



ANNUAL REPORT 2022



Evangelical
Lutheran Church
in America

A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDING BISHOP ELIZABETH EATON



Dear friends in Christ,

We have seen many changes throughout the years and throughout the world. Sometimes we've been left yearning for the days when things didn't feel so complicated. Other times, we have seen something new happen and have asked, "Why did this take so long?" The church has been through its own changes as well. Some of these have left us wishing for simpler times while others have us waiting for even more to come about.

But, dear church, God still is unchanging. God's love is still the foundation on which the church was built. While we have seen many changes, both in the world and at the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the eternal love of God and the good news that dwells with Christ's death and resurrection continue to provide hope for everyone. This is why our mission remains steadfast, whether that is through our traditional mission work in places near and far or from new ventures and visions that encourage us to think of different ways to reach even more people.

The writer of Hebrews reminds us: "Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God" (13:16). That could not be truer in the work we have been doing in each expression of the church. Your gifts continue to benefit the good work of spreading the good news throughout your communities, your synods and the whole church. We are all answering the call to continue to do good work with the help of your support, whether that is through your resources, your time or your talents.

I am grateful for your generous support of each expression of the church. God calls all of us to continue to do the good work, and you continue to answer that call. We also continue to join you in that call and will remain true to looking toward God's unchanging promise. There is still much change and learning that will come before us, but God's steadfast love energizes us for the work God is still doing in the world through this church.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elizabeth A. Eaton". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton
Presiding Bishop
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

“Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God”

(Hebrews 13:16).

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

OPENING LITURGY

Spirit of God, Descend upon My Heart

Recognizing that our faith is a living, busy, active and mighty thing, may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with each of you.

And also with you.

Teach us to love you with all our heart, soul, mind and strength.

Receive our prayer, O God.

Descend on our hearts, that we may love others in the ways Jesus loves us.

Receive our prayer, O God.

Empower us to be enthusiastic in pursuing your vision for our congregation.

Receive our prayer, O God.

Move us to engage issues in our community in Christlike ways, and to pursue deep and authentic relationships with those with whom we serve and partner.

Receive our prayer, O God.

Strengthen us to face the barriers we encounter in doing your work, learning to work with others amid disagreement.

Receive our prayer, O God.

Give us the ability to adapt to the cultural, economic and social changes that occur in the neighborhoods we serve.

Receive our prayer, O God.

Guide us to be a healthy congregation that learns from its failures as well as its successes and offers wisdom to others.

Receive our prayer, O God.

As we strive to become the church that we proclaim to be, raise up leaders who focus on the gospel of freedom, forgiveness and reconciliation as given to us through God's indescribable act of love in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Renew us daily in our baptism, that we may discover vitality in our relationships with you, each other and those we serve in the world.

Amen.

1 Spir - it of God, de - scend up - on my heart;
2 I ask no dream, no proph - et ec - sta - sies,
3 Have you not bid me love you, God and King;
4 Teach me to love you as your an - gels love,

wean it from earth, through all its puls - es move;
no sud - den rend - ing of the veil of clay,
all, all your own, soul, heart, and strength, and mind?
one ho - ly pas - sion fill - ing all my frame:

stoop to my weak - ness, strength to me im - part,
no an - gel vis - i - tant, no op - 'ning skies;
I see your cross; there teach my heart to cling,
the bap - tism of the heav'n - de - scend - ed dove,

and make me love you as I ought to love.
but take the dim - ness of my soul a - way.
Oh, let me seek you and, oh, let me find!
my heart an al - tar, and your love the flame.

Text: George Croly, 1780-1860

Music: MORECAMBE, Frederick C. Atkinson, 1841-1897

Text and music are in the public domain. Reproduced from Evangelical Lutheran Worship, hymn #800. May be reproduced without restriction.



Agenda

Call to Order

Devotions

Adoption of Agenda

Statistical Information.....Pages 2-3

Minutes from 2021 Annual Meeting.....Pages 4-5

Council President's Report.....Page 5

Pastor's Report.....Page 6

Staff Reports.....Pages 7-10

Committee Reports.....Pages 10-21

Election of voting members for 2023 Southeastern Iowa Synod Assembly
May 15-16; New format: evenings via video conference

Election of Council Members & Endowment Committee Members

Balance Sheet and Income Statement

Budget Adoption

Adjournment

Lord's Prayer

Grace Lutheran Church Congregational Council

Term Expires <u>February 2023</u> Bruce Bergman Nancy Crowfoot Valerie Culp Alex Davik	Term Expires <u>February 2024</u> Aaron Brandsfield Tom McCleary Linda Moravec Dean Watson	Term Expires <u>February 2025</u> Kevin Drury Michael Hilsabeck Jennifer Rehder Carter Woodruff
---	---	--

2022 Executive Committee

Alex Davik
Dean Watson
Jennifer Rehder
Michael Hilsabeck

Congregational Officers

President	Alex Davik
Vice President	Dean Watson
Secretary	Jennifer Rehder
Treasurer	Tom Selander
Financial Secretary	Paul Kallenbach

**Grace Lutheran Church Staff
The Rev. Michael Jon Schmidt**

Grace Staff Members

Jessica Flannery, Office Assistant for Worship
Denise Friesth, Minister for Administration
Todd Haugen, Custodian
Rich Snyder, Organist
Emma Stammer, Minister for Worship and Music
Bunny Stoutes, Vicar (2022-2023)
Michelle Voelker, Minister for Communication

In Memorandum

We remember with love and respect the following loved ones who from their labors rest.

(Names and date of death.)

Pat Bordt	02-23-2022
Larry Oberg	02-25-2022
Arnold Johansen	05-08-2022
Judy Cramer	05-18-2022
Virginia Naney	06-09-2022
Steve Young	07-30-2022
Karen Mann	08-11-2022
Delores Larsen	10-03-2022
Barbara Tussing	11-05-2022
Immogene Beck	11-07-2022
William Biegger	11-07-2022
Ryan Nordeen	11-17-2022
Gladys Peterson	12-28-2022

Membership Statistics

	<u>Baptized</u>	<u>Confirmed</u>
Membership end of 2021	682	574
as reported in the Congregational Report to the ELCA		
Members removed during 2022		
by death	7	7
by transfer to other congregations or other reasons	3	3
Members received during 2022		
by baptism	4	
by transfer from other congregations by affirmation of faith		
baptized youth confirmed in 2022		1
Membership end of 2022	676	565

Statistical Report

Worship Services Conducted.....	66
Weddings held at Grace.....	1
Baptisms	5
Funerals.....	7
Average Sunday worship attendance 2004...	368
Average Sunday worship attendance 2005...	333
Average Sunday worship attendance 2006...	324
Average Sunday worship attendance 2007...	294
Average Sunday worship attendance 2008...	293
Average Sunday worship attendance 2009...	259
Average Sunday worship attendance 2010....	228
Average Sunday worship attendance 2011....	229
Average Sunday worship attendance 2012....	212
Average Sunday worship attendance 2013....	197
Average Sunday worship attendance 2014....	197
Average Sunday worship attendance 2015....	191
Average Sunday worship attendance 2016....	178
Average Sunday worship attendance 2017....	167
Average Sunday worship attendance 2018....	141
Average Sunday worship attendance 2019....	133
Average Sunday worship attendance 2020	
Worship moved to online in March 2020	
Worship online and in person 2021	
Worship online and in person 2022	

We are unable to track worship attendance due to the inability to accurately track online participation.

Covid-19 has impacted how we gather for worship in many ways. This can be seen as negative as the in-person attendance has changed drastically. At the same time, we have navigated into a hybrid format that has allowed us to reach, connect, and build community in new ways. These ways include in-person, livestream, recorded services, and printed resources. If you know of someone for whom these ways of gathering do not work, please contact the church office so that we can work toward a solution.

Minutes of Annual Congregational Meeting January 30, 2022

Held via Zoom Teleconferencing Application

After a quorum was established, the meeting was called to order by Congregational Council President John Roehrick at 10:04 AM. Some brief guidance was given concerning how to participate in a remote meeting.

Devotions: Pastor Mike Schmidt led the assembly in devotions.

Attention was directed to the Opening Liturgy and the message from Bishop Eaton.

Rich Snyder was appointed Parliamentarian.

The agenda was adopted by absence of objection with the addition of one item: discussion and vote whether to approve Grace Lutheran Church as an intern site.

President John Roehrick directed the attendees to review the statistical information presented on pages 2 and 3 of the annual report.

It was moved, seconded, and passed to approve the minutes of the 2021 Annual Congregational Meeting as printed.

Reports:

- **President's and Pastor's Reports:** President Roehrick directed the participants to review the Congregational Council President's report and the Pastor's report. Both reports noted the difficulties faced this past year. Both also commended the Congregation for continued spiritual and financial support during the ongoing pandemic. Staff and the technicians who kept us "on the air" also received recognition and thanks. There were no questions, and the reports were approved as written by unanimous consent.
- **Staff Reports:** The participants were directed to review the Staff reports. There were no questions, and the reports were approved as written by unanimous consent.
- **Committee Reports:** The participants were directed to review the various committee reports. There were no questions, and the reports were approved as written by unanimous consent.

Discussion and vote to approve Grace Lutheran Church as an intern site: Pastor Mike explained the process of applying and setting up the church as an intern site. After discussion and some questions, it was moved and seconded to approve Grace Lutheran Church as an intern site. The motion was approved by absence of objection.

Elections:

- **Southeastern Iowa Synod Assembly 2022:** Jessica Flannery volunteered and was approved to be one of two voting members for the Southeastern Iowa Synod Assembly. The Congregational Council will appoint the second member.
- **Congregational Council:** The following members were elected by absence of objection to 3-year terms on the Congregational Council: Kevin Drury, Mike Hilsabeck, Jenny Rehder, and Carter Woodruff.
- **Endowment Committee:** Kristin Medhurst and Eric Weber were elected by absence of objection to serve as members of the Endowment Committee.

Balance Sheets, Income Statements, and Budget Adoption:

- Kevin Krause presented and explained the balance sheet and income statement and directed attention to the Finance Committee Report on page 21 of the annual report. The financial condition is good, due in part to PPP money, some large personal contributions, and the generous response of the members of the Congregation to the Stewardship Campaign.
- Kevin presented the proposed budget for 2022 as recommended by the Congregational Council. It was moved and seconded to approve the 2022 budget as presented. The motion carried by voice vote and the 2022 budget stands approved and adopted.

There being no further business a motion to adjourn was approved without objection. Meeting was adjourned at 10:55 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,
David F. Gronert, Council Secretary

Report from the Congregational Council President Alex Davik

2022 has been quite a year. Our Little Free Pantry has made and continues to make a significant impact on the needs of people in our neighborhood. We welcomed a new intern, Bunny Stoutes, who has managed to keep us smiling even in those tough moments. We even had our first Grace Golf Outing in over a decade!

Financially, we are in great shape. The amount of support we received from the congregation was greater than we expected, and expenses were less than expected. On top of that, we were able to arrange significant upgrades to our HVAC system. This does not mean, however, that we can ease off in our stewardship moving forward. We must continue to support the church vigorously as energy prices (and the cost of everything else) have increased significantly. We are also planning another campaign for upgrades to many areas of our building. This is critical as our building will be open to use by more outside groups than at any time since early 2000.

The Council of 2023 will have many things to consider, including upgrades to computers for staff, updating our membership rolls for a new directory, and continuing the journey toward more fully welcoming people of all races, orientations, and identities.

A big thank you goes out to all members of staff, council, committees, small groups, and everyone who has volunteered their time, talents, and resources.

Respectfully submitted,
Alex Davik, Council President

Pastor's Report 2022 - Pastor Michael Schmidt

*"I thank my God every time I remember you,
constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you."
Philippians 1:3-4*

I want to begin by offering thanks. At the Annual Meeting twelve years ago, you took a vote to call me as pastor, and my life has been forever changed by our time together. We have been through a lot of highs and lows together. This year marks some of the highest highs and lowest lows, as we were able to celebrate Easter and Christmas together and have also gathered in celebration of many lives well lived. We have enjoyed being an Internship Host Site, working with Vicar Bunny, while also facing the reality that ministries such as Grace Kids Care will not return. Highs and lows mark the year, yet I still pray in thanksgiving and joy for the opportunity to serve here and walk with you as the people of God at Grace Lutheran Church.

This year has been home to some wins, and I want to take time to acknowledge those.

- We were able to return to in person worship and have watched in person attendance steadily grow throughout the year.
- We were able to resume education for all ages. There is a dedicated team of volunteers working with our school aged youth and middle and high school students. Adult education has resumed on Sunday and Tuesday mornings.
- Our Little Free Pantry project has grown considerably. We were able to create a back-stock space and have received grants for supplies. This is largely due to the work of Vicar Bunny.
- The Music Ministry is once again a vital part of worship. It has been a joy to hear the Choir, Bells, and Brass in person once again.
- December 18th was a wonderful community wide celebration through the Christmas Program and dessert potluck. We were also gifted by the presence of Bishop Amy Current. This is the first time since June of 2017 that we were able to welcome someone from the Office of the Bishop in the Southeastern Iowa Synod.
- A generous anonymous gift has led to the start of the Mission Action Fund. This fund is to be used in outreach with the goal of being spent down each year. We currently have \$22,145 with which we can make an impact in the world in the name of Christ. Thanks be to God.
- It was a strong year financially. We were able to finish the year with a surplus of more than \$30,000! Thank you!

These are just a few of the accomplishments this past year. These accomplishments listed together give a glimpse of what is possible here at Grace Lutheran Church. As we celebrate these wins, we also look forward to what is coming this year.

- This year during Lent we will dive into the theme of "Seeking." The worship services will have a similar feel to the format used during Advent. We will dive into a series of questions that deal with the inner work of faith. It will be a time for all of us to grow in faith.
- The Council voted to embark on a journey of congregational study through the Reconciling in Christ process. The goal is to create a safe space for us to enter discussion and education of sexuality and race. The life of Jesus was one of radical hospitality. We hope to learn together how to welcome like Christ.
- We hope to continue the journey as an Internship Host Site. This is such a great opportunity to learn and teach as a community of faith.
- As space in our lower level is cleaned out and prepared for occupancy, we can explore potential partnerships with other groups and agencies. In a time where many agencies are reducing their "bricks and mortar" footprint, there is an increased need to such partnerships. It is exciting to see where this will lead.

It is such a joy to journey with you, and I look forward to seeing where the Holy Spirit guides us together. This is such an amazing community of faith, and that is all because of you.

Thank you!
Pastor Mike

Intern Report 2022 by Vicar Bunny Stoutes

It seems like a distant memory – March 16, 2022. This day students gathered at Wartburg Castle and Zoomed with online students while waiting for our intern assignments. We paced. We acted like we were paying attention in class, but most of us were not. Then it came at 2:41pm – I was assigned to Grace Lutheran Church in Des Moines. A letter from Pastor Mike with a description of the congregation was attached to the email. Words stuck out to me – especially the opening words, “One can expect to be welcomed. This community of faith has a rich history of welcoming all as fellow siblings in Christ.” Other keywords stood out to me: siblings, worship, community, opportunities. All words that gave me an inkling to the health of the congregation in very positive ways. In practice I’ve found these to be true, yet a small snapshot of the many wonderful things that makes the people of Grace unique and special.

One of the scariest moments was reading that Grace was a new intern site, and Pastor Mike would be a first-time supervisor. Who would I call to get the scoop? What was the congregation really like, besides on paper? What are the living accommodations like? Talk about a leap of faith – for both of us. Grace applied for an intern with no say on who you would receive. That had to be a bit scary too. We all placed our faith in the people who make the matches; they pray, they talk with interns and the committees, and then they pray more.

I’m grateful we both took this leap of faith. To be gifted with a supervisor who has a goal of helping me to see my God given gifts in a pastoral role is a blessing. To be greeted by a congregation that understands that my purpose here is to “become” and nurture my soul while being open to let me learn is a precious gift. We have also found the learning has been reciprocal – I am learning tons from the congregation, council, staff, & supervisor, and I’m also able to share insights with each group of people as well.

One of the teams I work closely with is the internship committee. These faithful volunteers meet with me offsite once a month. On paper, the biggest task of the committee is completing the 6- and 12-month evaluation forms. But in reality, having a core team of people that are there to ensure I personally and professionally thrive is an added bonus! It’s a low time commitment/high impact ministry – please consider saying yes to serve this way if asked to serve for future interns!

As I move forward in my final five months of internship, there are a few things I need to check off my “list” of things I came in wanting to learn. These include attending finance meetings, continue work with my confidence, preaching regularly, and learning what to look for as I move forward with my first call.

In thinking about embracing your next intern – I offer this insight: They will be different. They will come with different experience levels, different backgrounds, with different gifts. They will need to work on different aspects of their growth. There is one statement that I beg you never say. “But Vicar XXX did it that way.” There is no comparison. Our learning goals are personalized and what following interns need for growth will not be the same as mine. Give them the same gifts you gave me – a soft place to land, time to form relationships and trust, hospitality, honesty, and love.

Internship has been a rewarding experience for me on many levels. As I go out into the world and take my first call, second call, work with the synods, and more, I will be forever changed by the lessons learned here at Grace. The potential people I encounter will be limitless. By taking this leap of faith, the people of Grace have the potential to catapult new leadership for the ELCA and the world. I can’t thank you enough.

Peace and grace to you, today and always,
Vicar Bunny Stoutes

Report from the Director of Communications **Michelle Voelker**

2022 has been a joyful year with a fully occupied/staffed office, groups meeting throughout the week, Vicar Bunny Stoutes, new successful projects, and the return of staff retreats and staff lunches. We've had our challenges, with rounds of illness and weather, but the ability to work remotely, and the support and understanding of the staff we have makes dealing with challenges easy.

A new computer hard drive has meant fewer challenges and less twiddling of thumbs while my computer "thought" about the things I wanted to do, and provided a few short term challenges connecting properly to finicky equipment, but the change in productivity was worth the hiccups. Many thanks to Nick Medhurst for making sure all my files were moved and accessible.

Working and collaborating with Vicar Bunny has been lovely and refreshing.

We've dreamed up a few new advertising schemes to help promote Grace. The first is Grace pens: share kindness by offering a clean pen to someone who might need one. The light blue means it will stand out, and hopefully lead a few people to our website and Grace. The second: we will be announcing soon.

All our usual communications have continued, shifting and adapting as needed. We have spent the last few years overlapping information in all publications to make sure no one missed anything during closures. Now that the calendar is fuller, we are trying not to repeat items as frequently in every publication. All information is published in multiple places each month, with the majority also archived on our website and links from our Facebook page to the website. If in doubt, look there! Signup links included in the website news, as well as archived announcements and the newsletter remain clickable.

- **The website at gracedm.org** Find the calendar, news, worship, bulletins, announcements, newsletters, forms & applications, secure giving, and archives here.
- **The Tuesday enews** for upcoming events, meetings, short term needs.
- **The Friendly Visitor** – Monthly reports, articles, photos, and interest items, as well as events to look for in the future.
- **Weekly Announcements** – Prayer concerns, celebrations, education times/topics, the day's events, and other items as space allows.
- **The Street sign** - Worship & bible study times, welcomes, events, other messages determined by staff.
- **Facebook** - Morning Prayer twice a week, worship services broadcast and archived. Advertising Grace events. The private page Abiding Grace continues to be a low use space but is a good location for discussions and sharing of information.
- **Post Cards/Mailings to the membership & neighborhood as needed**
- **Worship Materials** printed, published online, and mailed.
- **Membership Mailings:** we continue to mail monthly newsletters and weekly bulletin/announcement/sermon to those who request it. This list has shortened considerably in the past year, some sadly due to losses, and some thankfully as members have been able to return to in-house worship. Anyone who would like to be added to this this for any reason need only ask.

Thank you for allowing me to continue to serve the Grace Community.

Michelle Voelker, Minister for Communications.

Report from the Minister for Administration Denise Friesth

Thank you for your support during 2022. I appreciate the opportunity to work with the people of Grace Lutheran Church as we continue to try to live as God's faithful people and discern God's call.

My day-to-day tasks include lots of details: accounts payable, payroll, various member requests, helping to coordinate service calls with vendors, etc. I enjoy these roles but making time to stay connected to the members of this congregation: phone calls, cards, emails, etc. feeds my soul.

The biggest highlights of 2022 for me include: Vicar Bunny Stoutes, the Little Free Pantry and December 18 (Worship, Christmas Story, Bishop Amy Current, Fellowship & Cookie Potluck)

Gratitude for.....

- Members – your faithful stewardship of all that God has given
- Staff – finding ways to build connections with each other and with the congregation
 - What a blessing to become a Wartburg Seminary Internship Site AND welcome our first intern: Vicar Bunny Stoutes. This partnership in ministry has provided our staff and congregation a new level of energy. I am grateful for all the ways that Vicar Bunny lives out her call to be a servant leader. As she learns and grows, so do we, the people of Grace!
- Church Council – thank you for your faithful service and leadership
- Finance Team – support throughout the year, especially volunteers Paul Kallenbach, Kevin Krause, and Tom Selander
- Worship volunteers – especially our tech crew, altar guild, musicians, and those that host coffee/donut time!
- Education volunteers – thank you!
 - Star! Angels! Shepherds! Kings! – I brought this program idea to staff and it was embraced fully! Special thanks to Pastor Mike, Vicar Bunny and Emma Stammer for their leadership. And thank you to the children, youth, choir, bells, brass, tech crew, etc. The program was part of worship on Sunday, December 18 and an extra blessing was having Bishop Amy Current with us that day. (The fellowship and cookie potluck after worship was wonderful, too!)
- Member Care – finding so many ways to care for others; the needs are great.
- Little Free Pantry – what a beautiful ministry!
 - Grateful for the congregational and neighborhood support of this ministry
 - Grateful for God's Work. Our Hands project and Vicar Bunny's leadership and continuous efforts to make this ministry more sustainable.
 - The volunteers that restock the pantry
 - Together, Bunny and I applied for and received a \$6308 grant from the Immanuel Vision Foundation; Continuing to look for ways to financially support this ministry.
- Grace Garden – so much produce!! They make it look easy, but lots of hours are put in to have that much produce harvested from the limited square footage of land. I love this ministry so much – I'm helping my home congregation in Allison, IA, get a garden started (and a Little Free Pantry!)
- Property Team volunteers – the size and age of our facility requires LOTS of volunteer hours. (The work of those that step forward to help with the church facility and the house next door is one contributing factor to the positive bottom line of 2022!)
- Willing Workers – Thursday morning crew to help with property needs that arise during the week
- Saturday Men's Group – more help with the maintenance of the facility, including Todd's house
- Lutheran World Relief – helping us serve those in need around the world
- Vendors – so many vendors that we have built relationships with over the years
- Thrivent Action Team Grants – a wonderful way to support projects here at Grace & in the community!

Thank you, all. May God bless you abundantly in 2023.
Denise Friesth, Minister of Administration

Report from the Worship & Music Ministry Emma Stammer

2022 has been a year of rebuilding and revitalizing for worship and music at Grace. Notable happenings include:

- Grace Chancel Choir returning to singing in the sanctuary space on Sunday mornings.
- Lenten mid-week and Easter Sunday services live and in-person!
- Welcoming Vicar Bunny as an addition to the worship team.
- Conversations and discernment with council regarding the mission and mission statement of Grace Lutheran.
- Outdoor worship and church-wide food pantry project for God's Work, Our Hands Sunday in September.
- The return of music time with the Sunday School kids in a fresh, updated education space.
- In-person Affirmation of Baptism!
- The return of coffee and donuts after worship each week!
- A musical Christmas offering in worship on Dec. 18, followed by extra special fellowship time and a visit with the Bishop.
- A Longest Night worship time with Vicar Bunny on Dec. 21.

Despite the discouraging start to 2022, with the Omicron variant circulating and pandemic protocols still in place, the worshippers and volunteers at Grace have "gone with the flow" in such a gracious manner and with a hopeful attitude. It is good to be back in the building and able to offer worship and education in-person! Rich Snyder faithfully sends out a weekly update to the Health & Safety Taskforce with COVID hospitalization data, so please know that we continue to monitor the pandemic situation even as we move forward into 2023 with fewer COVID precautions in the building.

Another positive change we saw in 2022 was the placement of Vicar Bunny as an intern on staff. She has been such a wonderful addition to our team and has given momentum to the work of Grace Lutheran as a community of faith. I look forward to seeing God's grace work in our lives in the new year!

*Yours in Christ,
Emma Stammer, minister for worship & music*

Report from the Stewardship Committee

Stewardship packets were mailed out in October to members of Grace Lutheran Church (160 households.) The packet contained the following:

- letter from Pastor Mike
- letter from Vicar Bunny
- letter from Grace Lutheran Church Council regarding capital needs
- Pledge Card for the General Fund
- 2022 ytd Statement of Giving for each household

In November a special blessing of the returned pledges took place during worship. Thank you for your faithfulness.

Respectfully submitted,

Howard Kulzer

Children & Youth Education

The school year began with a realistic look at the volunteer capacity for the children & youth education hour each Sunday. Emily Stowell and Deanna Weber took the lead of the K-5 group. This group was moved to the main floor to be closer to the other activities taking place during this hour. The Spark All Kids curriculum from Sparkhouse was used, allowing leaders to flex as necessary with age appropriate lessons for small groups. The curriculum offers lessons for older kids and younger kids and it is based on the same lectionary that is used in worship. Leadership is currently looking at ways to engage more adult volunteers to expand the class in hopes of creating a small group for our preschool students who are currently attending.

Jenie Schmidt, Courtney Brandsfield, and Jessye Flannery took the lead of the 6th-12th grade class. There was a strong desire from our youth to craft their own program with an emphasis on service this year. Their main goals include learning how the life of the church has a place in their daily lives and developing relationships with each other. Our leaders work with the youth to help them form practical goals and accompany them as they learn and grow from a place of grace and love. The youth planned and pulled off a service project with Meals from the Heartland and adopted three families from Moore Elementary. In December, they shopped together for the families, wrapped gifts together, and enjoyed fellowship while being entertained with a movie.

For the spring semester, the 6th-12th grade students plan on creating a liturgical dance to be performed during worship in April as a part of their many activities.

Both groups have implemented a new volunteer system to ensure a second adult is in the classroom for all events for the safety of the children, youth and adult volunteers. A sign-up board is in the Gathering Hall and volunteers sign up to be a “second” in each classroom, where no pre-planning is involved to make it easy for all members of the congregation to help support our kids.

All the youth participated in a musical Christmas program. Some volunteered to sing, some helped with the tech crew, others were “Angel Herders,” and more! Many thanks to Denise, Emma, and all the volunteers for their work on the program this year.

Confirmation is co-taught by Pastor Mike and Vicar Bunny in a “retreat” style format using the Collaborate lessons from Sparkhouse. The group spends one Sunday a month learning about the New Testament, including maps, the life of Jesus Christ, learned about other events that took place during the same timeframe, and they have an understanding of the first four books of the Bible. During the spring, the confirmands will dive into the books written by Paul, the history of the early church, and end the year with a study on the book of Revelation. Three lessons are taught each session with a meal, relationship building, and deep listening to our youth from their leaders.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the children and youth education team,
Vicar Bunny Stoutes

Report from the Companion Congregation Committee

The Companion Church Committee maintains contact with our companion parish in Tanzania. Our dear friend, Pastor Ombeni Mmbaga, celebrated his retirement in December.

If you are interested in becoming part of the committee, please talk to Mary Freimuth Helt 515-577-6425. We are open to new members with new ideas.

Mary Freimuth Helt and Jane Ridnour

Outreach in 2022

Little Free Pantry (LFP)

The Little Free Pantry (LFP) program was expanded this year as a part of God's Work Our Hands day in September. As a lead up to the event, Kevin Drury was asked to be the lead volunteer recruiter, and successfully set up leads for a congregational meal, food handlers & organizers, shoppers, shelf builders, and more. On the day of the event, we celebrated worship outside in the parking lot, then teams got straight to work setting up room 105 as a new backstock room for food that was collected in the weeks leading up to the event. Craft supplies were moved from the room, shelves were built, then food and toiletries were brought in and organized. After the room was complete, we ate grilled hamburgers together and enjoyed fellowship.

As a part of the changes to the LFP, it is stocked from the backstock room twelve times a week by several volunteers. These volunteers handle incoming products, rotate stock, and maintain cleanliness of the LFP. We ask for different food items to be brought in each week by the congregation, advertise an Amazon wish list, and use funds given by the congregation to purchase food as needed.

In December, we received a \$6,000 grant from Immanuel Vision Foundation for the purchase of groceries, supplies, and advertising to help sustain the project. Vicar Bunny is working on turning over final responsibilities of the pantry. Small jobs to turn over include: Amazon wish list curator, food ordering, grant finder, and a general communicator.

Christmas Star Tree for Mosaic and Lutheran Services in Iowa

Lutheran Services in Iowa (LSI)

- We were able to give LSI thirty-one \$25 Walmart gift cards for children in their Early Childhood program.

Mosaic

- We provided gifts for 23 adults in Mosaic's group homes.
- We also provided an extra \$100 for Mosaic's special programs

We brightened the lives for many children and adults! Thanks so much for your participation!!!

Thank You

- to Joie Gronert for organizing the Star Tree project.
- the Congregation for their continued support of this project.
- Michelle Voelker for her assistance in helping set up the online program for giving to the Star Tree project

Altar Guild

The Altar Guild members at Grace prepare the altar for Sunday worship and assist with communion preparations and cleanup. Other responsibilities include any special preparation for the seasons of the church year such as Advent, Christmas, Lent and Easter, and special events such as baptisms, weddings and funerals.

The group handles the care and maintenance of the paraments, linens, banners, and candles as needed for worship services. Like everyone else, we did see an increase in the cost of some supplies in 2022. The following items were purchased throughout the year:

- Communion supplies
- Candle oil
- Cleaning supplies
- Seasonal supplies and decorations

A smaller group is designated for handling funerals. These are volunteers who help to prepare for the services as needed to meet the requests of the families for the worship space.

Altar Guild members continued regular meetings and were pleased to be able to include Vicar Bunny Stoutes in our meetings. We used that time for fellowship and to discuss the group's duties for the next month. We ended our year by decorating the church for Christmas and then gathering to celebrate the end of another year.

There were nine volunteers that served on Altar Guild in 2022. All those members will continue their service for 2023. If you're interested in joining Altar Guild, please reach out to any current member for info! We have found it most beneficial to everyone's circumstances to maintain a collective leadership and whomever is available to take the lead on a certain item or issue does so.

Thank you to:

1. The Willing Workers and Men's Group for their assistance throughout the year.
2. The 2022 Altar Guild volunteers for their dedicated service: Sue Anderson, Kathy Bowermaster, Connie Heuton, Gail Peterson, Jenny Rehder, Jane Ridnour, Amy Schmelzer, Rita Stackhouse, and Carol Woodruff. Kathy also served as altar flower coordinator.

Budgeted amount for 2023 (including altar flowers): \$3,500

Expenses for 2022: \$2,772

Report respectfully submitted by the Grace Lutheran Church Altar Guild

Additional note from Denise: Our local vendor for Altar Flowers, including Easter Lilies and Poinsettias, is Irene's Flowers. We are grateful for their service.

Report from Cradle Roll

The Cradle Roll program ministers to parents with children between the ages of birth through age three.

“Splash!” materials from Augsburg Fortress are used. Each month the parents receive a “Parent Page” appropriate for the age of their child. A music CD is included with the first parent page and again for the child’s 1st and 2nd birthdays. The materials are supplemented with additional materials at Christmas, Easter, and the child’s third birthday.

There are currently fifteen children enrolled in the Grace Cradle Roll.

Three children enrolled in the program were baptized during 2022. At the time of baptism, the parents are presented with a bible for their child. A dove with the child’s name and baptismal date is added to the Baptismal Roll in the sanctuary. The dove is sent to the parents prior to the first anniversary of their child’s baptism. The bibles were purchased with funds received from the Grace Endowment Fund. The doves and baptismal napkins were made and donated by Len and Helen Ringgenberg in memory of their grandson, Alec Freese.

Expenses include “Splash!” materials, postage, mailing and supplemental materials.

2022 Budget: \$400.00

Expenditures: \$360.13

Respectfully submitted,
Gail Peterson
Cradle Roll Coordinator

Report from the Memorial Fund Committee

All memorial money donated to Grace Lutheran Church is deposited to a reserve account with memorials for each individual tracked separately. Purchases from these funds are made according to the needs of the congregation and the desires of the family.

Contributions received from January 1 - December 31, 2022 were in memory of:

Immogene Beck, Frances Best, Pat Bordt, Judy Cramer, Delores Larsen, Karen Mann, Virginia Naney, Larry Oberg, Cathleen Swanson, Barbara Tussing, and Steve Young, adding a total of \$7,770 to the fund.

Disbursements in 2022 included:

\$ 350	Journal Entry Endowment Fund
\$ 175	Funeral honorariums
\$2,000	Outdoor Lighting

The December 31, 2022 balance in the Memorial reserve account is \$38,652.

Lydia-Martha Circle

Lydia-Martha Circle had not met during the 2021 year and the first half of 2022 due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the concern for the safety of our members.

During the pandemic “Keeping in Touch” correspondence has gone out to circle members for Birthdays, Get Well, and Sympathy. Other mailings have included cards for Valentine’s Day, Easter, Ascension Day, 4th of July, Thinking of You, Thanksgiving and an Advent Calendar at Christmas which included homebound and Sunday School members.

Lydia-Martha Circle began to meet again on August 25, 2022. It was decided to become more of a social circle where members can meet and enjoy visiting. We do continue to support the church neighborhood having donated \$1,000 to the Little Free Pantry and \$250 to Keep the Kids Warm through the Merle Hay Neighborhood Association for winter clothing for Hillis Elementary School students. We also made candy Bibles for our homebound members Christmas gift bags.

Lydia-Martha Circle meets on the 4th Thursday of each month from March through December at 9:30 a.m. in Grace Hall. The November/December meeting is a combined meeting. New members are always welcome.

Martha Mitchell and Marilyn Nizzi, Co-Chairs

Report from the Grace Garden Committee

Committee: Julie Honsey, Marion Nehmer, Carla Peterman, Michelle Voelker, Loree Nelson, Linda Gronert

We welcomed two new gardeners to the group – Linda Gronert and Loree Nelson

Each year after we decide what we will grow – based on previous years’ successes and struggles – each person signs up to contribute specific seeds and plants. Planting and cleanup are a group effort, while other crops are planted as appropriate.

Gardeners take care of the garden using a rotating schedule. This year each took one week out of every four, while Loree and Linda chose to work with/help other gardeners to learn how things work. We also provide help to each other during weeks of heavy harvest or watering needs. If you are looking for a way to do a little bit (or a lot) of gardening let us know.

Budget. We did not use most of our budget this year. While our compost bins currently provide enough to top off one or two of the long-raised beds every year, we wanted to amend all beds at the end of the season. A late summer fire at the local compost facility meant a shortage of loose compost, and an increase in price for bagged compost. Instead, we used part of our budget to repair/replace one of the small, older raised beds that was falling apart. Tim and Loree Nelson purchased the materials and made the repairs. Compost will be purchased in 2023.

Produce is delivered to local food pantries. Produce placed in the Little Free Pantry during/after each weeks’ harvest is picked up almost immediately and is much appreciated.

We grew peas, okra, broccoli, sweet potatoes, Swiss Chard, tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers, beans, pole beans, turnips, kohlrabi, beets, carrots, radishes, tomatillos, white and purple eggplant, and onions. Zucchini and squash harvests were small, and with a presence of squash bugs, we will likely break from growing these for a time.

Sincerely,

Michelle Voelker, Julie Honsey, Marion Nehmer, Carla Peterman, and all the volunteers and recipients

Report from Visiting Friends

The purpose of Visiting Friends is to bring loving care, attention, and concern to those who are isolated from our church family due to age, illness, or circumstance. By reaching out beyond the church walls, it is our hope that God's real presence may be sensed and felt wherever two or three are gathered. Visiting Friends make home visits and distribute the sacrament of Holy Communion to our friends at home.

Home visits and distribution of the sacrament of Holy Communion to those homebound are a beautiful ministry of Grace Lutheran Church. Thank you, Pastor Mike, Vicar Bunny, Martha Mitchell, Cherie Rissman and Cheryl Weatherington.

If you would like to know more about Visiting Friends, have questions about the ministry, or know of someone who may benefit from the ministry, please contact:

Cheryl Weatherington cweatherwasrn@gmail.com
Cherie Rissman cherierissman@gmail.com
Denise Friesth denise@gracedm.org

Member Care

The Member Care Team (MCT) continues its ministry of assisting Grace members in time of need; illness/surgery or loss of a family member. This may include providing meals, transportation, visits, cards and/or phone calls. Due to the situation this may be a one-time contact or one that extends over a period of time. Grace members may request care through Pastor Mike or by calling the church office.

With the end of the Covid-19 quarantine, it has been possible to visit in person once again when appropriate. Purchased meals or restaurant/grocery gift/Door Dash gift cards continue to be provided to those in need.

The MCT also reaches out to those listed on the Grace prayer list, the homebound and Grace's treasured senior members. Holiday cards were sent at Christmas, Valentine's Day, Easter, and Thanksgiving. "Thinking of you" cards were sent in those months in which there were no holidays.

In April 2022, we were fortunate to be awarded an Immanuel Community Grant of \$1,000.00. Thank you to Denise Friesth for her assistance in applying for this grant. This grant will help us continue this ministry.

All Grace members are in our thoughts and prayers. We would like to suggest you take the time to reach out to others to let them know you are thinking about them. A simple phone care or card is greatly appreciated.

As Grace's membership ages (including those on the MCT) there is a need for additional members on the team. If you would like to participate in this ministry, please contact one of the members listed below.

For 2022:

2022 beginning balance	\$ 763.95
<u>Income</u>	
Immanuel Community Grant	\$1,000.00
Grace Car Show	\$ 577.43
<u>Expenditures</u>	
Supplies/Cards/Postage/ Gift Cards/Groceries	\$696.58
2022 ending balance	\$ 1,644.80

2022 Member Care Team members

Jill Boeschen, Joie Gronert, Mary Helt, Connie Heuton, Gail Peterson, Jane Ridnour, Melissa Young

Report from the Lutheran World Relief Team

Supporting Lutheran World Relief is an enduring ministry of Grace Lutheran Church. We are enthusiastic about donating time, money, and talent to make kits and quilts to help people in need around the world. This year, we held two kit making and quilt tying sessions with the congregation, assembling 221 personal care kits, 94 school kits, 29 baby care kits and tying many quilts. Congregation members designed lots of colorful quilt blocks in a separate service project. Our quilters turned out a total of 62 quilts this year! These gifts were all delivered to LWR through two ingathering events in April and October.

In 2022, we conducted one fundraiser and received additional generous support through the memorial gifts contributed by the friends and family of Pat Bordt, who died on February 23. Pat was a talented coordinator of our kit making ministry for several years. We joyfully welcomed Vicar Bunny Stoutes to our team. She is bringing lots of added spark to our group. She also helped us discover where many of our kits and quilts have gone in the last several years.

Thank you to everyone at Grace for your generosity.

Gratefully submitted,

LWR Team: Alice Kulzer, Allison Olson, Barb Zimany, Beth Flannery, Vicar Bunny Stoutes, Cathy Watson, Gail Peterson, Helen Ringgenberg, Jessye Flannery, Jill Boeschen, Kathy Piltingsrud, Mary Jo McCleary, Mary Weaverling, Nancy Crowfoot

Lutheran World Relief Account Year End Report 2022

BALANCE ON HAND - January 1, 2022		\$ 967.88
INCOME:		
Pat Bordt Memorials Received	\$ 680.00	
Donations Received (January-June)	\$ 260.00	
Donations Received (July-December)	\$ 1,130.00	
Total Income		+ \$ 2070.00
		\$ 3037.88
DISBURSEMENTS:		
Pat Bordt Memorial gift sent directly to LWR	\$ 30.00	
Kit Supplies Expense (January-June)	\$ 1,063.58	
Kit Supplies Expense (July-December)	\$ 586.66	
Total Disbursements		- \$ 1680.24
BALANCE ON HAND - December 31, 2022		<u>\$ 1357.64</u>

Report from the Property Committee

The Property Team is in a state of reorganization as we figure out how to maintain the facility, make improvements and spread the maintenance tasks over a pool of volunteers.

We are very grateful for

- Todd – keeping the facility clean and alerting us to any potential red flags or changes
- Weekly Willing Workers – Thursday mornings they help with various property tasks
- Saturday Group – once per month they tackle a variety of property projects
- Eric Weber – updates to HVAC programming based on occupancy
- Members that helped with deep cleaning, major repairs & other maintenance at the house
- Work of Excel Mechanical on the repair of leading pipes with boiler system.
- Work of other technicians hired for preventative maintenance within our facility this past year
 - Automatic Door Company
 - Control Systems Specialists
 - Dayton Heating & Air Conditioning
 - DeHaan Outdoor – quarterly yard treatments (Todd cuts the grass)
 - General Fire and Safety
 - Johnston Controls
 - Midwest Lock & Security
 - Schumacher Elevator – elevator and lift
 - Smith's Sewer Service
 - Springer Professional
 - State of Iowa Boiler Inspections
 - State of Iowa Elevator/Life Inspections
 - Waste Management of Iowa
 - Will Lawson (Parking Lot Snow Removal) (Todd clears the sidewalks of snow)

There are also upcoming projects.

- The new lights for the sanctuary have been ordered and should be installed in February or March.
- The air conditioning units for the Sanctuary and Msindo Hall will need to be replaced.
- The murals in rooms 101 and 102 will be repaired.
- We will continue and complete our clean up of the lower level so that we can pursue potential partnerships with the available space.

Thank you for your continued support of our property through regular giving and the mini–Capital Campaign!

**Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church
Columbarium Fund**

Cash Balance of December 31, 2021	\$13,334.25
Receipts:	
Interest on funds	\$ 6.69
Deposits	\$ 0.00
Disbursements:	\$279.00
Cash Balance of December 31, 2022	\$13,061.94

Members that have purchased niches – McIntyre, Tussing, Frost, Krauss, Rehder, Iverson, Buihner, Page, Batten, Singh, Zimany, and Knudsen.

No niches were purchased in 2022.

Grace Lutheran Church has a Columbarium in the Prayer Chapel. Grace's Columbarium is a forty-eight companion Garden Niche Columbarium that accommodates a maximum of ninety-six cremation urns. The purchase price of each niche is \$1,200.

It has always been the obligation of the church to serve its congregation from baptism to death. Although earth burial on church grounds is not feasible at Grace, the desire to continue this sacred rite remains for some members.

The Columbarium at Grace allows us to revive the crucial ministry of offering a rightful place at the church for those who have come before us. It also comforts the living with the knowledge that we too will be welcomed home to the church.

Report of the Endowment Committee

The purpose of the Grace Lutheran Church Endowment Fund is to promote faithful Christian stewardship by providing a congregational plan to receive grants, gifts or bequest of money to be used to enhance the total program and mission of the Church beyond that supported through regular giving and apart from the general operation of the congregation. The Endowment Fund Committee acts as custodian of the Fund.

The Endowment Committee approved the following distributions of 2021 income, which was distributed in March of 2022.

Awards to Grace Lutheran Church:

- \$5,000 for Sidewalks and Landscaping for the Sexton House
- \$380 for a Technology Cart and Racks

Other Awards:

- \$2,500 to Lutheran Services in Iowa for Global Greens
- \$2,500 to Nutrition 4 Young Children for Healthy Baby Showers

A total of \$10,380 was awarded. Requests for grants totaled \$10,380.

Since inception, the Endowment fund has awarded a total of **\$359,963** to **195** projects.

Your Endowment Committee,

Kari Dostalík (Chairman), John Justice (Secretary), Kristin Medhurst, Gary Nehmer, and Eric Weber

Election of Endowment Fund Committee Members

Members include Kari Dostalík (Chairman), John Justice (Secretary), Gary Nehmer, and Eric Weber.

Year of term expiration for each member:

John Justice	2022 (resignation)
Kari Dostalík	2022
Gary Nehmer	2023
Kristin Medhurst	2024
Eric Weber	2024

Report of the Finance Committee

The Church results were above budget in 2022. Overall, a surplus of \$30,389 was achieved as compared to a surplus budget of \$5,000. This positive variance was equally due to income above budget and expenses under budget.

Highlights of actual activity include the following:

- Pledged and unpledged offerings were above the prior year and budget.
- Overall, expenses were below budget. This was primarily due to lower costs for the intern position and utilities offset by higher insurance, internet/web and office equipment.

Budgeted activity for 2023 reflects a deficit of \$12,000. Highlights include the following:

- Pledged offering activity is below 2022 actual activity and pledging units are down.
- Pledged offerings are based on the actual pledge cards received and not historical results.
- Unpledged offerings are based on historical results and considers the transfer of activity to pledged offerings.
- Budget for 2023 includes the intern pastor position for the full year.
- Total staffing costs are approximately \$256,000 and represent 57% of the total operational costs of the Church.
- The budget for the professional leadership positions includes salary, employer taxes, pension and medical insurance.
- Synod Benevolence is unchanged from 2022.
- All other expense activity is comparable to the prior year.
- The activity for debt service reflects interest only on the debt to the Endowment Fund. This \$255,000 debt has an interest rate of 3%.

While a deficit budget is not an ideal presentation, the offerings budgeted is conservative and the past two years of strong results would be able to fund this shortfall.

Not included in the presented results is the activity of the Capital Campaign.

- During 2021, \$12,100 was received from members and \$84,916 from the Daycare closure, \$32,584 was spent on furnace replacements.
- During 2022, \$15,400 was received from members and \$20,676 was spent on lights for the sanctuary.
- Since Inception, \$173,341 has been received and \$112,580 spent on building improvements.

Your Finance Committee,

Kevin Krause (chair), Kevin Drury, Paul Kallenbach (Financial Secretary), Tom Selander (Treasurer), Rick Stammer

Through your generosity, God is at work across the ELCA. A portion of your offering, called Mission Support, advances the ministry of our church, helping the ELCA nurture Christian community, raise up leaders, serve our neighbors and strive for justice. Read stories and learn more at [ELCA.org/SOFIA](https://elca.org/SOFIA).



Evangelical
Lutheran Church
in America