



Grace Lutheran is a community of faith united by God's love to listen, grow and serve in the name of Jesus so that all might experience grace.

2022 Annual Report

January, 2023



Senior Pastor's Report



Dear Grace Family:

"In a word, what I'm saying is, grow up. You are kingdom subjects. Now live like it. Live out your God-created identity. Live generously and graciously toward others, the way God lives toward you." Matthew 5:48- the Message

We often think of Jesus preaching to a crowd in his most famous teaching which we commonly call the Beatitudes (in Matthew 5-7), however, according to verse 1-2, Jesus speaks these words only to his disciples. His words of blessing and his instructions about how to live as salt and light are not given to everyone, but to this small group of 12 who are invited to follow Jesus in a new way. His words are meant for us to reflect on as individuals who are already followers of Jesus, not as words to proclaim or perhaps even judge others. They are words of transformation, words that invite us to see the world in a different way, and through it all, is the proclamation that God is generously pouring out abundant love and blessing upon us, and all of creation.

The Reverend Joanna Mitchell

Our leadership has spent time reflecting on these words and what they mean for the future of Grace and how we as a congregation live and grow. The mission of our congregation is that we are people united by God's love to listen, grow, and serve, so all might experience grace. This year we have been talking a lot about growing. Growing in relationship with God, growing in our connection with each other, growing stronger in our faith, growing in numbers. So how do we do this? Our Vision Board has identified three ways to concentrate on this growing:

Grow across generations.
Grow across divisions.
Grow beyond our walls.

As has been typical since I began my ministry at Grace, we continue to experience change. As we listen to God, we are invited to imagine the new ways God is inviting us to be church in this time and place. Our leadership has spent time reflecting on why they have stayed involved in a faith community and their dreams for our children and families. Because of these conversations, we recognize that our children need relationship beyond children's programming or youth programming, but with others in the congregation. Faithful people who can inspire and lead in faith development. We seek to have integrated programming that considers the various age groups present and the diversity of our people. Because of this we have restructured our staffing model and plan to hire a director of Children, Youth and Family instead of having two separate departments. This change has meant that we said goodbye to Kristi Larson, our Youth Director of 7 years, and have entered a time of discernment. Our CYF programming continues through our interim of CYF, Molly Schroeder, and the support of Kelsey Russell, our assistant CYF director who joined our staff in May.

As we think about the integration of people across generations, we have made changes to support these efforts. Our Wednesday evenings are a good example of what this looks like. There is something for all ages (children, youth, and adults), and we end in worship together. Worship that takes

into consideration our youth, who often help lead, and the adults who are present. Our worship and pastoral team continue to evaluate how this is working and what might need to be changed.

Our Transforming Inside & Out Generosity Appeal shaped much of our past year at Grace. Our winter months were spent hosting events and having special worship services focused on the ways that God is inviting us to grow through the transformation of our building and our hearts. We challenged the congregation to give \$1.2 million and we ended up exceeding our goal and raising \$1.5 million. God's abundant generosity was seen in the joy and faithful giving. A huge thank you to the Transforming Team led by Greg Ackerson and Tracie Russell as co-chairs, Nancy Jenkins (communication and prayer), Jackie Glockner (event planner) and the staff for their hard work. This was a huge undertaking. My own faith and spirit was inspired through the radical ways that Grace responded to the invitation to grow in giving. Jennifer Perrow and Pastor Kristine Capel were our generosity coaches, and they were such wonderful leaders for our group. I give thanks for them, and to the team who held everything together while I was away during my mom's sickness and death.

Transforming invited us to recognize the barriers that exist within our building and also in who we want to be as people of grace. We want to be a church that lives into our values in being welcoming to all, that cares compassionately, deepens connection, and shares the good news. We do this in several ways, through our worship and music, through having an open and welcoming building, through our outreach ministry that responds to the needs of the community, and through enriching our programming so that we can indeed all grow together and with God.

We had a dedicated team who have been working behind the scenes on our building project, along with our architect Kevin Busch. They have prayerfully listened to the needs of the congregation, the community and also dealt with rising costs in construction to make the best decisions for Grace's future. Huge thank you to our team: Greg Ackerson, Charlie Wold, Dennis Grabowski, Nancy Jenkins, Sandy Schmoll, Frances Fernandez, and Tracie Russell. We are welcoming Rochelle Poore to the team as well. If you have questions about the project, please feel free to reach out to these individuals or me.

Please know that one of the things I treasure about our community is that we can allow different perspectives to exist side by side. We are not of one mind and one spirit, but we are one in Christ. I pray that that may be enough to keep us listening, loving and caring for each other.

Thank you for the many and various ways you serve in our community and you live out your faith. I am grateful for you!

Pastor Joanna Mitchell



Our Staff

I have a tremendous staff that understands the heart of our ministry. They give so much of themselves, not only in time, but in care, and energy. They love God, this community and the work and this year has not been easy. Our staff cares deeply for each other as well. We have incurred our fair share of trials this year: from the death of my mom to Frances' daughter's kidney transplant to Pastor Maria's stroke. I am so grateful for the ways that the congregation has supported all of us during these difficult times. In May, we held a fundraiser for the Fernandez Family that was organized by Stephanie Chandler. In June, we had a number of guest preachers who helped me out while Pastor Maria was out on medical leave, and we welcomed Pastor Christine Belfry as an Interim Pastor for the summer.

Our programming continued to run through it all. A small team stepped up to make sure our VBS continued, and I give thanks for the hard work and organizing done by Stacy Surratt, Sandy Schmoll, Nancy Jenkins, Sally McPhillips, Victoria Bell, Olivia Surratt and Ann Lange. We had a great team of teachers and volunteers as well.

Our church is Spirit-filled. Each week, I leave feeling inspired by God's grace expressed through song, and word, and through the care of the community. Our work continues in the next year. It will be another year of change as our building project breaks ground in the Spring. We anticipate a lot of chaos and reorganizing and reimagining in the year to come. I know that during the challenges to come that God's love and grace will lead us to continue to listen, grow, and serve together.

Joanna Mitchell, Senior Pastor



Associate Pastor's Report

"He began to teach them many things in parables, and in his teaching he said to them: 'Listen! A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell on the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Other seed fell on rocky ground, where it did not have much soil, and it sprang up quickly, since it had no depth of soil. And when the sun rose, it was scorched; and since it had no root, it withered away. Other seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no grain. Other seed fell into good soil and brought forth grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirty and sixty and a hundredfold.' And he said, 'Let anyone with ears to hear listen!'" -Mark 4:2-9



The Reverend Maria Markman

I just returned from a follow up visit at my doctor's office. After the year I have had, she left me saying my hope is that 2023 is your year, because 2022 was so full of unexpected hard things! No one expects a 31 year old to suffer a stroke. And yet this is true of my year, and I hope that 2023 is less unexpected too! And yet, one of my biggest takeaways from this year in ministry and in life is that ministry and life are full of unexpected hard things, planning, people, and perspective provide hope in the present, and for the future!

We began 2022 with a focus on generosity! Adults and children alike reflected on God's generosity in our lives and at Grace. Complete with confetti and Price-Is-Right numbers revealing we surpassed our goal, our Transforming Inside & Out Campaign was met with outstanding success due to the planning and preparation of our Generosity Team, through our learning, and through our congregational study on the *Genius of Generosity* by Chip Ingram. Understanding God's abundant provision and not the world's scarcity continues to shape our ministry together. In some ways it may have tilled the soil and now we are in a year of growing! Growing in faith, growing in connections, growing in ministry and outreach.

Soil tilling is messy, dirty, and hard work. This past year has been that too. Messy, dirty, and hard! We have accomplished so much for the sake of the gospel because of the dedication of volunteers and behind the scenes planning for events: Transforming Inside & Out, Children's Ministry's VBS, Summer Youth Trips, the return of the Grace Bazaar and so many more. When I unexpectedly left on medical leave, what pre-planning had been done for our summer's Vacation Bible School was met with people and perspective. Volunteers and staff, who showed up and whose perspective said Vacation Bible School is essential and we can do this!! These volunteers made the week happen with great success and I am forever grateful to them! It wasn't just the planning and preparation, but the relationships that were built from doing this work together. I would be remiss if I didn't also mention the relationship shared through the care I received while I was recovering, and the many get well soon cards. God's love is felt and experienced through the people of Grace! I pray you are able to feel this love when times are difficult for you too.

Once having returned from medical leave, it was clear to me that our perspective had shifted. Mine had for sure. The ways I once worked and overworked was no longer feasible or healthy. And as a congregation our perspective had shifted about what is essential to us. How will we show up and care for one another. What ministries are important to us. And where are we going from here, especially with a building project, and after all we have been through together. We continue our work of planning and preparation for a building project, for another year of grace-filled ministry. We are reminded of the gift of each other given to us by God to do this work together. With this, our perspective is clear!

When I look to the future, I am excited for the current ministry we are doing and I cannot wait to see where God is leading us to grow across generations, grow in faith and grow in our connections in our community and across divisions. As you journey through this report, take notice of all of the volunteer leadership who took time to reflect on their ministries, outreach ministries, music ministries, faith formation ministries, ministries of our children and youth. I pray that you are moved by the stories told in these pages, stories of faith formation, and growth and that you might be inspired to listen, GROW, and serve so that all might experience grace!

In Christ,
Pastor Maria Markman
Associate Pastor



Vision Board President's Report



Brook Vander Leest
Vision Board President

There are many words that can be used to describe our past year. Generosity, challenging, giving, excitement, outreach, and innovative all come to mind.

But when I think of our church in the year 2022, I think of change and all the excitement that comes with it.

Isaiah 43:19 says *"Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I'm doing new things! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?"*

We started our year off with the creation of our new capital appeal, *Transforming Inside & Out*. We hosted events and shared stories of hope and inspiration about how we have been moved or challenged by our faith, the direction of our church, and how better to serve the community in a post COVID world. As we approached our commitment weekend, there was a certain buzz of excitement in the building about what was possible for us and

how to meet our needs. But what a success for all the hard work so many dedicated people put in. You as the congregation showed up in a big way and surpassed all expectations. We were able to listen to everyone's wishes and wants to come up with a list of needs for the church that will work for all.

We created a building task force team to meet with the architects to come up with a few plan options. During our spring congregation meeting we voted to accept the recommended plans from the Vision Board and move forward. Our Building Task Force Team continues to meet monthly with the architects as the plans evolve. We have hired a construction manager at risk to oversee the project and are excited to see the budget numbers come in this month. We are planning to break ground in spring and be complete with construction before the 2023 Christmas season.

Also early in the year we voted to share our gifts in the way of tithing from the Nightingale land sale. We were able to donate close to \$74,000 to our local and global partners and a few new charities along the way. What an unbelievable gift of generosity we were able to share with those in vulnerable situations.

Our office staff are true miracle workers. They had their difficulties with COVID and often worked double duty due to staff shortages. A big thank you to this caring staff for their dedication. We added some new faces this year as well. We welcomed Kelsey Russell in May as the Assistant Children's Ministry Director. Tracie Russell joined us in September in Administration. Gary Spielman took over the Treasurer position this fall. We would like to thank Mike Russell for leading this position over the past few years.

Change continues at Grace as we integrate our children's and youth programs including Sunday School, Own Your Faith, Summer Stretch and summer trips under one umbrella. This program is now headed up by our Director of Children Youth and Family. Molly Schroeder, from Interserve Ministries was brought in to serve as our Interim Director. A listening team was created to meet with parents and leaders to help the church evaluate, discern, and strategize for the future of the Children's and Youth Ministry programs.

This year has been very exciting to say the least. I am constantly amazed by the willingness of this congregation to answer God's calling where needed. It is hard not to feel God's presence as he challenges each one of us in new ways to spread his good news.

I look forward to seeing where the next year takes us as the transformation continues. It's sure to be even more exciting.

Brook Vander Leest
Vision Board President



Administration & Finance



As we embark in our second year of Transforming Inside & Out, I want to thank all Grace families for the continued support and generosity for our ministry work. During 2022, our GRAMPS team continued to take care of our building, our Garden Ministry was hard at work with our beautiful gardens and the Building Committee was busy assuring our Congregation's needs and wants were being met as we worked with our architect firm to begin transforming inside and out. We celebrated our kickoff and milestones and we are just so excited to continue this great work together!

We also upgraded to a new computer support vendor to help us assure computer security and work on improved WIFI access. With the new year, we will transition to Tracie Russell in the role of Administrator as I step down from the Business Administrator role. I will continue to manage payroll and Human Resources and support Tracie and the Building Committee as we continue our transforming work. I am so very grateful for all the

love and support you provided me in the role of Administrator, but more importantly as a member of this beautiful Congregation while my family went through the unimaginable— having our 17 year old go through a kidney transplant. Thank you for the continued prayers. I know you will continue to support Tracie in her role as we continue to Transform Inside & Out.

God's love,

Frances Fernandez



Transforming
INSIDE + OUT

Administration & Finance

Happy New Year to all Grace families and our greater community! As the newest member of Grace's staff I just wanted to take a moment to introduce myself. My husband, Mike, and I have been attending Grace since 2008. With three young children (at that time) our lives were pretty busy and we never got around to attending a New Member Class. We were officially welcomed as members in the summer of 2020 (thank you COVID for the life slowdown needed to make this happen). We have however, considered Grace our church home and family since we walked through the doors so many years ago. Many of you have seen me through my volunteer efforts with Grace's Transforming Inside & Out Capital Campaign. This campaign has had a Transforming impact on my life and I hope your lives as well. I am so grateful for the opportunity of meeting so many more people within Grace, hearing your stories of how Grace has impacted your lives, hearing your dreams for our church and praying with you. As a community of faith, we took a leap and pledged over \$1.5 million dollars towards our building construction and remodel. Over a third of this pledge has already been received. **Thank you for your generosity and for the legacy that you will leave behind for generations to come!** This building remodel will make Grace Lutheran welcoming for all, will enhance our thriving ministries and give them opportunities to grow further, and will positively impact the faith journeys of all who walk through our doors! Your donations to both our Capital Campaign as well as Ministry Operations are having a very positive impact! THANK YOU!!! THANK YOU!!! THANK YOU!!!



Tracie Russell

While there isn't a lot to see yet with our building project, there is a lot of work happening behind the scenes. Our Building Task Force has been meeting with Busch Architects to finalize our building plans, maximizing what we are able to complete while remaining budget conscious. We have hired a Construction Manager at Risk, Donlar Construction, and they will advise us as we begin the bidding process and manage our project from start to finish, as we move into the construction phase. New sound equipment for our sanctuary has been ordered and we are hoping for arrival and installation soon. This equipment, along with planned acoustical work through our sanctuary remodel will improve our worship experience. We hope to begin construction this spring and complete our project by December 2023. As I look outside at all the fresh snow today, it doesn't feel like construction will ever begin and like anyone who has ever done a remodel, I want the remodel finished yesterday, but exciting times are coming soon, and I hope you're all ready to jump in, buckle up and enjoy the ride!

As we begin the journey of 2023, my wish for everyone at Grace is connection. Connection and relationship with God and Christ Jesus, connection and reconnection among members and visitors to our church, and connection with our community through serving.

Ephesians 2:21-22 NIV ~ "In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his spirit"

Tracie Russell



Program Staff's Reports



*Assistant Director of
Children's Ministry
Kelsey Russell*

Children's Ministry

Members of Grace,
for those who do not
know me, my name is

Kelsey Russell and I have been the Assistant Director of Children, Youth, and Families since May of 2022. It has been such a pleasure being in this role so far. Looking back on the year, we have faced some challenges, but with the overflowing support from the congregation and our dedicated volunteers we have had such an amazing year. The Children's Ministry has had many successful events including the Valentine's Day Dance, Eggstravaganza, Trunk or Treat, and Christmas Campout. We also held programming for Vacation Bible School (VBS), Sunday School, and Kids Night Out, all of which consisted of the GROW curriculum. I would like to highlight VBS because we had an astonishing number of 54 volunteers who helped throughout the week and around 100 kids that attended! Trunk or Treat also had a huge turnout with an estimate of 500 people from our congregation and community that came and got candy from 14 Trunks that participated, and with the support from the Vision Board we were able to serve a meal as well. Planning for these events was led by members of the Children's Ministry Team that meet once a month to make sure we are delivering the best events for the kids here at Grace. With COVID restrictions slowing down, we have made it our priority to get the kids involved with as many things as we can. The kids here at Grace are a cornerstone to our congregation, and it is our mission to continue to inspire and teach them about God, as well as being a safe space they can always rely on.

There are so many goals and dreams that I have for next year. My first priority is to get Sunday school aligned with the sermons so that families are able to reflect and grow together outside of Sunday worship. In addition, I want to continue to hold our usual annual events as well as welcome new ideas so that we can reach new heights with the endless possibilities that the Children's Ministry can be. I am confident that we can grow our numbers of volunteers, members of the Children's Ministry Team, and kids involved in the Children's Ministry. A personal goal of mine in 2023 is to grow relationships with more families in our congregation, and be someone you see as role model for your kids and their faith. I am so excited to see what the new year has in store for our Children's Ministry, and thank you for your continuous support. All of your support, encouragement, volunteering, donating, and financial giving allows us to provide programming for families at little or no cost because as our mission statement suggests, we wish all to experience grace.

Kelsey Russell,

Assistant Director of Children's Ministry





Youth Ministry

This has been a year of transition for our Youth Ministry at Grace. It has been a tremendous blessing to see the leadership of our young people at our Wednesday evening worship. At this worship, it is common to have our Catechism small groups lead the readings and various

parts of the liturgy. Our small group leaders have done a great job of guiding our youth, connecting with them and strengthening their faith.

In May, we confirmed 30 youth, welcoming them as adult members of our congregation. Their faith stories demonstrated perseverance and an awareness of how God loves them no matter what.



For the first time since the pandemic, we were able to run Summer Stretch, a program designed for our Middle School youth that involves weekly service projects and fun events in the community. Huge thanks to our volunteers who helped in running this and our High School students who mentored and guided our youth. We did expand the age range included in Summer Stretch to include 4th graders this year. It was fun to have this group a part of our activities.

There were two trips offered for our students. One was a return to Christikon Lutheran Camp in Montana for both our High School and Middle School youth, and the other was a trip to Luther Glen Farm in California for a Youth Gathering type camp activity. Thank you to our volunteers for giving of their time and energy to make these trips possible.

This past fall we used a new curriculum for our programming on Wednesday evenings. It is called Grow and it is developed uniquely for Middle School youth to help them see how the Bible stories relate to their lives.

We also returned to Okoboji Bible Camp for the first time since COVID. We had 13 kids take the trip from Minnesota to Iowa, where we spent the weekend learning how to be "all in" with God since God is "all in" for us.



We have a tremendous team of volunteers who give so much of themselves to make Youth Ministry work at Grace. Huge thanks to Michele Behnke-Nead who facilitates communication between the church and families, and to the youth leadership team: Michele Behnke-Nead, Gretchen Schlosser, April Anderson and Nick Hendrickson (who served last year and has now stepped down). We are grateful for you.

Our Interim Director of Children, Youth and Family primarily leads our Catechism on Wednesday nights, hosts Donuts and Dreams on Sunday morning and is leading our listening team. The listening team is assessing the needs of our children, youth and families and building the best job description for our future CYF staff. Soon, they will be inviting the entire congregation to be a part of the conversation. Our hope is to be posting the job description they created, sometime early in 2023.

This summer, we will once again offer a few trips for our youth. We will return to Christikon in Montana, journey out to the Appalachian Mountains for a mission trip with ASP, and also be offering a Middle School trip down to Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter Minnesota.

While we recognize that these changes are hard for our families, we are also committed to providing quality programming that strength and grows faith in our youth, and helps them live their Christian identity in the world.

Senior Pastor Joanna Mitchell



Music & Worship

The first full program year with a new Music Director can give a lot of insight of how the ministries will continue. Looking at all we have continued to do in worship, and the excitement I feel with new opportunities arising, I know God is working, and allowing us to grow. I am so grateful for every single one of our musicians and volunteers that help make worship what it is here at Grace.

As the Capital Campaign wound down, and Lent became the focus, the choir turned its sights to Good Friday and a service of word and music. It was an evening of reflection, and another wonderful experience for all those present. In March we were blessed to welcome Jennifer Malinak into our space and share a worship experience with her. She is beginning her ministry through music, and we were grateful to have her with us.



David Phelps

As the program year came to an end, summer was upon us. We saw a lot of change over the summer, and some challenges we did not expect. With the start of our Wednesday evening worship services, we brought on two new musicians. Andy M, our bassist, and Aileen S, a vocalist. Along with the rest of our volunteer musicians, it has become a wonderful addition to the Grace worship experience.

The fall brought on a new program year, and more musical opportunities. We started up our Children's Choir again, and had a successful performance in the fall, and some beautiful singing in the Children's Christmas Program. Our choir once again combined forces with the Lord of Life Music family to present a beautiful cantata "A Weary World Rejoices."

Throughout the spring and into the summer, I worked with an acoustical consultant to help improve the sound quality in the sanctuary. We were able to get new sound equipment ordered, and most of it has arrived (The supply chain issues are real!). We are working to get it installed soon and complete it during the renovation of the sanctuary in the coming months.

Along with the sound upgrade, we have worked to make our projections and live stream more cohesive utilizing the program "ProPresenter." This allows us to use one computer for both the projections in person, and the online stream.



Financially, this year went as expected. We spent more. We were in the church for the entire year, unlike the past two years, so spending on items like flowers for worship or communion supplies went up. The rising cost of everything also contributed to this.

Licensing for both in person worship and streaming remains a large part of our expenditures, but they are necessary, so we are not infringing on copyrights.

I am so grateful for everything about this Grace community, and all the opportunities and experiences that have been shared by so many this year. Grace is alive, and Grace is growing, and God's grace abounds!

Musically,

David Phelps

Director of Music and Worship



Administrative Ministries

Thank you, thank you to all of our AWESOME volunteers. We are so very blessed by your generosity! Every week, hours and hours of volunteer time is required at Grace to make things run smoothly. From teaching our children and youth, office help, packing food shelf bags, building maintenance, as well as worship help, outreach ministries and so much more. We just couldn't be Grace Lutheran Church without your help and support.

Many opportunities exist to serve within our walls and out in our community and our world. If you are interested in serving in a ministry at Grace, please give us a call at 763-421-6520 or e-mail me at krism@graceandover.org. We have a spot just for you.

Kris Miller



Kris Miller



Bookkeeping / Communications

Thank you to the volunteers who help count and enter the weekly offering! We could not function without all of you. Thank you to the volunteers who help print, fold and stuff programs and bulletins each week! Thank you to the volunteers who help print, fold, address and sort Grace Notes each month! We could not have all of these communications going out to inform the people of Grace without all of you. You are blessings to Grace!

A very special thank you to Ann Lange for graciously accepting the responsibility of Altar Guild Leader! She has taken over this leadership role from me and is fabulous in her new volunteer role. Thank you, Ann!

If you are interested in offering counting, helping with mass mailings, labeling envelopes, or other office volunteer opportunities please call the Grace Office at 763.421.6520 or email me at mariek@graceandover.org. We are always welcoming new faces and talents!

Marie Kolar



Marie Kolar

Seeds of Grace

Preschool + Childcare of Grace Lutheran Church
In the Heart of Andover



Sandy Schmoll

Greetings from Seeds of Grace Preschool and Childcare!

As I reflect on this past year, I am filled with hope, joy and I am grateful for all of God's blessings! We have had a wonderful year here at Seeds of Grace

In 2022, we successfully opened our infant room! It is such a joy to come to work and see all those little babies and getting to watch them grow and move into the toddler room. We have a full house at Seeds of Grace and have the most students we've ever had enrolled. All our classrooms have wait lists. We are blessed.

The parents of our students at Seeds are amazing! They are so generous with their support and time. We always have more than enough chaperones for field trips! Parents were a huge help with the set-up and clean-up of our Student Lunch and our Fall Festival. We also had several parents come in during our community helper's week and talk about their jobs. Whenever we ask for help and support, our parents are right there with a helping hand. We are so grateful and thankful for all our parents do for Seeds of Grace.

The staff at Seeds of Grace is one of a kind. We have been through a lot together and we make a wonderful team. I could not ask for a more faithful, dedicated, and loyal staff. They uplift each other on a daily basis, and it makes for a great work environment.

I want to thank my staff, the Seeds of Grace Board, Grace Lutheran, and its' congregation, and the parents for all you do! As Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 says *"Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up."*

Blessings,

Sandra Schmoll



Building Task Force

The Building Task Force has met throughout the year with their efforts trained on providing the best finished product within the budget as established by the sale of the Nightingale property and the fundraising of Transforming Inside & Out. It must also be mentioned that the current economic conditions have added, or more so, subtracted from our project. Higher material costs that once were expected to moderate into 2023 have not at this time. This has pushed the Task Force to look hard at what is possible with the inevitable need to change or cut items. We will still have a finished product that we can be proud of, one that will enhance our worship experience, allow us to gather, and provide space that furthers our mission to others.

Partners in our pursuit include Busch Architects, the lead in design efforts, Apex Companies, providing construction management experience, and Donlar Construction, Construction Manager at Risk, similar to a general contractor, but engaged earlier in the process by providing cost estimates and building techniques as iterations of design are produced. Task Force members include Greg Ackerson, Francis Fernandez, Dennis Grabowski, Nancy Jenkins, Kathie Karsnia, Pastor Joanna, Rochelle Poore, Tracie Russell, Sandy Schmoll, Brook Vander Leest and Charlie Wold.

The Task Force has been meeting regularly throughout the past year. The initial meetings were geared toward providing options for the congregation to comment on and provide momentum for our Capital Campaign. The Transforming results established the financial value that then focused our attention to greater building details. Bringing Donlar on board gave the Task Force the voice from the construction industry, further adjusting our vision to what is possible.

Next on our agenda is to determine the scope of work for the final bidding documents that will be released to subcontractors. There is a high likelihood that there will be alternates that we could choose to accept or reject for those items that would be nice, but if too costly, ignored. We believe that bid documents will be on the street by the end of January.

A rough construction schedule would have a start this Spring when the ground is frost-free, likely April sometime. Completion is anticipated to be this November. Expect disruptions in accessibility but not in service. The Farmers Market will remain at Grace through the construction season.

Charlie Wold



Faith Formation

Ruth Circle



What a joy to be able to gather as a group of women for Bible Study the first Monday of each month at 12:30 to 2pm. Of course, there is a dessert to be shared while we delve into our study of the month from the Gather magazine of the women of the ELCA. Our offerings that we give each month are given to charity. This year two families in need and Adopt-A-Family were the recipients of our giving. It was our pleasure to host with Grace Quilters a luncheon for staff in June and December. The food was delicious and the fellowship, heartwarming. We rejoice and give thanks for the new members who joined us this year increasing our circle of caring. *Low Jackson*



Graceful Seniors



2022 has been a bit of a challenge. Following the COVID-19 pandemic, we resumed our monthly coffee and donuts and our monthly Bible study and discussion of items of interest.

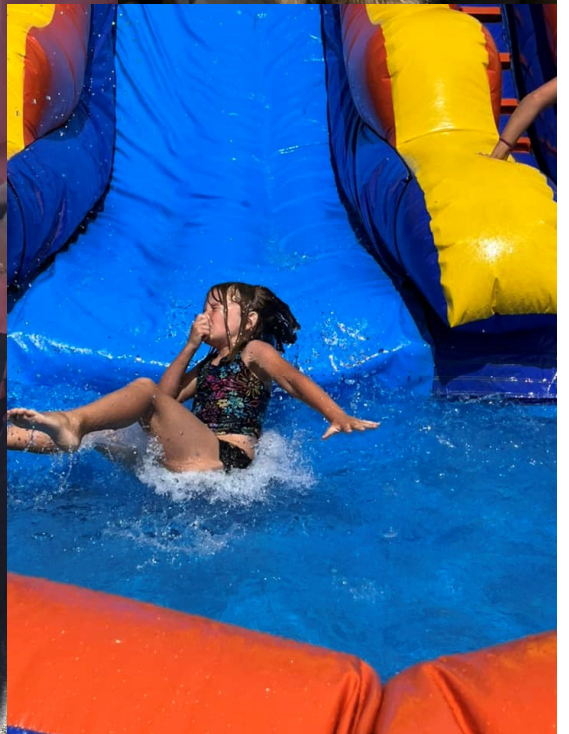
However, in May our pastoral leader, Pastor Maria Markman suffered a stroke. Thanks to God she is recovering well and is back performing her duties as our Associate Pastor. In her absence, Pastor Joanna, along with the staff and volunteers did a wonderful job supporting our group. Thank you to all that contributed.

Under the leadership of Pastor Maria, our current Bible study is focused on the book of Revelation. We encourage and welcome any seniors to join us.

We meet the second Tuesday of each month at 8:30am for donuts and coffee, followed with the current Bible Study and discussion at 9:00am for an hour. The breakfast is held in the fellowship hall and is provided for a free will offering.

Prior to each meeting, seniors are called to remind them of the breakfast and to identify how many will attend for a refreshment count. If you or someone you love would benefit from attending, please let us know and they will be added to our calling list.

Pastor Maria Markman



Outreach Ministries

Faith & Community Partnership with Sand Creek Elementary

Our partnership continues to grow strong with care, generosity, and supplying the needs for many children and families. In August we presented Sand Creek with our land tithing check of \$10,000 which they greatly appreciated! This school year Sand Creek has had boundary changes increasing students from 525 to 650 with many of them being ESL students. This has increased their ESL teachers from 2 to 4, and many of the students overall needing extra help.

Grace opened our doors for Sand Creek to use the Fellowship Hall on May 29 for their 5th grade Kindness Retreat. We have abundantly completed our annual school supplies collection and monetary donations for emergency needs. We provide Sharing Grace backpack meals to 10-20 students per week on Fridays to those in need of food for the weekend. For these backpack meals we buy and pack our own balanced meals of nonperishable food to provide more food at a cheaper cost and the students and parents love what is provided. Holiday food baskets are provided to 10-12 families in need for Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter, and Spring Break. Christmas Adopt-A-Family has made 10 families a very memorable and happy occasion! Healthy snacks are collected throughout the school year for those hungry students tummies in the midst of the school day. Teacher appreciation uplifting notes with a treat are provided to the staff quarterly, and a staff appreciation lunch is provided at the end of the school year.

Your generous donations, noisy offerings, and benevolence funding from Grace are very much appreciated and used with discretion for our above listed items and Sand Creek's "Little Bit of Grace" emergency fund at Sand Creek. *Ann Lange and the Sand Creek Team*





Stepping Stone Emergency Housing

Stepping Stone Emergency Housing for homeless singles 18 and older has gone through a couple of tough years due to COVID, and have had to house their residents in temporary hotel housing at a high cost. They are excited now to have the second level of their building in Anoka under construction to provide more rooms for their 66 residents, bring them all back home, and have only 4 residents per room rather than 8, for health safety benefits.

Throughout the year, a small but mighty Grace team of 5 picks up and delivers food every Friday afternoon from the Andover Pizza Ranch and delivers it to Stepping Stone. In November we presented Stepping Stone with our land tithing check of \$4,000, which was extremely appreciated!

For Christmas this year, because they are under construction, we provided gifts and gift card donations from their provided "Wish List" to help fill 66 handmade gift bags for each of the residents. You cannot imagine how happy these people are to get these bags filled with basic needs and a gift card or two! Thank you!

Ann Lange and the Stepping Stone Team



**STEPPING
Stone**
ending homelessness





Love of Grace Bazaar

After two years of not being able to have our bazaar due to COVID, this year on November 12th, our doors were opened to a constant flow of shoppers from 9:00am – 3:00pm!

We had a total of 35 vendors with 57 8 ft spaces sold, and 24 table rentals. The vendors are required to sell all homemade crafts. Our kitchen was bursting with smells of homemade sloppy joes, chicken wild rice soup, and pies. The Emporium room was filled with homemade quilts, baked goods, crafts, jams, lefse, etc. Proceeds from this year's sales surpassed our sales from our last two bazaars in 2018 and 2019, so we were extremely happy! However, what made us even more happy and thankful, was all the volunteers we were blessed to have for set up, take down, kitchen help, the donations of food and supplies – it takes many, many hands and so much help to make this a success and we thank you for that!

Proceeds of \$4396.46 from the bazaar was divided \$1,000 each between: 1) Grace Youth Scholarships for mission trips, summer camps, etc; 2) to Sand Creek Elementary Partnership; 3) to Transforming Inside & Out; from the quilters Emporium Room proceeds, a tithe was given to scholarships for Grace youth going to Christikon, and the remainder used for their own quilting supplies.

Ann Lange and the Love of Grace Bazaar Team

OK@Play (Old Kids at Play)

A group of young at heart kids, that welcome ALL to participate in our events! We meet roughly every other month for events within the church or outside, sometimes on week days or weekends, sometimes during the day or in the evening in order to accommodate those working and those retired.

Events we have enjoyed recently have been:

- Summer Music in the Park concerts.
- Tickner Hill Bed & Breakfast
- Lyric Arts performances in Anoka.
- Stillwater outing for a trolley ride, lunch, shopping, etc.
- Halloween potluck and bonfire at Joel and Becky Anderson's with donations collected for our Grace food shelf.
- Sing Along Christmas Carols at Heart of the City Music Factory in Anoka.

Ann Lange



Altar Guild

New leadership has been accepted by Ann Lange to relieve Marie Kolar of this responsibility. I currently call myself "still in training", however I am excited to have new people join the Altar Guild and I have been in training with them as well. I am even more thankful for the experienced and faithful Altar Guild members that always show up and complete their responsibilities perfectly!

We can still use more Altar Guild volunteers, just let me know if you are interested.

As mentioned last year, in the building plans for the expansion/remodel, we have requested new counters, and a double sink with a faucet and sprayer.



Ann Lange – Team Leader



Funeral Fellowship Ministry

The Funeral Ministry Team supplies support to the grieving families as requested with a lunch and/or bars and beverages following a Celebration of Life at Grace.

This year we provided for five funerals, both large and small. We thank all who have donated bars and helped in preparing, serving food, and clean up.

If you wish to be a part of this special ministry, we would love to have you join us.

Tri-Leaders – Low Jackson, Nancy Jenkins and Ann Lange



Family Promise

Empowering families experiencing housing insecurity to build a foundation of lasting independence.



Ten years prior to the COVID pandemic, Family Promise along with twenty interfaith congregations formed a network in Anoka County to serve families experiencing temporary homelessness. I am proud to say Grace Lutheran was then and continues today to be a major supporter of Family Promise in Anoka County.

With the advent of COVID, Family Promise needed to find new safer ways to serve our guests and volunteers. To achieve this, Family Promise developed three programs, Prevention, Shelter and Stabilization.

- Our prevention program works with families to help them remain housed where they are.
- Our Shelter program is currently housing families in long term stay hotels, with plans to establish our own guest house within a few months.
- Our Stabilization program helps families who have found their new forever home to be able to avoid the issues that caused them to become homeless.

Some of you may recall when Family Promise began we were serving 4 families and up to 14 people. Today Family Promise is serving 23 families and 77 people.

So, what has Grace done this year to help our less fortunate neighbors? Quite a lot actually:

- Grace Volunteers provide, Gas Cards, Meal Cards and Gift Cards along with basic personal care items and cleaning needs during our scheduled hospitality weeks.
- Grace Volunteers have provided basic household essentials for families moving into their new forever homes.
- Grace Volunteers helped make deliveries of fresh food to over 100 needy families.

As a beneficiary of Grace's tithing based on the sale of our Nightingale property, Family Promise received a check for \$10,000.00.

I close with a passage from 1st John, Chapter 3. " ¹⁷ If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? ¹⁸ Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth."

We People of Grace recognize the plight of our less fortunate homeless neighbors and strive to do our part to ease their suffering.

Alden Riley



Empty Nesters / Parents of Independent Children Group

Over the past year, Empty Nesters has met for dinner, drinks, bon fires, conversations, and lots of fun!!!! Our group is for adults who are enjoying the freedom of no longer having to drive their children everywhere and are looking to develop new friendships. We meet most months of the year, and at times we will have a topic of interest. Please watch Grace At A Glance, Grace Notes, and the tri-fold bulletin for information about our future events in 2023. If you are interested in joining this informal group or becoming part of our email distribution list, please contact Nancy Jenkins (dnjenkins@comcast.net) or Sandy Schmoll (SandyS@Graceandover.org).

Sandy Schmoll and Nancy Jenkins



Mental Health Team

This past year we had several mental health speakers at Grace, we had team meetings, and we helped shape worship a couple of weekends. What I really want to tell you about are the unseen (and perhaps wilder) ways in which God worked this past year. First, back in March 2022, Pastor Maria and I decided that given the busyness of the spring and the challenges of meeting during the summer, we could put our team meetings on hold until August. Neither of us of course had any idea that Pastor Maria would be on medical leave from late May until the end of August. As it turned out, our first Mental Health Team meeting since spring was the day Pastor Maria returned to Grace.



Second, we had two key team members who were instrumental in the formation and development of our mental health ministry leave the Grace community last May. Strangely, this loss didn't cause me to get overly anxious about the future of our team. When our team met in August, I looked around the room and realized that God had provided new team members and that several people had already voluntarily stepped up to serve in new roles.

A third example was shared in part by Pastor Joanna during our All Saints worship. Last May I had asked Pastor Maria, "what do you think about focusing on grief and loss for All Saints?" Pastor Maria replied that her and Pastor Joanna had just been working on the worship calendar for the months ahead and had decided not to do the luminary event for All Saints as had been done during the pandemic. The pastors were pondering what to do for All Saints this year and the topic of grief and loss sounded like a great option.

I am writing about these things because this is how God often works in my life and I believe how God works in others' lives too. The question is whether I can see and notice God's working and weaving. Can I listen to God's nudges and whispers and follow the Spirit's prompting?

Lastly and most importantly, the Mental Health Team recognizes that we are complex and holistic beings: mind, body, spirit, and emotions, and God loves and cares for each of us. If you or a loved one are struggling with your mental health, please reach out for help by calling your primary medical provider, a friend, either of our pastors, or, in urgent situations, calling 988, the new "911" help line for mental health support because YOU are loved beyond measure.

Nancy Jenkins



Grace4Rakai

Grace4Rakai Ministry at Grace Lutheran Church continues to provide critical support for many children and their families through outreach ministries of African Children Today (ACT) in Rakai, Uganda.

Rakai schools fully reopened in January of this year after the global COVID-19 pandemic. The ACT Junior School, offering Pre-School – Grade 7, now has a total of 800 students with nearly 700 boarded on site. The ACT High School, offering Grades 8-13, was constructed during the pandemic and opened this year with a total of 271 students. The new high school features a STEM program with a focus on science, technology, engineering and math; many girls participate in the program, which is not common!

The greater Grace community supports more than 100 students through a child sponsorship program at the two schools. In addition to receiving a quality education, each student receives a uniform, daily nutrition, and medical care through the clinic at the ACT Junior School. Also, food and medical care assistance is provided as needed for the families of every sponsored child, many from very poor, at-risk families. Nearly all of the children sponsored by the Grace community attend the ACT schools and many of them live on campus.

A group from ACT visited Rakai in October 2022 with letters and packages for children from over 60 Grace sponsors. The Grace Quilters also sent along 120 quilts that they produced over the past three years; these were delivered to girls living in the dormitory at the new ACT High School. The love from the Grace community was truly felt by these children!

The Grace4Rakai Ministry Team held their annual Grace4Rakai weekend in November where information and stories were shared in regard to the schools, the medical clinic, the Grace Bakery and other ACT ministries that Grace members support. New sponsors were recruited, funds were raised to support the school and the Grace student scholarship fund, and the Hope Again Women in Rakai were supported through sales of their products over the weekend.

ACT plans to open two new dormitories at the high school in 2023 so that many of the students transferring from the junior school to the high school will be able to live on campus and focus on their studies. There are future plans to establish a poultry operation to provide eggs, a source of protein, for children living at the schools.

The vulnerable children and their families in Rakai, Uganda, are truly grateful for the love and support they receive from the Grace community. Grace4Rakai team celebrates the great opportunities for these children!

Scott Christensen, Team Leader

GRACE4RAKAI



Grace Quilters 2

Our primary mission is to make colorful quilts for the dormitory beds of our precious kids in Rakai. Over the past several years we have sent 345 quilts, including 120 which were distributed to high school girls in October of 2022. As the photo shows, the Grace quilts are folded and tucked inside a blanket. It can get chilly at night. Although Rakai is near the equator, it is on a high plain similar to Denver, so it is not tropical like other parts of Africa.

Our group meets once a month, usually on the morning of the second Friday. We have a lot of fun tying quilts, and all are welcome to come. Some people work at home on sewing tops and other preparation for tying. Each year lots of people help out at God's Work Our Hands. Please consider joining this useful and fun ministry. We would also appreciate donations of cotton fabric and sheets. *Jan Margotto, Leader*



W.O.W (Women On Wednesday)

Inward Roots, Outward Fruits was the theme for our WOW (Women On Wednesday) kick off this year. As we gathered, we reminded ourselves of the seeds that were planted over 20 years ago by women who were called to connect and walk together in growing their faith and relationship with God and each other. There is a mystery in the rootedness of these relationships. But the real mystery and surprise is always in the fruits that are revealed in just the right time and the right circumstances. We can tend to the roots by reading the Bible, praying together, looking closely at our lives by reading and discussing books, and by doing service projects for the community. But the full fruit of these actions is always a mystery, how God uses our efforts and intentions is revealed in surprising and often unknown ways. This year there are 40+ women from Grace and from other churches. We are studying 5 different books/series, some groups in person, others via Zoom. The groups are doing service projects along with their studies. In each woman's heart the fruits of the spirit are maturing. With each woman's growth the larger community is blessed with God's grace. *Anne Weikle*



Grace Quilters

Thanks be to God that we were able to gather together in better lighted rooms and assemble 315 quilts for Haven for Heroes (homeless veterans and their families in Anoka), Hope 4 Youth, Anoka Foster Care (children and adults), Shriner's hospital, Stepping Stones (homeless shelter in Anoka), Sand Creek elementary families in need and individuals/families who needed God's warmth and love shared with them. Quilt tops are made by many individuals from our congregation as well as from the community. We thank God for the donations of cotton and flannel fabric, yarn and good usable cotton/flannel sheets from our church family as well as our community. Baptism quilts are made by this group and given to each child baptized at Grace.

Due to rising costs our quilt batting has risen to \$100 a roll. The tithe from the sale of the Nightingale property and donations from individuals have made purchasing this possible. We greatly appreciate receiving the money from the Emporium Room of the Love of Grace Bazaar this year and gave a tithe of ten percent for youth scholarships to Christikon Bible Camp. Your donations to the Emporium Room made this possible. The rest of the funds will be used to purchase supplies to continue to make quilts for those in need in our community. A big "thank you" to Jan Margotto who sews and helps lead this ministry.

Grace Quilters meet every Monday morning from 9 AM to noon all year. The fellowship over the quilts and during our treat and coffee time allow us to care for one another. Everyone is welcome to join us in this ministry of "warming hearts and bodies." We will teach you any skills you might need.

Low Jackson, Leader



Financial Peace University

This fall Grace hosted a Financial Peace University (FPU) course. Financial Peace University is a nine-lesson course that teaches you how to save for emergencies, pay off debt fast, spend wisely, and invest for your future. You may be wondering why we would host such a class at our church. There are many reasons. First Dave Ramsey's principals are not only commonsense, Dave recognizes how much there is to learn about managing money from the bible.

Proverbs 22:7 *"The rich rules over the poor, and the borrower is the slave of the lender."*

Another reason we chose to host the course is that finances can be a significant burden on individuals and families. It can feel like a never-ending battle to try to get ahead. We feel strongly that the tools taught in this class are a way to minister to others. Getting out from under that burden is empowering and freeing.

Proverbs 13:11 *"Wealth gained hastily will dwindle, but whoever gathers little by little will increase it."*

The other great thing about this class is that we can advertise it on the Dave Ramsey fpu.com site and anyone in the community can join the class. We feel that this is an opportunity to celebrate our core values of being welcoming and accepting.

Mathew 6:21 *"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."*

We had a wonderful turn out, 18 people signed up for this course. We had a wide range of participants from those looking to retire to young adults just finishing up college. It's never too early or too late to learn these valuable tools. The course participants did a great job in applying the lessons. As a group they paid off over \$30,000 of debt, put \$14,500 into emergency fund savings and got rid of 18 credit cards.

Proverbs 10:4 *"A slack hand causes poverty, but the hand of the diligent makes rich."*

We are so proud of all who attended the course and are looking forward to offering it again.

Doug and Angie Hanson



God's Work Our Hands

The Grace community has always been very generous when it comes to outreach, and that was on display again this past year during the God's Work Our Hands outreach event on Sunday September 18th. We took on a wide variety of projects that impacted many in our local community as well as people in distant lands.

Volunteers at Grace washed cars, tied quilts for Rakai and rolled bandages and created Hospice kits for people and children in need over in Africa. Notes of encouragement were also written to the families participating in Family Promise

Offsite from Grace, projects were undertaken for Sand Creek Elementary School and Stepping Stone, music was shared with the residents at The Farmstead, and yard work projects were tackled for two of our shut-in members of Grace. Meals were also prepared in advance for families in need in our local community over at Lord of Life.

God is generous to us, and the Grace congregation is generous to the communities around us through our outreach, which is a key part of our identity. Thanks to all of those leaders who stepped forward to lead the various outreach teams, and especially to those who participated in serving at our God's Work Our Hands event in September!

Scott Christensen/God's Work Our Hands Team Leader



G.R.A.M.P.S.

What is GRAMPS, you ask? Perhaps you have seen that name in Grace Notes or in the announcements and assumed it is just a bunch of old guys. Almost every church has such a group. Unfortunately, you would be wrong. Most churches would call the GRAMPS Team the Property Management Team or Facilities Improvement Team. One church I know calls their team the "Hard Hats." Grace calls our team GRAMPS (Grace's Resourceful Active Members Performing Service).

So, what does GRAMPS do, you ask? Anyone who owns a home or drives a car knows about maintenance and more importantly, the cost of maintenance. You can hire someone to perform the maintenance, or you can do it yourself. The latter is what GRAMPS does. The team meets on the third Thursday of the month and works on the various maintenance and repair items that have accumulated over the previous month. By performing this service, GRAMPS keeps the facilities looking good and working while not hiring outside companies to perform the work.

So, what has GRAMPS done, you ask? The best answer is probably whatever the team members are capable of. The list is long and varied: replacing the exhaust fan in the women's restroom, painting the hallways, fixing the pew that was loose, moving patio furniture into the garage for winter, hanging the wreath above the church entrance, putting up Christmas lights, assembling office chairs... The list goes on and on.

The Bible suggests that Joseph was a carpenter, but some confusion regarding Biblical translation suggests he may have been more like a craftsman or handyman. God has blessed the GRAMPS team with the skills and capabilities to perform these craftsman or craftswomen-oriented tasks. For that, we are grateful.

Dennis Grabowski



Garden Ministry

The Garden Ministry team has been quietly tending the flower gardens, urns, shrubs, and trees for many, many years in order to execute their mission to beautify and enhance the physical appearance of the church property and its outside spaces for those physically attending worship services, meetings, bazaars, the Farmers Market, just walking by or driving by. This year the team has accomplished their usual myriad of tasks, along with some additional ones needed to prepare for construction this coming spring. A significant number of the perennial flowers and plants have been partially or completely relocated to team member homes for safe keeping until after the construction is completed. My hope for the coming year is that during construction we'll be able to have some portions of the gardens and urns beautifying and enhancing the spaces they occupy and that we'll be able to keep them watered and alive. The same hope applies to the lawns, shrubs, and trees, as they'll all need water and tending too.

Joe Jackson



Grace Symphonic Ensemble

The Grace Symphonic Ensemble (GSE) is still relatively new with the mission to enhance the worship experience by providing instrumental pieces (i.e., solos, duets, trios, quartets, quintets, etc.) and instrumental accompaniment for choir, Praise Team, small groups, or soloists. During the past 12 months GSE members played for worship on Christmas, Palm Saturday, Easter, July 31st worship, Rally Sunday, and Reformation Sunday. For some worship services there were only a couple of us playing, while for others we had up to ten participants. We currently have fourteen instrumentalists to draw from ranging in age from 7th graders to those of us in our seventies and it all works and it's all good! Rehearsals are held on Sundays between worship services in the portables (while they're here). My hope for the coming year is for the GSE to continue to grow, eventually getting to a place where the group or portions of the group would be able to provide instrumental music at worship monthly.

Joe Jackson



Women's Retreat

The Women's Retreat Ministry team had a very successful year in 2022. This team put on 2 unforgettable events for all Grace Lutheran women and their friends to enjoy.

The first event was the over-night weekend winter Women's Retreat at Luther Point Bible Camp on Friday February 18-Sunday February 20, 2022. This was the 5th year for this overnight retreat and there were 28 women attendees. The theme for the retreat was "My Faith Journey" where the attendees uncovered several spiritual topics including how and when to get closer to God in our daily lives. Several Bible verses were used throughout the weekend which tied back to the theme and inspired the Retreat attendees including 2 Corinthians 5:7 – *"For we walk by faith, not by sight"* and Joshua 1:9 – *"Be strong and courageous; do not be frightened or dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go"*.

The Women's Retreat team provided all the meals, daily devotion sessions, Bingo with door prizes, hiking, snacks, lots of free time and wonderful women fellowship during the weekend. The goal for this 3-day retreat was to grow in relationship with one another and God; provide tangible spiritual take-aways to apply to our everyday lives and have lots of fun and laughter – which the attendees accomplished and had a great time doing it. This retreat also provided a safe and encouraging space where all the women were able to build lasting memories with one another and be themselves. During the retreat, they also had time to relax their minds and bodies thru Qigong led by Nancy Jenkins and Chair Yoga led by Michelle Beeskow. Chrissy Gast entertained the group with her ukulele and provided music through the weekend. The team also decorated the retreat center with "Journey Frames" that had inspirational pictures and quotes for attendees to take home.

The highlight of the retreat was on Saturday night, when the attendees worked as a group on many service projects that benefitted several different non-profit organizations in our local area. The attendees made over 100 new toiletry kits for homeless youth and adults, over 30 new kitchen utensil kits for new immigrant families who are relocated in Minnesota and wrote many "thinking of you" cards to shut ins in our community. On Sunday, Pastor Maria blessed the attendees with an amazing sermon and the retreat concluded with communion, a delicious brunch and a final prayer.

The second event for the Women's Ministry Team was the half-day retreat on May 21st called "Grow in Gratitude" held at Grace Lutheran Church. There were 20 women attendees who gathered to celebrate Spring, fun fellowship and creative crafting. The event started with a light breakfast, an ice-breaker activity, door prizes, and a devotion written by Dani Martin where we learned how to develop an "Attitude of Gratitude". The event finished with a 2-hour painting session where the attendees made beautiful dragonfly painted Spring pots under the supervision of a local artist.

The 2022 Women's Retreat Team Members are Stacy Surratt (leader); Mandi DeGrote, Dani Martin, Jamie Zupon, Michelle Beeskow, Kendra Mattke and Brenda Lindgren.



2022 Congregational Meetings Minutes

Grace Lutheran Church Annual Financial Meeting January 30th 2022 0945

Opening Prayer

Minutes from 2021 Meeting – minutes approved

Review 2021 (see power point)

- Review of key statistics – Pastor Joanna Mitchell
- Review of new staff – Pastor Joanna Mitchell
- Review of 2021 financial metrics- Bill Hentges

Budget 2022

- Review proposed 2022 budget – Anna Welle

Proposed Amendments – Lori Ackerson

- Determined that the congregation would not vote on the Amendments due to the lack of timely notification.
- Low Jackson recommended review of constitution regarding the voting on amendments. Vision Board to take her information back for review and contact the Synod offices to determine next course of action
- Plan to vote on the 2 Amendments on February 26/27 weekend

Tithe on the Land Sale – Anna Welle

- Reviewed the Vision Board's recommendations for distribution of the tithe from the sale of the land.
- Notified congregation that other recommendations could be entertained if they resulted in a zero balance overall.

Vote

84 total ballots received

- 83 approved the budget
- 83 approved the tithe
- 1 person abstained from the tithe vote
- 1 person selected all 4 boxes.

Closing Prayer



Grace Lutheran Church Special Meeting February 27th 2022

Recorder: Anna Welle

Ann Lange called the meeting to order at 10:03am on February 27th.

Ann introduced the Vision Board members and Pastor Maria opened in prayer.

Ann introduced the amendment related to the nominating committee. There was no discussion.

Ann introduced the amendment related to the audit committee. Daron Yates asked what the audit committee did so as to further understand if a VB member would create a conflict of interest. Frances Fernandez answered the question by stating that the audit committee reviews the financial statements as prepared by the church.

Ann introduced the Synod Assembly attendees. Low Jackson asked how many attendees does Grace need? The answer is three.

Low Jackson moved to vote on the two amendments to the constitution as written. Bill Hentges 2nd.

Low then moved to amend the motion on voting for the two amendments to add "as approved by the Synod Council". Bill Hentges 2nd the amendment.

Charlie Wold moved to vote on the Synod Assembly attendees. Mark Hedin 2nd.

Ballots were passed out and individuals voted on all three items via paper ballot.

Pastor Maria closed in prayer.

Frances Fernandez moved to adjourn at 10:21am, Bill Hentges 2nd.



**Spring Congregational Meeting:
May 22, 2022**

Opening Prayer: Joel Anderson
Approval of Minutes from January 2022

Thank you to outgoing Vision Board Members:
Ann Lange- President 2021-2022
Chad Hadler President 2020-2021

Nominating Committee report and presentation of candidates: Daron Yates

Nominees:

- Holly Dodd
- Mandi De Grote
- Chrissy Gast
- Dan Johnson
- Dave Kolar
- Kendra Mattke
-

Building Project Update: Greg Ackerson
Discussion of Plan B and alternatives
Timeline

Amendments to the Constitution: Lori Ackerson Vision Board Secretary
Discussion of Amendments
Distribution of Ballots

Results:

Vision Board Candidates voted in for a three-year term:

Holly Dodd
Chrissy Gast
Dan Johnson

There were a total of 77 ballots cast.

Grace Constitution Amendments:

C13.02 74 yes approved

2 no do not approve

1 abstained

C13.03 75 yes approved

2 no do not approve

Grace Building Project:

Plan B \$2.2M Original Plan from Transforming Inside & Out
4 Yes

Plan B2 \$3M Modified Plan B with renovated kitchen & expanded narthex
73 Yes

There were no proposals from the floor.

Thanks to Low Jackson Parliamentarian
Closing Prayer: Pastor Joanna Mitchell
Meeting adjourned

2022 Membership Statistics

- 1151 Baptized Members
- 20 Adults and 5 Children were received as New Members
- 10 Baptisms
- 5 Funerals
- 1 Wedding
- 269 Average number of in-person Worshipers every week
- 83 Average number of online Worshipers every week
- 4 children received their First Communion
- 13 Youth traveled to Christikon Lutheran Camp in Montana
- 13 Youth traveled to Luther Glen Camp in California
- 12 Youth traveled to Okoboji in the fall
- 22 Youth affirmed their Baptism through the Rite of Confirmation



2022 Noisy Offerings and Tithe

The generosity of our Grace community is palpable in how we show up for those in need. Below is a breakdown of the Noisy Offerings and the disbursements during 2022:

Samuels PCA	\$ 1,142.15
Family Promise	\$ 1,095.11
Feed My Starving Children	\$ 774.25
Ukraine/ELCA Crisis Relief	\$ 2,814.88
ACBC	\$ 757.15
Grace 2 Haiti	\$ 497.53
Robin's Nest Scholarship	\$ 613.66
Mental Health Connect	\$ 704.30
Grace 4 Rakai	\$ 260.85
Youth Trips Gas Costs	\$ 1,135.00
Shriners	\$ 916.87
Grace Quilters	\$ 1,139.79
Sand Creek Partnership	\$ 955.23
Pastors Discretionary Fund	\$ 844.76
Tapestry Ministry	\$ 462.73
Haven for Heroes	\$ 205.63
Sharing and Caring Hands	\$ 213.00
Hope 4 Youth	\$ 495.78
Stepping Stone	\$ 495.78
Gifts of Grace	\$ 1,083.44
Family Table	\$ 1,083.44
Hurricane Ian/ELCA Crisis Relief	\$ 300.00
Fernandez Family (Noisy & Corn Hole Fundraiser)	\$ 15,045.82

Total Noisy Offerings/Disbursements: \$ 33,076.19

The generosity of our Grace community continues in 2022 with the **Tithe to the Sale of the Night-ingale property**. Below is a breakdown of the tithe and the disbursements during 2022:

Stepping Stone	\$ 4,000
Sand Creek Elementary	\$ 10,000
Family Promise	\$ 10,000
Robin's Nest	\$ 1,500
Hope 4 Youth	\$ 1,500
Sharing and Caring Hands	\$ 1,500
Grace 4 Rakai	\$ 13,200
Tapestry	\$ 7,500
Family Table	\$ 1,500
Study Abroad (Max Carlson)	\$ 300
Grace Quilters	\$ 2,000
Grace Quilters 2	\$ 2,000
Shriners Hospital	\$ 500
Small Sums	\$ 5,000
Haven for Heroes	\$ 5,000
Total Given in 2022	\$ 65,500

Outstanding
Habitat for Humanity \$ 7,500



2021 Congregational Audit Report

With this report, the Audit Committee present its audit of the financial books and records of the congregation to the Congregation and Vision Board.

Period: January 1, 2021 – December 31, 2021

Audit Objectives:

The audit objectives related to the internal audit of Grace Lutheran Church's financial books, records and operations include determination that:

- All assets and liabilities recorded in the congregation's books and records are supported by appropriate independent documentation (i.e., bank statements and vendor invoices);
- All general ledger balances are appropriately reconciled to their underlying assets (i.e., bank statements) and liabilities (i.e., accounts payable) in a timely and accurate manner;
- All donations are properly classified on the financial statements inline with the donor's intent;
- Appropriate procedures are in place governing key financial operations and are being complied with;
- Proper segregation of duties is in place for all key financial transactions and are not being circumvented;
- Controls governing the congregation's investments and bank accounts are in place and operating as intended;
- All necessary insurance policies are in place and in force;
- The Sunday (or special) offering is handled and counted in dual custody;
- All monies generated and expenses incurred as a result of special events are properly accounted for and can be traced back to the general ledger;
- All major capital expenditures have been approved by the governing body (i.e., Vision Board);
- Expenses are appropriately approved and supported by the appropriate documentation;
- Fixed assets exist and are properly recorded in the general ledger;
- Personal identity information is properly safeguarded both in system and paper form;
- Controls over the payroll process are in place and operating as intended;
- An appropriate records retention policy is in place and being complied with;
- All vendors receiving a payment in excess of \$600 annually receive a 1099; and
- The appropriate data processing controls are in place and operating as intended.

Audit Conclusion:

Based on audit work performed to achieve the objectives listed above, the books and records of Grace Lutheran Church appear to be materially accurate in all respects.

Testing performed found that the controls governing the financial operations process appear to be in place and operating as intended.

Land sale transactions appeared in order with corresponding supporting back up present.

The audit committee has performed the procedures and testing called for in the audit program adopted by the congregation on **6/27/2022 for the period of 01/01/2021 through 12/31/2021**.

In doing so, the audit committee has reviewed the procedures governing the financial reporting and operations process and has found the balances presented to be correct, procedures proper, and records properly kept.

Ed Stang

Dennis Grabowski

John Peterson

Mike Russell, Treasurer



2021 Financial Audit Report

2021 Audit Summary Report			
Annual Revenue & Expenses			
Operations - US Bank			
Beginning Bank Balance 1/1/21	\$ 215,295.13		
Total Deposits/Transfers	\$ 1,196,686.96		
Total Withdrawals/Checks Paid/Transfers	\$ 1,247,655.92		
Ending Bank Balance 12/31/21	\$ 164,596.06		
Dedicated - US Bank			
Beginning Bank Balance 1/1/21	\$ 99,999.61		
Total Deposits/Transfers	\$ 1,058,162.02		
Total Withdrawals/Checks Paid/Transfers	\$ 475,001.91		
Ending Bank Balance 12/31/21	\$ 683,159.72		
Savings - US Bank			
Beginning Bank Balance 1/1/21	\$ 12,249.40		
Interest	\$ 1.19		
Ending Bank Balance 12/31/21	\$ 12,250.59		
Financial Security Funds - Thrivent #1			
Beginning Bank Balance 1/1/21	\$ 10,876.44		
Interest	\$ 12.19		
Ending Bank Balance 12/31/21	\$ 10,888.63		
Financial Security Funds - Thrivent #2			
Beginning Bank Balance 1/1/21	\$ 27,057.26		
Interest	\$ 40.62		
Ending Bank Balance 12/31/21	\$ 27,097.88		
Financial Security Funds - Thrivent #3			
Beginning Bank Balance 1/1/21	\$ 64,659.05		
Interest	\$ 117.18		
Ending Bank Balance 12/31/21	\$ 64,776.23		

2023 Itemized Operational Budget

Grace Lutheran Church 2023 Itemized Operational Budget			
<i>FINAL 01/19/23</i>	2022 BUDGET	2022 Actual	2023 BUDGET
RECEIPTS			
Current Offerings & Loose Change (Grace Ministry Operations)	\$ 775,000.00	\$ 699,030.87	\$ 750,000.00
Sunday School Offering	\$ -	\$ 41.15	\$ -
Lent/Easter Offerings	\$ 8,500.00	\$ 6,582.85	\$ 8,500.00
Thanksgiving Offering	\$ 500.00	\$ 320.00	\$ 500.00
Christmas Offering	\$ 12,000.00	\$ 2,805.00	\$ 10,000.00
Noisy Offerings	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 16,260.38	\$ 20,000.00
DEDICATED Offerings	\$ -	\$ 33,855.10	\$ 65,000.00
Hopeful Expectations (2021 Stewardship over Current)	\$ -	\$ 2,475.00	\$ -
Capital Offerings (plus Free2B)	\$ 100,000.00	\$ 111,452.82	\$ 115,000.00
2022-2024 CAPITAL CAMPAIGN - TRANSFORMING INSIDE AND OUT	\$ -	\$ 563,593.31	\$ 500,000.00
Gifts of Grace	\$ -	\$ 720.00	\$ -
Miscellaneous Income / Other Receipts	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 230,194.14	\$ 1,000.00
Sub Total - Contributions	\$ 912,000.00	\$ 1,667,330.62	\$ 1,470,000.00
Use of Facilities	\$ 51,000.00	\$ 71,320.26	\$ 2,000.00
Seeds of Grace Receipts	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 665,300.00
Registration Fees / Books	\$ 22,450.00	\$ 32,887.36	\$ 41,635.00
Other Receipts	\$22,715.00	\$29,034.27	\$33,520.00
TOTAL RECEIPTS	\$ 1,008,165.00	\$ 1,800,572.51	\$ 2,212,455.00

Cost of Ministry	2022 BUDGET	2022 Actual	2023 BUDGET
Seeds of Grace Investments	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 74,300
Administrative Expenses	\$ 57,150.00	\$ 92,386.41	\$ 63,850.00
Worship Investments	\$ 7,200.00	\$ 8,183.35	\$ 8,300.00
Christian Education Investments	\$ 2,525.00	\$ 4,407.21	\$ 3,500.00
Music Investments	\$ 3,150.00	\$ 2,696.47	\$ 2,400.00
Social Ministry Investments	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 155.94	\$ 500.00
Parish Life / Fellowship Investments	\$ 11,700.00	\$ 6,520.99	\$ 8,950.00
Property Investments	\$ 161,428.00	\$ 718,974.52	\$ 658,428.00
Youth Investments	\$ 21,170.00	\$ 27,838.67	\$ 49,388.00
Benevolence	\$ 79,600.00	\$ 49,600.52	\$ 56,500.00
Additional Expenses	\$ 65,100.00	\$ 289,996.74	\$ 90,000.00
PERSONNEL INVESTMENTS --> SALARIES & BENEFITS			
Pastors	\$ 227,330.31	\$ 231,229.39	\$ 232,799.68
Grace Staff	\$ 391,110.92	\$ 338,627.57	\$ 414,247.00
Other Personnel Investments	\$ 27,835.00	\$ 29,954.73	\$ 32,850.00
Seeds of Grace	\$ 334,160.00	\$ 426,738.74	\$ 518,306.00
Total Receipts	\$ 1,008,165.00	\$ 1,800,572.51	\$ 2,212,455.00
Total Expenses	\$ 1,057,299.23	\$ 1,800,572.51	\$ 2,214,318.68
Margin	(\$49,134.23)	\$0.00	(\$1,863.68)




Grace
Lutheran
Church



Accept Everyone
Care Compassionately
Deepen Connections
Share God's Love
...Experience Grace