



ARE WE IN STEP WITH HIM?

GRACE
LUTHERAN
CHURCH

MAY 2014 ANNUAL REPORT

ANNUAL REPORT

Grace Lutheran Church, 13655 Round Lake Blvd, NW, Andover, MN 55304

www.graceandover.org

Minutes from January Meeting

January 25/26, 2014

President Lori Ackerson called the January 2014 congregational meeting to order following the 5:00 pm service on Saturday, January 26, the 8:00 am service on Sunday, January 26 and continued the meeting following the 9:00 am and 10:30 am services. After the meeting at the 5:00 p.m., 8:00 am and 9:00 am services, a motion was made, seconded and passed to suspend the congregational meeting until the following service. After the meeting following the 10:30 service a motion was made, seconded and passed to adjourn the congregational meeting.

The item of business at this meeting was to vote on the 2014 budget. Ballots were counted by two or more members of the Grace Vision Board. Ballot totals and counts were as follows:

188 members voted; 38 non-members voted:

Yes	184 (members)	38 (non-members)
No	4 (members)	0 (non-members)

Submitted by:

Patricia L. Walters, Vision Board Secretary

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Senior Pastor's Report

Mark Hellmann

GOD WITH US...ARE WE IN STEP WITH HIM?

As I reflect upon this theme at the close of another year of ministry, I realize something about myself... I don't always sense God's presence in my life when I'm in the midst of the hectic schedules of meetings, classes, sermons, or any of the other activities that fill my life and ministry. No, I don't! However, when I take the time to reflect over the past year, I come to realize just how often God has been with me, whether I

realized it or not.

Perhaps this is part of the reason why church leadership takes the time and trouble to write an Annual Report in May, just before the summer break. It forces us to stop, reflect, and realize that God has indeed been with us throughout the ministries we lead, whether we have been aware of it or not. The only question is the same as our year's theme asks: "Have we been in step with him?"

Senior Pastor’s Report Continues

GENEROSITY

My experience in teaching generosity is this: people give when they get excited about God and his mission in the world. If this is truly the case, then we have to conclude that God was indeed with us in this past year! How? Let me share just a few observations:

- **Free 2B Grace Giving** – we finished visiting as many families as we could last fall. The overall sense was a great amount of excitement as over 170 families took major steps of generosity. Every week since then we have seen weekly offerings grow.

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Operational	\$266,963.18	\$237,784.43	\$266,727.19	\$239,302.47	\$242,666.56	\$238,763.59
Capital	\$30,846.50	\$29,958.50	\$37,525.00	\$32,254.00	\$30,240.50	\$31,583.00
Other	\$24,156.80	\$16,063.87	\$16,521.49	\$23,633.84	\$18,448.12	\$14,709.29
Free 2B Grace				\$53,385.00		\$72,624.00
Total:	\$321,966.48	\$283,806.80	\$320,773.68	\$295,190.31	\$344,740.18	\$357,679.88

- **Mission Tithe** – we gave more than \$12,000 dollars to four different ministries beyond our walls: Hope 4Youth, World Wide Village, New Creations Lutheran Church, and Family Promise
- **Living Generously Stewardship Series** – I’ve never heard as many positive comments about a Stewardship program. Based on the video story of a fictitious character named “Frank,” we learned some of the deep truths about generosity. Over 67 families indicated a desire to grow their giving and serving at Grace and beyond.
- **Living Within our Budget** – I am thankful we are working hard to cut expenses in order to match our projected income. Some of the changes have come in staffing as we have

asked full-time employees to contribute to their health plans. We have also eliminated several positions to bring employee costs to a more reasonable percentage of our budget.

MISSIONS

I was truly blessed on the first weekend in May as I listened to the testimonies of various ministry team leaders who shared how God had shaped and grown them as they were SENT out in mission. Over and over again I heard the same thing: God had blessed them as he called them to serve in Family Promise, Family Table, Feed My Starving Children, Hope 4 Youth, Prayer Shawl and Quilting ministries, and of course, our various Haiti Mission teams. I could not help but think back on the years I have been a part of this church. God

has certainly changed us by these, and many more mission opportunities. But more important than that is the recognition that God is busy working in our community, as well as in the world, and we have many opportunities to join him in his mission. This is where I believe we are “getting in step with him!” Mission is growing at Grace! It is contagious! All I can say is: “Praise the Lord!”

STAFF

We are truly blessed by our staff. I believe God uses them to share his presence with us. Through their loving welcome and acceptance, the ways in which they teach and lead, the various ways in which they inspire and equip people and share their faith, we grow in our faith in Jesus. I am filled with gratitude for all of them.

This year we have seen significant staff changes and transition. We have said “good bye” to Tyree McDowell, Carol Moler, John Dailey, and Ralph Holbrook. Each of them has touched our lives in some significant ways. We will miss them all!

These staff changes allow us an opportunity to re-imagine how our staffing might change and look differently. Some of the changes might be:

- To reduce the Church Administrator position to part-time in order to free up financial resources for a full-time youth director. This will enable Pastor Steve to focus more of his 30 hours/week for Adult Spiritual Formation. Tom Baker will remain as Youth Coordinator;
- To expand the duties of the Director of Worship and Music to assume the IT, Website, internet communication which were handled by the Church Administrator.
- To redistribute the added Director of Worship

and Music responsibilities by hiring Doreen Hutchings to direct the Adult Choir;

- To hire replacements for John Dailey who died earlier this year;
- To equip a pastoral-care ministry team of volunteers to help Pastor Mark and Pastor Gene in visitation ministries.

HOLY CONVERSATIONS JOURNEY

I am thankful for the wonderful community of Grace! As we end this journey of exploring whether or not Grace will host same-sex weddings at our church, I celebrate the love, respect, and grace our community has shown throughout these challenging discussions. Our conversations have been wonderful! Tender! Honest! Faith-filled! I admit I didn't know what to expect when we first began the journey. Knowing some churches have divided, I was worried about Grace. However, it was obvious God has been with us the whole time! I am so thankful for the strength of a church where members have very different beliefs and opinions, but never let them hinder us from the larger mission of being a ministry of grace!

I am thankful for the wonderful Holy Conversations Team! It has been a joy to work with them. There have been tears! There have been struggles! There have moments of fear and faith. This team has been a source of encouragement and strength to us all.

Perhaps the moment I will remember the most is when the Vision Board sat down with two sets of parents over dinner to share about their personal journeys of raising gay

Senior Pastor's Report Continues

children in our church. I listened to their joy and pain as they spoke about the difficulty of being gay in our world and in the church. One father spoke of the moment when his daughter told him that she was gay. He said to us: "I realized that in the five minutes it took for her to tell me, I still loved her the same as I had the five minutes before I knew. And I loved her the same, five minutes after I knew. Nothing had changed!" As I listened to these parents, the Holy Conversations Journey took a very personal turn. The discussions suddenly had faces, names, and stories. I was overwhelmed by how close God seemed to us at the table. I couldn't help but realize once again how God welcomes all to his table!

For many, the question of Holy Conversations revolves around this: **"Are we in step with him?"** I can't help but think this is partly what the whole journey has been as we have discovered important values about our church:

- We believe we are a welcoming place for all of God's children as we strive to live out our name.
- We believe the Scriptures to be God's authoritative word of love and salvation given to a broken world. God spoke his word in a certain group of people, context and culture

long ago, yet it still speaks to us today. The more we understand the original context the better we are enabled to follow and discern what God is saying.

- We believe that we are called to use the Jesus lens of loving God and loving others as the interpretative approach to questions like this.
- We believe God is in the world during new things, and we seek to join him in his mission of restoring and redeeming the world.

As we end the 2013–2014 Ministry Year we have much to celebrate. God has been with us! We have experienced this over and over again. We have seen great growth and spiritual formation. We have been shaped by our serving and giving. Finally, we **have** been in step with him and our prayer is that it may continue!

I give thanks to God for all of you!

In Him,

Pastor Mark Hellmann
Senior Pastor

"For many the question of Holy Conversations revolves around this: "Are we in step with him?" I can't help but think this is partly what the whole journey has been as we have discovered important values about our church:"

Spiritual Formation

Pastor Steve Thomason and Tom Baker

Youth Ministries

Middle School

CATECHISM

Over 120 students met in 21 small groups every Wednesday night this year. Pastor Steve taught through an overview of the Bible in 17 sessions. The students learned the keywords to each book of the Bible, the major genres of literature in the Bible, and the key story line that connects the Old Testament to the New Testament and how everything points to Jesus. It is our goal that this biblical framework will help provide the students with the necessary context in which to process Luther's Smaller Catechism in the next two years of training.

Special social and service nights punctuated the regular rhythm of teaching nights through the year. The groups were encouraged to spend half of their small group nights in social activities and the other half in service activities. It is the faithful dedication of the 29 adult and junior leaders that creates the community and mentoring for these catechism students to experience God's love and grow deeper in their relationship with God.

In November we took 75 students to Camp Okoboji in Iowa for a Recharge Retreat. We learned what it means to be aliens in the world, and to always keep God's Kingdom as the main focus of our lives.

MIDDLE SCHOOL CONNECTIONS

While the bulk of our energy for Middle School students is focused on the Catechism program, we also tried to provide some opportunities for all Middle School students to connect. In December we had a Christmas party and in January 40 of our students joined over 600 middle school students

for a Lock-In in Maple Grove.

High School

This has been a very strong year in High School ministry. It began with a wonderful mission trip to Lander, Wyoming in July. 22 students and 5 adults spent a week working with the Native American people in the Wind River Reservation. The Spirit moved in a mighty way through our students and lives were changed. We were able to serve the physical needs of some of their elderly tribe members, run a day camp for children, and learn about their rich heritage. Our students returned home with a deep sense of God's presence in the world and a desire to grow closer to God and live a life of service.

The Summer Dojo, interspersed with several fun outings, helped keep connection and continuity with the students over the summer break. Special thanks to Micki Thomason and Doug Donaldson for leading that effort.

We tried something new this year and kicked off Own Your Faith with a two-night retreat at the end of September. Upperclassmen joined us on that Saturday for the Amazing Race in the Mall of America. This event and the retreat helped connect the new Own Your Faith students to the larger high school group and kick-started their final year of preparation. We ended the retreat with a ceremony during the 10:30 service in which the parents blessed their children for the upcoming year.

We took a handful of students to the Sleepout for Homelessness in October and to Planet Wisdom in December. Events like these help our students grow deeper in their faith and see that there are hundreds of other students in the area that share the same passion for following God.

Spiritual Formation Report Continues

Our philosophy on the youth ministry staff is to equip people to do the ministry. That is why we have a high school leadership team called SaLT (Servant Leadership Team). This fantastic team—4 adults and 8 students—led the weekly Dojo meetings on Sunday afternoons. Week after week, this team planned lessons, games, and built community. We had the highest average attendance—27—and the most consistent attendance all year than we have ever had. Praise God for this faithful team!

41 students will be confirmed on May 18th. This is a wonderful group of students who are ready to take their place as the newest adult members of our community. It is our goal to help them find meaningful places of connection, growth, equipping, and service in and through the Grace community.

It has been four years since Pastor Steve and Tom Baker stepped into the leadership role of youth ministry at Grace. The current Confirmands were 6th graders that year, and the current graduating seniors were confirmands that year. That means Pastor Steve and Tom have journeyed through every step of Catechism, Confirmation, and High School with these students. That is a wonderful feeling.

Please continue to pray for our students as they grow and move into adulthood. They need the love and support of the congregation in order to thrive.

Adult Spiritual Formation

Spiritual formation comes in many shapes and sizes. Much of this growth has to do with personality style, phase of life, and giftedness. Our job, as a staff, is to 1) try to intentionally cultivate spaces in which the Spirit can work in people's lives, and 2) to be attentive to the unexpected places where the Spirit is working in people's lives. Then we need to celebrate both.

The spaces we intentionally cultivate include: various Men's and Women's groups, Women on Wednesday (WOW), Men's Ministry (ENGAGE), and Sunday Evenings @ Grace.

This year we expanded our ministry in **Sunday Evenings @ Grace** by offering courses taught by lay-leaders in the church (that is a real sign of growth!) We offered Radical, Animate.Bible, Dinner with Jesus, DivorceCare, Care Ministry Training, Two Couples classes, Financial Peace University, Sticky Faith, and Holding Your Family Together. Over 100 people participated in these courses in the Fall and the Spring. This was the most well-balanced, lay-led, and whole-person-oriented year of Sunday Evenings @ Grace that we have ever had.

Pastor Steve has been working for the past three years on a PhD in Missional Leadership at Luther Seminary. This Spring he started a research project called *Deep in the Burbs* to study the topic of spiritual formation in the suburbs. He formed a team comprised of members from Grace, Zion Lutheran in Anoka, and Faith Lutheran in Coon Rapids to explore new ways to engage this topic. Pray that these efforts will yield fruit for our community—inside Grace and in the neighborhoods of Anoka County—in which we experience a deepened sense of God's presence and work in the world.

Spiritual Formation takes place in all the areas of service and worship that we experience in the Grace community. The reports you read from Women's Ministry, Men's Ministry, Outreach Ministry, Children and Youth Ministry, Worship Ministry, Holy Conversations, and many more, are all spaces in which the Spirit of God is moving in, with, and through us to connect, grow, be equipped, and serve

Outreach ministries – Oh, what God can do with ‘one stitch’

Jeannie Hellmann

Laughingly, Bev Jovanovich tells her story that many years ago she thought it might be fun to join the Prayer Shawl ministry at Grace since she liked to knit. But there was a problem ... she only knew one stitch! She only knew how to make a scarf using one type of knitting stitch, but she thought if she would make a really long scarf then someone could possibly use it as a prayer shawl.

Well, as the story goes, Bev took a risk and joined other volunteers in the Prayer Shawl ministry. She was surprised by the joy of connecting with other women at Grace and she was blessed by many new friendships. And on top of that, Bev was thrilled when a lady in the group showed her a simple way to tweak her ‘one stitch’ so as to

create beautiful shawls (that didn’t look like long scarves)!

Now Bev freely gives of her time to encourage others in this ministry, and she lovingly gives of her talent to create shawls of comfort and hope for those who are ill or home-bound. Currently, Bev is the ministry team leader for the Prayer Shawl Ministry, one of our many outreach ministries at Grace.

Over the years of serving, Bev has grown in her faith and understanding that God gladly welcomes our simple gifts of time and our sincere offering of talent. God will do far more than we think or imagine with our ‘one stitch’!

Thank you, God, for SENDING us!

From the many testimonies given in worship on May 3 and 4, we caught a glimpse of God using each of us as His instrument, both locally and globally, to be a ‘ministry of grace in the heart of Andover... and beyond!’ Thank you, God, for teaching us . . . and thank you, God, for sending us!

And thank you, people of Grace, for the countless ways (truly, countless ways) that you are serving in outreach ministries . . .

- From the 100 dutiful volunteers who serve locally with Family Promise to rebuild a foundation of hope for families experiencing homelessness --- to the 23 courageous people who travelled to Haiti to build homes as well as relationships --- to those who will help with Habitat in June. . .
- From the boisterous food packers at Feed My Starving Children --- to the quiet, sincere servants at funeral luncheons at Grace . . .
- From the 1700 pounds of food donated to local food shelves during Lent --- to the \$1700 sent to Uganda for Nutritional farming initiatives . . .
- From the devoted knitters and sewers in Prayer Shawl and Grace Quilters ministry --- to the dedicated cooks and servers with Family Table Meal and Our Savior’s Shelter ministries . . .
- From the newly formed Hope 4 Youth team of volunteers to the dependable servants with May All Be Fed Food Shelf.
- From the crazy Catechism nights of rolling bandages for Global Health Ministries --- to the faithful volunteers who help at Sand Creek School through our Faith & Community Partnership.

And together we say . . . Thank you, God, for SENDING us!

Women's Ministries – God has a better idea!

Jeannie Hellmann

We sat in our meeting, tired and discouraged. Our women's ministry team had hoped to host a fellowship event in the spring, but quite honestly we lacked energy and enthusiasm, as well as any willing volunteers to plan this event. So we decided to cancel it... just take it off the church calendar, since we had no plan, no speaker or any inspiration.

But God had a better idea . . .

For some reason, Jeannie hesitated a few days before removing this event date from the church calendar. And for some reason Deb Stang's sister called Deb one day, bubbling over with excitement about a speaker she had heard just that morning. And for some reason, Deb called Jeannie within the hour to share the impressive story (and the phone number of the speaker). And for some reason, Jeannie called Amanda Ficek that very day. And for some reason, Amanda said 'yes' to speaking at our next women's event in April. For some reason, the pieces all fell into place within hours.

Could it be that God had a better idea?

Well, energy and enthusiasm exploded! Within days we formed a ministry team, entitled the event "Spring it Forward" and began planning & praying with renewed spirits! Oh YES, God had a better idea! He knew 60 women would be blessed with joy-filled connections, honest sharing and inspiring stories at this event on April 26. Yes, God had a better idea for this women's event!

And, God has a better idea for our very lives. When we are discouraged, He is the one who renews and refreshes us with His purpose. When we want to give up, He is the one who provides relationships and encouragement. When we feel lonely or overwhelmed, He is the one who heals us, often through the gift of a listening friend.

Yes, He has a better idea for each of us! God pours His love and grace into our hearts and truly 'up-cycles' our very lives so we are set free to be ourselves . . . women of grace!

Graceful Senior – Fed with the Word, Fellowship and good food!

Pastor Gene Heglund

The scripture reading was the story of the "Two Builders" and the question was, "How could you use this parable to advise a friend or relative?" This question was part of a table discussion we had at one of our monthly breakfast meetings. 30 to 35 seniors gather the third Tuesday of each month at 8:30 a.m. at Farmstead (13733 Quay St., Andover) for a breakfast, fellowship, and a time for

enrichment.

The past six months our topic for study has been some of our Lord's most familiar parables. New members are always welcome and if you are interested in attending, contact the church office. Pastor Gene Heglund is the advisor for the group.

Children's Ministries – God has been with the Children!

Monica Allen and Kim DeVries

Children's Ministry is a broad range of Ministry that includes development in the areas of leadership, curriculum, family ministry, Bible study, faith development and much more.

We develop leaders who commit to our vision and make learning about the Bible and God's love fun, exciting, and meaningful. We equip youth to be our future leaders. In Vacation Bible School, Music Camp, SONday School, Nursery, and Rockin'Kids Bible Club, youth are guided to care for and teach children.

Children's Ministry is blessed to have many willing hearts and hands to minister to the youngest ones at Grace. This year, our volunteer staff has grown tremendously. Teachers and youth love serving and want to return for another year. They know your child's name, and pray and care for them. The teachers sometimes have as much fun as the students!

SONday School Highlights

- **Birthday Offering** – We collect offering in honor of the children's birthdays. We have collected \$135.75 which will allow us to purchase 6 flocks of chicks. As many as 300 chicks that will be donated to needy families through our donations to Heifer International.
- **Milestones and Memory Work.** Each month, children have learned a Bible Verse. Their names were put on our bulletin board and they received a piece of candy. Lines formed outside of Kim and Monica's office to recite their verses each week. Each grade level works on learning key verses from the Bible and Catechism and receives a Milestone to help them remember this big accomplishment.
- **Year two of Large Group/Small Group** – In Small Group, kids connect with children their own age and their teachers, unpacking the Bible Story,

and work on Memory Work. In Large Group, we worship as a group, singing songs of praise, taking offering, and the Bible Story is presented in fun, age appropriate manner, and in many creative ways.

Nursery Highlights

- The Nursery was blessed with the gift of pagers. We have 15 pagers which allow parents to leave their children and know they can be contacted in worship if needed. This has helped bring many little ones to the nursery to play and be held.

Rockin' Kids Bible Club Highlights

- **RKBC** continues the memory work started in SONday School. We learned the books of the Old Testament, even preschoolers can sing that song, and we ended the year with our musical, Hide 'em in Your Heart, Bible verses set to music. We especially liked Ephesians 6:1

Music Camp – The Rock Slinger and His Greatest Hit Highlights

- We learned what faith in God can do. Even kids can do great things, just like King David. Our 23 cast members did an amazing job, singing with all their heart, and sharing this story of amazing faith.
- We had 6 youth leaders who were integral partners in our musical team.

VBS 2012 – Tell it on the Mountain – Highlights

- Families supported VBS by sending kids and friends for one of our biggest years ever!
- The congregation supported VBS donating supplies, snacks, and volunteering! Many new faces participated and are returning for another, especially our Security Team, making us intergenerational.
- We donated over \$600 for Hope for Youth and gave them many boxes of food as well.

Worship Ministries

Jonathan Orwig

This year Pastor Mark asked us to do something different for our annual report. Instead of a laundry list of people to thank, meetings attended and statistics, he asked that we try to think of where we saw God at work in our ministry, to focus in on something where we really felt the movement of the Holy Spirit.

So, in the spirit of that, I want to say a short and simple thank-you to all of the people who have made worship both possible and meaningful this last year... there are many of you, and you bless us all by sharing your talents and time.

This year I especially saw God's hand in the Worship ministry during the Lenten season. In 24 years of ministry, I think it was one of the most meaningful I have ever experienced, and both from my viewpoint and the comments of others, I sensed that we really had some very special times together. One event in particular stands out to me - our Maundy Thursday Last Supper Church. What began simply at first as Pastor Mark and I attending a presentation of Dinner Church at the 2014 Convocation at Luther Seminary, quickly blossomed into our own interpretation and an

attempt on our part to recapture the flavor, both of the early church and of the Last Supper. I was amazed at how the planning came together, the people agreed to help with decorating and the meal, and then finally when we came together it was in a transformed Fellowship Hall. Things went smoothly - you all entered into the spirit of the worship, which was mingled with dinner and communion. When it was done, we finished in the Worship Center, singing as we walked down the hall carrying our candles... to strip the altar... to prepare for Good Friday. Even with all of the details I had in my head, I was still able to enter into the moment with you all, and join in the experience.

So, thank you, Grace Family. Thanks for being willing to try and experience new things, thank you for coming to worship this Lent with your hearts and minds ready to enter into God's presence. I look forward to the places where God will meet us in the coming months and years.

A Word from the Vision Board President

Lori Ackerson

It is pretty unbelievable to me that my term as Vision Board President will be done in June. It is amazing how fast time goes by when you are busy. These 3 years have been a pretty unbelievable journey for me and my family. I want to thank the members of Vision Board and Pastor Mark for all of their support this year. We have a challenging but rewarding year. They are all an amazing group of faith-filled individuals that I respect and admire. Beginning in June, Dennis

Grabowski will be the new president of Vision Board. He will do a great job! He and his wife Diane have a lot of passion for this church.

Grace has gone through a lot of physical changes this year. Free 2B Grace dollars are helping us to make some much need repairs to the outside of our building. We have also been able to fix sidewalks and portions of the parking lot. Thank you to everyone who was

President's Report Continues

able to support our capital drive. You are making a difference!

The year we also said good bye to Ralph Holbrook our business administrator who moved on to another opportunity with Eagle Brook church. We give thanks for the service he provide to Grace. He will be missed.

Many of our ministries are strong and active. We continue to support Family Promise, Feed My Starving Children, Hope for Youth, Quilters, Haiti Mission Trips and more! Hopefully you were able to hear the testimonies the team leaders gave on May 3rd and 4th. I was moved to tears as they shared their mission. All of their testimonies were so moving, their faith so inspiring. If you have the opportunity participate in any of these ministries or maybe you have a passion to start a different ministry, DO IT! It is worth it.

Finally, a shameless plug for the Parish Nursing program at Grace. If you have any needs please feel free to call us! We are willing to help. We also will be checking blood pressures on Connect Weekends. Look for our big yellow signs!

Grace is an amazing place to be. I feel blessed to be a part of it! Please let any of us on the Vision Board know if you have any questions! My family and I tend to spend a lot of time at my in-laws cabin, so if I don't see you, I hope you enjoy your summer.

Lori Ackerson

ENGAGE

Men's Ministry

The men of Grace are discovering that God is indeed with us as we regroup and reimagine the Men's Ministry at Grace. We have launched The ENGAGE Men's Ministry and held our first event on April 5th. It was a great time as 40 men gathered at Andover Lanes for a time of bowling, pizza, and fun! It was so successful that we're planning a golf outing sometime soon in early summer.

Why the name ENGAGE? It is an acronym that expresses our hope and goal for the men of our church: **Everyone Needs God And Grace Every Day.** We give thanks that many of our men are already involved in Bible studies, serving events, ministries, and short-term classes with their spouses. The men at Grace are growing spiritually. But we want to also connect men to other men because we know it can only encourage us more in following Jesus! So we'll be planning fellowship events throughout the year. We will continue to offer Bible studies on Monday and Saturday mornings.

If you are interested in learning more, please don't hesitate to call Mike Schaaf (763-427-3068) or Pastor Mark (763-421-6520)

Nominations for Vision Board

Three positions on Vision Board are open. The term of office is 3 years. These people listed alphabetically, have been nominated.

GREG ACKERSON

I am Greg Ackerson. My wife Lori and I have been attending Grace Lutheran Church for almost 9 years now. Lori and I organized and lead the first Grace 2 Haiti mission trip and we just spent two weeks in Haiti this past March leading the 3rd and 4th Grace 2 Haiti trips. We have been amazingly blessed by those opportunities and we have grown a lot through those experiences. I was also one of the co-chairs of the Free 2 B Grace campaign.

Lori and I also co-lead two different classes as part of Sunday Evenings at Grace. I also participate with Family Promise and Feed My Starving Children when I can. There are a ton of exciting things happening at Grace and we consider many of the members of Grace to be family. I am excited about what the future holds for us and would like the opportunity to serve our congregation on the Vision Board.

JESSIE CROOKS

I live in Blaine with my husband Andy and our two children, John (6) and Addie (3). We have been attending Grace for approximately 6 years. I am a Stay At Home Mom and enjoy leading various groups at Grace, including WOW and Sunday Evenings at Grace, along with volunteering for VBS, Family Promise and the Angel Tree Ministry. I also enjoy volunteering at my son's school, and being a Den Leader and Committee Chair for my son's Cub Scout Pack. In my spare time I like to garden, read, sew and cook.

DOUG HANSON

I'm Doug Hanson & I grew up in Ramsey attending church and school at Cross of Christ Lutheran in Coon Rapids. I now live in Ramsey with my wife Angie and 2 daughters Aria (12) and Danika (9). We've been coming to Grace for 2 1/2 years and became members shortly after that. We felt welcome from the very beginning, and Grace is definitely our home. We have attended all the Sunday Evenings at Grace in the past 1 1/2 years and enjoyed them all. Angie and I are on an ushering team, and we are both

Our Mission Statement

God has created us as a ministry of grace in the heart of Andover.

God will:

- Welcome us into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ as Lord, through the transforming power of the Holy Spirit;
- Encourage us to grow in our discipleship through worship, learning, and fellowship;
- Equip us to share this ministry of grace and love through serving others; and
- Send us into the world to do his will.

Catechism small group leaders. I have also driven the Family Promise Van when needed. Our whole family went on the March 2014 mission trip to Haiti and it was amazing. I have grown so much in my faith since coming to Grace, and would like to give back to Grace and its members in any way that I can.

BERNARD MCDOWELL

I am originally from Atlanta, Ga and moved to MN in 2010 with my wife, Tyree and two daughters, Ellie & Ava. Having found Grace was no doubt a blessing for our family and from our first visit we immediately felt welcomed and surrounded as newcomers. Since that time Tyree and I have served as facilitators for Sunday Nights at Grace, Prepare Mentors for newly engaged couples and also Bernard has served on the Free2B Capital Campaign in 2012/2013. We both share a passion for connecting those coming into the church and seeking relationships at various life stage points as well as reaching newlyweds that are beginning their lives as couples and looking establish a Christ centered foundation for their marriage and future family.

KATE MORPHEW

My name is Kate Morphey and I have been attending Grace Lutheran Church for several years. I have grown in faith and have enjoyed the opportunity to serve the community as a part of the congregation at Grace. I have been involved in various Ministries and Outreach programs at Grace and I look forward to the opportunities that God has in store for me. I live in Andover with my husband, Bill, and two children, Joseph and Grace.

MERLE TINGELSTAD

I have been a member of Grace Lutheran for more than 20 years. I have been active in services as an usher and working the sound board. I am an active participant in Men's Ministries, a volunteer for Family Promise and Feed My Starving Children and actively support Golden Rule Child Care Center. I live in Andover with my wife Kathy, a former Vision Board member, and have raised 2 sons at Grace.

WeConnect



WeGrow



WeEquip



WeServe



WeLutheran

