



Grace Lutheran Church Annual Report

May 2015

A Summary of our year of ministry at Grace
and Candidates for Vision Board

January 2015 Congregational Meeting Minutes

Vice - President Tari Yates called the January 2015 Congregational Meeting to order following the 5:00 pm service on Saturday, January 24th, and continued through the 8:00, 9:00, and 10:30 a.m. am services on Sunday, January 25th. After the meeting at the 5:00 p.m., 8:00 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. services a motion was made, seconded and passed to suspend the congregational meeting until the following service. After the 10:30 am 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 2015 Budget. Ballots were counted by two or more members of the Grace Vision Board.

Totals and counts were as follows:

Yes 215 (members) No 4 (members)

Submitted by:

Jessie Crooks

Vision Board Secretary

MAY CONREGATION



ANNUAL MEETING

Saturday - May 24

Sunday - May 25

**At the conclusion of all
worship services**

Agenda:

**Election of Vision Board
Members**

Celebrating our year of ministry

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Senior Pastor's Report

Blessed to be a blessing! This promise given by God to Abraham so long ago, is one of our best-loved sayings around Grace! It's one we know by heart! You can't sit in many worship services without hearing it. **Blessed to be a blessing** has been a wonderful theme to guide us this 2014-2015 ministry year. But how has it made a difference? There is no question we have been blessed this past year. However, we can't help but ask: "How have we been a blessing to others?"

What follows in this Annual Congregational Spring Report is part of the answer to this question. Each of the ministry areas of Grace will endeavor

to share how blessings have overflowed in the lives of many people inside, as well as outside the walls of Grace. As you read each of the reports, I invite you into a prayer and praise journey of the wonderful ways God has shaped and grown us in the love of Jesus, giving us his Spirit to show us how to share it.



Last August, the leadership and staff met at our Leadership Summit IV to share our 2014-2015 Ministry Goals. The following graph depicts the five main areas we sensed God was telling us to focus on so his blessings might flow into blessings for others.

I would like to share with you how I have seen God work among us.

GOAL ONE: BUILD BIBLICAL FLUENCY

Biblical fluency means more than merely knowing what the Bible says (biblical literacy). Biblical fluency is one step further. It's growing the capacity for our people to "speak the language of the Bible in everyday life" as we make connections between what the Bible says and the everyday realities of life. Far too often we sense people don't know much about the Bible. However, it is our hope that the greater the Biblical fluency, the greater the spiritual formation, giving, and serving will grow.

In the past year we have continued to use the Narrative Lectionary as the basis for our worship services. Instead of preaching only from the Gospels and using Old Testament stories as mere backdrops to the New

Testament passages, we started in Genesis and worked ourselves through the rest of the Old Testament, moved into Matthew and ended the year with Acts and Romans.

In addition to our worship services, we continue to see people in our Men's and Women's Bible Studies. Finally, I was thrilled to teach Major on the Minor Old Testament Prophets Class during the winter session of Sunday Evenings@GRACE.

All in all, this has been a great year to grow our biblical fluency as we continued to learn God's story of blessing all people with his love, forgiveness and salvation! The more we learn how he has blessed his people in the Bible, the more we realize how blessed we are!

GOAL TWO: BUILD MISSIONAL FLUENCY

Missional Fluency means to reaffirm our core belief that God is busy in the world, and he invites us to join his mission to heal, restore, set free, and save his

people. Like the ELCA's logo says: missional fluency is the realization that it's God's Work, and we are his hands.



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.



Grace Lutheran Church

Senior Pastor's Report con't.

So how have we seen Grace grow in missional fluency? Here are some of the year's highlights:

- Loving Generously Worship Series when we were challenged to see how we live more generously in the ways we welcome and build significant relationships with those who are ostracized and not accepted.
- God's Work, Our Hands Event on Rally Sunday in September
- Two Mission Trips to Haiti
- A visit from **RAKAI ORPHANS DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE** and the subsequent 25 Sponsorships from Grace members!
- Free 2B Grace Tithe of \$24,000! We celebrate we were able to share \$6,000 with the following ministries:
 - El Salvador Lutheran Church Global Health

Ministry

- Ebola Outreach through Feed My Starving Children
- Support of Williamson Home for Abandoned Kids in Haiti
- The Bakery Project in Rakai, Uganda
- The Just 1 More 5K Race to support World Wide Village's City on a Hill medical clinic in Haiti
- The start of the Whole Life Stewardship Team to reimagine stewardship as something more than asking people for money. I am thankful for the team's first event:
- Care for God's Creation Fair
- We grew our benevolence by .5% to a total of 9.5% of our weekly regular offerings.

It is clear we are growing in our passion to join God in the ways he is working in the world!

GOAL THREE: ENCOURAGE SPIRITUAL FORMATION OPPORTUNITIES

Spiritual Formation is taking a step to open our hearts to a deeper connection with God. At Grace we see this happen in many lives and in various ways: Bible studies, serving events, book studies, ministry teams, and mission trips. In this past year we give thanks for some of the ways we have grown spiritual formation opportunities:

- A beginning step of online Adult Spiritual Formation Opportunities on our website. In order to do this we have been blessed with the gift of video recording equipment to enable us to take our first steps by

putting the following spiritual formation opportunities online:

- Own Your Faith Mentor Program
- Bible A-Z Course
- The Overflow Class
- The many volunteers who have been blessed and want to share blessings with others by leading Men's & Women's Bible studies, fellowship events and the many ministry teams who serve inside and outside our church.

GOAL FOUR: GROW CONNECTIONS AT GRACE

We continue to welcome a high number of visitors to our worship services. We want to become more effective in helping newcomers connect to Grace in meaningful ways. We want to find ways to bless those who come to our church with a warm welcome and significant friendships. In the past year we have:

- Strengthened our Connector Ministry to facilitate a significant shepherding process to help newcomers feel welcomed at Grace

- Hired Kate Morphew as our Connections & Volunteer Coordinator. Kate has made a big impact in enlisting and training volunteers to be connectors. She has also helped us become more intentional in reaching out to first-time visitors.
- Completed a new pictorial directory to help the congregation connect with each other.
- Began a monthly Fellowship Time on Nametag Weekends to build friendships on Sunday mornings.



Senior Pastor's Report con't.

GOAL FIVE: ADMINISTRATIVE CONCERNS

A major part of our staff and leadership's time is in building the administrative support to undergird the overall ministry needs of our church. I give thanks for our gifted and creative staff. They are dedicated and committed to our church. We could not have such a vibrant faith community and strong witness without them. We have been blessed by their work!

I also give thanks for our Vision Board Members who give their time and energy to help us discover the next steps God has in store for us. Their faith, dedication, and willingness to embrace new ideas the Spirit brings to us are inspiring to me. They have made a big difference in the life of Grace!

This year we want to celebrate significant steps we have taken administratively:

- The hiring of Kristi Larson as our new Director of Youth Ministries. She will join Tom Baker, our Youth Coordinator, to grow our present confirmation and senior high youth ministry. Hiring a full-time Youth Director will free up Pastor Steve's time to focus more on adult spiritual formation.
- The support of Pastor Steve as he has concluded his dissertation and PhD program at Luther Seminary.

- The additional steps of Free 2B campaign:
 - We carpeted the hallways and the Nursery, completed the tuck-pointing, roof repair, installed LED's bulbs, replaced damaged computers and video projectors.
 - We reduced our mortgage debt by \$100,000. As of April 2015 our indebtedness is \$1,119,000!
 - We tithed 10% of our Free 2B Grace offerings.

As I read over the long list of steps we have taken this past year I am filled with a deep sense of gratitude and thanksgiving. It is clear to me that we have been blessed! It is also clear to me we are learning that God's blessings are not for us to keep for ourselves, but to give and pour them out on others.

I hope that the following ministry reports will fill you with hope and joy for what God is doing in our midst. We ARE blessed so that we may be a blessing!

In Him,

Pastor Mark Hellmann



Vision Board President

As one completes a lengthy undertaking, say serving on the Grace Lutheran Church Vision Board, one can't help but be a little sad. You have had the opportunity to work with dedicated and talented people whom you have gotten to know at a personal level, and that work is about to end. You tend to look backwards and focus on what has happened, rather than focusing on what the Vision Board is about, "looking forward," or more specifically attempting to discern what God is calling Grace, our church, to do.

The challenge, of course, is to know what God is thinking. There are numerous examples of God speaking directly to people: Noah to build an ark; Moses hearing from a burning bush; Adam and Eve in the garden; and many others. Does God speak to us today? That sounds like a 12 week sermon series by Pastor Mark. How then does a group of seven people, Grace's Vision Board, attempt this nearly impossible task?

While there is no magic formula, we start with a thorough understanding of the issue and discuss probable outcomes, we pray for guidance, we discuss

the matter and genuinely listen to each other, we pray for understanding, we read and study and share knowledge, we pray and we take action. Did we really do what God is calling us to do? That sounds like another 12 week sermon series, this time by Pastor Steve.

When we pray, we talk with God and we listen to God, not with our ears, but with our heart and soul and our inner being. When seven people pray and they hear and share a similar message, we believe that God has influenced our decision, and that we have endeavored to discern how God wants Grace Lutheran Church, our church, to move forward.

As we enter the summer season, I would encourage all to set aside time for prayer and reflection, and to carefully "listen" to what God is saying.

God Bless,

Dennis Grabowski

President of the Grace Vision Board

Grace Lutheran Church Mission Statement

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

We believe that God...

Welcomes us into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ as Lord through the transforming power of the Holy Spirit;

Encourages us to grow in our discipleship through worship, learning, and fellowship;

Equips us to share this ministry of grace and love through serving others; and

Sends us into the world to do His will.



The Blessings in Youth Ministries

We have been truly **blessed to be a blessing** this season in youth ministry. We have an amazing team of staff and volunteers who come together to faithfully walk along side our youth in middle school, Own Your Faith, and high school. We are also very pleased to announce that God has brought a full-time youth director to us. Kristi Larson will join the staff on June 22. This will truly be a blessing that will allow us to exponentially bless the youth and their families in the coming years.

Middle School

Catechism

This was another great year of Catechism. Eighteen small groups, led by adults and high school students, met each Wednesday throughout the school year. We learned about the Ten Commandments, Baptism, and Communion, and explored how these things connect to everyday life. Mike Frazier led the band and encouraged and equipped a number of middle school students to use their musical gifts for God's service.

Connection Events

Over sixty students spent a weekend at the Fall Recharge at Okoboji Lutheran Bible Camp in November. This was an excellent week of deepening friendships and spiritual formation. Over forty students also gathered for the Ultimate Lock-In in Maple Grove where they were able to connect to new friends from multiple churches in the area.

High School

Own Your Faith

OYF is designed to give high school freshmen one additional year following catechism to process their faith questions with an individual mentor in preparation for Confirmation. Thirty-Two students worked diligently with their mentors in monthly one-on-

-one sessions throughout the school year. We implemented a new delivery method this year in which Pastor Steve created a monthly video and discussion page that allowed the students and mentors to interact with the topics and questions in their own time and space. This seemed to increase the effectiveness of the OYF process. The year ended with a wonderful weekend celebrating Confirmation.

SaLT and Dojo

High School ministry is led by SaLT (Servant Leadership Team) and meets weekly in the Dojo on Sunday afternoons. We have an excellent group of high school leaders in SaLT. The truly amazing thing about our weekly Dojo meetings is that they are planned and led *by* high school students *for* high school students. We spent the year working through the Narrative Lectionary texts and exploring how they apply to life in high school. Special thanks to Chrissy Petersen for leading this team,

and to Micki Thomason and Doug Donaldson for being adult leaders in the Dojo.

Special Events

Tom Baker coordinated two amazing mission trips last summer that crossed both borders in an effort to "bless all nations." The first trip was an advanced Youth Works trip south of the border to Puerto Rico. It was comprised of students with previous mission trip experience. The second trip consisted of middle school and high school students who crossed the northern border into Thunder Bay Ontario. Both mission teams experienced deep spiritual, emotional, and relational growth.

We also returned to Planet Wisdom in December where our students were encouraged to share their faith and deepen their connection to what God is doing in the world.



Blessings of Adult Spiritual Formation

Graceful Seniors

The Graceful Seniors are a blessing to the Grace Community as they share wisdom and experience with the younger generations. Pastor Gene continues to lead the monthly Graceful Seniors' breakfast as they are encouraged and equipped in God's Word and faithful fellowship. This group finds multiple ways to connect and serve in the community through ministries like: The Ruth Circle, the Graceful Quilters, the Property Team, and faithful service on just about every other ministry team at Grace.

Men's and Women's Ministries

Men's and Women's groups continue to meet weekly throughout the year for Bible study, prayer, encouragement, and service. See Jeannie Hellmann's report for details regarding women's ministry.

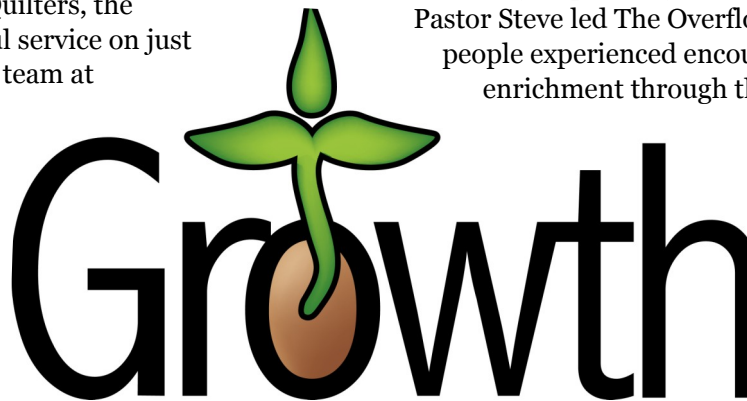
Sunday Evenings @ Grace

We had two more successful semesters at Sunday Evenings @ Grace this season. We attempted to align the entire church in the Fall by using the Living

Generously video curriculum in worship and in every adult and high school small group, including Sunday Evenings @ Grace. Many people were encouraged to expand their horizons and realize that our lives are a blessing to be used in generosity for all people.

We returned to our normal smorgasbord of course offerings in the Spring Semester. Pastor Mark led a class on the Minor Prophets, Lindsay and Jonathan Orwig led another group through Financial Peace University, and Pastor Steve led The Overflow Principle. Over sixty people experienced encouragement and spiritual enrichment through this experience. Special

thanks goes out to our Sizzle Team for providing excellent food each week!



Spiritual Formation takes places 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, 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.

In his grace,

Pastor Steve Thomason



Blessed in Women's Ministries

As women listen and learn, pray and share together, we realize the sacred spaces of relationships in which God blesses us so that we may be a blessing to others! During the past year, women's bible studies at Grace included the Ruth Circle, Monday night Women's Group and W.O.W. (Women on Wednesday). Within these small groups, over 75 women gathered for bible study and prayer, as well as encouragement and support for one another. Other women's events included the Women's Retreat "Calm within the Chaos" in November, "Mugs, Muffins & More" in February and the Great Escape "Flip Flops, Faith & Friends" in April.



Blessed to be a Blessing in Outreach

As we grow in our faith journeys - as individuals and as a church community - we understand that we are speaking and serving directly on behalf of God to others ... and He is the one giving us the desire, ability and strength to do so. It's through the transforming power of Christ within us that allows us to trade selfishness for selflessness. And we thank God for all the faithful volunteers at Grace who are growing in faith and serving others. We are each BLESSED to be a BLESSING as we strive to be a "ministry of grace in the heart of Andover . . . and beyond."

African Children Today

Richard and Johnson from Uganda visited Grace in November and shared their personal stories of being orphaned. In response to their plea, Grace families are sponsoring 25 children in Rakai. The Bakery Project was funded by our Lenten noisy offerings and Free2B Grace tithe. Now fresh, affordable bread is a reality for people in Rakai!

Faith & Community Partnership

Our church partnered with Sand Creek Elementary School to help meet needs of students and families in our local community. Grace donated holiday food baskets, quilts and winter coats, as well as snacks and encouraging notes to the school staff.

Family Promise

Grace volunteers provided caring hospitality to local families who are experiencing homelessness. Grace hosted Family Promise four different weeks during the year, using the time and talents of over 250 volunteers.

Family Table Meal

Volunteers joyfully cooked and served a complimentary meal on the third Sunday of each month, feeding hundreds of people in our local community.

Feed My Starving Children

Grace volunteers packed meals at FMSC many times throughout the year, blessing 700 children

with a daily life-saving meal for a year. On our 'marathon' packing event in November, 400 Grace volunteers packed 171,000 meals. Through the Free2B Grace tithe, we were able to support the Ebola relief efforts in West Africa.

Global Health Ministries

Volunteers rolled bandages and helped sort medical supplies which will be sent to Lutheran medical missionaries and hospitals overseas. We also supported Global Health this year with money from the Free2B Grace tithe.

Grace2Haiti

Two mission teams traveled to Haiti in January - building homes, chicken coops and most importantly relationships with Haitians and the World Wide Village ministry. Through the Free2B Grace tithe, we supported 8 abandoned children with food, shelter and education.

Grace Quilters

Faithful women graciously made and donated over 300 colorful quilts this year, sharing God's grace through these beautiful quilts.

Habitat for Humanity

Putting God's love into action, many volunteers from Grace served at a Habitat work site in Coon Rapids last summer.

Hope 4 Youth

Grace volunteers offered their helping hands at this drop-in center in Anoka, a safe place for youth experiencing homelessness. Volunteers also helped sort clothing and staff fund-raising events throughout the year.

May All Be Fed Food Shelf

Countless volunteers donated an abundance of non-perishable food items, and our church handed out over 300 bags of groceries this past year. During our Lenten outreach, we collected and donated food to Pathways



Outreach Con't.

Food Shelf within the Anoka-Hennepin school district.

Operation Christmas Child

We filled nearly 300 shoe boxes which were delivered around the world to children in need. Many volunteers served at the OCC Distribution Warehouse in November.

Our Savior's Shelter

Grace volunteers cooked and served a meal at this transitional housing shelter in Minneapolis on the first

Monday of each month, sharing God's grace in tangible ways.

Prayer Shawl Ministry

Volunteers continued to pray as they knit and croquet shawls and lap blankets for anyone in need, blessing others with the warmth of God's love.

In His Grace,

Jeannie Hellmann

Worship Ministries Share God's Blessings

This year Pastor Mark asked us to think of how our ministries held up the theme "Blessed to Be a Blessing", and to note where we saw growth and transformation as well as a recap of our highlights.



Without going into a long laundry list of names, 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 think the greatest transformation and growth came in the Grace Choir. The choir has flourished musically under the leadership of Doreen Hutchings – she has really helped us sound our best. We have also been very blessed with new custom-built choir loft/risers thanks to Dean Keller's woodworking skills (and his assorted helpers). I have wanted to honor the choir in that way and give them their own space pretty much since I interviewed back in 2012 – it is nice to see that dream come to fruition. We can see the conductor better, and the sound of the back rows projects better now also, since we are on different levels now. Musically, the top highlight of the year for me was our Advent choral presentation – nearly 40 people from the Grace Choir, Praise Team, other seasonal guests and

a small orchestra combined to help us reflect on the season and prepare for Christmas. It was exciting, and the full chancel really gave us a sense of celebration.

Another highlight was again the Maundy Thursday Last Supper Dinner Church – I felt (and heard from many) that it was a very meaningful and spiritual time of worship. It was easier for me this year, since it was our second time doing this service and I had a better idea of how it should go, but it was also an opportunity for me to grow as I reached out to teams and people to help put it all together.

Good Friday was also very meaningful – I have listened to the recordings, and the choir sang beautifully; several people shared that the service was very moving for them.

Personally, I have enjoyed singing in choir again (something I've not been able to do in many years) and playing the organ on a more regular basis. I feel blessed that this May I celebrated 25 years in professional music Ministry – I have been doing this for half of my life! Grace family, you are a blessing to Lindsay and I, and I look forward to how God is going to continue shaping all of us to bless our world and our community

Jonathan Orwig

Director of Worship and Music



Worship Coordinator/Organist

It truly has been a blessing for me to serve this congregation as Worship Coordinator and Organist. Working with the Sound and Projection Team, I want to thank them for their ministry on Saturday and Sunday mornings. We have lost some of our team this past year, but we have added some new people to the roster and we are thankful for them stepping up and committing their time to our ministry.

Some of our highlights for this past year include: adding a new soundboard, and fixing one of the two projectors that had some issues. We also bought a new wireless microphone for Mark to end some of the issues he was having with the old wireless microphone.

We are still offering an American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter at our 10:30/10:00 service for the hearing impaired. We have an agreement with ASL Interpreting Services to provide us with an interpreter for these services. We have been pleased to have Alan Farnham as our regular interpreter for most of this past year.

Carroll Potter

Worship Coordinator/Organist

Worship Team

This year was a wonderful year for Worship Team. We have grown as a group both in numbers and in relationships. We gained two singers this year as well as a new drummer. We have spent our time producing quality music and challenging ourselves with trickier songs and focused practices. Everyone in the group contributes creative ideas. We work hard to make everyone in the team feel welcomed and loved. Because of this, the overall morale of the team has grown exponentially. We are proud of the music that we play and how we lead our congregation in worship.

Adult Choir

This has been a successful year for the Grace Choir. In August I was pleased to take over as director and was met by a wonderfully dedicated group of singers, who are not afraid to be stretched and challenged. The choir has grown musically this year, and I am grateful for their willingness to share their time and talents each week as worship leaders at 8 and 9am.

We have enjoyed our involvement in worship each Sunday but a highlight of the year was the Advent presentation of "The Promise of Light" in December. We performed at four worship services and were joined by members of the worship team, four talented string players from Blaine High School,

and several other members of the congregation. Special thanks to Jonathan Orwig and Mike Frazier for their fine orchestrations and Pastor Mark Hellmann who not only accompanied the Advent program but has been our wonderful pianist throughout the year. The new choir risers in the sanctuary have been a major

improvement, assisting in the ensemble's ability to hear each other and to be heard better by the congregation. We have welcomed some new choir members this year and are hopeful that our membership will grow.

To God be the glory!

Blessings,

Doreen Hutchings

Director of Grace Choir



Children's Ministries

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

Volunteers

We have a team of over 55 amazing who people make SONday happen each week from our teachers, helpers, greeters, substitutes, Drama and Fun Food Teams, and many helpful hands behind the scenes.

Birthday Offering

We collect offering in honor of the children's birthdays. We have collected \$266.46 which will allow us to purchase 13 flocks of chicks. As many as 500 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. We have learned the Fruits of the Spirit, the Great Commission, and many other verses. Each grade level also works on learning key verses from the Bible and Catechism and receives a Milestone to commemorate their accomplishment. Kids are very excited to receive their Milestone.

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 learning 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 including puppets, drama, video, storytelling, and more.

Service Project

We learned about the wonderful work done by Global Health Ministries. We were able to help be a part of this wonderful ministry by rolling 288 bandages and raising \$78.64. SONday School and RKBC both dedicated a class to this project.





Rockin' Kids Bible Club Highlights

This year, we began with Board Games, just as games have rules, God has rules for us. In the winter/spring, we did "It's a King Thing", as we met the good and not so good kings of the Bible. It's hard to find memory work for our RKBC kids as they know the books of both the Old and New Testament, so we settled on a song that included Psalm 23. All children sang the song to receive their award of a Hershey Bar. Rockin' Kids Bible Club could not happen without a fantastic team of volunteers. They are the heart of the program making connections with the kids and their families.

Nursery Highlights

We are so blessed to have a fantastic team of caring adults and energetic youth who come each week and care for the little ones of Grace. They play with the children, have parades, teach Bible stories, and meet and greet the families. They are an amazing team!

Music Adventure Camp

Jail House Rock was an amazing week, as our musical was set at Camp Koinonia. As our characters experienced thunder storms, we learned about Peter and Paul and their jailhouse experiences. Our 27 campers learned about the power of prayer and trusting Jesus as the solid rock to build their life upon. The Music Adventure Camp includes a staff of fabulous adults and youth who make the experience for everyone amazing!

VBS 2014

Gangway to Galilee – Highlights Gangway to Galilee VBS took us on and around the Sea of Galilee with five accounts of Jesus' ministry there. By grace through faith, Jesus, God's own Son our Savior, calls us, teaches us, keeps us safe, saves us, and provides all we need now and forever. That's amazing grace! We also thank the families for sending their kids and friends to VBS as well as all the help, donations, snacks and volunteers from our Grace families!



Vision Board Candidates

The following candidates are presented by the Grace Lutheran Church Nominations Committee to be elected for the two open Vision Board positions. We want to give thanks for Dennis Grabowski and Alden Riley who have served three years .

The 2015 Vision Board Elections will be held during the 2015 May Congregational Meeting which will be held after all the worship services on May 30th & 31st.

Those who served on the Nominations Committee are: Dennis Grabowski, Lori Ackerson, Vickie Meade, Alden Riley, Daron Yates and Pastor Mark Hellmann.



Chad Hadler

I have been a member of Grace for the past year; before that I attended Grace for 4 years sporadically as my family was working to find our church home. I have lived in multiple locations throughout Minnesota, but for the past 6 years my family has called Andover home. My wife, Leah, and I have been married for the past 9 years and have a 3 year old daughter.

In my professional career, I spent 6 years working for the Boy Scouts of America in the Rochester, MN area. My roll with the Boy Scouts included fundraising, volunteer management, and volunteer recruitment. For the past 8 years I have been working as an Operations Manager for Lake Restoration in Rogers, MN. My role includes budgeting, sales, service, and staff management. I have to be a forward thinker in my professional life and continuously consider the bigger picture, which I intend to bring to the Vision Board if I am elected. Thank you for your consideration; I look forward to serving our faith community.



Doug Hanson

I'm Doug Hanson & I grew up attending church and school at Cross of Christ Lutheran in Coon Rapids. I now live in Ramsey with my wife Angie and our 2 daughters Aria (13) and Danika (10). I work in Elk River as a Mechanical Designer/Drafter at Tescom Corp. We've been coming to Grace for 3 1/2 years and became members shortly after that. We felt welcomed from the very beginning, and Grace is definitely our home. Angie and I have been catechism small group leaders for the past 2 years. We are also on the founding committee for the Just1more5k race, and we help with ushering and communion when needed. I also serve on the Stewardship committee, as well as help with the Family Promise ministry. 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 it's members in any way that I can.





Neil Hawkinson

Greetings. My name is Neil Hawkinson and I am running for a position on the Grace Vision Board. I have been a member of Grace for 7 years. I am a family man with a loving wife and 3 wonderful children. I believe that my experiences, professional life, and faith in our Lord have given me the skills to be a contributing member of the vision board.

In my professional life, I am a product development engineer where I'm tasked with making critical decisions, innovating new designs and processes, and leading project teams. Earlier this year the Holy Spirit called me to participate in the Haiti mission trip where I helped lead the group in building the framework for a chicken coop in Williamson. I am excited for the opportunity to serve on the vision board and I feel that it is the next step in my faith journey to serve the Lord.



Deb Stang

My name is Deb Stang and I am honored to be a nominee to the Vision Board. I met my husband Ed through Grace Lutheran and we have been married for almost 4 years. We have 4 children between the two of us and are happy to have 5 grandchildren to spoil! I am thrilled to be retired, after being a teacher for 35 years in the Osseo School District. In the 5 years I have been at Grace, I have "jumped in with both feet" in a number of areas: offering counter, WOW, scripture/prayer reader, communion server, member of several committees (Women's Ministry, Love of Grace Bazaar, Church Directory,) and a DivorceCare facilitator.

I feel the skills I would bring to the Vision Board are important: team player, organized, detail-oriented, problem-solver, mediator, good listener, and able to put a positive spin on most situations. I would be proud to be a member of the Vision Board, helping to live out God's will.

