



St. Paul reminds the church of this, then and now. God chooses us, to be God's people, to work together to do God's work in this time and place. Let us continue to be faithful followers of Jesus, serving others in his name.

Table of Contents

Parochial Report.....	3
Council and Board Members.....	4
Vision Team Report.....	5
Board of Personnel Report.....	5
Board of Evangelism Report.....	6
Stewardship Report.....	6
Stephen Ministry Report.....	7

Board of Property Report.....	7
Sunday School Report.....	8
Board of Youth Report.....	9
Church in Society Report.....	10 & 11
Board of Fellowship Report.....	12
Board of Worship Report.....	13
Grace Outreach.....	14

“WORSHIP - IT’S GOOD FOR YOUR EVERYDAY LIFE”



Parochial Report

Baptized

3

Membership as of January 1, 2018.....712

Members received During 2018

By Baptism (Children under 15).....4

By Baptism (Adults).....0

By Affirmation of Faith0

By Transfer.....13

From other sources and statistical adjustment.....0

Total Members Received.....17

Members Removed During 2018

By Death.....2

By Transfer.....1

By Request.....13

For other reasons and statistical adjustment.....0

Total Members Removed.....16

Total Membership as of November 15, 2018..... 713

Pastoral Acts 2018

Confirmed

Tessa Atwood
Jack Blokhuis
Mitch Blokhuis
Joey Bohman
Logan Felker
Aria Fischer
Carson Gunderson
Eric Huglen
Braeden Planer
Abigail Schuerman
Nicole Sonnenberg
Dylan Wittenberg

Average

Worship Attendance

135 – 2018
147 – 2017
155 – 2016
173 – 2015
167 – 2014
209 – 2013

Baptisms

Finnley John Henning
Silas Ray Shepherd
Brooke Allison Strangfeld
Madison Rose Strangfeld

Funerals

Don Ewald
Robert Hein*
Sharon Parmelee
Amber Schneider*

Weddings

Forest Passineau and Ashleigh Lingquist
Christopher McRae and Amanda Morzewski
Joshua Thompson and Shelby Krommenakker
Cody Knutson and Brittany Krause

Members Received

David Mazurek
Chelsey Mazurek
Sydney Mazurek
Alayna Mazurek
Nikki VanDenHeuvel
Les Ross
Pam Ross
Mike McGinnis
Jerry Krofta
Susan Krofta
Arnold Strangfeld
Angela Strangfeld
JoAnn Sullivan

*Denotes
Non-Member

Officers and Board Members for 2018

President – Bob Zieroth
 Vice-President – Jim Giese
 Secretary – Anne Lee
 Treasurer – Steve Grant
 Payroll – Lee Lindgren

Board of Worship

Mary Manley - Co-Chair
 Ann Trzinski - Co-Chair
 Sandy Schreier
 Debby Brown
 Laura Haugen
 Barry Trzinski

Board of Education

Lilli Storandt
 Dorothy Freiman
 Chelsey Mazurek

Board of Evangelism

Randy Oleson - Chair
 Mike Schreier
 Brenda Bambenek
 Pat Brott
 Patrick Barrett
 Linda Barrett

Board of Property

Jim Chase- Chair
 Scott Howard
 Jim Kieper
 Jeff Daugherty

Finance Team

Bob Zieroth - Chair
 Tim Blokhuis
 Pam Huntington
 Kristi Holck
 Steve Grant

Board of Stewardship

Board of Fellowship

Sue Powers
 Amy Ewald
 Lynda Olson
 Andrea Kubisiak

Board of Youth

Amy McMillen
 Korey Jacob
 Samantha Krummel
 Joni Feidt

Board of Church-in-Society

Dick Bartosh - Chair
 Noreen Bartosh
 Janet Giese
 Barb Allworden
 Diane Pichelman-Sutherland
 Rick Sutherland

Stephen Ministry

Dorothy Freiman
 Jim Giese
 John Harper

Board of Personnel

Jim Giese - Chair
 Kristi Holck
 Kathy Hess
 John Harper
 Mary Manley

Vision Team Members: Tim Blokhuis, Peg DeLapp, Tim Engelen, Andrea Kubisiak, Rick Merdan, Logan Planer, Sarah Price, Kelsey Sachs, Rachel Seevers, Andrew and Morgan Simon, Pastor Michelle, Bob Zieroth (ex officio).

The Grace 20/20 Vision Team was formed to:

Lead the people of Grace through a time of focused discernment (figuring out) who we are, and what God is calling us to do and be next.

Create opportunities for everyone to be involved and provide input and feedback.

Report to the church council, and the congregation.

Surround this process with prayer, and encourage others to do the same.

In spring 2018, the team focused on discovering the core values for Grace. Core values describe who we are currently as a congregation.

Core Values of Grace Lutheran Church

As followers of Jesus Christ, we value:

Welcoming Worship: We welcome everyone to join our casual worship service of music, prayer, hearing God's word, and Holy Communion.

Faith Family: We share love and fellowship with one another building supportive relationships.

Serving Others: We serve our neighbors using our varied gifts to share God's love.

Education: We provide opportunities for spiritual growth through all ages and stages of life to deepen our relationship with God.

Youth Engagement: We embrace youth in our church family and nurture their faith journey.

The team worked over the summer on learning more about our local community. Their current focus is on looking ahead to our future together and discovering what God is calling us to do and be next.

Board of Personnel Report by Jim Giese

This year, the Board of Personnel continued to work with Pastor Michelle in her acclimation to Grace this year as she becomes more comfortable in getting to know everyone and leading our Grace Visioning process.

The annual staff "check in" meetings were conducted and topics such as job efficiencies, software programs, task distribution, path forward for 2019 were discussed and job descriptions were updated. We are so fortunate to have a hard working and caring staff who make Grace a special place to worship. We look forward to seeing the final work of the Visioning team and doing our part to implement that vision for the future. The board also spent considerable time working on the 2019 budget to be presented in December.

Board of Evangelism Report by Randy Oleson

The Board of Evangelism started this year with Mike Schreier, Brenda Bambenek, Pat Brott and myself. In January, we welcomed new members Patrick and Linda Barrett to our group.



One of the first projects we orchestrated this year was a table at the Dakota Road Concert, where our board distributed items such as cellphone ID holders and magnets with church information on them.

“When one is so full of Jesus, the Good News cannot help but exude into life.”

We organized several Friendship Sunday services as well as our ‘Discover Grace: A Time for Newcomers’ meeting throughout the fall and winter. We completely revised the Discover Grace folders for those meetings. An electronic version of the Family Information form was created for those wishing to join.

The Silent Greeter program was eliminated this year. The congregation has been asked to take over that role and welcome visitors they see at service. The board reminds the congregation of their responsibility two to three times a year.

The Bread Ministry continues delivering bread to first time visitors to thank them for visiting Grace and to provide them with information on joining.

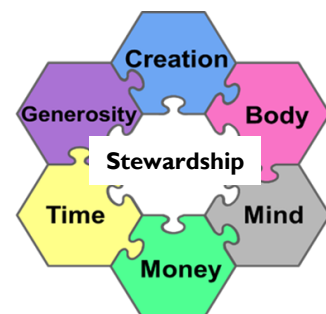


The Board of Evangelism continues to reach out to others and make our visitors feel welcome and give them opportunities to join the church family.

Stewardship Report

Our stewardship focus for 2018 was on putting together some of the pieces of all the various things that stewardship encompasses. Stewardship is the Christian’s response to God’s unending love, mercy, and grace. Recognizing that everything we have is a gift from God to us, we accept responsibility for these gifts, seeking to use them wisely for ourselves, others, and the world. With this in mind, we talked about stewardship of creation, body, mind, money, time, and generosity, with an opportunity to make commitments in each of these areas.

The Board of Stewardship is currently seeking 3-4 people to serve as board members. This group is responsible for guiding the people of Grace in learning about the many different aspects of stewardship and growing in giving of ourselves, our time, and our money. If you are interested in being a part of this group, or know someone with the gifts to serve in this way, please contact Joanne Wayne or Pastor Michelle.





Stephen Ministry at Grace by Dorothy Freiman

The Stephen Ministry logo tells the story of a journey from brokenness to wholeness through the transforming power of the cross of Jesus. It serves as a simple reminder that it is not a Stephen Minister that restores a person, rather it is only through the cross of Jesus that a person can be made whole.

Grace has been blessed with Stephen Ministry since February of 2014. This ministry was started to give more support and care to the members of our congregation. There are times in everyone's life when we need someone to share a burden. In Paul's letter to the Galatians he says "Bear one another's burdens and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ." Stephen Ministry exists for that purpose. A Stephen Minister's role is to listen and care-not to tell anyone what they should think or feel or do. We are the care givers, God is the cure giver. We do that in a confidential and non-judgmental way so members of our Grace family do not have to walk difficult life journeys alone.

Grace is blessed with 15 Stephen Ministers, 7 men and 9 women. We are currently or have ministered to 8 individuals this year. Stephen Ministers have also been delivering communion to members of our congregation that cannot get to church.

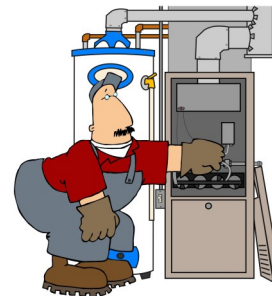
As part of our Ministry, we get together once a month for continuing education. Whenever the topic is relevant to our members, we invite the congregation to attend. We also gather in small groups to affirm the work that we are doing.

If you, a family member, or friend wish to connect with a Stephen Minister, please contact Pastor Michelle at the church office or Jim Giese at 715-213-6326.

GOD'S LOVE IN ACTION

The Board of Property 2018 Annual Report – Jim Chase

Greetings from the Board of Property. We are going to designate 2018 as the year of the furnace. The year started out with the Fellowship Hall furnace going out and it had to be replaced. Throughout the remainder of 2018 we had 3 furnace capacitors fail and the #3 furnace above the Sanctuary had to have a blower motor replacement. Also, we lost the economizer for the furnace that handles the Narthex in the new addition. All In all, we kept Rapids Sheet Metal busy. The spring clean-up went well with the help of some great volunteers. The fall clean-up took place Saturday, November 3rd. We installed some shelving behind the curved wall at the front of the sanctuary. Additionally we had a few minor maintenance issues crop up that we took care of. Except for the furnace issues, we had a pretty good 2018.



Making Bible stories stick is one reason we continue to offer Rotation Sunday School. During the winter, the children experienced these stories for a month at a time; Joseph & His Brothers, God Calls Samuel, Holy Week & Easter and the Good Samaritan. As they heard each story multiple Sundays and experienced God's word through art, games, storytelling, spiritual practices or science they could make connections with what God is doing in their lives. The preschool class continued to flourish, as Amanda Whipple and Heidi Slinkman dedicated their Sunday mornings to building relationships with the little ones and their families, even inviting the families into the classroom for special celebrations.

To keep the kids involved during the summer, we hosted Vacation Bible School on July 31st, August 1st & 2nd. ***Our Shipwrecked VBS had the biggest attendance in 10 years!*** Sharing the message of how "Jesus Rescues Us" with 50 kids and 20 teens. Three days of non-stop music, games, Bible adventures, snacks, friends and more!



We "walked with Jesus" into the new Sunday School program year at Rally Day in September. We invited Faith Explorers (1st-4th graders) and Little Lambs (preK – kindergarten) to join us for games, crafts and songs. We revitalized our Facebook page (Grace Sunday School WR), inviting families to view photos, updates, reminders and other information about Sunday School. Pastor Michelle offered a Backpack Blessing for youth at the beginning of the school year. Each student received a keyring to remind them of God's love every day.

Once again, we used our clipboard sign-ups to invite members to teach or help with the Faith Explorers Sunday School program; we've found it's a great way to add new faces to our rotations. Amanda Whipple continues to passionately commit her time to teach the Little Lambs group, with help from youth members Sarah Price, Adam Price, Angel Francis and Joey Bohman.



Our fall rotations included Creation and The Lord's Prayer. Sunday School youth even shared a song they learned, "God Created," during worship in October. We will finish the calendar year with A Baby Is Born rotation, culminated by our children's Christmas Program entitled "The Sounds of Christmas," using songs and a narrated story with sound effects to tell the story of Jesus' birth.

Grace Board of Youth Report: Growing in Faith and Fellowship

9

Members Include: Kevin Cushman, Amy McMillen, Joni Feidt, Samantha Krummel, Heather Friday, Korey Jacob



January

- * Confirmation class built tents
- * Camp staff visited Grace youth

February

- * Annual Junior High Youth Gathering in Manitowoc (worshiped in the form of singing, dancing, serving, large group speakers and small break out sessions) with one of our own on the youth board
- * Game night at Grace



March

- * Youth served food at the Grace Dinner Theater
- * Wednesdays, volunteers setup, served and cleaned up Lenten Soup Suppers
- * Youth served at Empty Bowls



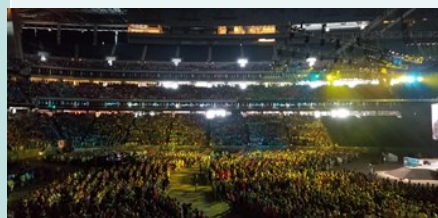
April

- * Attended concert by Mark Kroos at Trinity Lutheran Church in Stevens Point



May

- * Held semi-annual Kids vs. Adults kickball game



June

- * Junior High Confirmation Camp

Our 2018 Grace Graduates

July

- * National Youth Gathering, Houston, TX



August

- * Ate dinner at El Mezcal with group who had attended the National Youth Gathering
- * Helped with VBS

September

- * Helped with Sunday School Rally Day
- * Held tailgate pizza party at church & then enjoyed LHS football game.
- * Played Kids vs. Adults 2nd semi-annual kick-ball game



October

- * Ninth grade Confirmation students completed their faith projects
- * Ninth grade students were confirmed
- * Haunted House at the Community Theater
- * Matched Prayer Friends with 7th graders



November

- * Senior High Youth Gathering, with service project, took place in Manitowoc, WI. Avery and Sarah, Kevin and Amy attended.



December activity:

- * Will go Christmas Shopping and wrap gifts for those in need. Then we'll have pizza at church.

Grace Lutheran Church – Church-in-Society Annual Report

10

“God’s Work – Our Hands”

The purpose of the Board of Church in Society is to provide opportunities for members of Grace Lutheran Church to live out their faith as active, compassionate, caring, and generous children of God to people in the local community & the world. The theme of the ELCA’s Church-in-Society efforts is , “God’s Work – Our Hands”.

Many worthwhile activities were accomplished and opportunities were promoted in 2018. Many people participated; everyone is encouraged to be involved. Special efforts have been made to include our youth. We have also highlighted resources available through the ELCA.org.

January – Many members helped with preparation and serving at the Neighborhood Table meal on January 4th. This event was coordinated by MariJo Zieroth.

February - ELCA.org Good Gifts promotion for Valentine’s Day – Joanne made a very nice display.

A Personal Care Products Appeal was made for the Family Center and SWEPS.

March – Items for “Coats for Kids” and “If the Shoe Fits” (socks, underwear, shoes) were delivered to the Caring Closet. The Caring Closet is a United Way effort to help the “Keep Kids Warm Program”, by donating coats, boots, snow pants, winter hats, gloves, mittens and scarves to students in need. Students who need outer clothing can contact their school social worker or counselor.

- A forum was held about homelessness in South Wood County, including its impact on local schools.

April – Grace became one of ten area Christian churches from ten denominations (and growing) who are joining together to form Love INC to help those in need in our community by empowering them.

June – We sponsored the Neighborhood Table June 21st. Many thanks to MariJo Zieroth for coordinating this event and to all the awesome volunteers who served.

- A canned food sculpture was made for the “United We Can” Event on Thurs., June 7th at Witter Field. All the food was donated to the Hunger Coalition. Grace donated 375 cans of food and 47 cans of coffee.

- Dave Guse, pastor of Port Edwards United Methodist and board president for Helping Hands Gospel Mission, an organization which helps the homeless, met with the CIS board to talk about potential support for their work. No commitments were made.

July – Red Cross Blood Drive was held at Grace July 10th. Connie Eisch coordinated this event. 31 units of blood were donated, including 7 units from first-time donors.



cont...

- A Stuff the Bus collection was held at Grace. The drive to collect needed school supplies ended on August 1st during Vacation Bible School. This was a VBS service project.

August – Donations for the Caring Closet continued. The most urgent need was for elementary boys clothing.

September – ELCA's *God's Work - Our Hands* was celebrated September 16th at "Share Some Sunshine Sunday". We provided flowers for members to assemble bouquets for shut-ins and others who needed cheering up. Notes of encouragement were sent to several persons. Quilters displayed their special talents too.

- A Grace Golf Outing was also held September 16th at Tri-City Golf Course. At least 21 members enjoyed the best-ball scramble.

- *God's Work - Our Hands* T-shirts were ordered for several members. These T-Shirts have Grace Lutheran printed on them.

- We coordinated an adult forum on Gun Violence in our schools September 23rd. Andy Simon provided good input. A special invitation was sent to Kevin to encourage middle school and high school students to attend.

October – Several items of clothing (mostly socks and shoes) were delivered to the Caring Closet.

- Over 50 beautiful quilts were made by a very dedicated group of quilters here at Grace. They work year round to send quilts on the Lutheran World Relief boxcar in the fall.

- We coordinated an adult forum on opioids and addictions October 21st.

- Provided Chuck Green (a work crew supervisor with Habitat) with a list of volunteers who will work on Habitat for Humanity Projects. A house will be started in the spring of 2019.

November – The "Fair Trade Fair" will be held Sunday November 18th. Our Fair Trade Fair will promote ELCA Good Gifts; Beads for Life and "Fair Trade" items made in Nicaragua. A grant was awarded from Thrivent for \$250 to be used for this event. Janet Giese and MariJo Zeroth will coordinate it.

- Donations for Coats for Kids, "If the Shoe Fits", and Caring Closet continue.

December – These activities will be promoted:

- We will sponsor a December 21st blood drive at Grace.

- Throughout the year, we collect donations for "If the Shoe Fits". This has been an on-going effort to gather shoes, socks, and underwear for the Caring Closet, which provides needed items to students in the Wisconsin Rapid's School District.

Thank you very much to all who made generous donations.

Church-in-Society Board Members: Barb Allworden, Janet Giese, Rick and Diane Sutherland and Dick and Noreen Bartosh

Respectfully submitted by

Dick Bartosh, bartosar@wctc.net



Grace Board of Fellowship Report

12

Creating events that bring people together.

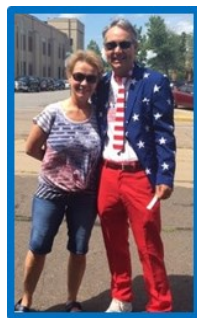
2018 board members include: Amy Ewald, Joanne Wayne, Lynda Olson and Andrea Kubisiak.

In **January**, we set up the gathering space and provided refreshments for a reception during the Dakota Road concert intermission on Saturday evening. We also prepared a welcoming space in the fellowship hall and provided lunch for a roundtable discussion with the band members following worship on Sunday.

In **April**, we added festive décor and set the tables; to match the wonderful annual Easter brunch served by the men of Grace.



In **May**, we all had a blast at a church picnic and ice cream social held at Lake Arrowhead. Young and old enjoyed the music by Tilly's Village, games, water and a finger lickin' good chicken dinner.



In early **July**, we coordinated an afternoon of fun at a Rafters game with a picnic and time to cheer on the Grace choir as they sang the national anthem to open the game.

In fall, we started a new program called 'Meet Ya There!' that combines time for fellowship with events that support Grace members.

In **September**, we joined together for dinner at the Wild Horse Saloon and then headed over to the LHS football field to catch a football game, with sideline and halftime entertainment.

In **October**, we enjoyed the Halloween Aid benefit with a WRCT Nachthexen witch dance and a Dance with Pam Thriller performance followed by dessert at Perkins.

In **November**, we are hosting the annual pie social following the Thanksgiving service.

In **December**, we'll be coordinating another 'Meet Ya There!' event.





Lent



Board of Worship



Our highlight of the year was in January, when the Dakota Road band held a Saturday evening concert and led a Sunday morning worship service. Dakota Road is a Praise Band that writes and performs music used in many contemporary and praise services. Throughout 2018, we learned and incorporated their music into both our 10:30 a.m. contemporary and 8 a.m. traditional services. In addition to the concert, Dakota Road and musicians/leaders of Grace discussed “contemporary worship” as a casual welcoming atmosphere, with lay person language and contemporary music, recognizing people have different interpretations of “contemporary.”

Our board also developed offering cards to be placed in the black welcome books during worship. Congregation members who participate in Simply Giving are encouraged to place a card in the offering plate each Sunday in recognition of their dedicated financial contribution to Grace.



We utilized the Holden Evening Prayer service for Lent and Advent Wednesday evening services and enjoyed the round robin of Pastors in the area during Lent. The Board also coordinated gifts of flowers for our Easter service, to beautify our worship space, and honor people close to congregation members.

We held an outdoor service in July, honoring God’s creation of nature, where the congregation made their own “creatures” with play-dough, and a noisy offering was collected for Pine Lake Camp. Our board continues to invite congregation members to share their talents to enhance worship through choir, drama, dance, children’s time, special music, and selected readings during worship throughout the year. Several youth members have recently signed up to share their gifts of music with the congregation, and we look forward to hearing them during special music time in the upcoming year. The Have Mercy band has added a new drummer and an additional guitarist. Both have been a welcome addition.



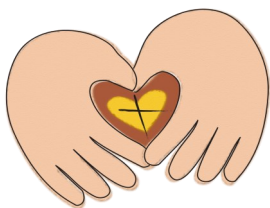
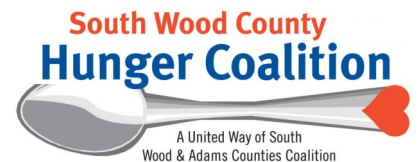
We are looking forward to the upcoming Advent and Christmas season where we will be enhancing worship with Advent skits on Wednesday evenings, and once again decorating our worship space with a theme of nature.

Board members include: Debby Brown, Sandy Schreier, Barry Trzinski, Laura Haugen, with Ann Trzinski and Mary Manley as co-chairs. Anyone with ideas for worship is encouraged to speak with a board member.



Grace Outreach

People of Grace, thank you for the wide variety of ways you support other organizations in the Rapids area community with your time, skills, donations of needed items, and monetary gifts. The work of these community groups could not happen without you and your generosity. We know there are a great many causes and organizations you might choose to support, and are grateful you have chosen to partner with us, to better serve the people of our community together. Thank you.



'Matthew 25:35-40

For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.' "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?" "The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'"

Connecting with Grace

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(715) 423-2330

Email: glcwroffice@gmail.com
www.facebook.com/gracelutheranchurchwrapids

Pastor Michelle Nickodemus
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Joanne Wayne: Ministry Coordinator
Email: talksonphone@yahoo.com

Kevin Cushman: Youth Ministries
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Susan Jacobson: Administrative Assistant
Email: glcwroffice@gmail.com