



**Celebrating 50 Years of Grace**  
**September 10, 1967 - September 10, 2017**

**grace**  
remember • rejoice • renew



## Acknowledgements

### **50th Anniversary Planning Team**

Joel and Becky Anderson (Chairs), Debie Brink (Block Party), Dianne & Dennis Grabowski (Publicity), Don Krook (Gifts of Grace), John Peterson (History), and Jamie Zupon (Gifts of Grace).

### **Block Party Planning Team**

Debie Brink, Jeannie Hellmann, Ann Lange, Karen Fisher, Michelle Behnke-Nead, Gail Evans, Carol Mercuri, Gayle Pacholl, Carla Renner, & Karen Roche.

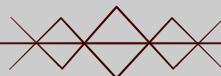
### **Brochure**

Contributors: Sue Melody, Beth Schaefer, Mark & Jeannie Hellmann, Steve McKinley, John Peterson & Phil Knutson. Front Cover: Emma Krom.

### **Special Thanks**

A special word of thanks to Pastor Norris Swenson for his video recording and all the background insights he provided!

An added word of gratitude to Bishop Ann Svennungsen, Pastor Steve McKinley, and the various former staff members who helped make this celebration a time to Remember, Rejoice and Renew!





August 17, 2017

Dear Friends and Members,

What a joyous moment to celebrate these 50 years of being the ministry of Grace in the heart of Andover and beyond! It is a time to remember, rejoice and renew as we bring to mind those 116 people who gathered on September 10, 1967 in the gym at Wilson Elementary School for the first time to begin a new church. Could they have ever envisioned the ways in which God would bless and shape us these past years, by the love he's given in our Lord Jesus Christ?

How essential it is for us to remember that we have not done this by ourselves! Not only have there been many who have given, sacrificed and served, paving the way for where we are 50 years later, but this is all the result of God's grace! One of my favorite Bible verses reminds me that a church like Grace is a work of God's mercy:

**But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.**

1 Peter 2:9-10 (NRSV)

I am reminded that it's all by God's grace and mercy. I believe that's why it is so important to remember all the people, events, pastors, staff members, and ministries which have been a part of our church these past 50 years. For as we remember, we see how God's Spirit has been at work in us, so that we rejoice and renew our call to "proclaim the mighty acts" of God no matter where he calls us!

I hope you enjoy this 50th Anniversary Brochure which summarizes the many ways in which we have transformed these past five decades. As you read through it, I hope you are filled with the same wonder, gratitude and excitement as I have at what has been done through us. As we frequently say: "we are blessed to be a blessing to others." This is true and I pray it will continue throughout the next 50 years!

Come and join us as we Remember, Rejoice and Renew!!

In Him,

Pastor Mark A. Hellmann

# remember

**The process of recalling the past, especially the presence and activity of God in the history of his people.**

*Remember the wonderful works God has done,  
his miracles, and the judgments he has uttered,  
Psalm 105:5*

It all starts so simply...a knock on the door, a visit made after dinner, or an informational brochure placed in a mailbox, mixed together with lots of prayer and hard work, and then, a church is born. Such is the humble beginning of Grace Lutheran Church of Andover, Minnesota, when Pastor Norris Swenson began knocking on the doors of the growing

community surrounding Anoka, Minnesota fifty years ago.

## **1967- 1981 The Beginning Years**

It didn't take very long...less than three months of visiting with interested families; then the first worship service was held September 10, 1967 in the Wilson Elementary School Gymnasium. It was an

exciting moment when 116 people showed up under the basketball hoops to sing, pray, and celebrate God's message of love and grace for the world, that is found in Jesus Christ. With little resources or supplies, this infant church was blessed with lots of children, devoted parents and leaders, and a mission-minded pastor, called to build a ministry of grace for all who wanted to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.



**Pastor Norris Swenson and Grace Lutheran Church on Charter Sunday - December 3, 1967**



First Building Unit - April 20, 1969

The early days of infancy were not easy. How do you have a visible and constant presence in the community when you pack away your church into a school closet after Sunday morning worship? How do you hold catechism and Bible studies during the week without a regular place to meet? How do you worship on special holidays when the school building is filled with other events?

It became abundantly clear to church leaders that a building needed to be built and lo, two and a half years from the very first worship service, Grace dedicated its new church building amid the corn fields at the corner of Round Lake and Bunker. With a new home and a deep sense of togetherness, Grace Lutheran Church began to grow in earnest. Just a few short months later, a second worship service was added to serve the fast - growing church family.

The first dozen or so years of Grace was a time of inward focus, as a considerable amount of time, energy and financial resources were invested in growing Sunday School and Confirmation ministries. Even before the first building unit was dedicated on April 9, 1969, planning was underway to add more space with an addition. So in 1981 a larger worship space, a nursery and new offices were added. It was a

busy time! It was an exciting time!

But these early years weren't just about constructing a church home, it was also a time to take an important step to serve the community, and Golden Rule Daycare was begun in 1972. Its mission was to help support and encourage parents of double-income families needing quality childcare. From its earliest moments, Golden Rule proved to be an integral part of the ministry of Grace, providing a significant opportunity to be a loving, Christ-like ministry of grace in the hearts of countless children in our surrounding communities.

Grace grew in more ways than just numbers. As Grace's first Pictorial Family Directory notes:

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**"But more than numerical growth is the Christian growth that will take place in the life of each member who is affiliated, or who will affiliate with the congregation...and their efforts together to worship and honor God, to serve the Living Christ in this community and throughout the world in word and in loving action."**

**From the First Pictorial Directory - 1969**

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## What was it like in the early years of Grace Lutheran Church?

The following are memories from the six original Charter Members who are still involved at Grace Lutheran Church.

### Karla Qualey

"I remember being confused and asking my mother: "Why are we having church in the school lunch room?" We lived very close to the school and walked to church. I remember babysitting for Pastor Swenson."

### Phil Knutson

"I remember the portable pulpit we used for the pastor. We stored it in a chicken coop during the week."

### Flossie Knutson

"Everyone had to wear many hats during those days. There just weren't enough people to fill up all the spots...it was noisy in that gym. The squeaks of the chairs echoed!"

### Bev Tkachenko

"There wasn't a baptismal font that I remember. I think they borrowed my mother-in-law Mabel Erickson's pitcher and basin and used that on the altar for baptisms."

### Heidi Johnson

"I was three at the time so I don't remember anything, but my mother told me that she was often stopped by members of the church because she dressed me and my twin

sisters in the same outfits. Everyone thought the triplets were "cute."

### Doris Boie

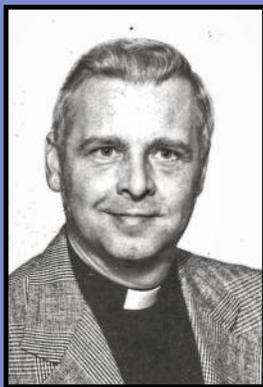
"I remember working in the kitchen when the new church was built."

All of our charter members fondly remember those "early days of Grace!"

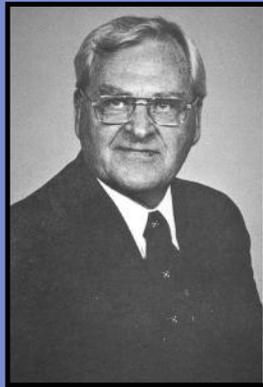


Charter Members from the left: Phil Knutson, Bev Tkachenko, Heidi Johnson, Flossie Knutson, Doris Boie and Karla Qualey(seated)

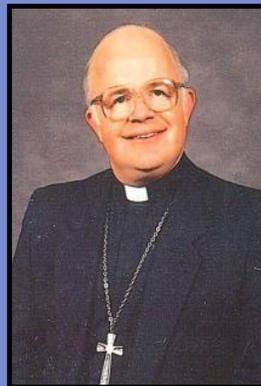
## Senior Pastors of Grace Lutheran Church - 1967 - 2017



Norris Swenson  
1967 - 1975



Doug Pearson  
1976 - 1981



Steven McKinley  
1982 - 1994



Mark Hellmann  
1995 - 2017

These years of Grace were a time of growing fellowship and connection opportunities. Pot luck dinners were a common occurrence, providing wonderful fellowship and friendships for many. There were special outreach moments such as the Wild Game Scholarship Dinners, the outdoor worship services at the Ramblin' Rum Campground, the joint sponsorship of a Vietnamese family with Mt. Olive Lutheran Church of Anoka, and the many trips to the Metrodome to work at concession stands as fundraisers.

Pastoral change and transition were also a part of these early years as Pastor Swenson received a call in 1975 to serve a church in Iowa. After a year of discernment, Grace called Doug Pearson to serve, as Senior Pastor and build the ministries of Grace. Known as a gifted preacher, the church continued to grow and flourish under his leadership until his retirement in 1981. Once again, the church began another pastoral search and Steve McKinley accepted the call to serve as the Senior Pastor.

## 1982 – 1995 The Growing Years of Childhood



Pastor Steve McKinley breaks ground for addition.

The years that followed saw a significant change in Grace's context for ministry. When Pastor McKinley arrived, an old farm on the northwest corner of Round Lake Boulevard and Bunker Lake Boulevard was the only other occupant of the intersection. A stop sign on the corner was the only



Grace Lutheran Church in 1982

traffic control north of Highway 10. There were a few houses between the church and Highway 10, but no businesses, and then the roadside was clear in both directions all the way to Main Street and the Federal Cartridge property. Andover was still considered a suburb of Anoka, and the church's official address was Anoka. In 1980 the population of Andover was 9300; by 1990 it had grown to 15,300; by 2000, 26,000. (Today it is approximately 30,000.)

The growth of Andover meant growth for Grace. Soon there were so many children in Sunday School that a second Sunday morning session was added. Barb Jones joined the staff to direct youth ministry. Under her dynamic leadership, young people from Grace crisscrossed the country on mission trips. The Motion Choir, a sacred dance group directed by Debbie Wallace, regularly enhanced Sunday morning worship. When Barb left to become a teacher, she was succeeded by Lori Carpenter, Sarah Moat (now Pastor Sarah Moat of Gethsemane Lutheran in Hopkins) and Tim Johnson.

Grace also served as an internship training ground for Pastors Liane Rock, John O'Neal, Nitza Rosario, and Vicky Pedersen.

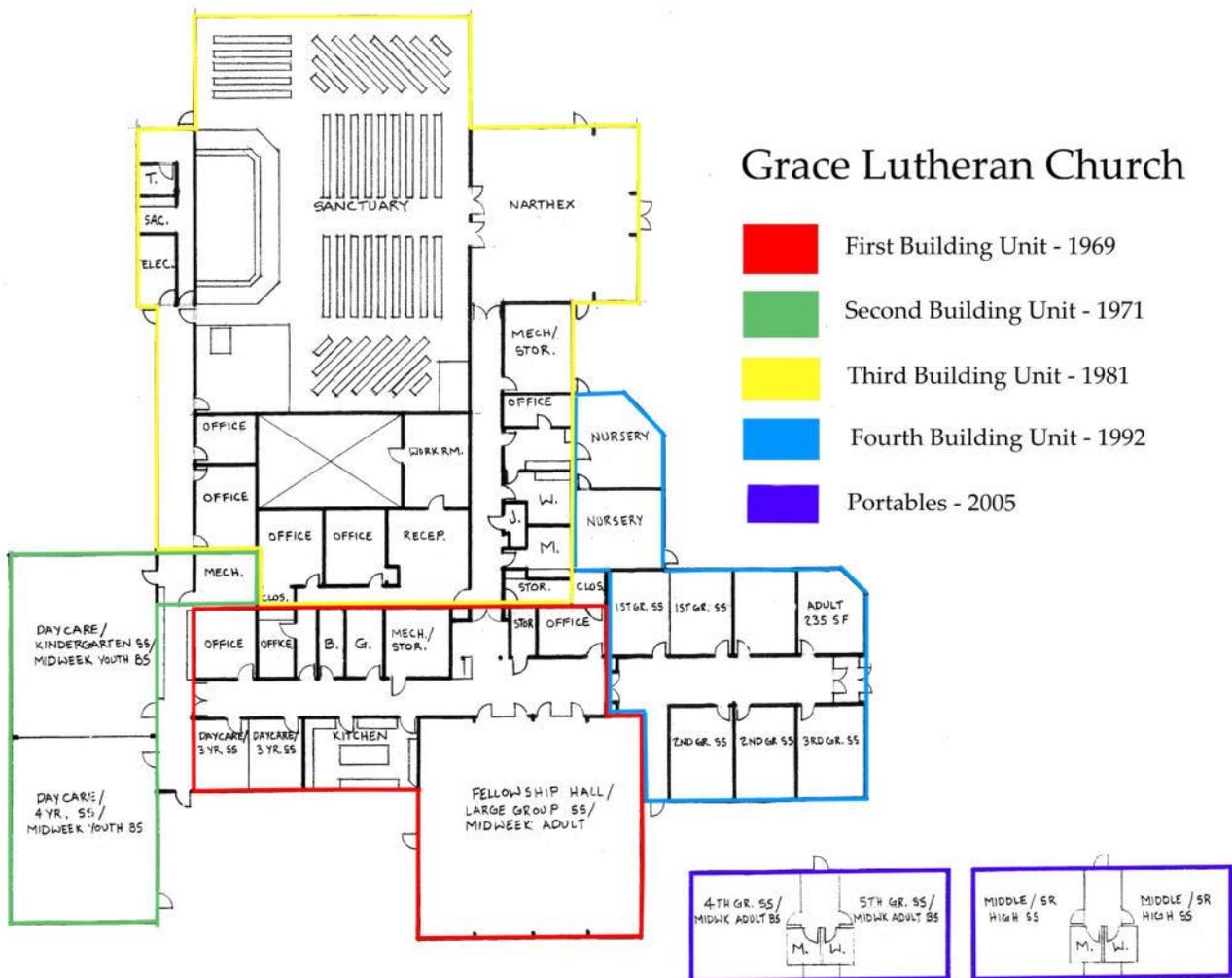
Congregational life was booming with organizations and activities ranging from the Love of Grace Auction to hosting a Jobs in Transition group for the unemployed. Two associate pastors came to serve with Pastor McKinley. Helen Johnson was the first in 1987. She was succeeded a few years later by Pastor Steve McGinley. (It was a test of the congregation's persistence and sense of humor when its two pastors were named Steve McKinley and Steve McGinley. Fortunately, Pastor McGinley, the young, tall, thin one with a full head of hair, went by "Skip," relieving some of the frustration for secretary Gloria Frederickson.)

Congregational growth inevitably led to a fourth building project. Encouraged by a fabulously successful "Growing Faith, Building Grace" capital fund appeal, the congregation was able to add meeting rooms, expand the nursery, upgrade the sound system, refine the landscaping, and enhance the sanctuary. All this happened in 1992 under the direction of a Building Committee chaired by Charlie Wold.

At the same time, Grace was building a relationship with Pastor George Harris and El Shaddai, an African-American ministry in south Minneapolis,



## Building Additions



which developed into a pulpit exchange between the pastors.

Pastor McKinley left Grace in 1994, having accepted a call to become senior pastor at House of Prayer Lutheran Church in Richfield.

## 1995 – 2007 Years of Outward Focus

As the needs and self-



One of the significant turning points during this time came as community, civic, school, law-enforcement, and business leaders were invited to explore, with the leadership of Grace, various ways in which Grace could serve the community.

It was at this moment that the skateboard parking lot ministry was conceived and launched, with the support of the Anoka-Hennepin Community Education, to help meet the needs of middle-school students often left unsupervised at home. The skateboard park was wildly successful, reaching upwards to 200 youth skating and biking through the various ramps and jumps. More importantly,

the excitement of seeing the needs of youth being met became



centeredness of childhood give way to a more outward focus of adolescence, so too, Grace grew both a strong inward spiritual focus and a distinct external serving mentality beyond the walls as Mark Hellmann was called in 1995 to be Grace's fourth Senior Pastor.



contagious and Grace began to grow outreach ministries such as:

- Our Savior's Shelter
- Family Table
- May All Be Fed

Food Pantry

Another important step of growing a more outward focus came when Crooked Lake Elementary School was closed unexpectedly due to a mold issue, and the church leadership offered our facilities short-term to the school board to house the students. It was a couple wild weeks of wonderful chaos and welcome as Grace opened our doors to 350 students. More importantly, it was another step for us to learn firsthand that our church exists for others, not only for ourselves!

It was during the development of a 10-year ministry plan entitled Vision 2000 that the leadership discovered the most effective way of growing an outward serving mentality is to focus inwardly on spiritual formation. To encourage this process, Grace:

- Developed the Welcome, Encourage, and Equip Mission Statement to emphasize that pastors and staff are to equip and train members to do the work of the ministry.
- Identified the Seven Habits of Effective Discipleship to help members grow spiritually.
- Began congregational care opportunities: Stephen Ministry and Care Ministry.
- Promoted small group Bible studies to grow biblical knowledge.
- Purchased pew Bibles and video projectors to enhance worship services.
- Moved from a traditional church council organizational model, to a more organic Vision Board and a gift-based ministry team approach.

It was during this time that Grace was given a unique opportunity to purchase an additional 9.2 acres near the corner of Nightingale and Crosstown Blvd. to provide for long-term growth of the congregation. The church leadership hired the

Cunningham Group to assess the needs of our facilities, as well as the growth potential of our church. The result of the study suggested that a multi-site model of ministry might be best to reach our full potential. The church took a year to prayerfully discern whether we should move to the other site or work to be multi-site. Although the consensus was that we did not want to abandon our facilities at Round Lake, we were not in a strong enough position as far as debt load, staff development, and repair of the Round Lake facilities to take steps toward multi-site ministry.

However, since that time, we are thrilled to

provide land for the Andover Community Gardens as we wait to plan future possibilities.

It was during the early 2000's that Grace matured and grew. The average worship attendance grew to nearly 600. The 18-year journey to become a full 10% tithe church started to make a difference. Long-term debt was addressed in the Giving Grace Freedom capital fund drive. Life-changing spiritual formation ministries like Christ Renews His Parish Renewal and W.O.W. (Women on Wednesday) were begun and made a big impact in the life of our church. In addition, adult mission trips to Grand Forks, ND, Louisiana, and Arizona gave us

## **Grace Mission Statement**

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

- **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.**



opportunities to put faith into action, as we extended the ministries of Grace thousands of miles beyond our walls and served those in need. Perhaps one of the most significant mission steps began with what was first known as the Phoebe Project and later morphed into Grace4Tanzania. This ministry involved loading 40-foot shipping containers with bicycles, medical supplies, clothes, and school supplies and it gave us our first international opportunity! This unique outreach was followed up by building several playgrounds in the country of Lesotho in South Africa.

## 2007 to present Maturing Years of Young Adulthood

In 2007, Grace undertook the REVEAL Spiritual Life Survey to assess the effectiveness of our adult education and worship ministries. The REVEAL Survey revealed that Grace had many members who were more in the beginning stages of spiritual formation, and if our church wanted to become more effective in equipping and growing disciples, then we would need to invest in more spiritual growth opportunities.

The survey results led the Vision Board to begin another envisioning process called Focus 2020 to discern ministry plans for the next ten years. Dr. Craig Van Gelder from Luther Seminary was hired as a consultant and Grace began an exhaustive and detailed study of our church. Some of the major results of Focus 2020 were:

- A Missional Focus – questions like: “Why did God place our church at the corner of Bunker and Round Lake?” “Where is God active and already working in the nearby neighborhood?” “How can we join God in what he is already doing outside our church?” were asked and discussed.
- The additional word “SENDS” was added to our “Welcome, Encourage, Equip” mission statement.
- The growth of local and global outreach ministries: Family Promise, Global Health, Sand Creek Elementary School, Andover Community Gardens, Feed My Starving Children.
- Five Core Values were developed: weCONNECT, weGROW, weEQUIP, weSERVE, weLUTHERAN. Pastor Steve Thomason was called to implement these values.
- The start of ALPHA and Sunday Evenings@GRACE for intentional adult spiritual formation opportunities.



WORSHIP



PRAYER



VITAL  
RELATIONSHIPS



BIBLE STUDY



SERVICE



GIVING



SHARING  
MY FAITH

**WeConnect**



**WeGrow**



**WeEquip**



**WeServe**



**WeLutheran**



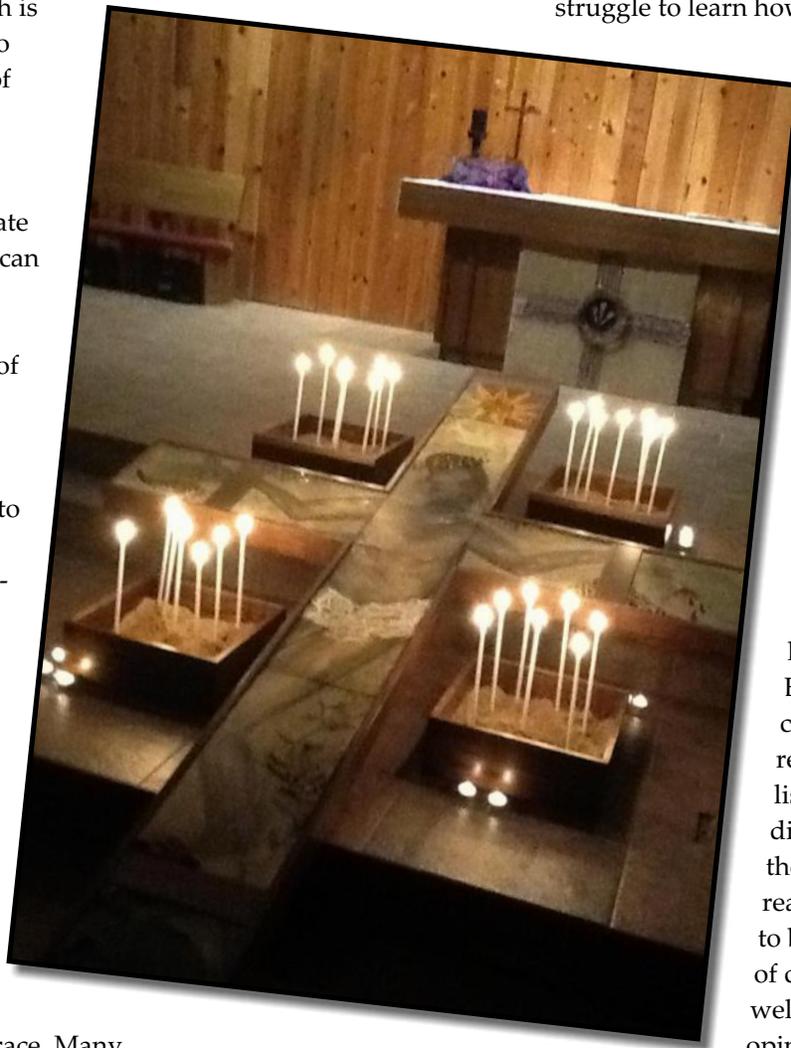
- The decision to hold a capital fund drive to reduce the debt and remodel the Round Lake facilities to prepare for a possible new missional ministry at the Nightingale site.

Respectful conversations ensued. Lots of prayer was offered. Convinced that a church had a larger mission to model grace, forgiveness, love and unity to the world, the Vision Board voted to remain in the ELCA. This however, did not mean Grace would not struggle to learn how to live out our name!

Every so often, a church is given an opportunity to redefine itself in light of cultural changes, demographic shifts, or decisions made at a denominational or a state level. (These moments can either be moments of disagreement and disunity OR moments of fruitful dialog, understanding and accord.) Such were the decisions of the ELCA to ordain people in long-term, committed, same-sex relationships as pastors in 2009 and Minnesota's approval of same - sex marriages in 2013.

**2009 – The ELCA Decision to Ordain Pastors in Longterm Committed Same-sex Relationships**

These were challenging times at Grace. Many wanted to vote to leave the ELCA. Others felt compelled by our mission statement that we had to be open and welcoming to all people, regardless of their sexual orientation. Bible studies were given.



**Minnesota's Decision About Same - Sex Marriage**

When Minnesota approved same-sex marriage in 2013, the Vision Board decided to invest an entire year of **Holy Conversations** to study, discuss, and discern whether Grace would welcome same-sex weddings. Ten meetings were held over the year. Each meeting was characterized by respectful, active listening and fruitful dialogue. At the heart of the discussion was the realization that we desire to be an "Open Set" type of church, which welcomes diversity of opinions, thoughts, and understanding, yet we are

all unified by the mission of Jesus Christ. In May of 2014, the Vision Board unanimously approved same-sex weddings in our church for those who are actively involved at Grace.

Was it easy? No! Was everyone at peace? No! Did some members find they could no longer be a part of our church? Yes. However, in retrospect, the Holy Conversations process, as well as the decision to host same-sex weddings at Grace was another defining moment of rediscovering what it means to be a ministry of grace in the heart of Andover, as well as learning to trust God to bring healing and peace through difficult times.

In addition to what we learned about the mission of extending grace to all kinds of people, he continued to give us mission opportunities to reach far beyond our walls to share God's blessings. Two significant ministries developed: Grace2Haiti and Grace4Rakai.

**Grace2Haiti**

It's been five years since Grace sent its first of many adult mission teams to Williamson, Haiti to work in collaboration with World Wide Village Ministries. Over the years, many Grace mission teams have helped construct homes, churches, schools, chicken coops, a health clinic, and wells for this struggling community located north of Port-au-Prince. But more important than the construction projects, vital relationships were built between Grace's team members and Haitians, as our

mission work blossomed and grew. For example, during one trip a few years ago, the Grace team met several young children recently abandoned by their



parents. As a result, hearts were touched, inspired and changed, as our Abandoned Children's Ministry was created to support ten abandoned children with housing, clothing, and food. We celebrate how

Grace2Haiti continues to create a spiritual transformation tool God uses to grow faith in people.

**Grace4Rakai**

Grace has embraced and enhanced mission

opportunities during the last seven years with the people of Rakai, located in southwest Uganda, where the AIDS epidemic first began. Starting first as a Lent project, our church helped build two water containment systems at a school, supported an agricultural program to empower farming efforts, funded the Amazing Grace Bakery, and grew the support of 90 Rakai children for schooling and living expenses. Currently Grace is a major supporter of a new school - dormitory complex slated to open in February 2018. In addition, four members of the Grace4Rakai Ministry Team travelled to Uganda last October to bring gifts and letters to the Grace-sponsored children and build relationships with our ministry partners in Rakai.

**Free 2B GRACE**

Just as we have grown missional focus beyond our walls, we have also grown a spirit of generosity and stewardship through Free 2B



GRACE. This five-year capital campaign addressed our debt load, critical building needs and mission outreach. Since 2012 we have lowered our mortgage debt by \$550,000, made significant improvements to our facility, and given over \$70,000 to mission, both locally and globally. The lesson we have learned is this: God has blessed us to be a blessing! As we embrace God's generosity in the gift of Jesus, we respond in like manner...being generous with our time, talents and money.



### THE PRESENT

Now at the age of 50 years, Grace Lutheran Church stands on a strong and firm foundation, built upon the sacrifices and gifts of the men, women, and children who have been a part of our journey of grace through the years. God has blessed us richly with his Spirit, which has continually grown us deeper into God's love that has been revealed in Jesus. It is his work! It is his action! It is his blessings of grace which has led us this far. So we sing and give thanks as we remember what God has done!



# grate rejoice

***To feel happy or show great happiness about something.  
To be glad. To rejoice exceedingly. To be well, thrive.***

*These I remember and I pour out my soul within me:  
that I would go with the multitude;  
I led them in procession to the house of God,  
with a voice of rejoicing and thanksgiving, a crowd celebrating a festival.*  
Psalm 42:4 (LEB)

In these past 50 years, we have much to rejoice about as we celebrate what God has done in and through us. God has blessed us with wonderful pastors, passionate staff and gifted leaders, Sunday School, VBS and Catechism teachers, as well as members who have faithfully gathered in worship and served those in need. Furthermore, we have been gifted with a remodeled facility and two great locations to ensure a fruitful future. All of these observations bring to light that we have been blessed in so many ways.

Additionally, there are two specific areas in which we REJOICE and celebrate what God has done and continues to do...

## **\* Lives Touched by Grace**

On the following pages, you will find personal stories of how the grace of God and our church community named Grace have enriched and empowered the lives of many. His grace is truly amazing! And once again, we rejoice in our Lutheran roots of God's forgiving and redeeming grace that touches lives forever!

## **\* Lives Transformed by Mission**

Our current outreach ministries are highlighted on the the following pages so that together we may celebrate how God's grace transforms us all, as individuals and as a faith community. We strive to be the hands and feet of Jesus in this world. And our lives are literally transformed as we join God's mission of loving others and sharing his grace within our homes, throughout our neighborhoods and around the world.

## CURRENT OUTREACH MINISTRIES

Striving to be “a ministry of grace in the heart of Andover ... and beyond,” we rejoice and celebrate how we reach out to others with Christ’s love, both locally and globally.

### Faith & Community Partnership with Sand Creek Elementary School

School supplies are collected and special gifts given to support students and encourage staff, and God’s grace is also shared through Adopt a Family program at Christmas, Easter and Thanksgiving.

### Family Promise

Volunteers provide safe shelter and warm hospitality for local families experiencing homelessness, as our church hosts Family Promise

guests four weeks each year.

### Family Table Meal

This faithful ministry team prepares and serves a complimentary dinner to guests from our local community on the third Sunday of each month.

### Feed My Starving Children

Countless volunteers pack life-saving meals that are shipped around the world, providing nourishment and hope to God’s precious children

### Free 2 B Grace Tithe

Our church tithes 10% on the capital campaign funds received through Free2BGrace, then members determine the recipients of these funds, i.e. FMSC, ELCA mission, etc.

## A Life Touched by Grace



**Karen Roche**

After being widowed, Karen left California and moved to Minnesota in 2010. She came here without the friends she left behind and without a job. After hearing her voice on the phone for a while, a longtime friend finally told her, “either find a book club or a church and get involved.” One day after leaving Costco, she decided to drive north on Round Lake Blvd because she had never been that way. When she came to the intersection of Round Lake Blvd and Bunker Lake Blvd, she noticed Grace Lutheran on the corner. Never having been churched her entire life, she made the bold decision to try it out. The rest is

history. She joined Grace in 2010 and became immersed in women’s ministries and was baptized in 2011. That event shaped the future for her and she remains forever grateful for it. She has had health struggles and is so appreciative of all the support she has gotten from her church friends. Because of her connection with Jeannie Hellmann, she was pointed in the direction of a part time job where her boss is Renee Miller, a member of Grace. Because of the losses of her past and the joy she feels about being a member of Grace, she finds herself so grateful and aware of ways to reach out to others.

## A Family Touched by Grace



**Greg and Lori Ackerson**

After church shopping, Lori and Greg found a church home at Grace in 2006. To them, Grace looks like home and good friends. Their lives have been transformed completely while at Grace and by mission trips to Haiti and their experiences while there. Together they have served multiple weeks in Haiti over the past years and have found that the Spirit moves and works through them while they are there in a different way than when they are home. Their stewardship focus has grown tremendously and made them more humble and more cognizant of furthering God's Kingdom. Both have served in leadership positions at church on the Vision Board. Lori was Vision Board President during the Holy Conversations and felt

she was led to be in that position during that process because of her awareness and passion for people. Their closest friends are members of Grace and they are grateful for all their experiences.

### **Gifts of Grace**

Grace members contribute special offerings; then pastors joyfully deliver these financial 'gifts of grace' to struggling families at Christmas time.

### **Giving Tree at Christmas**

Special gifts are collected and delivered to local families or ministries in need, such as Stepping Stone Shelter or Refugee Resettlement Services.

### **Global Health Ministries**

Volunteers sort medical supplies and roll bandages which are sent to hospitals around the world.

### **Grace Garage Sale**

Each spring a community-wide garage sale is hosted at Grace to raise funds for mission work, specifically youth going to camp and summer mission trips.

### **God's Work Our Hands Sunday in September**

Our church joins ELCA congregations nationwide as we engage in service work to share God's love and make a positive change in our local communities.

### **Grace Quilters and Grace Quilters 2**

Faithful volunteers create beautiful quilts that are donated both locally and globally.

### **Grace2Haiti - Our Abandoned Children**

Mission teams to Haiti accompany World Wide Village ministries with special projects, while currently funding and constructing a home for 10 abandoned children in Haiti.

### **Grace4Rakai**

Grace members support 90 children in Uganda through child sponsorships and also fund special projects such as Amazing Grace Bakery and the School-Dormitory in Rakai.

### **Habitat for Humanity**

Workers volunteer at local home construction sites to provide affordable housing for local families.

### **Hospitality for Funerals**

Gracious volunteers prepare and serve meals for funeral luncheons at our church.

### **HOPE 4 Youth**

Grace volunteers contribute supplies and volunteer at this Anoka center for youth experiencing homelessness.

### **Just 1 more Step**

This annual 5K run/walk fundraiser at Bunker Hills Park provides special support for our outreach mission projects in Haiti.

### **Love of Grace Bazaar**

As a long-standing tradition each November, this craft fair offers a warm welcome for everyone in our community, with proceeds being given to various ministries.

### **May All Be Fed Food Shelf**

Generous donations are received, and then grace-filled support is given to others in the tangible form of a filled grocery bag.

### **Noisy Offerings**

Special offerings are collected in bread pans during worship, and all funds are sent outside the walls of Grace to bless individuals and ministries, both locally and globally.

## **A Family Touched by Grace**



**Jess & Amy Thompson Nauman**

Amy and Jess came to Grace in 2014 after Jess met Grace members at ECFE classes. Jess felt comfortable instantly while Amy was hesitant as she liked her previous sense of being somewhat invisible in a very large church. Both were raised in the Catholic Church and Jess was involved in youth activities and many social events, while Amy's most tender memories are of sitting with all of her family tucked in together while she wondered if she would ever have that experience with children of her own. During college, both found themselves not very engaged with any church, although their faith remained strong. Amy had times of feeling abandoned by God. When their children were born, they had strong feelings they needed to be actively engaged with a church. Their first experiences at Grace were always centered around the loving welcome by Pastor Mark and him making them feel welcome, as we are all children of God. They are grateful Grace held Holy Conversations and made the decision to be inclusive. While certain things haven't always been perfect, they know it has been valuable and they look at religion as a heritage for their daughters. Amy's childhood dreams of being tucked in with her family surrounded by love have become a reality and their family enjoys the sense of belonging.

## A Life Touched by Grace



**Steve Martin**

Steve and his wife, Patricia, moved to Andover in July 2013. They were busy making their house a home and planning a wonderful Christmas holiday. While they were busy working on a Christmas meal, their family was here from out of town and attended Grace for services. They came home with wonderful things to say about Grace. On December 31, Steve's wife died by suicide and he would need emergency surgery. Soon after that, Steve began attending Grace and has found a home here. He has always had a strong faith and looks to church for comfort and the many friends he has made here. His life has been transformed by coming out of such a dark place to a place of gratefulness, being more in tune with others and trying his best to reach out to help others whenever he can. He found comfort in "Grief Share" and has been involved in many men's groups as well as traveling to Haiti, sponsoring children, Feed My Starving Children, Grace garage sale and social events with friends.

## Our Savior's Shelter

Volunteers cook and serve dinner at this Minneapolis homeless shelter on the first Monday of each month.

## Prayer Shawl Ministry

Servants knit comforting shawls and lap blankets for the ill, home bound, and hospice patients.

## Stepping Stone Emergency Housing

Grace supports this homeless shelter in Anoka by donating quilts and holiday gift bags for residents, as well as funding special projects and providing Friday food deliveries.

## Vacation Bible School

During VBS week each June, countless volunteers offer love and nurture faith for over 250 children in our community.



40 Foot Container filled with supplies unloaded in Kinampana, Tanzania  
Grace4Tanzania Ministry

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**Ann Lange**

Ann Lange joined Grace Lutheran Church about 22 years ago. Their family, her husband Jay and two kids, appreciated that while Grace was welcoming and friendly to them as visitors, they also loved that the welcoming spirit went beyond its own doors with outreach – both local and international.

Ann became active at Grace as a Sunday School Teacher while Jay got involved as a Confirmation and Catechism mentor, as well as singing in the choir. Over the years, Jay and the kids participated in mission trips while Ann and Jay did a couples Bible study. It was not until Jay's sudden death, that Ann valued Grace for the grace that the congregation showered on her. Through their support, Ann learned how many friends she and Jay both had at church.

The two most valuable "support" pieces were the Grief Share program and church friends sharing how Jay had impacted and inspired them. Ann attended Grief Share for a year and then became a co-leader – continuing to learn, hear God, and heal more each time she went through the program.

When she became a co-leader of Grief Share, Ann was not formally trained; she felt unprepared for the role, but jumped in on faith. Ann believes the best preparation anyone can have to show God's grace is a desire to help, and an understanding that no one is perfect; everyone sins; we all fall short. That is why showing grace through support and forgiveness is all anyone needs to do to support others in taking steps to grow in their faith. This is how Ann feels when others show her God's grace.

Ann believes Grace is more than a name, more than a building, and more than a talented church staff - learning, guidance, and inspiration need to be shared individual to individual. As Ann learned in one of her darkest hours, grace and outreach is about being a friend. She cannot imagine how anyone can handle family crisis/death without Christian friends to hold them steadfast in faith and show grace.

Ann continues to show grace at Grace by co-leading the Grief Share program, quilting, delivering food for local homeless people, participating in and supporting her WOW Bible study friends, and helping wherever she can.

# grace renew

**a renewal, renovation, complete change for the better  
make something new again. Sprout again.**

*I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God — what is good and acceptable and perfect.*

Romans 12:1–2 (NRSV)

The third word of our 50th Anniversary celebration is RENEW as we consider the next fifty years of ministry. What will Grace look like? What kinds of ministries will we have? What are the changes and challenges we face as we renew our call to be a ministry of Grace in the heart of Andover and beyond?

## Changes and Challenges

- **Declining Church attendance**

According to Barna Group's State of the Church 2016 Report: "The Christian church has been a cornerstone of American life for centuries, but much has changed in the last 30

years. Americans are attending church less, and more people are experiencing and practicing their faith outside of its four walls. Millennials in particular are coming of age at a time of great skepticism and cynicism toward institutions — particularly the church. Add to this the broader secularizing trend in American culture, and a growing antagonism toward faith claims, and these are uncertain times for the U.S. church."

- **Aging Congregation**

Gone are the days when Grace had 400 plus children in Sunday School, 60 confirmands, or multitudes of young families joining the church. As our church grapples with the demographic changes in neighborhoods nearest the church, what kinds of ministries will Grace need for growing numbers of empty-nesters and senior adults? Will the long-term growth engines of children and youth ministries at Grace diminish over the next decade? If so, what will we need to change?

- **Denominational**

The ELCA is growing smaller and older. Less people are worshipping and there is a critical shortage of pastors. In addition, denominations like the ELCA are finding the methods which worked in the last 50 years are no longer as

effective. They will need to be renewed and change to meet the needs of our churches of tomorrow.

What will all this mean to Grace in the next 50 years? Will we continue to center ourselves on the Lutheran “grace alone by faith” perspective that has undergirded our ministries since our beginning? What theological and structural heritage will we preserve? What will have to change? How will we grow in light of the fact people no longer look at a church for their primary spiritual needs? How will we do church with the many technological, internet and social network changes which have occurred? There will be more cultural and societal changes to come. How will we respond?

### **Missional**

Perhaps one of the ways Grace has grown the most in the last 50 years is being more missional in our ministries. What does “missional” mean? It means participating with God in what he is already doing in the world. That may not seem like much, but it shifts the focus off the church as the primary place of mission and understands

that God is actively involved in bringing his healing redemption, mercy, forgiveness and healing everywhere. Instead of inviting people to church in order to “be saved,” we’ve learned

that God invites us to join him in places where he is already “saving” people.

**This means we need to:**

- Discover what God is already doing in the world. We have to let go of the sense that we are serving others in order to “save” them and see salvation in larger terms of social justice, peace and loving our neighbors. In a world that sometimes sees “the church” negatively or has given up on it, we must learn anew what it means to be “the church” as we love God by loving our neighbors. “It is God’s mission, for which the Body of Christ—the church—exists. We participate in



helping to build toward the dream God has planted in our hearts.” (Presiding Episcopal Bishop, Katharine Jefferts Schori’s Gathering at God’s Table.)

- Build more significant connections both in nearby neighborhoods, as well as in places as far away as Williamson, Haiti and Rakai, Uganda. We will need new eyes to notice the small things God is doing around us. We will be required to see spirituality and faith in larger terms. And, instead of viewing serving as a one-way street, we will want to be open to the fact that we may be the ones who need to be ministered to by those we serve.
- Seek and emphasize spiritual formation and discipleship as the primary ways in which we grow ourselves deeper in the flow of God's love for this world so we might be more pliable for the Spirit's work in us.

How we will do this, we are not sure, but we will have to seek God's mission, not only inside our four walls, but far beyond.

## Renew

May God give our church a willingness to be open to his Spirit as we continue to be renewed and shaped by God's love in Jesus! If we've learned anything in

these past 50 years, it is this: as we trust the Lord and seek to do his will - even if it means that we change, modify, and find new ways to be a church, God is faithful and will complete the good work he has begun in us. (Philippians 1:6)

This will require lots of prayer. It will mean taking essential time to envision and imagine new ways of doing things. It will mean that we continue to be a place where God's Word is proclaimed and becomes visible in a meal of bread and wine, as well as water poured over the head of a child, youth or adult. Perhaps we will learn from other churches, as well as develop an ability to listen to those outside the church. Finally, we will renew our trust in God, as together we strive to be a ministry of Grace in the heart of Andover and beyond for many years to come.

All praise and glory be to God – Father, +Son and Holy Spirit. Amen

## Some fun facts about the first 50 years of Grace Lutheran Church:

- 1859 children or adults were baptized, 1553 youth were confirmed, 571 couples were married and 283 funerals were conducted.
- During the construction of the current Worship Center, the north wall blew down. Fortunately, it happened at night so no one was hurt. However, it did slow down construction.
- Junior and Senior High students performed in a Motion Choir for services from 1980-1997.
- A pipe organ was donated and installed in the original worship center (now Fellowship Hall). However it took up so much room, that it had to be removed.
- In 1974, Sunday Services were held at Ramblin' Rum Camp Grounds during the summer months.
- In 2012 and 2013, Grace members joined a community effort, Walk 4 Water, carrying buckets of water for miles while raising funds to build much-needed wells in Central America.
- In 2007, Grace built several school playgrounds in Lesotho, South Africa because one of our members was serving in the Peace Corp.
- In 2015, we funded the construction of the Amazing Grace Bakery in Rakai, Uganda. Through Noisy Offerings and special gifts, we supported this unique bakery project, providing not only fresh bread, but also job opportunities for African families.

## **Fifty Years of Grace**

By Gayle Pacholl

Tune: Good Christian Friends Rejoice

We've gathered here for fifty years in times of joy and times of tears  
Welcomed all into this place and shared the story of your grace  
Reaching out from sea to sea, to shine your light for all to see  
Fondly we remember fifty years at Grace.

We brought our kids to Sunday School, to VBS and Golden Rule  
Placed your word into their hands and helped them grow as confirmands  
Proud to serve our God above with humble thanks, and hope and love  
Fondly we remember fifty years at Grace.

One day, five hundred years ago a monk defied the status quo  
Nailed his theses to the door and changed the world forever more!  
Gave us words and songs to sing to help us know and praise our King!  
Join the celebration! Fifty years of Grace.

weGrow, weServe and weConnect and try to live as you expect  
Seven habits we profess to guide our path toward righteousness  
Now we all rejoice and pray: renew in us clean hearts today  
Join the celebration! Fifty years of Grace!

**Grace Lutheran Church**

13655 Round Lake Blvd., NW

Andover, MN 55304

[www.graceandover.org](http://www.graceandover.org)