

Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church
Annual Report
2025





Core Values

*Serving
Worship
Community Building
Hospitality and Care*

Guiding Principles

When we are at our best, we are:

- Growing Spiritually to be more Christ-centered and Spirit led.*
- Caring for One Another with the love of Jesus.*
- Caring Generously to share in God's work.*
- Serving Joyfully to reflect God's love.*
- Living Faithfully in our daily lives.*
- Developing Relationships in the community around us*
- Inviting and Welcoming all people into Grace.*

Strategic Priorities

- Celebrate worship that is Christ-centered, creative, and accessible in ways that inspire people as they are sent forth into the world.*
- Develop a supportive congregational life for both new people and long-term members.*
- Equip and encourage people for living their faith in daily life.*
- Support children and their families - both in congregational life and in the neighborhoods around us.*
- Embrace and assist people living with social and economic needs.*



2025 Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church
Annual Report
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**Grace Evangelical
Lutheran Church**
"A community of servants sharing
in the word and work of Jesus."

Agenda

131st Annual Congregational Meeting

February 22, 2026

- I. Call to Order President Allison Fink
- II. Prayer
- III. Declaration of a Quorum
- IV. Approval of minutes of congregational meetings:
 - February 16, 2025
 - May 18, 2025
 - December 14, 2025
- V. Presentation of Annual Report
- VI. Questions and Discussion
- VII. Old Business
- VIII. New Business
- IX. Announcements
- X. Prayer and Adjournment



**Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church
Annual Congregational Meeting
February 16, 2025**

The meeting was called to order by President Allison Fink at 11:12 a.m.

Pastor Pingel opened with prayer.

President Fink declared a quorum was present.

The minutes of the 2024 Annual Meeting were presented for approval. Robin Crowder moved that the 2024 Minutes be approved as presented. Jerry Kite seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The Annual Report was presented. It had been distributed to all member households previously by email and regular mail, and hard copies were available in the Narthex prior to and during the meeting.

There were a few comments about the comprehensiveness of the report and the work of this congregation and no questions. Donna Gum moved that the Annual Report be approved as presented. Charlie Wilson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

No other old or new business was brought to the floor. Robin Crowder moved for adjournment, and Tami Radecke seconded the motion. The motion passed, and the meeting adjourned at 12:30 p.m.



**Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church
Congregational Meeting
Sunday, May 18, 2025**

President Allison Fink called the meeting to order at 11:18 a.m. to vote on the 2025 Council Members slate. It was determined that a quorum was present. She explained that the ushers would distribute the ballots, and the candidate biographies were on the bulletin insert. President Fink asked if there were any nominations from the floor. None were presented.

The ballot included: Allison Fink, Linda Meyer, Donna Yobs, Kate Van Bremen and Jim Nelson.

Pastor Pingel offered a prayer. President Fink asked the congregation to cast their votes. The ushers picked up the ballots for tallying.

President Fink thanked everyone for attending the meeting and for voting. The congregation was invited to stay if they wanted to hear the tally.

Meeting adjourned at 11:22 a.m.

The in-person votes were tallied by the ushers. There were 63 in favor of all candidates, and 2 were in favor of Linda Meyer only.



**Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church
Congregational Meeting
December 14, 2025**

Call to Order – Vice President Linda Meyer called the meeting to order at 11:10 a.m.

Prayer – Pastor Pingel offered prayer.

Quorum – A quorum of congregation membership was declared.

Linda explained that this meeting of the congregation is for the sole purpose of considering the proposed budget for 2026 submitted by the Council.

Discussion – Ron Almarode, Congregational Treasurer, thanked the Council and the Finance Committee for their work on the proposed budget, then he gave an overview of the budget, explaining that the proposed budget is based on pledges made and estimates of giving outside of pledges. He said the estimated giving will meet our projected needs, in spite of the deaths of several pledging members this year. He further explained the changes in the proposed budget that will be incurred with the retirement of Pastor Pingel.

There were no questions from the congregation.

Vote – The vote to approve the budget was taken by written ballot.

The budget was approved with a vote of 61 Yes votes and no No votes.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:20 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by Linda Meyer

GELC Staff 2025

Pastor

Paul Pingel, Pastor 1224 Hollins Road 540-216-4454
Waynesboro, VA 22980 pastorpingel@gmail.com

Administrative Secretary

Nancy Dowdy 22 Ashleigh Drive 540-256-1975
Waynesboro, VA 22980 Grace.lc@comcast.net

Director of Music

Mike Myers 136 Ridgeline Drive 434-760-1375
Waynesboro, VA 22980 mickhdking@aol.com

GELC Congregation Council Members 2024-2026 Term

Peggy Caister 611 Northgate Avenue 434-964-7461
Waynesboro, VA 22980 caisterpeggy@gmail.com

Jacob Dolan 40 Lookover Terrace 720-883-163
Stuarts Draft, VA 24477 jldolan418@gmail.com

Jack Eckstrom 121 Tomasville Drive 240-344-3176
Waynesboro, VA 22980 jackeck47@gmail.com

Susan Myers 136 Ridgeline Drive 434-760-1660
Waynesboro, VA 22980 sparkelmyers@gmail.com

Karen Walck 426 Zion Church Road 765-480-9920
Waynesboro, VA 22980 kdwalck@gmail.com

GELC Congregation Council Members 2025-2027 Term

Allison Fink 982 Northgate Drive 540-448-0985
President Waynesboro, VA 22980 afink@mydccu.com

Linda Meyer 235 Wayneridge Road 540-256-2277
Vice-President Waynesboro, VA 22980 lameyer@cfw.com

Jim Nelson 519 Foothills Drive fsuorbust@yahoo.com
Nellysford, VA 22958 434-826-8923

Kate Van Bremen 535 Jocelyn Lane katevanbremen@gmail.com
Waynesboro, VA 22980 614-746-4792

Donna Yobs 20 Windsor Drive 650-248-4882
Fishersville, VA 22939 dmyobs@yahoo.com

Council Appointees

Ron Almarode Treasurer	417 Pelham Drive Waynesboro, VA 22980	540-649-4099 AlmarodeRG@ntelos.net
Charles Goodrich Financial Secretary	201 Brandon Circle Waynesboro, VA 22980	540-949-6739 goodrich@lumos.net

GELC Ministry Team Leaders

Congregation Engagement Round Table

Christian Education/Youth

Peggy Caister	611 Northgate Avenue Waynesboro, VA 22980	434-964-7461 caisterpeggy@gmail.com
Jacob Dolan	40 Lookover Terrace Stuarts Draft, VA 24477	720-883-163 jldolan418@gmail.com

Communications

Peggy Caister	611 Northgate Avenue Waynesboro, VA 22980	434-964-7461 caisterpeggy@gmail.com
Allison Fink	982 Northgate Drive Waynesboro, VA 22980	540-448-0985 afink@mydccu.com
Betty Karol Wilson	990 Northgate Ave Waynesboro, VA 22980	540-325-9529 bettykarolwilson@gmail.com

Support Fellowship

Sylvia Almarode	417 Pelham Drive Waynesboro, VA 22980	540-476-5730 almarod@ntelos.net
Caroline Biggers	1192 Tinkling Spring Road Staunton, VA 24401	540-337-1951 caroline.r.biggers@gmail.com
Susie Driskill	537 Maple Avenue Waynesboro, VA 22980	540-451-0199 susiedriskill@gmail.com
Judi Goodrich	201 Brandon Circle Waynesboro, VA 22980	540-836-7046 goodrichjudi33@gmail.com
Donna Gum	16 Toman Lane Waynesboro, VA 22980	540-649-0260 fdgum@ntelos.net
Marsha Howard	1132 Club Road Waynesboro, VA 22980	540-942-9425 humor4meh83@gmail.com
Diane Lundstrom	301 Pelham Driver Waynesboro, VA 22980	540-256-1308 dlundstrom@waynesboro.k12.va.us
Sharon Lynch	1108 Greendale Road Waynesboro, VA 22980	540-241-2605 sharonlynch129@gmail.com

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Support Fellowship Continued

Deloris Wertman	166 Crimora Station Lane Crimora, VA 24431	540-649-1661 dkwertman@comcast.net
Linda Meyer	235 Wayneridge Road Waynesboro, VA 22980	540-256-2277 lameyer@cfw.com
Karen Walck	426 Zion Church Road Waynesboro, VA 22980	765-480-9920 kdwalck@gmail.com
Donna Yobs	20 Windsor Drive Fishersville, VA 22939	650-248-4882 dmyobs@yahoo.com

Worship and Music

Donna Gum	16 Toman Lane Waynesboro, VA 22980	540-649-0260 fdgum@ntelos.net
Mike Myers	136 Ridgeline Drive Waynesboro, VA 22980	540-456-4505 mickhdking@aol.com
Jim Nelson	519 Foothills Drive Nellysford, VA 22958	fsuorbust@yahoo.com 434-826-8923

Altar Guild

Jean Morgan	321 Maple Avenue Waynesboro, VA 22980	540-649-4422 jc321morgan@ntelos.net
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Eucharistic Ministry

Jim Nelson	519 Foothills Drive Nellysford, VA 22958	fsuorbust@yahoo.com 434-826-8923
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Health and Wellness

Ron Almarode	417 Pelham Drive Waynesboro, VA 22980	540-649-4099 AlmarodeRG@ntelos.net
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Offering Stewards

Pat Brady	220 Lee Drive Waynesboro, VA 22980	540-447-6157 packy46@comcast.net
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Ushers

Jack Eckstrom	121 Tomasville Drive Waynesboro, VA 22980	240-344-3176 jackeck47@gmail.com
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Worship Assistants

Donna Gum	16 Toman Lane Waynesboro, VA 22980	540-649-0260 fdgum@ntelos.net
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Worship Attendance

Nancy Dowdy 500 South Wayne Avenue 540-949-6171
Waynesboro, VA 22980 grace.lc@comcast.net

Community Engagement Round Table

Evangelism and Hospitality

All God's Children

Rick & Kathy Bump 131 Club Highland 434-361-1824
Nellysford, VA 22958 rcbump0621@gmail.com
Linda Meyer 235 Wayneridge Road 540-256-2277
Waynesboro, VA 22980 lameyer@cfw.com

Christian Coalition for Equity and Justice

Rick & Kathy Bump 131 Club Highland 434-361-1824
Nellysford, VA 22958 rcbump0621@gmail.com
Linda Meyer 235 Wayneridge Road 540-256-2277
Waynesboro, VA 22980 lameyer@cfw.com

Faith in Action/Stewardship

Allison Fink 982 Northgate Drive 540-448-0985
Waynesboro, VA 22980 afink@mydccu.com

Mission Endowment

Jerry Kite 141 Brook Court (540) 910-3372
Waynesboro, VA 22980 jerrykite@ntelos.net
Jim Nelson 519 Foothills Drive fsuorbust@yahoo.com
Nellysford, VA 22958 434-826-8923
David Schwiesow Route 1, Box 596 434-325-7001
178 Fortune's Point Lane schwiesow1950@gmail.com
Roseland, VA 22967

Outreach Mission

Gwen Kite 141 Brook Court (540) 910-0508
Waynesboro, VA 22980 gwenma2002@yahoo.com
Jerry Kite 141 Brook Court (540) 910-3372
Waynesboro, VA 22980 jerrykite@ntelos.net
Kate Van Bremen 535 Jocelyn Lane katevanbremen@gmail.com
Waynesboro, VA 22980 (614) 746-4792

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Area Food Pantry

Jerry Kite 141 Brook Court (540) 910-3372
Waynesboro, VA 22980 jerrykite@ntelos.net

Back to School Supplies

Amy Warren 16 Porterfield Lane (540) 471-2362
Waynesboro, VA 22980 1teacheramy3@gmail.com

Backpacks

Gwen Kite 141 Brook Court (540) 910-0508
Waynesboro, VA 22980 gwenma2002@yahoo.com
Sharon Lynch 1108 Greendale Road (540) 241-2605
Waynesboro, VA 22980 sharonlynch129@gmail.com

Community Pot Lucks

Eric Hilker 766 Pine Ave 978-793-9845
Waynesboro, VA 22980 hilker.eric.d@gmail.com

Community Support

Karen Walck 426 Zion Church Road 765-480-9920
Waynesboro, VA 22980 kdwalck@gmail.com
Donna Yobs 20 Windsor Drive 650-248-4882
Fishersville, VA 22939 dmyobs@yahoo.com

Crop Walk

Karen Walck 426 Zion Church Road 765-480-9920
Waynesboro, VA 22980 kdwalck@gmail.com

Disciples Kitchen

Caroline Biggers 1192 Tinkling Spring Road 540-337-1951
Staunton, VA 24401 caroline.r.biggers@gmail.com
Gwen Kite 141 Brook Court (540) 910-0508
Waynesboro, VA 22980 gwenma2002@yahoo.com

HERO

Donna Yobs 20 Windsor Drive 650-248-4882
Fishersville, VA 22939 dmyobs@yahoo.com

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Hiker Ministry

Irma Graf	P O Box 1464 Grantham, NH 03753	804-814-6841 endATend@aol.com
Linda Meyer	235 Wayneridge Road Waynesboro, VA 22980	540-256-2277 lameyer@cfw.com
Jean Morgan	321 Maple Avenue Waynesboro, VA 22980	540-649-4422 jc321morgan@ntelos.net

Homework Toolboxes for the Salvation Army

Amy Warren	16 Porterfield Lane Waynesboro, VA 22980	(540) 471-2362 tteacheramy3@gmail.com
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Local Ministry and Giving Tree

Jane Stein	813 Oak Aveune Waynesboro, VA 22980	540-649-0979 kjatway@hotmail.com
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Quilts for Lutheran World Relief

Gwen Kite	141 Brook Court Waynesboro, VA 22980	540-943-1920 gwenma2002@yahoo.com
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Refugee Family Resettlement

Linda Meyer	235 Wayneridge Road Waynesboro, VA 22980	540-256-2277 lameyer@cfw.com
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Renewing Homes Augusta Project

Jerry Kite	141 Brook Court Waynesboro, VA 22980	540-943-1920 jerrykite@ntelos.net
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Rise Against Hunger

Jerry Kite	141 Brook Court Waynesboro, VA 22980	540-943-1920 jerrykite@ntelos.net
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WARM Ministry

Susan Myers	136 Ridgeline Drive Waynesboro, VA 22980	434-760-1660 sparkelmyers@gmail.com
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Support Round Table**Building and Maintenance Fund**

Ron Almarode	417 Pelham Drive Waynesboro, VA 22980	540-649-4099 AlmarodeRG@ntelos.net
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Church Property

Fred Biggers	1192 Tinkling Spring Road Staunton, VA 24401	434-981-1954 fred.s.biggers@gmail.com
Karen Walck	426 Zion Church Road Waynesboro, VA 22980	765-480-9920 kdwalck@gmail.com
Rew Walck	426 Zion Church Road Waynesboro, VA 22980	765-480-9916 rewalck@gmail.com

Columbarium and Memorial Garden

Ron Almarode	417 Pelham Drive AlmarodeRG@ntelos.net	540-649-4099 Waynesboro, VA 22980
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Property Lot

Donna Yobs	20 Windsor Drive Fishersville, VA 22939	650-248-4882 dmyobs@yahoo.com
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Finance

Ron Almarode	417 Pelham Drive Waynesboro, VA 22980	540-943-1753 almaroderg@ntelos.net
Chuck Goodrich	Waynesboro, VA 22980	
Susan Myers	136 Ridgeline Drive Waynesboro, VA 22980	434-760-1660 sparkelmyers@gmail.com

Thanksgiving and Memorial Fund

Ron Almarode	417 Pelham Drive Waynesboro, VA 22980	540-649-4099 AlmarodeRG@ntelos.net
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Personnel

Antoinette Eckstrom	121 Thomasville Drive Waynesboro, VA 22980	301-788-1994 andieck@me.com
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Power in the Spirit

Donna Gum	16 Toman Lane Waynesboro, VA 22980	540-649-0260 fdgum@ntelos.net
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Technology

Owen Keefer	2000 Cherokee Road Waynesboro, VA 22980	540-942-4290 deltanode@comcast.net
Jacob Dolan	40 Lookover Terrace Stuarts Draft, VA 24477	720-883-163 jldolan418@gmail.com

Congregation Council Meeting Highlights January 14, 2025

- Ron Almarode reported that Grace finished 2024 with a surplus.
- Forums were held to inform congregation of options for the use of Grace Property. A committee will be formed to move this project forward.
- A special Called Council Meeting was held to discuss the Special Music Fund as it relates to the Mission Endowment.
 - ◆ The Council changed the wording as follows: “To provide support for music programs both within GELC and/or collaborative community endeavors that reflect our call to be servants sharing in the word and work of Jesus.
- Work continues regarding replacement of the cross and repairs to the Columbarium.
- Grace continues to collect food for Main Street United Methodist Church and Calvary Methodist Church Food Pantries.
- Grace continued as a room sponsor at the Ruth WARM house.
- Backpacks for Waynesboro public schools continues at Grace for this school year.
- Quilting also continues at Grace this year.

Congregation Council Meeting Highlights February 25, 2025

- Council Retreat was held February 1 and Core Values were discussed.
- Discussion around the use of Grace Property continued.
- Council approved the purchase of new chairs for the Conference Room to be funded by T&M.
- Work continues on the replacement of the cross and repairs of the columbarium.
- The Youth Hot Dog Fundraiser after the Congregational Meeting was a success.
- Allison Fink, Linda Meyer and Donna Yobs agreed to run for another term of Council.

Congregation Council Meeting Highlights March 28, 2025

- Review of the Mission Endowment Policy continued.
- The church's current insurance was reviewed and compared. The decision was made to continue with current carrier, Church Mutual.
- Computers have been reviewed and plans made for replacements within the church's budget restraints.

Congregation Council Meeting Highlights April 22, 2025

- David Schwiesow gave a Mission Endowment Fund update and requested a total grant amount for 2025.
- Eight Keys for Healthy Church Finances were shared with the Council. This is a tool to evaluate the church's financial health.
- It was announced that the new cross was installed on Good Friday and dedicated on Easter Sunday. (See cover of Annual Report.)
- Wednesday Community dinners have started back up after being stopped during the WARM Cold Shelter season.
- Membership of Scott Winslow and Gigi Werner Winslow was approved.

Congregation Council Meeting Highlights May 20, 2025

- Jim Nelson and Kate van Bremen were elected to the Council and attended the May meeting. Installation will be June 1.
- Allison Fink was elected as President and Linda Meyer Vice-President. Ron Almarode was elected as Treasurer.
- A report was presented to the Council outlining the weekly collection and deposit process.
- Jean Morgan is cleaning up the Library and Sylvia Almarode is cleaning up the History room.
- Roles and Responsibilities of Council Members and Round Table Team Leaders were shared with the Council.

Congregation Council Meeting Highlights June 17, 2025

- A rendering of the proposed baptismal bowl for the Baptismal Font was presented to the Council by Pastor and Donna Gum.
- Eric Hilker requested the ability to offer showers in conjunction with the community meals.
- Discussions continued with the YMCA and Habitat for Humanity regarding use of Grace Property.
- Pastor suggested that an inventory and organization be made of Grace files and storage rooms. He also suggested Grace have a Records Retention Policy.
- A report was given on the successful Hiker Ministry for 2025.

Congregation Council Meeting Highlights July 15, 2025

- The YMCA was notified that Grace is not interested in letting one entity have the entire lot.
- Council toured and reviewed the facilities.
- A coordination between the Community Meal Group and WARM to provide showers was approved.
- After the Waynesboro Police Department requested that Grace allow a former member that is homeless and living in their truck be allowed to park their truck on Grace property and due diligence was done with Grace's attorney and insurance company, it was determined that Grace could not allow this for liability purposes.

Congregation Council Meeting Highlights August 12, 2025

- Mission Endowment Fund awards were presented to the Council and were approved.
- A presentation was made to the Council suggested that Grace become a “Reconciling with Christ” church.
- An outline was presented to the church for moving forward with the organization and review of Grace files.
- Grace has a new video system which is operating much smoother.
- Pastor reported that an Ecumenical Hymn Fest is to be held to honor Mike Myer’s 25th anniversary on October 5, 2025.
- Amy Warrant coordinated collecting school supplies for the Salvation Army.

Congregation Council Meeting Highlights September 16, 2025

- The second round of MEF Grants were approved by Council.
- Gift Acceptance Policy was approved.
- Facility Usage Policy was approved.
- Jean Morgan has cleaned up and organized the Church library.
- Karen Walck has cleaned up and organized the Medical Equipment Closet.
- Approximately 38,000 meals were packed in an hour and a half with 302 people at the Rise Against Hunger Event on September 13th.

Congregation Council Meeting Highlights October 14, 2025

- Property Committee attempted to repair stage curtains.
- A homelessness meeting was held at St. John’s and Grace had good representation.

Congregation Council Meeting Highlights November 18, 2025

- Pastor Pingel announced his resignation date will be January 11, 2026. A letter and an e-blast was sent to the congregation.
- The Treasurer presented the 2026 Budget recommendation to the Council and Council approved.
- A plat was obtained for the church property and the section looking to be used for community benefit is 1.05 acres.
- Consideration and discussion regarding “Reconciling with Christ” continues.
- HERO was approved to receive the Christmas Eve donation.
- Liquid candles were approved for the Chapel.
- River Smith and Kirk Hyden were approved to affirm their baptism in front of the congregation.

Congregation Council Meeting Highlights December 16, 2025

- A dedicated meeting to address the next steps for Grace Core Values is scheduled for February 28, 2026.
- Council meetings will be held the second Thursday of each month in 2026 at 7:00 p.m.
- Jim Nelson was appointed to the Mission Endowment Fund.
- Council approved the request of Grace for an interim Pastor.
- Property Committee presented bids to replace the flat roof.

***Grace’s Administrative Secretary keeps copies of
Council minutes
if anyone would like to see any of them.***



Pastor's Annual Report

As I looked over the Pastor's Pages I wrote over the last year, and thought about Grace and the Mission God has had for us in 2025, a number of observations came into focus:

- ◆ We are a worshipping community strongly gathered around God's Word and sustaining Sacraments. We celebrated 25 years of Mike Myers' gifted service to Grace. It is a powerful witness that when we celebrated Mike's anniversary, we celebrated with Worship and Praise to the God who has made us who we are! What a great celebration with musicians and friends from many of our neighboring congregations.
- ◆ What a gift that we ARE in good relationship with many of our neighboring congregations, both ecumenically and within our Southern Valley Conference of Lutheran congregations. We worship together, we share in service together. Now is the time to NOT lock ourselves up in our respective buildings, but to open the doors – as the Holy Spirit did on Pentecost (See Acts 2!), to push us out – TOGETHER – into the community to give witness to God's Grace and merciful intentions for this community and world.
- ◆ Grace is a congregation that serves in many ways. I'm not going to provide a list – think yourselves of the many ways Grace is present in the community. It is a strength of this congregation, it shows God continues to be active in and through us. And who is Grace Ev. Lutheran Church? You are! Give thanks for the ways you contribute to the Mission of Grace.
- ◆ Sometimes it is simply good to Lift High the Cross, as we did when the Tower Cross was re-dedicated on Easter, lifted up on Good Friday!! What a witness to what is centrally important to our faith! Jesus died, taking upon himself the sin of the world, and dying to those things, so that you and I can rise up every day to new life, the life that God has for us to live, each and every day. We are Agents of love, mercy, compassion, in a world that too often is afraid and quick to judge. But Holy Week 2025 we tangibly gave witness to God's different Way!
- ◆ Included in this witness was the dedication of a new Baptismal Font in November. We die each day, and we rise up each day to God's different way that God has for us in this world. Next time you worship at Grace, dip your finger into the Font and make the sign of the cross when you worship, or perhaps more importantly, when you exit the worship space to go out to where you live each day in this world. You are God's Sent Out people, you are the Body of Christ wherever you are.

Continued

Pastor's Annual Report Continued

- ◆ This past Easter, I wrote a Pastor's Page in which the recurring question was, "Now what?" It was the question the disciples had to answer after Jesus' resurrection and ascension, as they awaited the activity of the Holy Spirit to open the doors of their room to the world, and open their hearts to what God had in mind for them next. *This is our gift here at Grace*, to continue each day, each month, each New Year, and answer that question.
 - * As Grace begins the process of finding a new pastor;
 - * as you continue to consider the questions you've already begun, considering the use of Grace's property, perhaps in collaboration with Habitat for Humanity, or other ways God's Spirit is guiding you;
 - * as you continue to serve in the community, take part in racial justice and reconciliation, and consider other ways you are being called to give witness and welcome in this community;
 - * as you continue to prepare for worship, keep the property and physical plant maintained, consider the ways Grace will continue to be a blessing through Mission Endowment grants to our community and world, work together with other congregations and organizations, find yourself in new situations with new and different people that the Spirit has guided you to...

Now what? The answer comes in relationship, in communion with the righteous God who so loves you and the world you are a part of. Continue to be in God's Word together, and pray together, (in *re-ligio*, in *connection* with each other) discuss together what you believe God has in mind for Grace, Waynesboro. Discuss with each other, out of the strength that is yours through God's love in Jesus Christ, which has made Grace what it is over the last 133 years. I give thanks for God's call for me to Grace, but even more for what God has in mind for Grace in 2026 and the coming years.

Thanks be to God, through Jesus Christ our Lord!
Pastor Paul





2025 Parish Register Report

Members Received by Adult Baptism	0
Members Received by Child or Infant Baptism	0
Members Received by Affirmation of Faith	0
Associate Member	0
Members Received by Transfer	4
Members Who Transferred to Other Congregations	2
Members Released to Other Congregations or at Their Request or Removed Through Inactivity	0
Members Who Died in 2025	6
Confirmations	1
Marriages	0
Average Attendance:	
• Worship	73
• Worship Virtual	17*
*ELCA standard virtual attendance has a multiplier of 1.5	
• Sunday Church School	6

(Those who are confirmed and have communed and contributed of record in this or the preceding calendar year)

**Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Dowdy**



Music Director's Report

Music Director

The Music Department continued in its leadership role in worship during the year 2025, both at all regularly scheduled Sunday worship services and at additional festivals, services, and events.

The music ministry supported special worship plans for Epiphany, Ash Wednesday, Holy Week, Easter, Pentecost, October Festival of Hymns, Christ the King Sunday, Advent and Christmas.

I offer my thanks to Sam Moyer for his continuing leadership of the Adult Handbell Choir. Thanks, Sam, for your commitment over these many years! The congregation is blessed by your gifts of talent and time.

I am most mindful and thankful for the members of our Worship Choir, who are committed to serving actively, week-in and week-out. These people regularly attend rehearsals on either Wednesday or Sunday (or both), lead worship on Sunday, and participate in other events outside our regular schedule. We are blessed to have such a group!

The choir was active in worship during the past year, offering anthems, special music, and liturgical leadership in regular and special services. Many of our members offered solos, instrumental music, and other accompaniments. Special thanks are given to Bethanie Glover, Mike Trauscht, Caroline Biggers, and Susan Myers for these gifts.

Grace hosted a Festival of Hymns on October 5, in part to celebrate my 25th anniversary as Music Director/Organist. We were blessed to have choristers join us from First Baptist Church, Main Street UMC, St. John's Episcopal, and St. John the Evangelist Catholic (all from Waynesboro) and Pleasant Valley Church of the Brethren Weyers Cave. Participating conductors included Betty Karol Wilson, Anne Barnes, Katie Glydewell and Russell Blackburn. Guest organist was Florence Jowers and Andrew Fauber assembled and directed a brass quintet. We were especially happy to have seven former Grace choir members who have moved away to return and join us for that celebration.

We have added several new members to our worship and handbell choirs during the past year. The needs are still present, for both ensembles. Sam and I would be happy to speak to anyone with an interest in joining us!

Mike Myers
Music Director





Council President's Report

"A community of servants sharing in the word and work of Jesus."



Dear Members and Friends of Grace,

It is my pleasure to share a brief reflection with you for the 2025 Annual Report as Church Council

President. In the next few months, I will be finishing my second year as Council President. This role continues to both challenge and reward me. I greatly appreciate all your prayers and support as well as the steady support of Pastor Pingel, Nancy Dowdy, Linda Meyer and Church Council.

This Annual Report reflects the MANY ministries our congregation supports during the course of the year. Through it we share the impact of our work inside Grace, around our community, and around the world. We all contribute, however we can, to create the support needed to do this good and important work of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

"For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others." Romans 12:4-5

As part of the body of Christ we work together inside and outside of the walls of Grace. No 'gift' is too small, each of us share our gifts and talents to make up the support needed to complete good works. Whatever your contribution it matters, and it counts!

Over time we work together to weave a tapestry of good works...Sunday worship, music, worship leaders, flowers, ushering, acolytes, fellowship, Sunday school, Youth events, Confirmations, Baptisms, Celebrations of life, Study Groups, Community Dinners, WARM Cold Weather Shelter, Rise Against Hunger, CROP Walk, CCE&J, Book Groups, Mission Endowment, Food Pantries, Back Packs, Quilters, Hikers, HERO, Refugee Resettlement, Renewing Homes, Ruth Warm House, Building & Maintenance, Finances, Technology, ...the list goes on!

Thank you all for your faithful commitment through worship, service, gifts, and pledges. I'm thankful and blessed to be a part of the body of Grace. I look forward to working with you to uncover new ways we are called to share and serve in 2026. Please pray for our service to the community and our pastor search in 2026. May our Lord Jesus Christ bless and keep you, and his light shine through you.

In peace and love,

Allison

Allison Fink, Church Council President

Congregation Engagement Round Table

Christian Education and Youth Ministry

2025 was a strong and hope-filled year for youth ministry at Grace, marked by faithful participation, thoughtful engagement, and meaningful growth in discipleship.

Our Children's Sunday School continues to be a joyful and nurturing space, with 3–5 children attending regularly. Using the Spark lectionary-based curriculum, our youngest members have engaged weekly lessons that are both fun and faith-forming, with excellent materials to share at home. Heartfelt thanks go to Jane Blosser and Holly Carper for their faithful teaching and care. Through their leadership, our children are learning and experiencing the love of Christ in tangible ways.

The Confirmation program continues to be a vibrant and meaningful part of our ministry. Five youth attend regularly and bring curiosity, honesty, and depth to their conversations. This year, their primary focus has been the five promises of Holy Baptism, as articulated in the ELCA, with particular attention to how these promises are not only spoken but actively lived out in daily life.

Together, the students are exploring what it means to:

- Live among God's faithful people.
- Hear the Word of God and share in the Lord's Supper.
- Proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed.
- Serve all people, following the example of Jesus.
- Strive for justice and peace in all the earth.

These promises have guided discussion, reflection, and practice, helping the youth connect faith to real-world action, relationships, and service.

As part of their faith formation, the confirmation students also visited two other Christian traditions—St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church in Waynesboro and Christ Tabernacle—to better understand the wider Body of Christ. Their insights and observations from these experiences were thoughtful and often profound. Pastor and I are incredibly proud of the confirmation youth and their consistent desire to deepen their faith, ask meaningful questions, and live out their baptismal calling.

Our High School Youth ministry is currently in a rebuilding and planning phase, with hopes of establishing a regular meeting rhythm in 2026. With the ELCA National Youth Gathering in 2027 on the horizon, there is much anticipation and opportunity ahead.

Continued

The youth also demonstrated leadership and service through a hotdog fundraiser, helping raise funds toward future camps and gatherings. We are grateful to the Grace congregation for their continued encouragement and support of these efforts.

This fall, the youth led a truly meaningful Youth Sunday. Libby Caister offered an outstanding sermon, and the youth collaborated beautifully in worship leadership through skits, prayers, and music. Their passion, creativity, and faith were a blessing to the congregation and a joy to witness.

Looking ahead, we are hopeful for another Youth Sunday this spring, a possible opportunity to attend a Lutheran summer camp, and a youth-requested lock-in experience. These hopes reflect the enthusiasm and growing ownership our youth have for their faith community.

2025 Youth Ministry Summary

- Children's Sunday School serving 3–5 children with Spark curriculum.
- Dedicated leadership from Jane Blosser and Holly Carper.
- Five active confirmation students engaged in deep faith formation.
- Ecumenical learning through visits to other Christian congregations.
- Successful youth fundraiser supporting future ministry opportunities.
- Spirit-led and youth-led fall Youth Sunday.
- High School Youth ministry rebuilding with hope toward 2026.
- Looking ahead to camps, lock-in, Youth Sunday, and the 2027 ELCA National Youth Gathering.

Grace and peace,
the youth of
Jake Dolan

and thanks be to God for
Grace



Communications

In the busy life and work of Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church communication is a vital ingredient. We need to communicate, cultivate, and celebrate all the work that is alive at Grace. In 2025 we focused on Grace Notes, Facebook and our website.

- We continued to work to keep Facebook posts more frequent and alive with photos. We are most thankful that our Facebook posts are currently being managed by Peggy Caister. Photos with captions are shared with Peggy and posted to Facebook. This is a great channel for us as members as well as a wonderful community-facing tool to help share the life and work of Grace. Peggy has encourage members to take photos of Grace activities and text them with a caption to her cell.
- Our Grace Notes newsletter saw some additions in 2025 as Betty Karol Wilson has volunteered to be the Grace “news wrangler” to help deepen our coverage and bring new information to the congregation from the ELCA, Synod, and local events. We greatly appreciate the new content and intentional management of our newsletter!
- 2025 was our first full year with our re-booted website. We kept it basic for the first year and currently have plans to add new video, update layout and add new photos. It will be a light refresh. We also hope to research possibly working with a church website company to look for other possible upgrades.

Our Church Administrator, Nancy Dowdy, continues to do an amazing job supporting so many of our key communications, our Bulletins, Grace Notes, member emails, Council Packets, Annual Reports, and MORE! We could not do our work without her! She is an amazing resource.

And as you know we continue to offer online Sunday services via YouTube. This is a vital resource for our members unable to join us in person on a Sunday morning as well as others in our community wanting to hear the Good News. Special thanks to Owen Keefer for continuing to help us keep this important service up to date along with many other audio-visual services he provides.

We look forward to continuing to improve and fine tune Grace Communications in 2026. If you have an interest in joining the Committee, please let us know!

Sincerely,

Allison Fink, Betty Karol Wilson, and Peggy Caister



Support and Fellowship

The Support and Fellowship Committee continues to offer receptions and meals for the special events in our congregation. We continued with the subcommittee structure that was organized in 2023. Jill Pingel coordinated one funeral lunch. Sylvia Almarode coordinated the second funeral lunch. Sylvia continued to help out our committee by providing beautiful decorations for many receptions and other occasions. We assisted the youth to put on a fundraiser lunch after the Annual Meeting in February. Linda Meyer coordinated Grace's Lenten soup supper in March. Three receptions were put on for the graduates, in honor of Mike Myer's 25 anniversary and to honor a visit from Bishop Milton in December. Donna Yobs coordinated our annual Easter breakfast.

Karen Walck continues to be in charge of the kitchen. New procedures have been written and posted for anyone using the kitchen to review. She checks supplies, keeps things put away and cleans out the refrigerators as needed. Grace continues to serve a community meal each Wednesday night during all but the winter months, when WARM offers its winter shelter. Eric Hilker, along with many dedicated volunteers, keeps this dinner going on a weekly basis.

Our support role is to provide homebound meals or other help for our members. Caroline Biggers is in charge of this sub-group. She reported that she coordinated homebound meals for 9 people in 2025.

We are very thankful for the willingness and generosity of all members of our congregation to bring food, as well as helping set up and working in the kitchen for each event.

We look forward to times of fellowship and good food in the coming year.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Walck, Linda Meyer, Caroline Biggers, Donna Yobs, Sylvia Almarode, Susie Driskill, Judi Goodrich, Donna Gum, Marsha Howard, Diane Lundstrom, Sharon Lynch, and Deloris Wertman



Worship and Music Report

There are five highlights and dedications regarding Grace's worship life in 2025. Thanks to Pastor Pingel, Glen Gray, and Jack Eckstom for making another table for communion trays from the redwood cross, dedicated January 12th. A new Tower Cross was erected on Good Friday with the Good Friday Service held outside at the foot of the cross. It was dedicated at the close of the Easter Service outside. With the aid of a Thrivent Action Grant, Becca Dolan and Holly Carper revamped the children's kits used during church, dedicated May 4th.

Since 2018, discussion and study regarding design and placement of a new baptismal font resulted in a new stained glass Baptismal Bowl created by Molly Lyons with Romeo Glass in Afton. Glen Gray and Pastor Pingel reworked the top of the font to allow the bowl to fit properly. The bowl was dedicated All Saints Sunday, November 2nd. Mike Myers, Choir Director and Organist, celebrated 25 years of music ministry at Grace with an Ecumenical Hymn Festival on October 5th followed by a reception. The Festival featured a commissioned anthem, *Ask, Seek, Knock* by Pepper Choplin done for Mike's 20th Anniversary, but due to COVID that year, it could not be done. Signed front pages were framed and presented to Mike and to the choir by Pepper Choplin.

The Worship and Music Committee is part of the Round Table meetings under Community Engagement. The committee members also meet separately as well to work out worship details.

Grace began Lent with Ash Wednesday Services in the morning at Grace and then a joint service with First Baptist, St. John's Episcopal, Main Street Methodist at Main Street UMC that night. The Adult Choirs from Grace, First Baptist and Main Street Methodist combined to sing several music selections under the direction of Anne Barnes, choir director of Main Street UMC. The Waynesboro Lutheran Churches combined to have weekly Lenten Services on Wednesday nights based on *The Psalms: Glad, Sad, Mad, Scared, & Bad*.

Palm Sunday Service began on the front lawn of Grace with an Ecumenical Procession of the Palms with these churches: Christ Tabernacle Church of God in Christ, First Baptist, Main Street United Methodist, 1st Presbyterian, Union Baptist and St. John's Episcopal Churches. After the service concluded, the assembled began singing "All Glory Laud and Honor" before returning to their respective churches.

Holy Week began with Maundy Thursday Services held in the morning and at night which concluded with the Stripping of the Altar. The Good Friday Service was held at the Foot of the new Tower Cross. The service concluded with the Bidding Prayer and Adoration of the Cross. Holy Week ended with the Easter Vigil Service including Procession of Light beginning in the Columbarium, reading of the Old Testament Lessons, Reception of New Members, and Holy Communion.

Easter Sunday Service was held at 10:00 featuring Thanksgiving for Baptism and festival music provided by the Adult and Brass Choirs.

God's Work, Our Hands Sunday was celebrated using special ELCA worship materials on September 7th. A *Celebration of Vocation and Blessing of Hands for Ministry* were included in the service.

In addition to Sunday services in Advent, midweek services were held at one of the Waynesboro area Lutheran Churches. The worship homily focused on the *Road to Bethlehem*.

Many thanks to all who cut greenery and set up the outdoor Advent Wreath. Thanks to Jean Morgan and Jerry Kite for hanging and adorning the indoor wreath with greenery. Thanks to Jim Nelson for taking the wreath down after worship on December 21st.

Thanks to Ron Almarode and Holly Carper for spearheading the decorating of the sanctuary and the door wreaths and all who helped in any way to decorate for Christmas in less than an hour and then to de-decorate the church on Sunday before Epiphany after worship. Robin Crowder ordered the swags from Waynesboro Landscape and Garden Center. Linda Meyer filled the oil candles. A Candlelight Holy Communion Service was held on Christmas Eve to include special choir music, families taking part in reading the Nativity Story from Luke and the singing of *Silent Night* by candlelight only to conclude Holy Communion.

Grace welcomed Deacon Phyllis Cox and The Revs. Cynthia Long, Chip Bouzard and Mark Radecke who supplied the pulpit and performed other pastoral duties as needed while Pastor Pingel was on vacation.

Special Notes

Members are now encouraged to sign up to give flowers each Sunday and let the church Administrative Secretary know. You may take them after the service or allow the flowers to be taken to Summit Square for their Sunday afternoon chapel service. Thanks to Allison Fink and her mother for taking on this task.

The Handbell Choir can use more Handbell Ringers to adequately provide music that we have enjoyed over the years. If you have interest, please contact Sam Moyer, 540-471-1059 or jsmoyer@comcast.net for more information.

Thanks to the Ushers and / or the Assisting Ministers for serving as Crucifers and Acolytes.

Donna Gum wrote articles for Grace Notes regarding Holy Cross Sunday and Christ the King Sunday. She also spearheaded the Synod Assembly Altar Guild and gave Holy Communion.

Continued

Many thanks to these Worship & Music people who help to enhance our worship experience for services. As you can see, it takes many hands, feet, and voices to enhance our worship services. Their reports follow this report.

- Adult Choir—Mike Myers
- Altar Guild—Jean Morgan
- Worship Assistants—Donna Gum
- Collects Flower Money orders for Christmas and Easter—Nancy Dowdy
- Easter Lilies and Christmas Poinsettias--Jane Stein
- Eucharistic Ministers—Pastor Pingel
- Sound/Video System—Owen Keefer
- Ushers—Jack Eckstrom

Soli Deo Gloria
Donna Gum
Worship and Music Chair



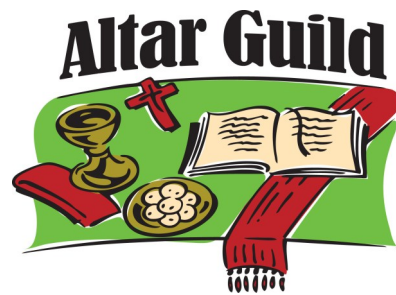
Altar Guild

Altar Guild would like to thank Pastor Pingel, our church secretary, Nancy Dowdy, and many of our church members for their help and guidance throughout the year. We welcomed a new member, Gigi Werner-Winslow, to the altar guild dedicated group of volunteers. All of the dedicated altar guild members take part in the preparation and care of the altar.

During 2025 two small oil burning altar candles for the Chapel and a new bowl for the Baptismal font were purchased using the T&M Fund.

If you would like to consider joining the altar guild please contact Jean Morgan at (h) 540-943-1929, (c) 540-649-4422, or through email, jc321morgan@ntelos.net. Or call the church office and leave a message with Nancy that you would like to be contacted.

Respectfully submitted,
Jean Morgan
Altar Guild Coordinator



Eucharistic Ministry

Grace Lutheran's Eucharistic Ministry serves as an extension of our Sunday morning worship. Communion elements are blessed the first Sunday of each month to be taken by trained and equipped lay members to take Holy Communion to those who cannot get to church and desire to have The Lord's Supper brought to them. If you desire to have Holy Communion brought to you, please call the church office. The list below indicates those who take Communion to the recipients.

Eucharistic Minister Teams

Donna Gum

Gail Johnson

Ron Almarode and Linda Meyer

Recipients

Minnie Moye

Ron Knicely

Berenice Archambeault

Marge Cloutier

Phyllis Kite

Bob Shumate

Liz Ann Binns

Donna H. Gum
Worship and Music Chair



Health & Wellness Committee

In 2024, the decision was made to rename the COVID Committee, the Health & Wellness Committee. The committee shifted its focus from COVID to any situation that may require preventative measures or congregational education. The focus will not be restricted to medical issues (COVID, flu, RSV, etc.), but will include educational opportunities such as home emergency preparedness, flood and hurricane prep, etc.

Starting in the August issue of Grace Notes, monthly informational articles (gathered from sources such as the Virginia Department of Health and Augusta Health) about such topics as immunizations, cold weather safety, and urgent vs emergency care were published to provide seasonal or relevant information to the Congregation.

We are grateful to Pastor Pingel, Ron Almarode, Robin Crowder, Jack Eckstrom, Gail Johnson, Owen Keefer, Jerry Kite, Linda Meyer, and Mike Myers for their service on the Health & Wellness Committee.

Respectfully submitted,
Ron Almarode

Offering Stewards

The Offering Stewards collect the offering at the end of the service. The offering is placed into the safe, until the Church Secretary collects it on the first day of the work week. The offering is tabulated and recorded and putback into the safe. There are five Stewards. and the assigned Stewards, for that week, meet at the Church on the agreed upon day, to ensure that the offering has been tabulated correctly. The Stewards make sure the checks are correctly filled out.

A deposit slip is then filled out and the offering is taken to the bank and deposited, by the assigned Stewards. The bank receipt is taken back to the Church and given to the Treasurer. At certain times in the Church year, Christmas and Lent/Easter, additional offerings are collected. The procedures remain the same.

Respectfully submitted,
Pat Brady

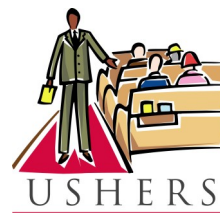


Ushers

At this time, we currently have seven teams of two people. Each team serves once every seven weeks.

We serve at special services and the ushers volunteer at their convenience.

Respectfully submitted,
Jack Eckstrom



Worship Assistants

The liturgy of the Church is the vehicle through which the tone of worship is established and the practice of worship is implemented. The Assisting Ministers, Communion Assistants, Acolytes, and Crucifers are integral leaders in the service as they give of their time and talent to read the lessons, prepare and pray the prayers of the church, and assist with the Holy Communion distribution, by giving the bread and or wine. Acolytes have returned to carry the cross, distribute wine, in addition to lighting the candles.

Members also read the lessons for the Maundy Thursday, Easter Vigil, and Christmas Eve Services.

They are also requested to read and or serve as Assisting Ministers/ Communion Assistants upon the family's request at Funerals/Memorial Services.

Acolytes/Crucifers/Communion Assistants: Isabelle Bokelman, Libby Caister, Reva Franklin, Zoey Mahoney, and Reagan Van Bremen.

Assisting Ministers: Peggy Caister, Cathy and Robin Crowder, Allison Fink, Tripp Franklin, Donna Gum, Erik Hilker, Marsha Howard, Gail Johnson, Brian Lundstrom, Linda Meyer, Susan Myers, Gloria Nelson, Tami Radecke, Andrew Sell, and Mike Trauscht.

Communion Assistants in Addition to Assisting Ministers: Carolyn Hite, The Rev. Mark Radecke, and Karen Walck.

Readers in the Easter Vigil Readings: Ron Almarode, Bethany Glover, Donna Gum, Eric Hilker, The Rev. Cynthia Long, and Susan Myers.

During 2025, families read lessons and placed the Holy Family in the Creche for the Christmas Eve Service. They were: Blosser/Mahoney, Carper, Dolan, Franklin, Hilker and Madawa/Denis.

Adults and children are invited to assist in the worship life of Grace Church. If you would like to be a part of this ministry, please contact Donna Gum.

I am eternally thankful for all of you for a job well done in 2025.

Respectfully submitted,
Donna Gum
Coordinator



Worship Attendance

Worship Attendance (Average per Month) 2025														
2025	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Christmas Eve	170
10:00 Service	74	81	72	95	54	65	64	60	66	68	69	88	Christmas Eve Virtual	6
Virtual*	23	18	20	17	17	15	17	18	18	17	18	17	Easter	148
SCS	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	Easter Virtual	13

*ELCA standard virtual attendance has a multiplier of 1.5

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Dowdy

Community Engagement Round Table Reports

Evangelism and Hospitality



All God's Children

This group has been active since November 2019 when we began discussion of our first book, *White Fragility* at the suggestion of the Virginia Synod and Pastor Pingel. In 2026, the group will meet on the first and third Mondays at 7:00 pm in person in the Grace Conference Room and via Zoom. We discuss racial and ethnic equity, justice, truth telling and transformation through books, videos, lectures, and current events.

We started the year reading and discussing *Speaking of Race: Why Everybody Needs to Talk About Racism—and How to Do It* by Celeste Headlee. A self-described “light-skinned Black Jew,” Celeste Headlee has been forced to speak about race—including having to defend or define her own—since childhood. She discovered, however, that while many people say they want to talk about race, the reality is, they want to talk about race with people who agree with them. To avoid painful discussions, we stay in our bubbles, reinforcing our own sense of righteousness as well as our division. This book generated thoughtful discussions within the group.

In January, we watched individually the movie, *The American Society of Magical Negroes* and then participated jointly in a web conference discussion as part of the Virginia ELCA Tapestry Committee on Racial Justice Movie Night.

In April, many AGC members attended the Monticello Founder’s Day Celebration. It featured Bryan Stevenson, founder of the Equal Justice Initiative, as the keynote speaker and recipient of the Thomas Jefferson Foundation Medal in Citizen Leadership. Mr. Stevenson spoke about confronting difficult aspects of American history, promoting truth, and the importance of love and unity, inspiring attendees with his message of justice and humanity.

We read and discussed *One of Our Kind: A Novel* by Nicola Yoon. While this was a book of fiction by the Black New York Times best-selling author, it was extremely thought provoking. The author noted that her dearest wish for this book is that the protagonist’s tragic fate would inspire thoughtful conversations and that was the case for our group.

Continued

We also considered Eve L Ewing’s *Original Sins: the (Mis)education of Black and Native Children and the Construction of American Racism*. The book considered how the U.S. school system has played an instrumental role in creating and upholding racial hierarchies, preparing children to expect unequal treatment throughout their lives. It compares how our educational system controlled and molded Black and native American children in different ways and with different goals. This book has stimulated us to look at racial and ethnic discrimination in the United States more broadly in 2026.

We all gained some valuable personal insights from reading and discussing *Good Reasonable People: The Psychology Behind America’s Dangerous Divide* by Keith Payne. The book challenged each of us to drop the weapon of demonization and replace it with something more powerful: a framework for understanding—and for being understood by—people who see the world differently from us. This book is highly recommended for anyone who is struggling with the daily conflicts we can experience with friends, colleagues, and family members.

We are always eager to welcome new members to join us on the first and third Mondays of every month at 7:00 pm in the Church Conference Room or via Zoom.

Respectfully submitted,
Rick Bump



Christian Coalition for Equity & Justice (CCE&J)
Grace-Christ Tabernacle Discussion, Fellowship, Advocacy and Service Group

2025 marked the Sixth (6th) year for CCE&J as members from Grace and Christ Tabernacle Church of God in Christ continued meeting in person (with a Zoom option) led by Bishop C.D. Brown and Pastor Pingel. We continued our journey of “falling in love” with each other and building on the goal of becoming a resource and example for our community.

Activities for 2025 included:

Fellowship & Spiritual Engagement

Our monthly Prayer Vigil to pray for racial justice continues, held on the first Saturday of every month outside at 11:00 AM at Grace (even months) and Christ Tabernacle (odd months). Vigils are open to the public and all are welcome. A banner is displayed at the site of the Vigil for several days before the event.

Continued

Throughout the year, members shared challenges and frustrations they encountered in the real world and in working situations. These were often powerful confirmations of the persistence of racism in our communities.

We have had several discussions regarding the future direction of the group. We agreed that going forward, it is essential that we continue to proclaim that our driving force is faith based. We acknowledge the importance both of continuing our relationship-building activities within the group and our service/social justice activities in the broader community. We are faced with a dwindling number of members for a variety of reasons. However, we have not been successful in attracting new members, Black or white, from Christ Tabernacle and Grace.

Expanding membership and engagement are goals for 2026.

We celebrated a well-attended “CCE&J Homecoming Reunion” in July at the Pingel home, with several former members attending.

Community Service

We have been available to provide work crews for service to Renewing Homes of Greater Augusta.

Grace and Christ Tabernacle CCE&J members worked at the Rise Against Hunger event at Kate Collins Middle School.

We coordinated the collection and delivery of 24 boxes of food and hygienic products during Lent for use by students in need and unhoused students at Waynesboro High School and Kate Collins Middle School. We received and distributed donations from members at Grace, Christ Tabernacle, Saint John’s Episcopal, and Bethlehem and Zion Lutheran churches.

Community Engagement

Multiple members participated in the MLK March from the Rosenwald Center to the Russel Museum and attended the program at the museum on MLK Day.

Multiple members of CCE&J participated in No Kings demonstrations in Charlottesville and Staunton.

Multiple members attended meetings to support St. John’s Episcopal, WARM, the Grace Community Meals, and the unhoused in our community in response to claims by some tree street residents that acts of hospitality to the unhoused are a threat to the safety of the housed.

We welcome anyone with an interest in promoting racial equity and justice in our community and beyond to join us. You can contact me at rcbump0621@gmail.com for information.

Respectfully Submitted,
Rick Bump

Faith in Action/Stewardship- *Because of God's Great Mercy 2025*

Jesus' disciple Peter writes, "You are...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." God has made us God's own people for a purpose, and that purpose is that we may proclaim to the world the story of God's incredible love. We do that in word, and we also do that in deeds of love and mercy.

Through Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church, we are involved in proclaiming in both word and deed. We proclaim God's love in word as we gather weekly for worship, as we teach the faith to children and youth, and as adults gather to study God's word and support one another in life's journey. We proclaim God's love in deed in our community as we support WARM and the HERO programs, as we work for racial reconciliation with the Christian Coalition for Equity and Justice, giving to the food bank and the River City Bread Basket, as we serve AT through hikers, and so much more. We proclaim God's love in deed across our country and around the world as we pray for our country and its leaders, as we give to World Hunger and the ELCA Disaster Relief, and as we give to the community we served in Nicaragua.

Sometimes it is difficult to see all that our congregation is doing. Make no mistake, because of you and many others, Grace is making a difference as we proclaim God's mighty acts.

With your pledges for 2026 and careful budget planning the Finance Committee was able to again propose a 2026 Budget without any additional cuts. I am extremely thankful for your giving, our Treasurer Ron Almarode, our Finance Committee, and our Ministry leaders.

As faithful stewards we are called to take what we are given and use it to proclaim the good news in word and deed. I pray that you will be faithful in your giving in 2026 and that you will share more when you are able. Through your stewardship of time, talents, and finances Grace can increase our reach and continue to be a beacon of love and hope across our community!

Respectfully submitted,
Allison Fink, Council President, 2025 Stewardship Campaign Leader



Mission Endowment Fund

The members of the Mission Endowment Fund Committee are David Schwiesow, Chair, and Glen Gray, Recording Secretary. The Committee wishes to acknowledge, with its thanks, the service of Tami Radecke and Jerry Kite, who served on the Committee during 2025. Pastor Pingel and the President of Congregation Council also were ex officio members of the Committee. Any member of the Congregation who would like to volunteer to join the Committee is encouraged to speak to David or any other member of the Committee.

Investment Performance

The assets in the Mission Endowment Fund are invested (i) in Certificates of Deposit (CDs) through the Mission Investment Fund of ELCA and (ii), with respect to all other funds, in equities and interest-bearing instruments selected by Alpha Omega Investment Advisors (“Alpha Omega”). Alpha Omega are professional investment advisors that were selected by the Committee and approved by Congregation Council in 2018. The specifics of the investments and the market values of these investments as of December 31, 2025 are:

- Through the Mission Investment Fund of ELCA, one three-year CD is held, having a value of \$159,520. The fixed interest rate is 4.184%. The maturity date is May 7, 2028.
- The Alpha Omega investments had a year-end value of \$576,339. The investments consisted of equities (\$411,266), bonds (\$158,490) and cash and cash equivalents (\$6,583). At year-end 2024, the total value of the Mission Endowment Fund that was managed by Alpha Omega was \$531,626. The market value increase during 2025 was \$51,601. Interest and dividend income was \$20,562. In addition, there were grant distributions of \$27,439.
- The total amount that was available for grants in 2025 was \$26,922. Total grants that were distributed from the Fund or committed for distribution in 2025 were \$23,889.
- The total value of all Fund investments at December 31, 2025 was \$735,859, as compared to a total value as of January 1, 2025 of \$692,519.

With respect to the performance of investments that were managed by Alpha Omega, these investments showed a positive return for 2025 (interest, dividends and market performance) of \$72,163, or 13.62%. The Committee continues to Have confidence in Alpha Omega and its investment approach.

Continued

Available Funds for Grants in 2026

Each year, the Committee recommends, for Congregation Council's approval, that the funds available for distribution in the current year (i.e., 2026) will be a percentage of the fair market value of the Fund (including realized and unrealized income and gains) as of the prior year end (i.e., December 31, 2025). The Committee will provide its recommendation to Congregation Council in January 2026.

How You Can Make a Difference

The Mission Endowment Fund was established in 1998 "for the receipt of special gifts and bequests." In establishing the Fund, it was stated that "for many people stewardship means only the giving of money to the church in The Sunday morning offering. Others understand stewardship more broadly. Stewardship also includes our accumulated, inherited, and appreciated resources. Planning for the distribution of all lifetime accumulations is a vital step in completing our stewardship plan." Further, "the name Mission Endowment Fund emphasizes the Fund's purpose: "To fund mission work and projects at home and around the world that are above and beyond those programs supported through our regular offerings."

Over the years, many Grace members have made contributions to the Mission Endowment Fund to further its purpose. Both large and small contributions have caused the Fund to grow to \$735,859 this year, and to provide the resources to make \$26,922 available for grants last year. The Committee encourages you to consider making a contribution to the Fund, regardless of size. Contributions may be made currently or through a bequest in your will. If you would like to get more information about how you can make a difference, please speak to David or any other member of the Committee.

Respectfully submitted,
David Schwiesow



Outreach Mission

Mission Outreach at Grace in 2025 continued to support a variety of programs with emphasis on supporting needs in our community and the world. We are thankful for the dedication of our members who have helped support Mission Outreach this year. The following recaps many of our programs.

Area Food Pantry

Thanks to those who have donated peanut butter, mac 'n cheese, personal hygiene items, beans, diapers and other items at Grace which were delivered to Main Street UMC and Calvary UMC food pantries during 2025. This year we also collected food condiments such as salad dressing and other items for the Bread Basket in Waynesboro. One of the big needs this year has been diapers which we been delivering to Calvary UMC. We will continue to have our donation box inside the office door for food collection in 2026.

Respectively submitted,
Jerry Kite



Backpacks

Grace continues to support the Waynesboro Public School Back Program with food being packed weekly during the school year. Grace members have developed two packing teams and we have partnered with St. John's Catholic Church with each Church packing every other week to support Waynesboro School's program to provide food over the weekend for children in need. The food is delivered to Grace; our teams pack the food and it is delivered to the Waynesboro schools by the Waynesboro Kiwanis Club. This year we packed for William Perry, Berkeley Glenn and Wenonah Elementary Schools. We are currently packing 144 bags a week for the three schools.

Respectively submitted,
Gwen Kite and Sharon Lynch



Community Meals

In our third year, the community meal ran from Easter to Thanksgiving. We continued to provide a consistent weekly meal on a day when there is not another meal offered in Waynesboro. In many ways the community meals this year progressed much as they did last year. We again combined efforts with the Hiker Ministry during its season (and this worked well). We also continued to have numbers that fluctuated both in terms of folks who came needing a meal and folks who brought food to share. Occasionally this caused a mis-match, when there was a lot of food, but fewer folks to eat, or more guests with less food. While there were a couple weeks that where there was not much left for seconds, we never ran short of getting everyone a plate of food. We also continued to make progress in developing relationships while eating together. I consider this our greatest success of the year—the folks from Grace who consistently came to eat at the meal have developed an awesome capacity for sitting down with a new guest and making them feel welcomed and cared about. This has been amazing to see. Another point of progress call attention to in this regard is the extent to which Kirk Hyden has become a central disciple in this ministry (this is true of his work with WARM as well). This is so encouraging to see, as we first came to know Kirk as a guest of WARM and the community meals, and now see him shouldering a lot of work for those ministries.

This season was particularly marked in four ways worth noting.

First, we teamed up with WARM to offer showers on Wednesday nights beginning July 9th, 2025. WARM provided outreach, transportation, shower supplies, and cleaning for this effort, which made it possible to utilize the Grace showers without needing additional Grace member support. This was a real benefit to guests who had no other consistent place to bathe, and brought more guests to the meals, some of which would not otherwise have had transportation to/from the meal. This was great and I hope we are able to continue this in the coming season.

Second, we benefitted from consistent food shared from WARM that had been donated by Chick-fil-A. Donna Gum was able to source this for us, and there were weeks that we may have fallen short on food if it had not been for the donated chicken and biscuits. I do not know whether that will be a continuing source of support or not.

Third, we saw an incredible partnership with St. John's Episcopal develop during this season. I met with Tom DuMontier early in the season, and by September we had steady group joining us from St. John's. This was really a blessing to get to fellowship with our ecclesial neighbors, and truly provided needed to support, as Grace participation in some weeks had been thin. The greatest threat to the community

Continued

meals, to my mind, is that the work will fall more and more on a few devoted members until they are burnt out. The infusion of help from St. John's was a God send, and I continue to look for others in our community that might be willing to join in as well. I also hope to identify guests of the meal who might be able to share some responsibility for doing the work of the meal.

Fourth, we put on a Thanksgiving dinner this year (the week before Thanksgiving), and it was a wonderful way to wrap up the season. While many people made this possible, Charlie Wilson was central to making it a special event. It was such a lovely time of sharing and celebration, we look forward to doing this again (and Charlie is hopeful of making it even fancier!).

Looking toward the coming season, I want to highlight a couple of things.

First, by the end of last season we developed the practice of placing a table at the entryway to welcome guests and provide name tags. This was also helpful for doing some light screening. Staffing the table was a challenge (as many regular helpers are busy in the kitchen) and we need some consistent volunteers who can come at 5:30pm and stay at the table until 6:15pm. I hope to identify 6 people from Grace who can take responsibility for that role on a rotating basis.

Second, I would like to begin offering a table of necessities that people can choose from as needed: toilet paper, deodorant, bug spray, hand sanitizer, feminine hygiene products, etc. There are often needs for such items, and we did not have a consistent way of helping with these needs this year. I am hoping to request some funding to help supply this effort (but can find other means if necessary).

My hope for the coming year is to continue to facilitate relationships among our community—housed and unhoused, members of Grace and members of other churches, and neighbors who are not part of any church. The power of the mustard seed in the Gospels is not simply that it grew large, but that it provided shelter for all kinds of birds (a reference to those outside the people of Israel). The community meal is a small ministry, but its power lies in its capacity to provide a place where those from outside are welcomed into community—and this is the power of the Kingdom at work..

Respectfully Submitted,
Eric Hilker



Community Support Information Ministry Fellowship

Grace held 3 Community Support Information Ministry Fellowship sessions in 2025. The goal was to provide a form for local community organizations to let Grace members know of volunteer opportunities in Waynesboro. The 5 presenters were:

- Lifeworks/River City Bread basket – presented on their work with the client choice food pantry which serves over 100 families a week.
- Renewing Homes presented on recent building & repair opportunities in Waynesboro.
- Serenity Gardens, BK presented on their history and wonderful uses of the garden.
- Project Grows - Waynesboro farm and farmers market.
- VPAS presented on services & backup meals on wheels volunteer opportunities.

Respectfully Submitted,
Donna Yobs & Karen Walck



Crop Walk

The 50th Anniversary of the Waynesboro-East Augusta CROP Walk took place at North Park on Sunday afternoon, September 21. The weather was beautiful and walkers seemed to really like using the South River Greenway as the new walk route. Donna Yobs, Gwen Kite, Sarah Beth Kite, Charlie Wilson and Karen Walck represented the Grace Lutheran team. Grace donations of \$2275 surpassed our goal of \$1550. Thank you to everyone who walked and donated towards the important work that CWS does all over the world. The Waynesboro-East Augusta CROP Walk surpassed its \$20,000 goal by raising \$20,894.43. An additional year end donation of \$916 was given by a local church, which raised the overall total to \$21,810.43. Grace Lutheran raised the second highest amount of fifteen teams. Twenty five percent of the amount raised stays locally donated to VPAS, The Blue Ridge Area Food Pantry and Disciples Kitchen. We were not aware at the end of September that there would be such an increased need for supplemental nutrition sources.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Walck



Disciples Kitchen

We continue to support the Disciples Kitchen by preparing and serving meals at their Thursday lunches at Second Presbyterian Church. We also prepared and served Saturday breakfast at Christ Tabernacle Church of God. We are provided meals for both programs about every eight weeks during 2025.

Respective submitted,
Gwen Kite and Carolina Biggers



HERO – Housing Emergency Relief Organization

The Housing Emergency Relief Organization (HERO) non-profit was formed in 2023 when several churches came together to investigate how best to help our Waynesboro neighbors make ends meet. Grace is one of the five (5) founding Waynesboro churches: First Baptist, Grace Lutheran, St. John's Episcopal, St. John's the Evangelist, and Westminster Presbyterian.

In 2024, HERO was able to help 195 households with \$59,000. In 2025, we saw a 50% increase, helping 300 households with \$98,000. The funds were used to help families retain their apartments, and keep their utilities running in the cold winter and hot summer. The increase is due to a combination of being better known in the community as well as increased needs.

HERO churches in Waynesboro are able to pool their resources, and simplify vetting of needs so that each church doesn't need to review each case, nor deal with limited resources on their own. Churches (and community organizations) can refer applicants to HERO making the process much more equitable and streamlined while still meeting the needs of our community.

Grace plays an active role in this organization, contributing funds, volunteering, and holding a board seat. Volunteers at HERO not only aid in funds but also provide support, education, and resources for individuals experiencing crisis. HERO shows what a community of churches can achieve when Faith and Cooperation are guiding principles.

For more information you can visit or refer individuals to <https://www.herowaynesboro.org/>

Respectfully Submitted,
Donna Yobs



Hiker Ministry

From June 2nd through the 28th this year, Grace Lutheran hosted our annual Hiker Ministry providing respite and overnight housing for Appalachian Trail thru-hikers on their journey from Springer Mountain, GA to Mt. Katahdin, ME. We hosted hikers from all over the U.S., as well as from Italy, Germany, England, Ireland, New Zealand, The Netherlands, Puerto Rico, and Canada. Hikers are invited to stay up to two nights at Grace; and many nights, we were full to capacity. We hosted an average of 9 hikers per night this year, for a total of 171 overnight stays – a 25% increase from last year.

Many thanks go out to all who served in and supported this ministry this year – those who provided check-in and check-out, overnight stays, food for the Wednesday night dinners and for the hiker lounge, those who drove hikers back up the mountain or around town, helped set up and take down, and those who made donations and who prayed for this ministry and for the hikers, encouraging us all throughout the time we were open. We had over 30 volunteers help at the ministry, including 6 community members and one of our “founders,” Irma Graf.

There were two incidents of concern that occurred during the hiker ministry. They will be shared and discussed during the Council meeting. We are also evaluating any needed changes for next year.

The hiker ministry is supported by donations from Grace members as well as from the hikers themselves. The following is the summary – it does not include all the donations from the hikers, as we used some of those funds to purchase grocery needs, first aid needs, stamps, etc. This year, we went through our stock of cots, many of which were quite worn. We recycled several and purchased 6 new ones.

Hiker Ministry fund status:

Beginning Balance	\$605.38
In	\$589.00
Out	\$515.74
Ending Balance	\$478.64



The hikers were very grateful for the opportunity to stay here where it was quiet, cool, and welcoming. They were all willing to help with routine activities like folding clean towels, helping get out and put away the cots, sweeping and cleaning. Several commented that this was the best experience of overnight stays they'd experienced so far on their journey north to Maine.

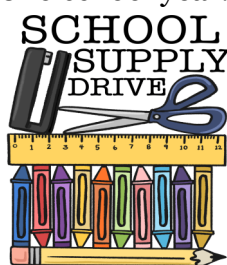
Thank you, Grace Church! It's times like these that we recognize we really do strive to be a "*Community of Servants Sharing in the Word and Work of Jesus.*"

Jean Morgan, Linda Meyer and Irma Graf

Homework Toolboxes for the Salvation Army

The 2025 collection of Toolboxes was much smaller than in years past. There were fewer than 20 boxes donated. As a result, Jerry Kite Contacted me about asking for money from the Outreach fund to help supplement the items donated for the Fall, 2026 school year. I asked for \$50.00 for the upcoming year.

Respectfully submitted,
Amy Warren



Local Ministry and Giving Tree

Local Ministry members are Sarah Beth Kite, Sharon Lynch, Peggy Caister and Jane Stein.

This year for the Giving Tree, the Salvation Army gave us ten (10) children. We provided over eight (8) gifts per child for Christmas.

We also have received several requests from the Salvation Army to help pay bills for clients.

Thanks to all!

Respectfully submitted,
Jane Stein



Quilts Lutheran World Relief

The Grace quilting team made quilts for Lutheran World Relief January to May and September to December. In June we shipped 34 quilts to Lutheran World Relief. We also delivered over 45 lap quilts to Rivers Edge Assisted Living in Waynesboro.

Respectively submitted,
Gwen Kite



Refugee Resettlement Program

As we reported last year, the Madawa/Mmeswa family is becoming more and more independent, and requiring much less of our attention for daily living issues. We keep in touch with them, particularly Rev. April Cranford of Westminster Presbyterian, Pastor Pingel from Grace, and Gail Johnson, of Grace. They have helped them navigate government regulations for refugees as well as some of the benefit programs they are eligible for.

Gail has attended to their medical needs and has taken them to medical appointments, making sure their vaccines are up to date and helping them meet school requirements and routine medical needs.

The children are doing well in school – and Happy, the “baby” has grown a lot and now is in preschool.

The family attends worship intermittently at both Westminster and Grace, and are welcomed warmly each time.

Some special moments included:

- Pastor Paul and Pastor April took the whole family for a day trip to Virginia Beach early last summer so they could see the ocean and experience a beautiful time at the beach.
- The younger children were sponsored for a week long day camp held at Westminster Presbyterian, and they seemed to really enjoy the group activities and outdoor fun.
- Several members of both churches helped the family celebrate the third anniversary of their coming to America with an evening at Fasttrax – with even Masoka charging around in the go-carts!

Please continue to keep them in prayer as this is a worrisome time for immigrants in this country. They all have their green cards and have followed all of the rules and regulations for their stay in this country, and we pray that they will continue to thrive and be safe as they continue to grow and work and learn.

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Meyer



REFUGEE ASSISTANCE

Renewing Homes Augusta Projects

Grace worked on 3 projects with Renewing Homes of Greater Augusta this year for home repairs for families of home owners in need. Our work this year included building or repairing wheelchair ramps and other needed repairs. We also teamed with Zion Lutheran on some projects this year.

Respective submitted,
Jerry Kite



Rise Against Hunger Food Packing Event

Our Rise Against Hunger event at Kate Collins Middle School had great support this year with 23 area congregations and the Key Club from Waynesboro High School. In about 1.5 hours we packed almost 38,000 meals and had over 300 people make, weigh, and seal and pack the meals.

Rise Against Hunger team leader said we packed enough food to feed 172 school children for a year. There were participants from all ages 6 to 96. The food we packed was part of a shipment to the Philippines to feed those in need. A special thanks to Robin Crowder for coordinating with Kate Collins Middle School for the usage of the space and Pastor Paul for coordinating with our area Churches.

Thanks to all our Grace members who help to make this event a great success again this past year.

Respectively submitted,
Jerry Kite



Room Sponsorship at Ruth WARM House

Grace continues to sponsor a room at the WARM Ruth House in Waynesboro for homeless women with children. We provided Christmas presents for the family in our room during December.

Respectively submitted,
Gwen Kite



WARM Ministry

Grace ELC continues to fully engage in numerous outreach efforts - one of which is hosting a week of the Cold Weather Shelter (CWS). I cannot thank everyone enough for their efforts - prayers, volunteer hours, financial and/or item donations, and "unrecognized" hours shopping, cooking, doing laundry, planning and for those who forgot to sign/in/out. Many thanks are given!!

Over the course of our week, we had 45 different volunteers who are Grace members or regular attendees! And, we weren't alone, there were a number of others:

- 45 volunteers from Grace ELC
- 12 volunteers from Waynesboro Kiwanis
- 10 volunteers from Zion Lutheran Church
- 5 volunteers from St John's Episcopal Church (and they hosted overflow every night - hours not counted)
- 3 volunteers from St John the Evangelist Catholic Church
- 2 volunteers from St James Lutheran Church
- *4 friends*

Total Volunteers—81 different neighbors helping neighbors!

These 81 volunteers put in 480 man-hours... feet on the ground! And note that the "480 hours" do not include - shopping, cooking at home, laundry, food purchasing/prep away from the church, picking up/dropping off or planning hours. We remained open 24/7 for 3 days (Monday, Tuesday, Sunday) and had 3 two-hour late releases (Wednesday, Thursday, Monday) - that is 66 extra hours staffing, extra food prep/replenishing ... amazing! Over the course of the week, we served 217 guests ... they ranged from 27—35 each evening, which averages out to 31 guests each night. We provided 67 showers over the week. We provided over 651 meals -- breakfast, lunch, dinner for 217 guests (does not include the volunteers who were fed as well).

Our 7 Meal Teams who provided dinners:

- Waynesboro Kiwanis
- St John's Episcopal Church led by Dan/Susan Jenny
- Zion Lutheran Church led by Joy Tobias
- Christ Tabernacle Church of God in Jesus Christ led by Fedlie Carrington
- From Grace - Antoinette Eckstrom, Quilters/Gwen Kite, and Christ Care/Gail Johnson each led a team.

Continued

Plus, we had additional support:

- \$250 Thrivent Grant (thank you, Donna Gum)
- \$100 Gift Card from Martin's (thank you, Charles Carrington and Donna Gum)
- \$200 Donation from The Sisters of the Mabry Shiflett Circle of New Hope UMC (thank you, Donna Gum)
- Pots of soup from Caroline Biggers for a hot lunch!
- Pots of soup from Evelyn Cotton of the Bridge Club for a hot lunch!

This was a particularly extraordinary group of guests. So polite. So appreciative.

From our guests this year:

- "I can't believe how good all this food is, every night!"
- "Thank you so much for all the good food!"
- "You've been so kind and welcoming."
- "Please," "Thank you," "Yes ma'am"
- "Please, can we have some more sugar, sugar?" said with a big smile!
- "What can I do to help?" - and they grab a mop or broom to clean floors/bathrooms or wipes to clean tables.
- Lots of comments on our smiles and the friendly folks at Grace!

Several guests and one WARM staffer wanted to stay longer at Grace!

In past years, I and other volunteers have spent time every day cleaning/wiping down tables, sweeping/mopping floors and cleaning bathrooms...this year, the guests took care of almost all of that! The guests made our hosting so much easier!

I thank God for our guests and for WARM.

I thank God for our volunteers and supporters.

I thank God for all the prayers that sustained us, kept us calm,
And smoothed the way.

I thank God for the opportunity to serve.

And, I thank God for Grace ELC.

Peace— Susan Myers



Support Round Table Reports

Building and Maintenance Fund

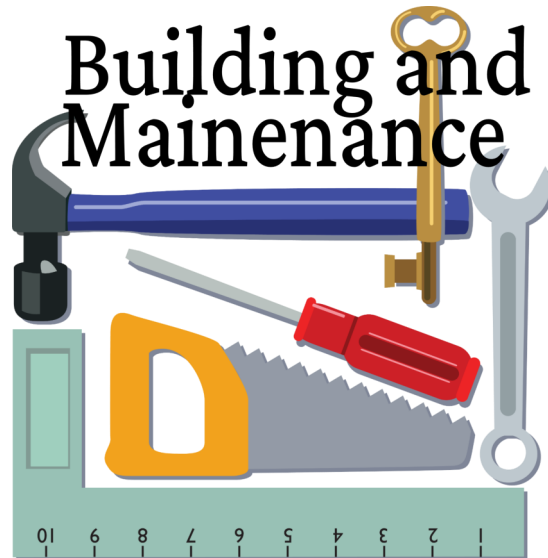
GELC was gifted \$250,000 from the estate of Morris and Ty Elliott in August of 2023. The contribution was designated for building and maintenance use.

The Building and Maintenance Fund Committee was established by Church Council to develop a policy and procedure for the fund and to provide ongoing oversight. Members of the Building and Maintenance Fund Committee are:

Pastor Pingel
Ron Almarode
Rew Walck
Allison Fink
Jack Eckstrom

There was no extraordinary maintenance cost in 2025, so the fund continued to grow from it's investments yielding over \$13,000 in returns at year end.

Respectfully submitted,
Ron Almarode



Church Property

Here is a list of Property Committee tasks and church property issues during 2025.

January

- * Wall drains repaired at VMA entrance.
- * Cross replacement planning underway.

February

- * Hired Little Mountain Metalworks to construct new Cross for tower.
- * New Cross will be 16' x 9' and similar to the cross over the altar.

March

- * Virginia case stone capstones were installed in the Columbarium by Davis Masonry. Columbarium repairs completed by Classic Wall Systems.

April

- * Tower Cross completed and installed by Nick Little from Little Mountain Metalworks.
- * HVAC systems serviced for summer AC.

May

- * Gutter work above 13th Street entrance completed by Austin & Sons.
- * Elevator Inspection completed by Central Elevator.

June

- * New Church Office HVAC installed by Ronnie Ritchie and Company.
- * Hiler Ministry building inspections completed.

July

- * Large walnut tree in playground trimmed for safety by Williams Brothers Landscape Company.

August

- * Stage curtains malfunctioned and were taken down to facilitate back packers.

September

- * Church shrubbery trimmed, beds weeded by Tiho Radic.

October

- * Got two (2) large flat roof replacement quotes from Greencast Roofing and Skyline Roofing.

November

- * Building inspections completed for Fire Suppression, Kitchen Hood, Fire Alarm, Fire Extinguishers in advance of WARM Shelter in December.

December

- * Selected flat roof quote from Skyline Roofing to be forward to Council in January for approval.

Respectfully submitted,
Fred Biggers
Rew Walck



Columbarium and Memorial Garden Report

A Columbarium is a way to bring Christian Burial back to the Church!

The completed east wall of the Columbarium contains space for 144 niches with stone facings. The uncompleted west wall has space for 164 niches, which will be added in the future when needed. Each niche has space for two brass urns, which the church stocks and furnishes without cost to you. The price for a niche is \$2,750 including up to two (2) brass urns, no charge for opening and closing the niche, or for engraving of the face stone with names and dates.

There are 44 niches sold. There are a total of 30 sets of ashes entered into the Columbarium. The memorial brick patio area has 43 bricks with names, most of these are for members and family members, who are buried elsewhere. An engraved brick has space for two names and cost \$400.

The Columbarium committee consist of three members. Ron Almarode's term ends 12/31/28, Bradley Keefer's term ends 12/31/30, and Rew Walck's term ends 12/31/26. The Pastor is a permanent member of the committee.

If you have any questions concerning the Columbarium and brick patio area, contact any of the above members. Bradley Keefer had been doing the record keeping, the opening and closing of the niches, getting the stone faces engraved with names and dates. Brad has passed these duties to Ron Almarode and the Columbarium Committee.

Respectfully submitted,
Ron Almarode



Property Lot

Grace held three (3) congregational property forums in January 2025 to discuss inquiries made by Habitat for Humanity and the Waynesboro YMCA regarding the future use of land owned by Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church. The property in question is the grassy, non-developed area between Grace parking lots and the Waynesboro library parking lots, stretching from Wayne Avenue and Market Street

Council held the forums to assess interest from congregational members as to whether or not to further engage in conversation about the potential use of this property. Council wanted to hear opinions of members before asking for further information from interested parties. The majority of attendees overwhelmingly support continuing the conversations about potential use. Any future use of the property requires approval by the congregation.

Council formed a property lot committee to further investigate options. In August we decided to not offer the land for YMCA use as they requested use of the full parcel rather than the half parcel Grace was discussing. Habitat for Humanity remains interested in the partial lot, they have an annual set of housing builds that could easily be used on this land. Committee members were given a tour of local builds.

Council will continue to investigate the land use possibilities. The next step is to determine the land value. Council approved limited funds to get an appraisal done in 2026. Any future use of the property requires approval by the congregation.

Respectfully submitted,
Donna Yobs
Allison Fink
Nancy Schwiesow



Finance

Finance Committee

GELC is in sound financial health entering 2026. The Finance Committee worked closely with the Stewardship Committee and Church Council to develop a spending plan for the congregation's approval.

The Finance Committee receives monthly updates on the financial performance of the church and meets quarterly (or as needed) to discuss the financial status and the future projects/expenses.

In 2025, receipts and expenses were both below budget resulting in a deficit of \$145.59 – about as close to break-even as you can get.

Many thanks to the members of the Finance Committee and Church Council for their efforts in monitoring the financial status and implementing measures to strengthen Grace's position. Most importantly, THANKS to the congregation for your support of Grace in 2025.

Members of the Finance Committee are:

Chuck Goodrich
Pastor Pingel
Jerry Kite
Ron Almarode
Allison Fink
Vivian Proctor

Many thanks to all who volunteer to monitor the financial affairs of Grace.

Respectfully submitted,
Ron Almarode



Financial Secretary

Giving of Record: 43 verses 49 last year.
Pledges: 48 verses 47 last year

Year end accounts that use Tithe.ly had a few errors, but corrected statements have been issued.

56% of the pledged units exceeded their initial pledge while 2.3% fell behind.

Respectfully Submitted
Charles Goodrich

Thanksgiving and Memorial Fund

	Beginning	Received	Disbursed	Balance
General	\$28,947.20	\$3315.00	\$6,799.02	\$25,463.18
Kitchen	\$1,074.22	\$15.00		\$1,089.22
Music	\$926.00			\$926.00
Pastor	\$75.00		\$39.29	\$35.71
Total:	\$31,022.42	\$3,330.00	\$6,838.31	\$27,514.11

Given In Memory of:

Genevieve Arneson
Sandra Hoy
Ernestine Moomaw
Dottie Sheaffer
Carol Varner
Tom Varner
Myrtle S. & Bette P.

Given in Honor of:

Redwood crosses

Disbursements:

Baptismal font
Chapel candles
Conference room chairs
Pastor's cincture

Gifts were given by:

Lydia Dolan
Randall & Allison Fink
Paul & Michelle Gabb
Jim & Mary Huerth
Mr. & Mrs. John McGehee
Dwight Moomaw
Jean Morgan
Janet Parmer
David & Vivian Proctor
Richard & Margaret Quickel
Non-member(s)

Thanksgiving and Memorial Funds are gifts received from members and friends for:

- **Thanksgiving** – in honor of an event, a living person, a blessing, or celebration
- **Memorial** – in memory of someone deceased

Respectfully Submitted,
Ron Almarode

memorials
& gifts

GELC Annual Treasurer's Report 2025

December-25

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Summary of Activities Truist Bank

	2025 Actual	2025 Budget	+ or - Diff	2026 Budget
Bal. Beginning Truist Balance	\$77,374.86			
A. Receipts Deposited				
R100 Pledge + Giving of Record	\$309,808.87	\$312,888	-\$3,079	\$313,200
R400 Other Offering	\$720.75	\$1,300	-\$579	\$1,000
R600 Facilities Usage	\$8,414.62	\$7,500	\$915	\$8,000
R1000 Niche Sales	\$0.00	\$0	\$0	\$0
R1200 Additional Revenue	\$0.00	\$0	\$0	\$0
Faith	\$0.00	\$13	-\$13	-\$158
R998 Total Budget Receipts Deposit	\$318,944.24	\$321,701	-\$2,757	\$322,042
S998 Total Special Receipts Deposit	\$252,294.44			
T998 Total Receipts Deposit	\$571,238.68			
B. Disbursed				
D100 Budgeted Benevolence	\$32,594.84	\$32,731	-\$136	\$34,622
D200 Ministry Programs	\$5,651.47	\$16,660	-\$11,009	\$11,350
D300 Property	\$47,262.42	\$40,395	\$6,867	\$46,150
D400 Administration	\$21,447.61	\$19,075	\$2,373	\$20,750
D500 Staff	\$77,957.44	\$79,809	-\$1,852	\$81,711
D600 Pastor	\$133,176.05	\$132,031	\$1,145	\$8,347
D650 Special Pastoral Accounts	\$1,000.00	\$1,000	\$0	\$119,112
D700 Payroll Tax Liability Adjustment	\$0.00	\$0	\$0	
D999 Total Budget Disbursed	\$319,089.83	\$321,701	-\$2,611	\$322,042
S999 Total Special Disbursed	\$237,492.78			
T999 Total Disbursed	\$556,582.61			
B2 Ending Truist Balance	\$92,030.93		Surplus/Deficit	-\$146

Summary Of Benevolence Giving 2025			
Total Budgeted Benevolence	\$32,594.84	Keefers VMA Scholarship	\$958.00
World Hunger	\$4,230.00	Rise Against Hunger	\$15,000.00
ELCA Disaster Response	\$929.00	NICAS Project	\$21,647.52
WARM	\$280.00		
CROP Walk	\$625.00		
Hiker's Hostel	\$515.74		
HERO Fund	\$711.00		
MEF Bequests	\$25,654.00		
Christmas Giving Tree	\$100.00	Total Benevolence Giving	\$103,245.10

GELC Annual Treasurer's Report 2025

December-25		Page 2			
Budget Disbursements		2025 Actual	2025 Budget	Diff YTD	2026 Budget
101	Mission Support (ELCA & Synod)	\$25,031.00	\$25,031	\$0	\$26,622
105	Outreach Missions Committee	\$7,563.84	\$7,700	-\$136	\$8,000
100	Total Budget Benevolence	\$32,594.84	\$32,731	-\$136	\$34,622
201	Worship & Music	\$2,807.26	\$3,800	-\$993	\$3,800
202	Christian Education	\$741.30	\$1,000	-\$259	\$1,000
203	Evangelism	\$0.00	\$1,000	-\$1,000	\$600
204	Faith in Action/Stewardship	\$432.92	\$360	\$73	\$450
206	Youth Ministry	\$219.80	\$2,000	-\$1,780	\$2,000
207	Support Fellowship	\$1,450.19	\$1,500	-\$50	\$1,500
210	Ministry Programs Reserve	\$0.00	\$7,000	-\$7,000	\$2,000
200	Total Ministry Programs	\$5,651.47	\$16,660	-\$11,009	\$11,350
301	Church Property	\$8,642.21	\$8,000	\$642	\$7,500
302	Natural Gas	\$8,429.00	\$5,640	\$2,789	\$9,000
303	Electricity	\$6,048.44	\$6,800	-\$752	\$6,000
304	Water/Sewer/Garbage	\$4,710.48	\$4,000	\$710	\$4,400
305	All Insurance	\$13,507.29	\$12,705	\$802	\$14,000
308	Lawn Care/Snow Removal	\$5,925.00	\$3,250	\$2,675	\$5,250
300	Total Property	\$47,262.42	\$40,395	\$6,867	\$46,150
401	Church Office	\$11,492.10	\$9,000	\$2,492	\$10,000
402	Telephone/Communications	\$3,375.79	\$3,120	\$256	\$3,300
403	Postage	\$946.50	\$1,200	-\$254	\$1,000
406	Delegates Expense	\$1,849.64	\$1,200	\$650	\$1,850
407	Council Discretion Gift Fund	\$1,000.00	\$1,000	\$0	\$1,000
412	Technology	\$2,573.73	\$2,355	\$219	\$2,600
413	Communications	\$209.85	\$1,200	-\$990	\$1,000
400	Total Administration	\$21,447.61	\$19,075	\$2,373	\$20,750
501	Adm. Secretary's Salary	\$22,847.04	\$22,847	\$0	\$23,487
503	Custodian's Salary	\$9,352.08	\$9,352	\$0	\$9,614
504	Nursery Caretaker/Protection Policy	\$0.00	\$1,250	-\$1,250	\$1,250
505	Audio/Visual Support	\$6,400.00	\$6,400	\$0	\$6,400
507	Organist/Choir Dir. Salary	\$30,929.04	\$30,929	\$0	\$31,795
509	Organist & Pulpit Supply	\$2,600.00	\$3,200	-\$600	\$3,200
510	Staff Continuing Ed. & Travel	\$1,000.00	\$1,000	\$0	\$1,000
520	Employer Tax Liability All Staff	\$4,829.28	\$4,831	-\$2	\$4,965
500	Total Staff	\$77,957.44	\$79,809	-\$1,852	\$81,711
601	Pastor Base Salary	\$53,523.96	\$53,524	\$0	\$4,653
602	Pastor Housing Allowance	\$29,000.04	\$29,000	\$0	\$2,417
603	Pastor FICA Allowance	\$14,907.00	\$14,907	\$0	\$1,277
604	ELCA Health Plan+Disability+Pension	\$31,482.44	\$30,500	\$982	\$0
607	Continuing Education	\$1,000.00	\$1,000	\$0	\$0
608	Travel Expense	\$2,147.25	\$2,000	\$147	\$0
609	Book Allowance	\$419.05	\$300	\$119	\$0
610	Professional Expense	\$396.31	\$500	-\$104	\$0
613	Pastor Cell Phone Usage	\$300.00	\$300	\$0	\$0
600	Total Pastor	\$133,176.05	\$132,031	\$1,145	\$8,347
620	Sabbatical Reserve	\$1,000.00	\$1,000	\$0	\$1,000
675	Pastoral Reserve	\$0.00	\$0	\$0	\$118,112
	Total Reserve	\$1,000.00	\$1,000	\$0	\$119,112
700	Payroll Tax Liability Adjustment	\$0.00	\$0	\$0	\$0
999	Total Budget Disbursed	\$319,089.83	\$321,701	-\$2,611	\$322,042

GELC Annual Treasurer's Report 2025

December-25

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Detail of Special Funds		Balance 12/31/2024	In YTD	Out YTD	Balance 12/31/25
A01	World Hunger	\$0.00	\$4,230.00	\$4,230.00	\$0.00
A05	ELCA Disaster Response	\$0.00	\$929.00	\$929.00	\$0.00
A06	Special Appeals	\$6,666.45	\$10,108.28	\$11,006.63	\$5,768.10
A10	Hiker's Hostel Donations	\$605.38	\$589.00	\$515.74	\$678.64
A14	Blue Ridge Area Food Bank	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
A19	WARM Shelter Fund	\$0.00	\$280.00	\$280.00	\$0.00
A20	MEF Accrual	-\$254.59	\$27,304.00	\$25,654.00	\$1,395.41
A26	Pledge Accrual	\$0.00	\$106,000.00	\$106,000.00	\$0.00
A27	HERO Fund	\$0.00	\$711.00	\$711.00	\$0.00
F01	Gifts to Regular T&M *	\$8,958.90	\$3,330.00	\$6,838.31	\$5,450.59
F03	Friends Fund	\$2,127.40	\$730.00	\$0.00	\$2,857.40
F05	Current Building Fund *	\$9,899.13	\$10,415.20	\$7,940.59	\$12,373.74
F16	Master Reserve *	-\$223.53	\$6,066.37	\$79.47	\$5,763.37
F30	Columbarium Fund	\$1,029.48	\$2,300.00	\$2,710.61	\$618.87
F32	KIVA Project	\$25.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$25.00
F36	Youth Projects	\$3,292.28	\$509.06	\$0.00	\$3,801.34
F37	Thrivent Project	\$252.62	\$222.00	\$25.00	\$449.62
F41	Quilting Group Reserve	\$127.94	\$100.00	\$43.63	\$184.31
F42	Keefer_VMA Scholarship Fund	\$7,978.00	\$0.00	\$958.00	\$7,020.00
F45	Rise Against Hunger	\$442.09	\$14,692.00	\$15,000.00	\$134.09
F47	Capital Project Fund **	\$32,693.67	\$986.31	\$2,425.64	\$31,254.34
F51	Pastor's Continuing Education *	\$800.00	\$0.00	\$800.00	\$0.00
F52	Cross & Columbarium Repairs	\$4,841.41	\$18,123.59	\$22,965.00	\$0.00
F53	NICAS Project	\$5,850.00	\$26,322.52	\$21,647.52	\$10,525.00
H02	Budget Surplus/Deficit	\$3,496.86	\$0.00	\$3,496.86	\$0.00
H04	Sabbatical Reserve *	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
M01	Flowers	-\$549.22	\$3,373.00	\$2,035.78	\$788.00
T01	Pending Transfers *	-\$19,386.32	\$14,973.11	\$1,200.00	-\$5,613.21
Y01	YNBP Church Challenge Special Fund	\$8,701.91	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$8,701.91
Total Special Funds		\$77,374.86	\$252,294.44	\$237,492.78	\$92,176.52
<p align="center">* Corresponding account in Credit Union ** \$27,167 in CD</p>					

GELC Annual Treasurer's Report 2025

December-25

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Detail of Dupont Community Credit Union Accounts					
		Balance	In	Out	Balance
		12/31/2024	YTD	YTD	12/31/25
CU01	Thanksgiving & Memorial *	\$22,063.52			\$22,063.52
CU02	Building Fund *	\$153.94			\$153.94
CU08	Master Reserve *	\$2,064.92	\$1,739.84	(\$1,200.00)	\$2,604.76
CU18	Organist/Choir Dir. Continuing Ed. Fund	\$10,321.33	\$1,000.00		\$11,321.33
CU19	Pastor Continuing Education Fund	\$278.11	\$1,499.82		\$1,777.93
CU20	Sabbatical Reserve Fund *	\$2,000.00	\$1,000.00		\$3,000.00
TR01	Pending Transfer	\$20,714.56	\$1,200.00	(\$16,301.35)	\$5,613.21
	Total Credit Union Funds	\$57,596.38	\$6,439.66	(\$17,501.35)	\$46,534.69

* Corresponding account in Truist

Summary of Capital Funds Available					
		Balance	In	Out	Balance
		12/31/2024	YTD	YTD	12/31/25
Acct.					
F05	Current Building Fund	\$9,899.13	\$10,415.20	\$7,940.59	\$12,373.74
F47	Capital Project Fund	\$32,693.67	\$986.31	\$2,425.64	\$31,254.34
CU02	Building Fund	\$153.94	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$153.94
	Building & Maintenance Fund	\$159,535.84	\$3,516.79	\$0.00	\$163,052.63
	Total Funds Available	\$202,282.58	\$14,918.30	\$10,366.23	\$206,834.65

Edward Jones Account					
		Balance	In	Out	Balance
		12/31/2024	YTD	YTD	12/31/25
	General Account	\$75.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$75.00
	Building & Maintenance Fund	\$159,535.84	\$3,516.79	\$0.00	\$163,052.63
	Organ Fund	\$4,422.00	\$71.97	\$0.00	\$4,493.97
	Total Funds Available	\$164,032.84	\$3,588.76	\$0.00	\$167,621.60

Combined Account Balances			
Account	Truist	Credit Union	Total
Building Fund	\$12,373.74	\$153.94	\$12,527.68
Master Reserve	\$5,763.37	\$2,604.76	\$8,368.13
Pastor's Continuing Education	\$0.00	\$1,777.93	\$1,777.93
Sabbatical Reserve	\$0.00	\$3,000.00	\$3,000.00
Thanksgiving & Memorial	\$5,450.59	\$22,063.52	\$27,514.11
Pending Transfers	-\$5,613.21	\$5,613.21	\$0.00

2025	Receipts	Expenses	Difference
January	\$18,823.94	\$23,271.52	-\$4,447.58
February	\$24,969.41	\$24,015.14	\$954.27
March	\$32,986.35	\$24,057.75	\$8,928.60
April	\$27,667.68	\$27,016.01	\$651.67
May	\$21,625.27	\$24,339.34	-\$2,714.07
June	\$30,104.72	\$25,101.43	\$5,003.29
July	\$24,064.73	\$28,572.72	-\$4,507.99
August	\$27,286.77	\$28,271.12	-\$984.35
September	\$23,444.15	\$26,419.20	-\$2,975.05
October	\$30,779.01	\$26,738.45	\$4,040.56
November	\$30,470.02	\$28,875.08	\$1,594.94
December	\$26,722.19	\$32,412.07	-\$5,689.88
			\$0.00
Total	\$318,944.24	\$319,089.83	-\$145.59
2024	\$332,456.72	\$328,960.10	\$3,496.62

GELC Annual Treasurer's Report 2025

Balance Sheet As Of 12/31/2025																						
A. Assets																						
1	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>Cash & Bank Accounts</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td> DuPont Cr. Union</td> <td>\$46,534.69</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td> Truist Bank</td> <td>\$92,030.93</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td> Edward Jones</td> <td>\$75.00</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td> - Building & Maintenance Fund</td> <td>\$163,052.63</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td> - Organ Fund</td> <td>\$4,493.97</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total Cash & Bank Accounts</td> <td>\$306,187.22</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Cash & Bank Accounts			DuPont Cr. Union	\$46,534.69		Truist Bank	\$92,030.93		Edward Jones	\$75.00		- Building & Maintenance Fund	\$163,052.63		- Organ Fund	\$4,493.97		Total Cash & Bank Accounts	\$306,187.22	
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2	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>Other Assets</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td> Cemetery lots</td> <td>\$1,500.00</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td> Building & Contents</td> <td>\$6,312,419.00</td> <td>Insurance value</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total Other Assets</td> <td>\$6,313,919.00</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Other Assets			Cemetery lots	\$1,500.00		Building & Contents	\$6,312,419.00	Insurance value	Total Other Assets	\$6,313,919.00										
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3	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>Investment Accounts</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td> ELCA Mission Certificates</td> <td>\$10,000.00</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total Investment Accounts</td> <td>\$10,000.00</td> <td>*</td> </tr> </table>	Investment Accounts			ELCA Mission Certificates	\$10,000.00		Total Investment Accounts	\$10,000.00	*												
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B. Liabilities And Equity																						
	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>Total Liability Accounts</td> <td>\$0.00</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Equity</td> <td>\$6,630,106.22</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Total Liability Accounts	\$0.00		Equity	\$6,630,106.22																
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* See Mission Endowment Fund Report For Endowment Assets																						

Personnel

The Personnel Committee is tasked with proposing policies about Personnel Management, overseeing the implementation of the Child Protection and Vulnerable Adult Policies and working with the Pastor and volunteers who supervise staff functions. It is most active in the hiring process of staff (not the Pastor).

The custodians who service Grace will be receiving a 2.8% cost of living raise for 2026.

The committee has completed all background checks for the Sunday school teachers, Grace current council members and those providing communion to homebound church members.

Committee members include Antoinette Eckstrom and Jack Eckstrom

Respectively submitted,
Antoinette Eckstrom



Power in the Spirit

Power in the Spirit conducted two programs in 2025. Donna Gum of Grace Lutheran, Waynesboro, The Rev, Wesley Smith, pastor of Zion Lutheran Church and Edith Blake of St. Andrews Lutheran Church in Portsmouth were excited to tri-chair this committee for another year.

The Mid-Winter event, *Faith, Hope, and Love (I Corinthians 13:13)* was held February 3-5, 2025 on zoom. The event uplifted Mary, Mother of Jesus (Faith, John 19: 25-27), Abraham (Hope, Genesis 12:1-2 & 17:1-8), and Mary of Bethany (Love, John 12:1-8) Each morning, registrants received a morning email featuring a poem by Edith Blake and artwork of icons for the Biblical person studied that night. Each night began with Bible Study, then attendees chose a workshop from two choices and ended with Evening Prayer. The Bible Studies were led by The Rev. Jessica Darty, Edith Blake, and The Rev. Wes Smith. Workshops were provided by Tom Jones-*Faith and Disability: Opening Doors for Belonging*, Martin Paulson-*Faith, Hope and Love Through the Eyes of a Small Country Church*, Meghan Cotter-*Hope Where You Think It Might Not Exist* The Revs. Meredith Williams & Keith Olivier—*What Do You Want to Be When You Grow Up*, Dr. Eric Hilker—*Making Room for Neighbors: A Workshop on Loving Folks on the Margins*, and The Rev. Terrie Sternberg-*Working Towards Being Antiracist*. Evening Prayer concluded each evening led by Richard West and Sylvia Miles, Synod Authorized Ministers not yet serving. Online offering was received for the Micah Street Church in Fredericksburg, Virginia.

Continued

The Summer event, *Wings of Hope*, was held at Roanoke College, July 17-19, 2025. The theme was based on Isaiah 40:31 “...those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall walk and not faint.” NRSV.

The Keynote Speaker was Maryn Olson, Director for Lutheran Disaster Response. She shared ELCA’s disaster work in the United States and globally. The Bible Study Leader was The Rev. Bobby Morris, adjunct professor at Southern Seminary at Lenoir Rhyne, Hickory, North Carolina. He uplifted Isaiah 11:1-16 after giving historical background of Isaiah and Isaiah 60:1-11. The Biblical Story Tellers, Kathy Thompson and Judy Wilfong read scriptures from Isaiah and other passages in our daily worship.

Back by popular demand was Michael Benschish from Chicago and Virginia Beach area who led the worship music and provided music for the special events, Beer and Hymns on Thursday night and the Reception on Friday night after worship. Michael conducted a Chimes Choir during Morning Prayer Worship as well as a Taizé` Service including installation of The Rev. Colleen Hetrick as Assistant to the Bishop for Leadership Development and Digital Ministry and The Rev. Elizabeth Radtke as Director of Faith Formation, Retired Rostered Minister Relations, and Conflict Mediation. The Holy Communion Service based much on Isaiah as well as the Sending Service on Saturday included commissioning of Edith Blake and Kim Good as Lay Preachers.

The 130 attendees, staff and workshop presenters had the opportunity to choose from about 6 workshop sessions: The Rev. Dr. Wesley Smith-“*Lutheran Theology and Confessions: A Review for SAMs and an Intro for Everyone*”; The Rev. Bobby Morris-*Can the “Unspeakable” Psalms Speak for Us? The Intercessory Power of the Spirit When Our Sighs Are Too Deep for Words*; Alex Parker-*Connecting With ELCA Advocacy and Coordinating a Letter Campaign*; Katherine Bays, Elizabeth Bays, Elizabeth Leap and Adam Neal-*REVIVE-Opioid Overdose and Narcan Education*; Sister Phyllis Cox and Dr. Bill Franz-*Climate Change: What It Is, Why It Is, and What Small Things Can We Do to Make a Difference?*; The Rev. Jessica Darty-*Establishing Small But Mighty Congregations*; Maryn Olson-*From Crisis to Community*; The Rev. Judy Cobb-*Women’s Voices: Lives and Words that Embody Gospel Faith*; The Rev. John Wertz-*Exploring Dinner Faith*; Maddi Froiland and Sasha Ghosh-*Siminoff-Sumud and WIS MENA: Advocacy, Awareness, and Accompaniment for Justice in Palestine and Israel and the Wider MENA Region*; Cathy Dudley-*Retirement With God-Some of the Best Days of Your Life*; Maribeth O’Cock-*Create an Oyster Shell Beaded Necklace*; The Revs. Kelly Bayer Derrick, Paul Pingel, and Terrie Sternberg-*What Do We Do Now? Conversations About Anti-Racism*; Dr. Nathaniel Porter-*Tomorrow’s Church: How Congregations and Our Neighbors are Changing*; and The Rev. Dr. James Cobb-*Luther Trivial Pursuit*.

Continued

Other features were One Pantry at Roanoke College Service Project, offerings split between Lutheran Disaster Response and Virginia Synod Disaster Response Fund, Little Free Library, four golf carts provided by Virginia Lutheran Homes, the Mediation Chapel created by The Rev. Terrie Sternberg including the creation of a stained-glass eagle by attendees and given to The Rev. Kelly Bayer Derrick as a parting gift from Power in the Spirit attendees. The Morning emails with a poem from Edith Blake and residents from Brandon Oaks attended the day sessions. Lay preacher Janet Gomez blessed us with her thought-provoking sermon to respectively close the event. Preachers were The Revs. Terrie Sternberg, and Bishop Phyliss Milton. Many thanks to The Rev. Colleen Montgomery for her audio visual and photography expertise. Many thanks to attendees and Synod Staff for driving the golf carts. The Rev. Wes Smith and Donna Gum along with the aid of Patrick Hite, produced a video promo for the events.

Come and join us this summer for *Wings of Hope*, July 17-19, 2025 at Roanoke College. The Keynote Speaker will be Maryn Olson Lutheran Disaster Relief Director. The Bible Study Leader will be The Rev. Bobby Morris, Professor at Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary. Michael Benschish of Chicago and Virginia Beach area will return as the musician.

Respectfully Submitted,
Donna Gum



Technology

It has been a good year on the Technology front. If you would like an “ad” for a project put on the Nave TV, let me know. Pictures of activities are good as well.

If you ever need a DVD of a service, let me know.

I want to thank my students Zachary & Libby for their help last year.

Christmas

If you have not seen the Christmas Eve service, I recommend watching it.
5:00 p.m.: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cAtUiX9ImMw>

Respectfully submitted,
Owen Keefer





Valley Music Academy had a wonderful year of music making, thanks to the support of the church and congregation.

Last year we celebrated our 25th year serving the local community, making music accessible for every child in the valley. In August, we hosted an open house Birthday Bash with demo classes, live music, games, prizes and birthday cake.

We currently have 220 students enrolled, a 30% increase over this time last year. Our early childhood program has had increased success, including new Monday morning classes for toddlers and homeschooled children. Summer Rock Band Workshop continues to be one of our most impactful programs, with kids from 8 to 18 making their own music.

Best of all, we have provided over \$15,000 in scholarship funds. This includes Grace's generous Keefer Scholarship, which provides 50% tuition to two talented students who attend Waynesboro Public Schools.

In the year ahead, we look forward to continuing our partnership with Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church to better serve our community, enriching the lives of children and adults through music. On behalf of the VMA faculty and board, I would like to extend a sincere thanks to the Grace congregation for their generosity and commitment to our mission.

Dawn Lemansney
Program Director







*Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church
500 South Wayne Avenue
Waynesboro, VA 22980*

*A community of servants sharing in the
word and work of Jesus.*