

Church *FutureFinder* Report

Prepared for:

Grace University Lutheran Church

324 Harvard St. SE
Minneapolis MN
55414

Monday, May 08, 2006



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Congregation Information



Grace University Lutheran Church

324 Harvard St. SE Minneapolis MN 55414

Denomination: Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Mission Statement

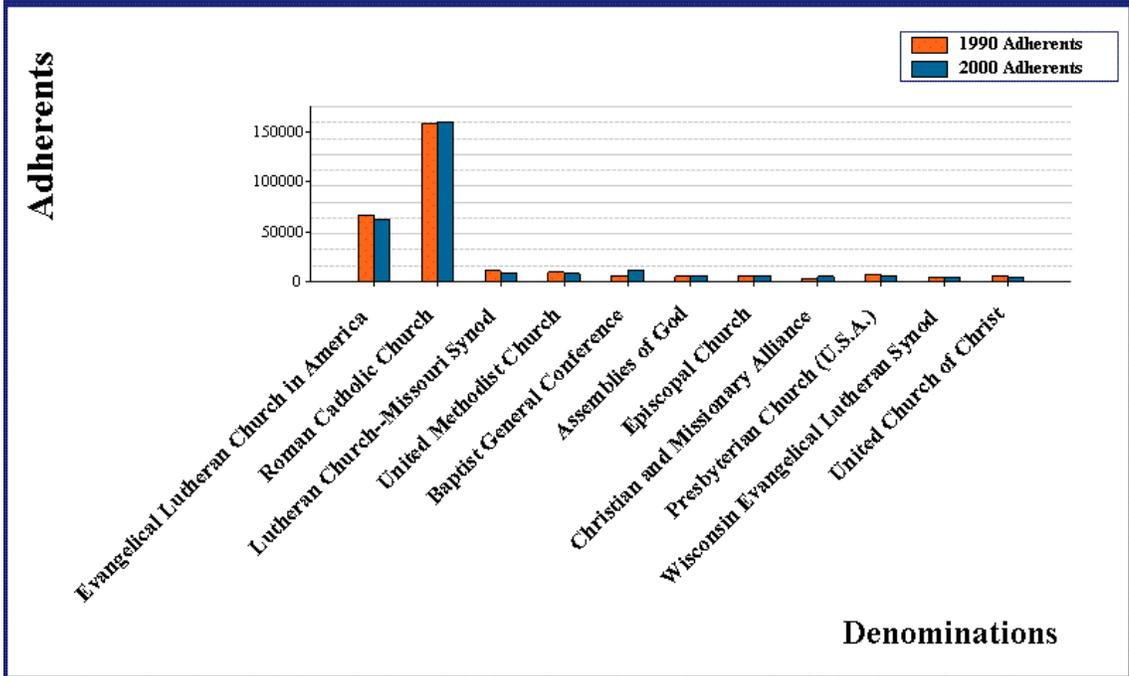
The primary mission of Grace University Lutheran Church is to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ as an instrument of God's reconciling love in the world. We do this so that reconciliation with God may become a reality for all. (II Corinthians 5:18-21)



Denomination Information



Denomination adherents by area 1990/2000



Denomination	1990 Adherents	2000 Adherents	% Change
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America	66,037	62,259	-5.72 %
Roman Catholic Church	157,945	159,281	.85 %
Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod	10,749	9,003	-16.24 %
United Methodist Church	9,526	7,929	-16.76 %
Baptist General Conference	5,772	11,034	91.16 %
Assemblies of God	5,050	6,004	18.89 %
Episcopal Church	6,031	5,646	-6.38 %
Christian and Missionary Alliance	3,425	5,432	58.60 %
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)	7,367	6,186	-16.03 %
Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod	4,227	3,878	-8.26 %
United Church of Christ	5,437	4,104	-24.52 %

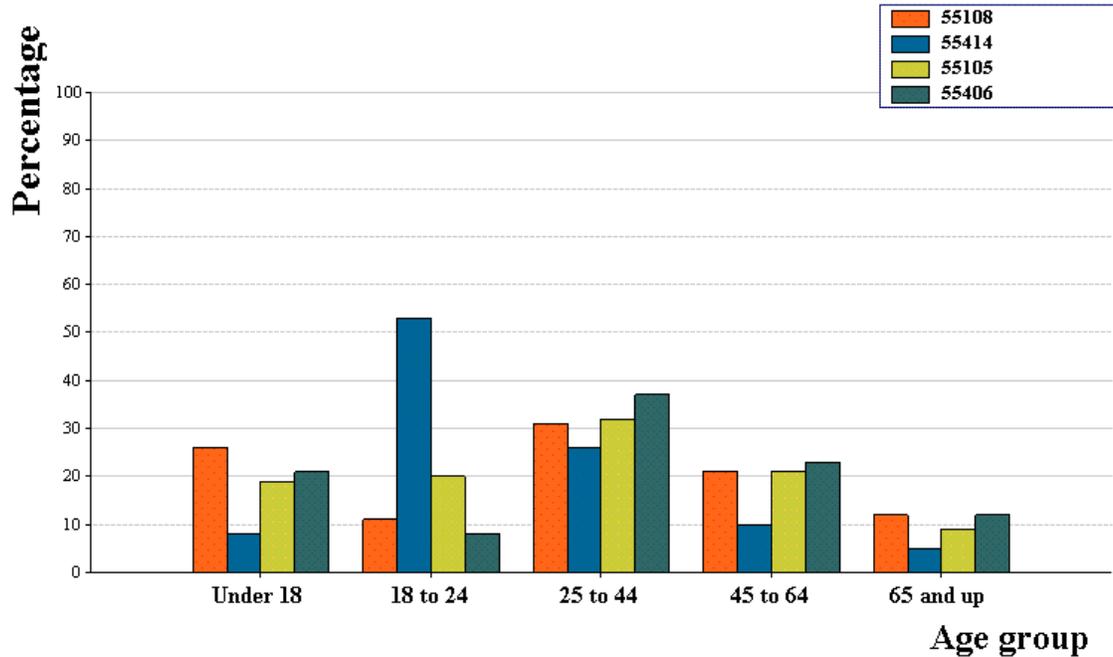


Population and Demographic Profile

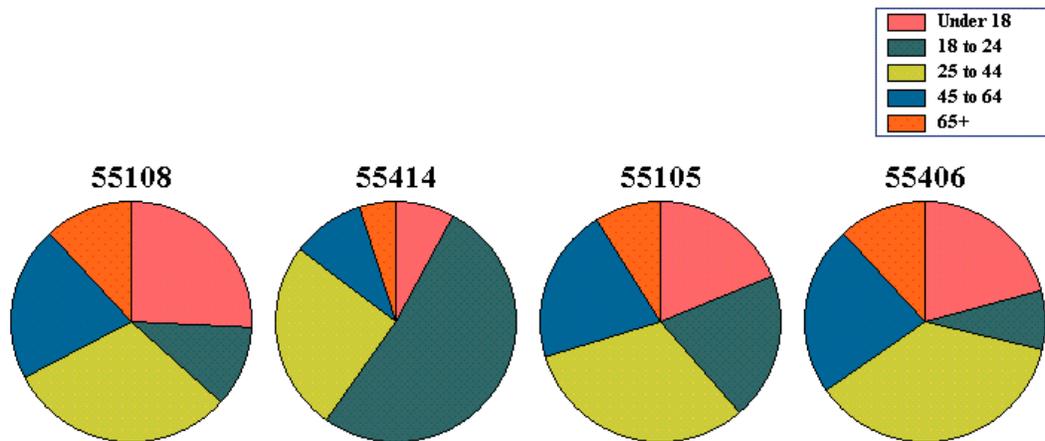


age demographics

comparison of area age profiles



age distribution by areas



Area	Under 18%	18-24%	25-44%	45-64%	65+ %
55108	26.00 %	11.00 %	31.00 %	21.00 %	12.00 %
55414	8.00 %	53.00 %	26.00 %	10.00 %	5.00 %



Population and Demographic Profile



Area	Under 18%	18-24%	25-44%	45-64%	65+ %
55105	19.00 %	20.00 %	32.00 %	21.00 %	9.00 %
55406	21.00 %	8.00 %	37.00 %	23.00 %	12.00 %

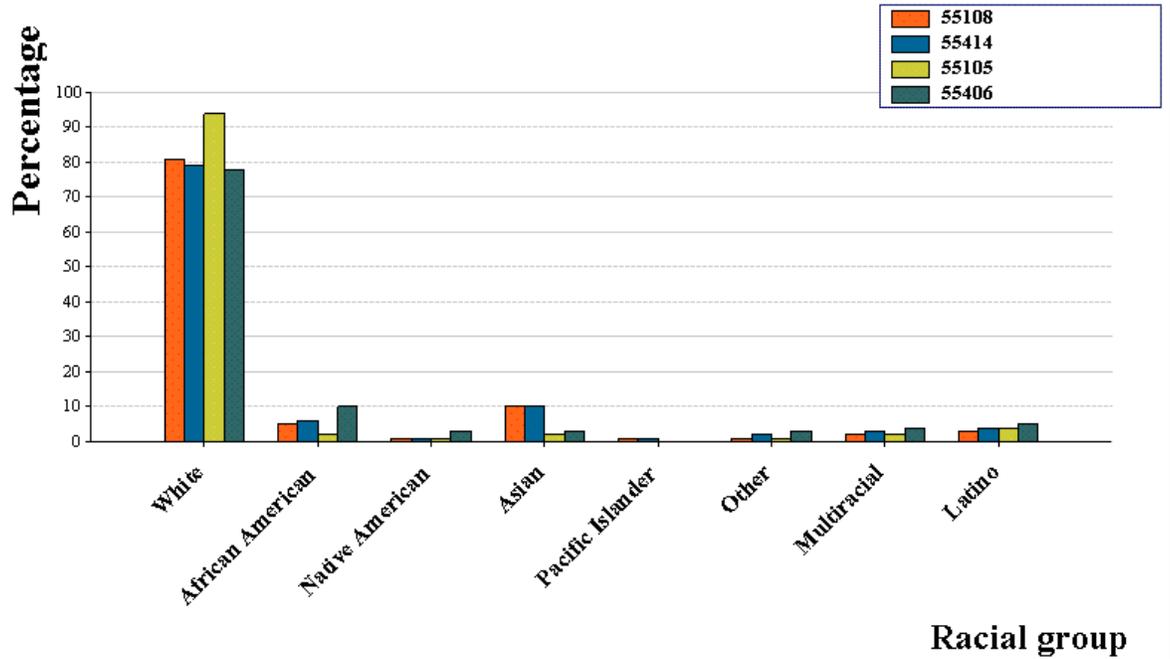


Population and Demographic Profile

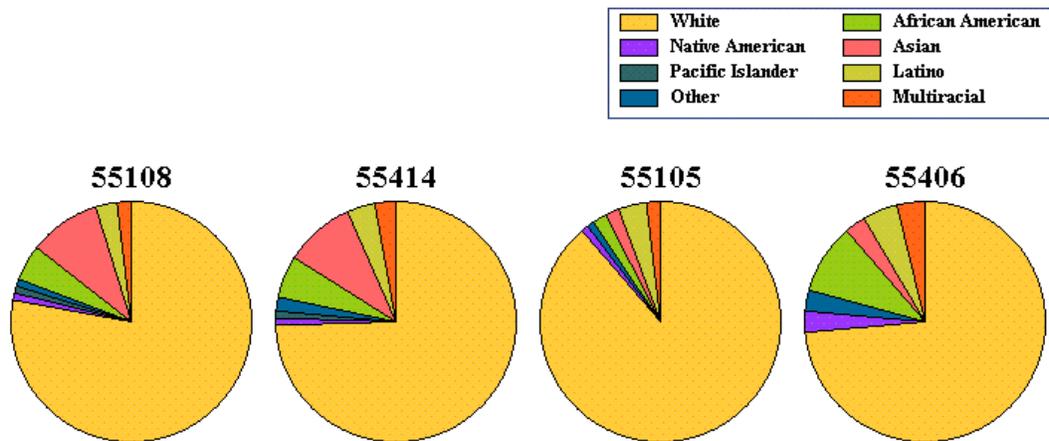


race/ethnicity demographics

comparison of area racial profiles



racial distribution by area



Area	White	African American	Native American	Asian	Pacific	Other	Multiracial	Latino
55108	81.00 %	5.00 %	1.00 %	10.00 %	1.00 %	1.00 %	2.00 %	3.00 %
55414	79.00 %	6.00 %	1.00 %	10.00 %	1.00 %	2.00 %	3.00 %	4.00 %



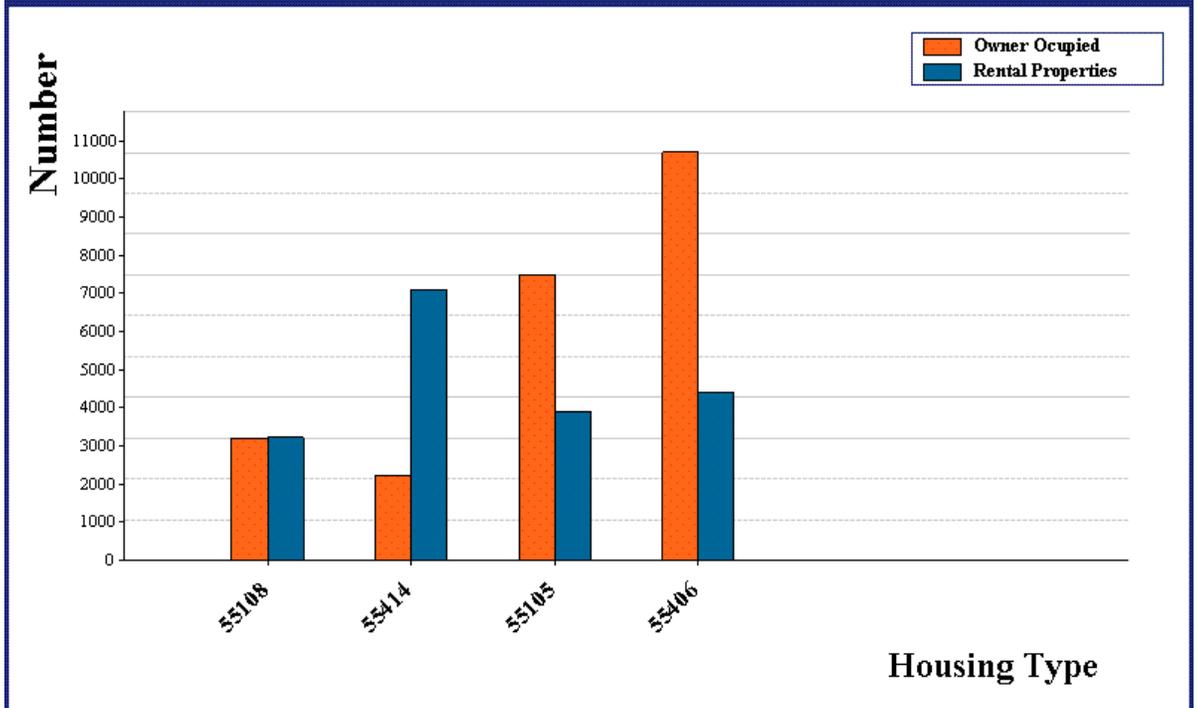
Population and Demographic Profile



Area	White	African American	Native American	Asian	Pacific	Other	Multiracial	Latino
55105	94.00 %	2.00 %	1.00 %	2.00 %	.00 %	1.00 %	2.00 %	4.00 %
55406	78.00 %	10.00 %	3.00 %	3.00 %	.00 %	3.00 %	4.00 %	5.00 %

housing tenure

comparison of area owner occupied rental and other properties

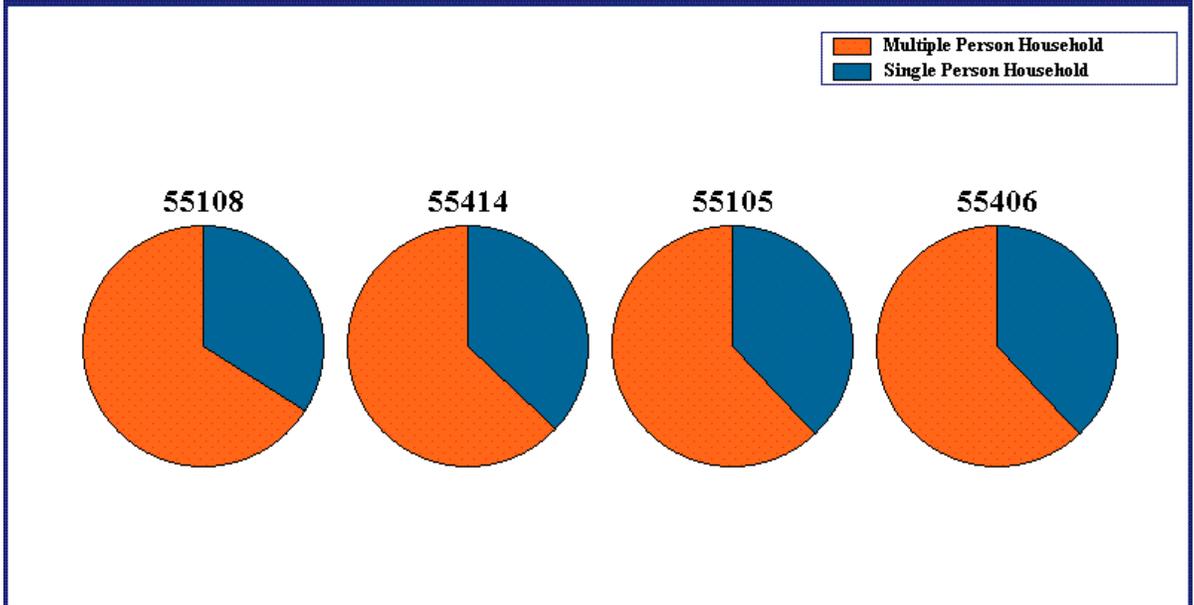




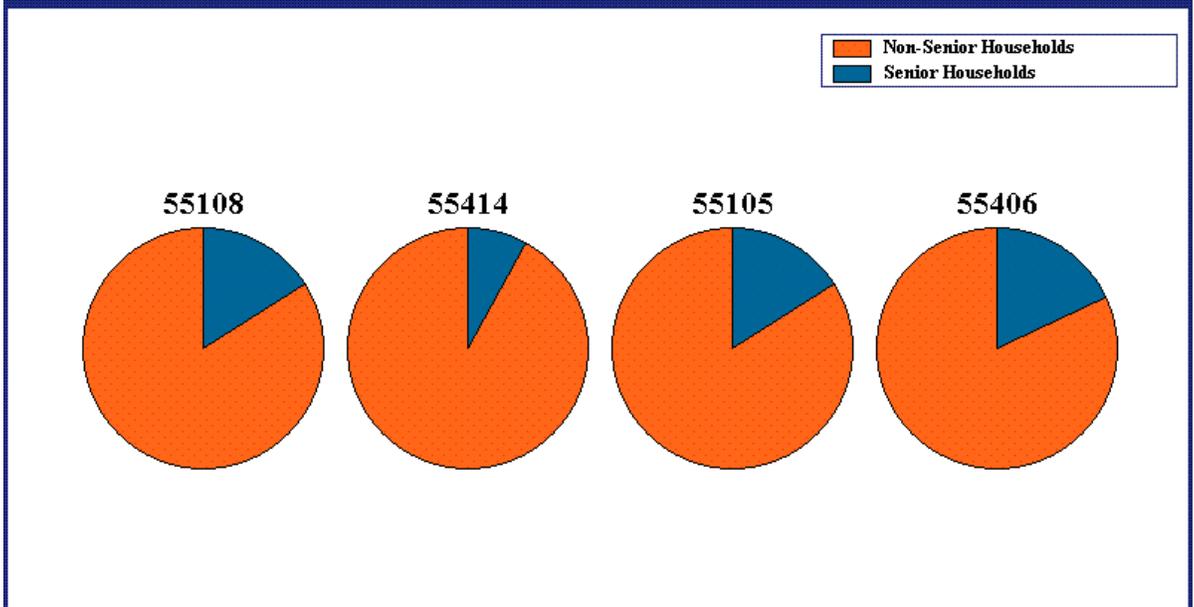
Population and Demographic Profile



distribution of single vs. multiple-person households by area



distribution of units with one or more residents 65 of over by area



Area	Total Units	Owned	Rented
55108	6,420	3,198	3,222
55414	9,321	2,222	7,099
55105	11,405	7,502	3,903
55406	15,120	10,703	4,417



Population and Demographic Profile



Area	Single Resident %	Multiple Resident %
55108	34.00 %	16.00 %
55414	37.00 %	8.00 %
55105	38.00 %	16.00 %
55406	38.00 %	18.00 %

Area	Senior %	Non senior %
55108	16.00 %	84.00 %
55414	8.00 %	92.00 %
55105	16.00 %	84.00 %
55406	18.00 %	82.00 %

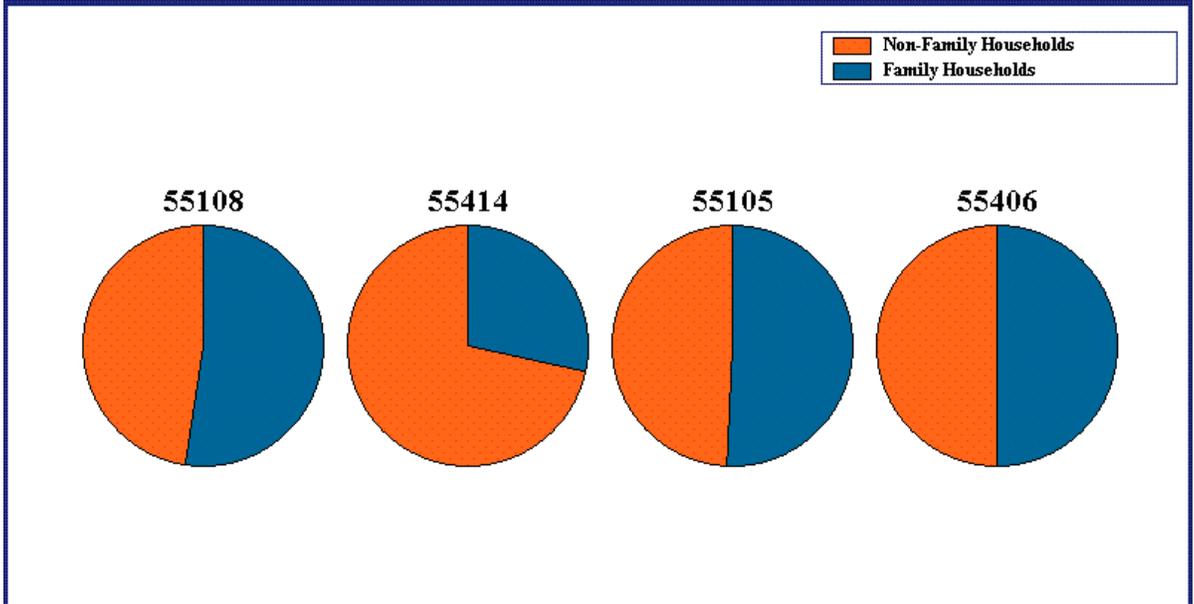


Population and Demographic Profile

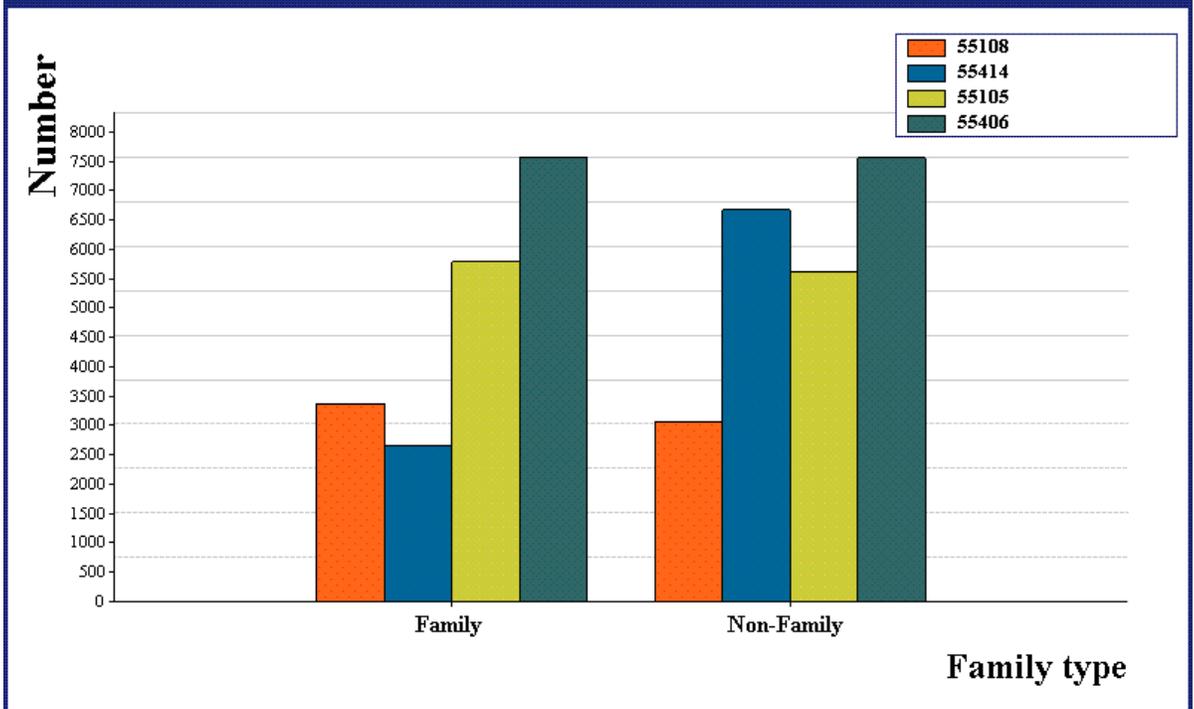


number and size of households

distribution of family vs. non-family households by area



comparison of area family vs non-family households



Area	Family	Non-Family
55108	3,365	3,055
55414	2,650	6,671



Population and Demographic Profile



Area	Family	Non-Family
55105	5,788	5,617
55406	7,567	7,553

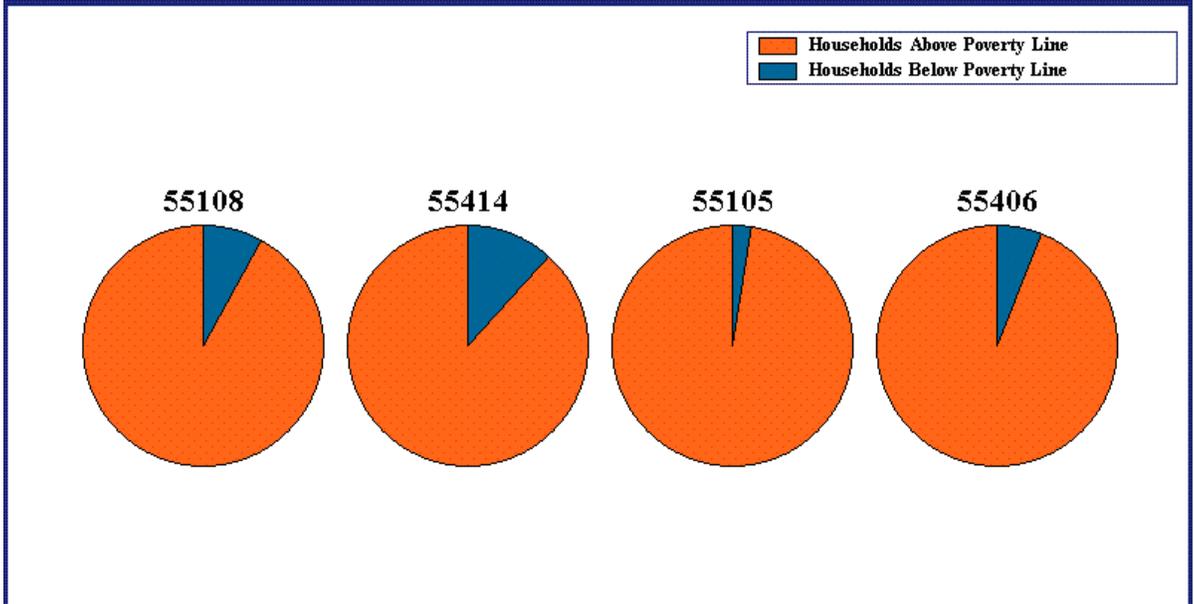


Population and Demographic Profile

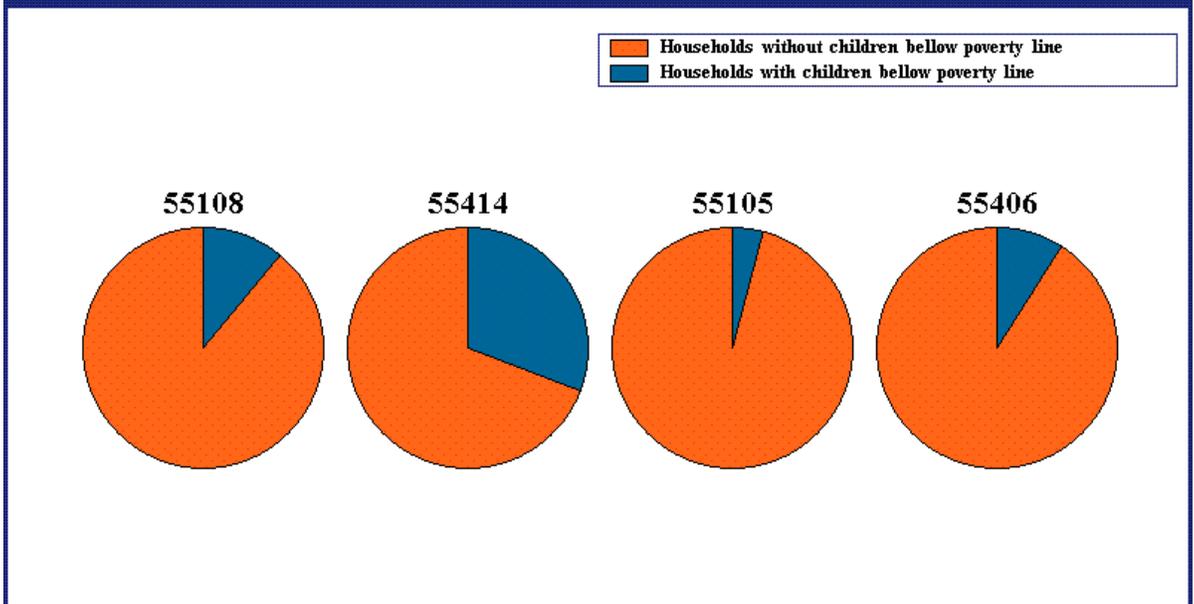


income

distribution of families below poverty line by area



distribution of families with children below poverty line by area



Area	Family in Poverty %	Families Not in Poverty %
55108	8.00 %	92.00 %
55414	11.70 %	88.30 %
55105	2.50 %	97.50 %
55406	6.00 %	94.00 %



Population and Demographic Profile





Population and Demographic Profile



Area	With Children in Poverty %	Without Children in Poverty %
55108	11.00 %	89.00 %
55414	30.80 %	69.20 %
55105	4.10 %	95.90 %
55406	9.00 %	91.00 %

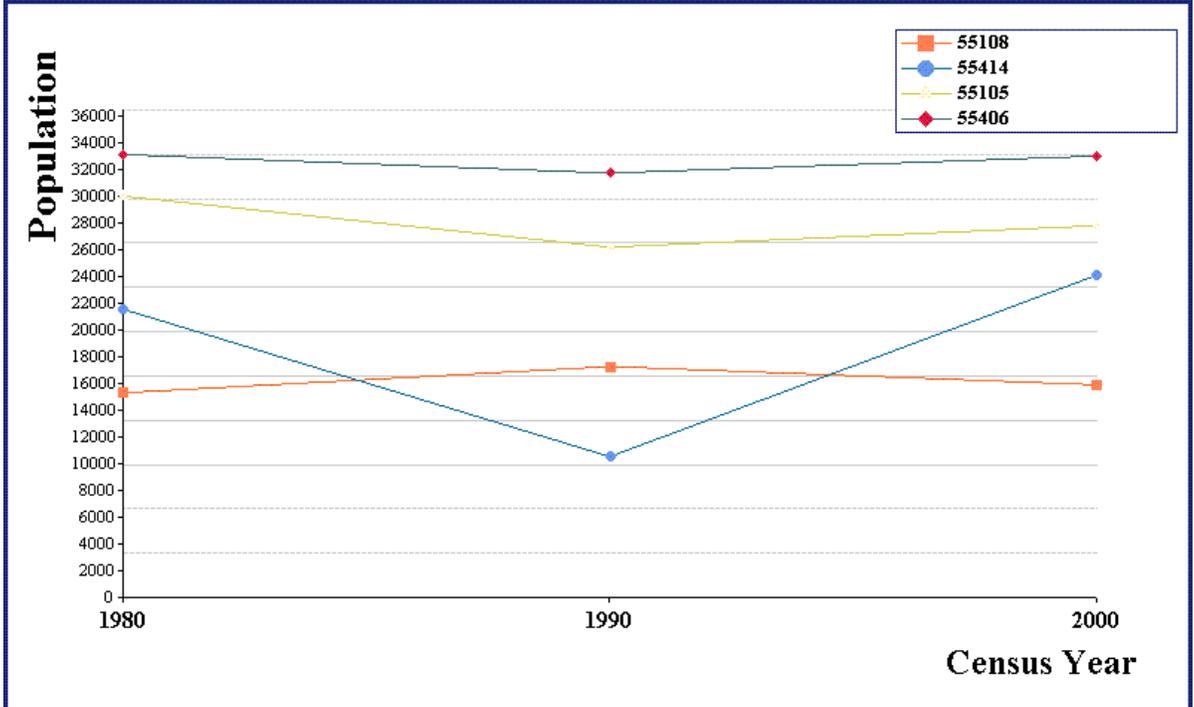


Population and Demographic Profile



population trends

population trends by area



Area	1980	1990	2000
55108	15,319	17,285	15,914
55414	21,572	10,535	24,126
55105	30,035	26,216	27,818
55406	33,154	31,760	33,033



Finances, Attendance and Membership



leadership

Year	Lead	Associates
1914	Wendell, C.A.	,
1946	Claypool, James	,
1956	Hawkinson, Vincent	,
1985	Smith, Verlyn	,
1993	Halvorson, Mary	Garnaas, Dan ,
1998	Halvorson, Mary	Garnaas, Dan ,
1999	Halvorson, Mary	Garnaas, Dan ,
2000	Halvorson, Mary	Garnaas, Dan ,
2001	Halvorson, Mary	Garnaas, Dan ,
2002	Halvorson, Mary	Garnaas, Dan ,
2003	Halvorson, Mary	Garnaas, Dan ,
2004	Halvorson, Mary	Garnaas, Dan ,
2005	Halvorson, Mary	Garnaas, Dan ,

membership, attendance and finances

Membership numbers

Year	Membership	Attendance
1914		
1946		
1956		
1985		
1993		
1998	390	136
1999	409	130
2000	414	125
2001	420	145
2002	470	156
2003	481	174

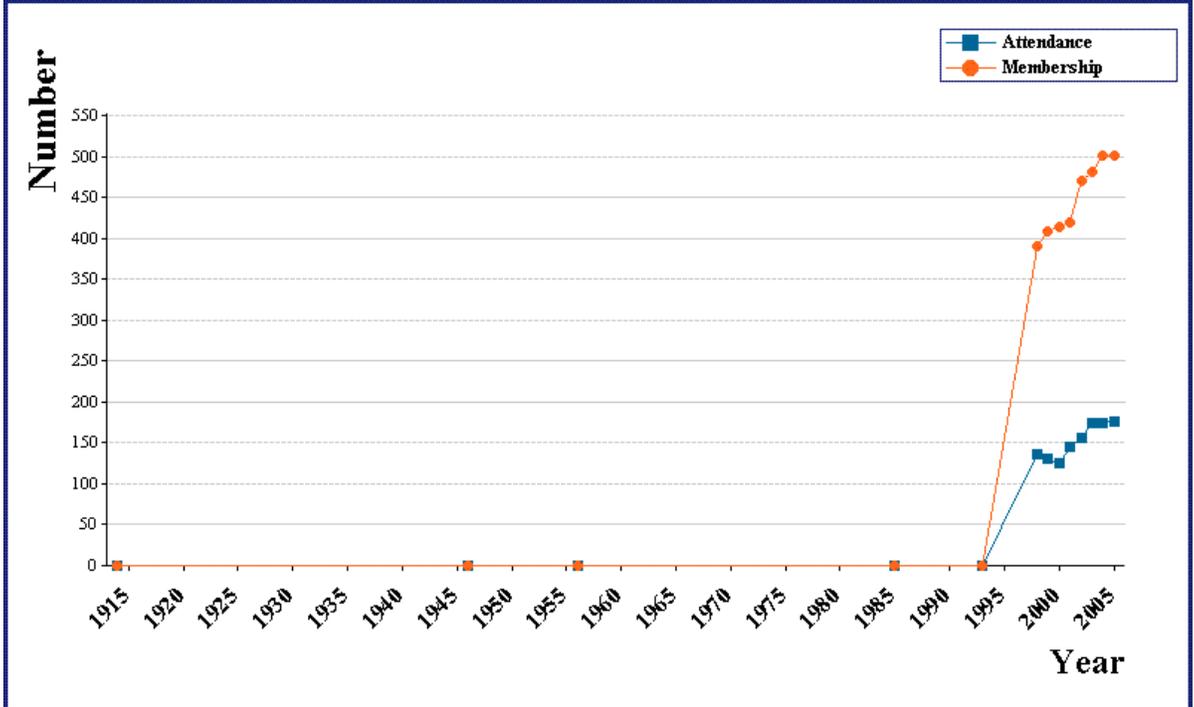


Finances, Attendance and Membership



Year	Membership	Attendance
2004	502	175
2005	502	176

membership numbers



Year	Operating	Total Income	Mission
1914			
1946			
1956			
1985			
1993			
1998	144,906	137,078	6,772
1999	144,906	129,775	6,772
2000	147,639	151,109	7,184
2001	159,326	181,216	7,650
2002	175,965	130,202	8,480
2003	214,565	528,210	9,296
2004	219,004	207,718	9,775



Finances, Attendance and Membership



Year	Operating	Total Income	Mission
2005			

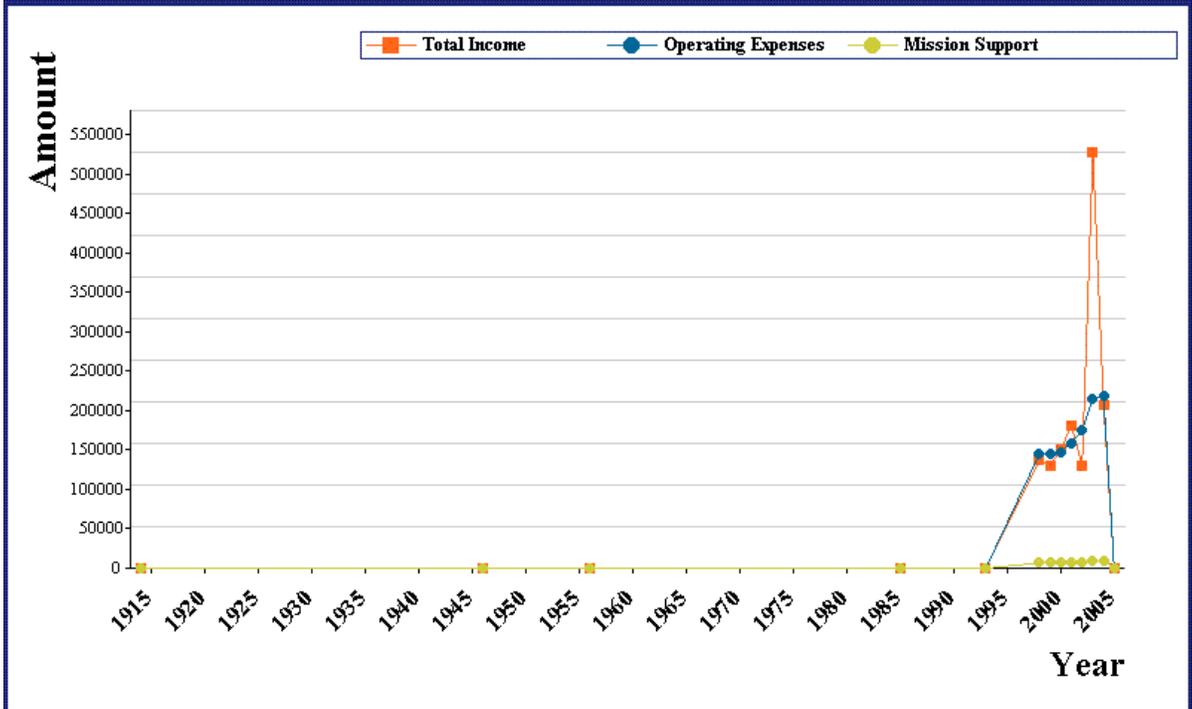


Finances, Attendance and Membership



membership gains

total income operating expenses and mission support



Year	Baptism Children	Baptism Adults	Affirmation of Faith	Transfer From Same Denomination	Transfer From Related Denomination	Transfer From Other	Other Or Statistical Adjustment
1914							
1946							
1956							
1985							
1993							
1998	6	1	6	4		1	
1999	3		11	9		1	1
2000	8		5	5	1	2	
2001	6		5	7	1	2	3
2002	15	1	19	20			
2003	4		9	6			4
2004	5		5	10		1	
2005							



Finances, Attendance and Membership



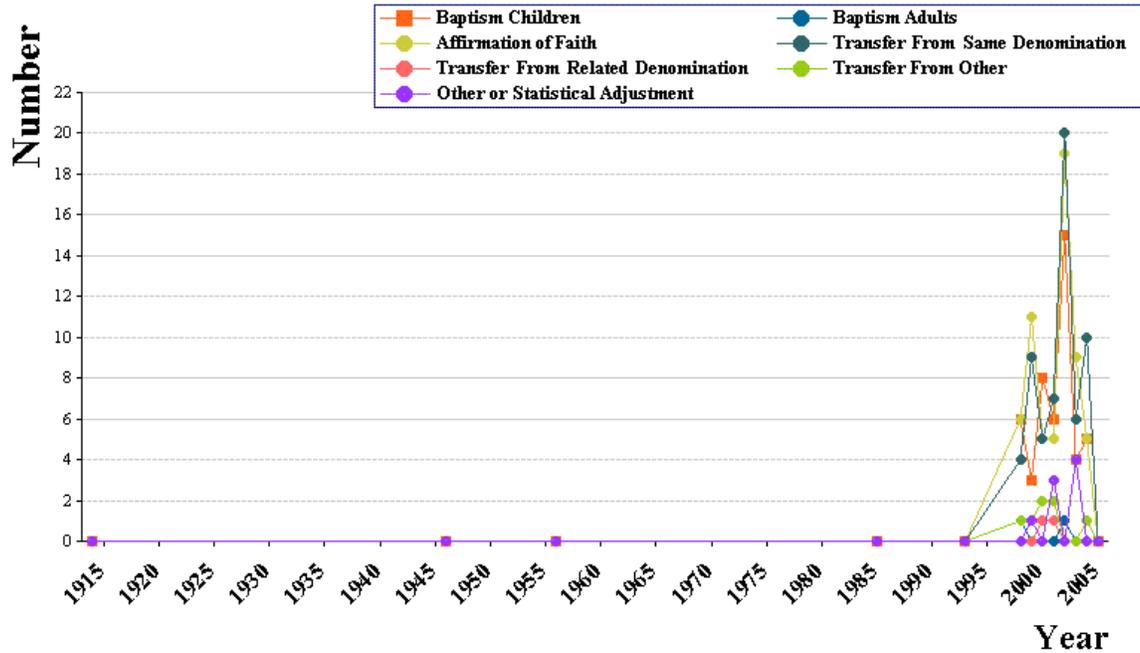


Finances, Attendance and Membership



membership losses

membership gains from other denominations

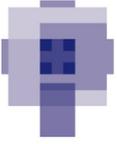


Year	Death	Transfer To Same Denomination	Transfer To Related Denomination	Transfer To Other	Other Or Statistical Adjustment
1914					
1946					
1956					
1985					
1993					
1998	2	6			5
1999		3			3
2000	2	7		1	6
2001	2	15		1	
2002	1	2			2
2003	2	5	5		
2004					
2005					



Finances, Attendance and Membership





Transportation Patterns



parking

On Street	Off Street
190	50

traffic patterns

Road	Traffic Volume
SE Washington Ave	17,000
Oak St. SE	6,600
SE University Ave	15,500
SE Harvard St. (foot traffic)	7,000
Delaware St. SE (foot traffic)	5,000



Building Use



The church building is equally well used in both the busy congregation and the neighborhood community. The recent addition to the building allows for added accessibility and space needs for all who wish to carry on activities there. In the past few years, the new addition has opened up new opportunities as well as created a more comfortable setting for the multiple and growing number of groups which meet there. There is no doubt that the attitude of gratitude, service and ministry to others is present in the use of the church building. Words like 'outreach', 'opportunity', 'prayerful', integrity', 'privileged', 'peace', and 'joyful' saturate the wording of the campaign to expand the building.

Grace congregational members make use of the building on Sundays with two morning services, Sunday school, adult forum, new member classes, and choir rehearsal. Wednesdays are set aside for Lenten or Advent services, concerts and/or meals, confirmation classes, and meetings. During the rest of the week, the congregation meets at the church for occasional educational and spiritual forums, administration meetings, and youth activities.

The University campus uses the space at Grace for Lutheran Student Movement/Lutheran Campus Ministry worship on Sunday evenings, informational and educational meetings, small group meetings, and Wednesday night Bible study. The student group feels ownership and 'at home' in the space. Groups from the University Hospital make use of the building for recovery and educational meetings during the week as well. The quiet space in the busy city is appreciated, especially in Peace Chapel.

Preparation for ministry programs for the outside community takes place at the church, but the site is also open to the neighborhood for monthly "GRACEsprings" services. This includes a free supper, healing service, classes, and support groups. Community classes and forums are held throughout the year and outside groups periodically use the church building for other kinds of worship (ecumenical and interreligious).



Civil Society: Community Service



Grace University Lutheran Church exists within the University of Minnesota community. The area surrounding Grace is occupied by dormitories, classroom buildings, the Fairview University Medical Center, and businesses aimed at university students. This community is considered by many members of Grace to be liberal because of the "educated" atmosphere. Grace is in an interesting location. In one day, an estimated 7,000 people walk by on the street directly in front of the church. Another 5,000 walk by on the intersecting street!

Members feel that Grace has many points of contact with the community. A healing service and a free meal, called GraceSprings, is offered once a month for community members as well as members of Grace. The youth and other individuals are active with the area food shelf. An Alcoholics Anonymous group is being organized by Grace to serve university students. Various groups from the community are using space that was added when the church built onto their building. One such group was the Muslim community who celebrated breaking fasts during Ramadan at Grace.

Members feel as if Grace has a definite sense of purpose and that their outreach is intentional. Grace's "Reconciling in Christ" status is a driving force in the congregation's outreach. The church is also very active in social justice and the arts as well. Grace is an open-door church where all people are welcome to attend services and programs that are offered. However, the church doors remain locked during the day as a safety precaution for those working inside. While this is understandable due to the urban culture that Grace is set in, it may be discouraging for some people.

Since the surrounding community is not a neighborhood filled with homes, being involved in the community can be hard. Most people who attend Grace are commuters which makes involvement in the community difficult.

Despite Grace's various connections with the community and their open-door policy, interviews with non-members in the surrounding community indicate that the church has a rather low profile in the community. While they have many points of contact, people who live and work nearby know very little about Grace. There seems to be a disconnect between the perceptions of Grace members and the perceptions of the surrounding community.



Local Church Society: Leadership, History and Heritage

leadership

The pastors are definitely respected and seen as important leaders in the congregation. They are looked to for guidance and inspiration. While the pastors play a significant part in leadership, others also have important leadership roles as well. Responsibilities are shared and decision making is done with the congregation's involvement. Small groups and committees help to balance power structures, and if people have passions for a particular area of ministry, they are encouraged to be involved and share their gifts. One woman commented that there are probably more leaders than followers in the congregation, noting several names that are not necessarily the most noticeable persons in the church. The synod plays only a small role in the life of this congregation. It is not a top-down structure, but rather volunteers and lay leaders are vital to the life of the church.

Leaders are expected to have an attitude of openness and it is hoped that everyone feels heard in meetings. Organizational skills and transparency are also expected of leaders. Being on a university campus creates an expectation that the pastors and other leaders be intellectually astute. Awareness of political justice and issues of peace are likely an unspoken expectation since these issues have permeated the community for many years. There are many strong leaders who are capable and passionate about the activities in which they are involved. Because of this, there are not a lot of strict guidelines for how things must be done. People just do it!

Pastors at Grace University have provided longevity for most of the church's history (since 1914). Rev. Hawkinson in particular was mentioned several times during interviews as someone who had a great impact on their distinction as a church dedicated to peaceful reconciliation in the world. Nurturing young people was most often done by parents and other volunteers. The recent hiring of a youth director was a huge step in the development of youth activities.

history and heritage

Grace University has its roots in the Swedish Lutheran tradition. Two faith communities in the area combined to make the congregation that is now known as Grace. One was a small congregation of Swedish-Americans who were yearning to adapt to their new cultural environment and the other began as a Sunday school program. The community began with few in number and many financial concerns, but has grown despite the many struggles faced throughout the years.

Grace established a strong stance on issues of peace early on in its development. During WWII and the Vietnam War, the congregation was intentional about providing safety and stability despite the turmoil going on around it. Under the leadership of Rev. Hawkinson, the church became active in providing care for veterans, educating young people about conscientious objection, and advocating for peaceful resolutions. In 1988, the church began a non-profit organization under the name of Rev. Wilkinson to promote peace initiatives through recongition of leaders and providing scholarships for those involved in peace and justice-making. It was declared a "Peace Site" in 1990 and continues to work in this area.

The church building is a historical site with its unique brick structure, decorative tile, exposed beams (in Swedish style), restored organ, and many other features. The new addition adds to the beauty and functionality of the church.

Lay and volunteer involmment has always been essential to this congregation. Worship life, community outreach programs, building upkeep, and many other areas of the life of Grace University have expanded and changed with the congregational needs due to lay



Local Church Society: Leadership, History and Heritage

involvement. While the congregation supported about 25 external organizations at one time in its history, it has more recently focused on supporting a handful of organizations.

Ties to the University of Minnesota campus have been highly influential during the shaping of the congregation and the surrounding community. Campus Ministry and the Grace congregation have had mutual and consistent support of one another along the way. This relationship is important as the university continues to grow and at times threatens to swallow up the small congregation.



Civil Society: Community Interviews



Person	Age	Gender	Interview Date	Type
A	45	M	2006-03-20	Community Type
B	21	F	2006-03-20	Community Type
C	22	M	2006-03-20	Community Type
D	20	M	2006-03-20	Community Type
E	27	M	2006-03-20	Community Type
F	62	F	2006-03-20	Community Type
G	25	M	2006-03-20	Community Type
H	19	F	2006-03-20	Community Type
I	26	M	2006-03-20	Community Type
J	30	M	2006-03-20	Community Type
BA	21	M	2006-03-20	Community Type
BB	25	F	2006-03-20	Community Type
BC	21	M	2006-03-26	Community Type

question 1

How long have you lived in this neighborhood/community?

Person	Response
A	"I have worked here six years."
B	"This is my 2nd year."
C	"I have lived in Centennial for six months."
D	"A couple of months."
E	"About 2 1/2 years."
F	"All my life. I only live 3 miles away."
G	"2 months."
H	1 year
I	He lived here 3 years ago as a student, now lives in Uptown.
J	I only work here...for the last few years.
BA	Lived in St. Paul all his life
BB	A couple years



Civil Society: Community Interviews



Person	Response
BC	

question 2

What do you know about this church?

Person	Response
A	"Nothing."
B	"They rebuilt it."
C	"It's on the National Registry of Historic Places."
D	"Nothing."
E	"Not a ton. When I was an undergraduate, I went to a number of weddings there. I know the student population is high in the congregation."
F	"What church? I don't know anything."
G	"That it is there."
H	Nothing
I	Not much - only that they have a parking lot!
J	nothing
BA	Nothing
BB	nothing - I think it's a historical site or something
BC	

question 3

What interaction have you had with this church?

Person	Response
A	"None."
B	None
C	"No."
D	"None."
E	"None."
F	"None."
G	"Nothing."
H	



Civil Society: Community Interviews



Person	Response
I	a generous lady shared her parking permit - that's all he knows.
J	none
BA	none
BB	none

question 4

How have you seen this congregation be involved in the community?

Person	Response
A	"Nothing."
B	No
C	"I haven't."
D	"I haven't."
E	"Nothing particularly."
F	"I haven't that I know of."
G	"People were talking about the (Ash Wednesday) service, that they were going to go."
H	
I	don't know
J	no
BA	no
BB	I haven't been aware of anything about it.

question 5

What neighborhood organizations are in this neighborhood or community?

Person	Response
A	"I don't know."
B	"University affiliated Habitat for Humanity and fundraiser through the dorms."
C	"None that I know."
D	"I don't know."
E	"There's another church group."
F	"Trailor Derby. The hospital is responsible for it. There are fundraisers for the hospital."



Civil Society: Community Interviews



Person	Response
G	Shrugged shoulders
H	anti-war group she's seen and lots of groups listed on everygopher.com
I	student organizations and many others, but he doesn't know any by name at the moment.
J	University, churches, YMCA, hospital
BA	not many, just campus organizations
BB	I don't know

question 6

What things do you think this neighborhood/community finds important?

Person	Response
A	"Housing."
B	"My only interactions are with students."
C	"I don't know."
D	"I'm not sure."
E	"Community housing. There are so many students in such a small area. It's an inclusive atmosphere. It is open-minded, accepting."
F	"Culture - that people get along. Growth in the area. The work environment is full of different people."
G	"Students."
H	Creating a community within the larger campus - finding your niche
I	Parking! The hospital is kinda taking over.
J	Parking and transportation
BA	crime
BB	history, education

question 7

What concerns you about this neighborhood/community?

Person	Response
A	"Crime."
B	"People are only concerned with themselves. They seem to have a phobia of interacting with other people. If there is a person in a wheelchair, they are afraid to ask if that person needs help crossing the street."
C	"It's too loud. There are a lot of college students."



Civil Society: Community Interviews



Person	Response
D	"That I don't know what things are valued in this neighborhood."
E	"Nothing."
F	"I'm used to it. I've lived through a lot. I have no concerns. Maybe be on your guard walking at night and such."
G	"Nothing."
H	
I	Huge growth of hospital.
J	Theft (stolen bikes), parking.
BA	environmental issues
BB	muggings, tuition

question 8

How do you think a church in this neighborhood could partner with other organizations in the community?

Person	Response
A	"Something with housing. Help out people who are homeless. Give them a place to go."
B	"They could promote activities, or events that aren't necessarily about the church. Like sponsoring or co-sponsoring something."
C	"They can do whatever churches typically do."
D	"Help children or work with children. Provide childcare for students."
E	"They could partner with university offices or groups on activities. They could co-sponsor an activity to get newer students involved."
F	"Get together to see what everybody needs. The more the merrier."
G	"Youth awareness and programs. Provide emotional support for kids just leaving home."
H	Integrate in regular daily life, doing service, be pragmatic, drawing folks into the community not by preaching, but by living out faith.
I	Don't know.
J	parking issues
BA	hosting groups at the church
BB	don't know



Local Church Society: Interior Interviews



Person	Age	Gender	Interview Date	Type
A	46	F	2006-03-23	Inside Stranger
B	50	F	2006-03-19	Inside Stranger
C	45	M	2006-03-26	Inside Stranger
D	76	F	2006-03-19	Inside Stranger
E	65	F	2006-03-19	Inside Stranger
F	53	F	2006-03-22	Inside Stranger
G	18	M	2006-03-22	Inside Stranger
H	55	M	2006-04-02	Outside Stranger
I	26	F	2006-03-19	Outside Stranger
A0	31	M	2006-03-19	Inside Stranger
AA	29	M	2006-03-19	Outside Stranger
AB	42	F	2006-03-19	Family Member
AC	80	F	2006-03-19	Family Member
AD	51	M	2006-03-19	Outside Stranger

question 1

(REQUIRED) - Tell a story about how you sense God's presence and activity in this congregation.

Person	Response
A	Being open to diversity - all equal and loved by God, all can use gifts. Also, a special relationship with former music leader.
B	"The energy (Spirit) I feel when I come to church on Sunday. Other churches seem dead in a way. One example is Karen and when her son died. She received a lot of support."
C	I sense God's presence in the energy. As a musician, I look for signs of musical energy like in the congregation singing and the choir singing. Strong singing is appropriate for the choir and musical health of Grace.
D	I sensed God's presence in the support I got after my husband died. People were warm and helpful.
E	One activity was the funeral for Bill W. He was a very special person to us. The congregation was very supportive. My husband and I met here. We stopped coming for awhile. We came back for the Centennial Celebration and have come back here for church.
F	In the sense of community here, the interactions of people. Meals are provided to help families after they have a baby. We have a prayer chain, coffee hour, an annual women's Advent retreat at ARC. There is a focus on social justice in the sermons.
G	Using Holden Evening Vespers. In the church the setting is darker. It's more reflective and meditative. I sense God's presence in the music here.



Local Church Society: Interior Interviews



Person	Response
H	
I	Everyone reaches out. It is a welcoming community. It's like "This is God's house, not our house". I sense God in all parts of the service (at the door, communion, people remembering us).
A0	When speaking with people there is a feeling of openness and acceptance. This leads to unexpected positive activities. Examples are people who need support due to circumstances: physical, emotional, or spiritual support, or things like taking meals or helping with everyday tasks.
AA	I sense God's activity through a charismatic preacher.
AB	It is a welcoming and open place. It feels like a family from the beginning.
AC	I feel God's presence now more than ever before especially during worship.
AD	When my daughter was born there was an outpouring of love and support from the congregation. Pastor Mary has mentioned our daughter in sermons and how she sees God working in her.

question 2

(REQUIRED) - Describe an experience of profound worship you have had.

Person	Response
A	Lamentations of Jeremiah with Choir and All Saints Sunday with candles and Agnus Dei
B	"Tony's funeral. He was 22 and a jazz musician. Jazz was played at the funeral. It was a celebration. It is like this a lot of times so it is not an unusual thing."
C	Mostly during communion. "Spirit of the Word" is hard because I'm worried about hitting the right notes.
D	Almost every Sunday at worship.
E	We have really wonderful music and choir. The pastors are exceptional. They speak about what the world needs to do. Grace Springs is different at night. It is more intimate.
F	The All Saints Day service every year. It is always profound. People walk up and light a candle for someone. Because of the close-knit community, you know their stories.
G	I can think of one sermon that Pastor Dan gave. It was powerful. It was something about the horrible things done with money (by the government). About it not being spent properly.
H	
I	I would say the Healing Service. My husband is Catholic and I'm Presbyterian. We do still worship together, but we just don't necessarily connect in all of the ways that I wish we could. At the healing service, though, when we were on our knees with hands on us for our daughter. It was God and us and the prayers of the woman. That was it. Nothing else mattered at the moment. It was a shared religious experience. It provided us strength and a lot of hope for what was to come.
A0	Funerals. They are spiritual on lots of levels. The facade is peeled away.
AA	I haven't recently.
AB	On the one-year anniversary of the events of September 11th we were praying. In the middle of a prayer a plane flew over.
AC	When I read a Henri Nouwen book I was very moved. I felt that I knew God. The church music, the sense of community and the strong love are profound.



Local Church Society: Interior Interviews



Person	Response
AD	The baptisms of both kids. One was baptized at home and there was a public celebration. Our other daughter was baptized outside. Pastor Mary had spruce branches to sprinkle everyone with water. The congregation enjoys surprises.

question 3

(REQUIRED) - Tell about the ways people fight in this congregation. Tell about a situation where you and other people were involved in a problem at church and how it was handled.

Person	Response
A	Two people she knows left because of misunderstanding or wanting their way, but meetings are structured and respectful. Small committees and delegation of responsibilities by pastors is helpful.
B	"It's usually around things where there are two good things like 'what should money be going to?'. One situation involved hospitality and having coffee in the sanctuary to engage people while the addition was being built."
C	I haven't experienced this.
D	There are a lot of disagreement on things, but I have never felt any rancor. We agree to go with the majority. We need more Bible studies. The "outreach" committee should be named evangelism committee. We have discussions not fights.
E	One situation was the decision to build a new addition. It went on for a long time. We needed a new sound system. Also, giving to the larger community.
F	Respectfully. The pastors set the tone. If a problem starts to arise they may say, "Listen to each other". At an annual meeting about 20 years ago there was a 45 minute discussion about using styrofoam cups. One man didn't want to wash cups after the coffee hour! At the same meeting, 2 minutes was spent talking about sending financial assistance to San Francisco and there was total support.
G	I don't know.
H	It is the concensus model. People disagree, but are united in mutual concern for each other. You opt in or opt out based on politics and theology. If you really disagree you are not welcome here. Intellectual freedom is curtailed. When the center idea of the congregation shifts you are excluded if you don't shift with them.
I	I can't say that I have experienced that. Everybody has been very accomodating for us. When I brought my daughter she wasn't supposed to be around a lot of people. They brought a chair into the foyer. No one said anything, but they could have.
A0	Controversy arises when we talk about what to do with resources, or when there is discussion about liturgy or sermon focuses. Constant dialogue leads to appreciation and integration.
AA	The fighting is passive aggressive. There was discussion about the addition for 10 years before they did it. People handle it by leaving.
AB	I haven't experienced intra-church conflict. I've been involved in political rallies.
AC	Usually we have constructive conversations and sometimes people leave. Usually, disagreements are resolved in private conversations and church meetings.
AD	The addition to the church was the biggest controversy. Some people were hurt so badly that they left. Others grin and bear it. Since it was built, the concensus is that it was the right decision. The public started and stopped several times. Three to four times a year we have congregational meetings. Problems are not discussed in worship.



Local Church Society: Interior Interviews



question 4

(REQUIRED) - Tell a memory that gives you anxiety about the future of this congregation. Tell a memory that gives you hope.

Person	Response
A	Parking situation is so unwelcoming. Increase in young families with the great youth program foundation.
B	"Fifteen or twenty years ago the church almost died. It was scary. People who want to make rules can feel comfortable to splitting part of the church. One example are homosexuality laws. I feel hopeful with the growth of the church. There are many young people: kids as well as college kids."
C	Anxiety: Having a transient group - moving in and moving out. However, there is hope because we are constantly getting new people. Success breeds success.
D	This is a personal struggle. At a families together dinner one person emphasized pluralism. How can we preach as the exclusive embodiment of God and still accept pluralism? Then we are diluting the impact of Christ. This is high Christology.
E	Hope: Creative leadership and members. We are always looking for ways to reach out to others. The sanctuary garden on the new land will be done with volunteer landscapers. A doctor from Taiwan, who was doing pediatric research at the university, walked by and was encouraged to come because this is a welcoming congregation. She was struggling in her own life. Periodically she comes back. It built relationships. She is Catholic.
F	No anxiety. Our budget has doubled in the last 5 years. We always give 10% right away. There is a sense of 'don't worry'. "This is God's church. God provides."
G	The sermons are good. They say the right things. It gives me ideas for my future.
H	
I	I feel hope for the community and the world just by the presence of this church here. People's determination to keep it here is hopeful. It is a bastion of warmth in a very cold place.
A0	The building expansion and could we come up with money. There is hope in that the people who were committed remained committed.
AA	I don't have any anxieties. I have confidence in spirituality.
AB	Anxiety: Land issues since we are so close to campus. Also that we will outgrow the church. Hope: During hard times I am confident that there will be support and that people will rally.
AC	I used to have anxiety about the distance people had to travel to come to church. Recently we have more young couples driving to church. Once we struggled with 30 people in church. This has turned around and there are lots of people in worship.
AD	The by-laws were changed to allow for calling a pastor who is gay or lesbian. The synod recognizes the old by-laws. This is a sore spot that could create tension in the future. Hope: The church has changed and grown. There are lots of younger people now. In the mid-80's it was mostly older people. It is getting younger now. The pastor team gets along swimmingly.

question 5

If you were to leave this congregation for five years, without contact, what would you expect to see when you returned? What would you hope to see?

Person	Response
A	Better parking lot, more art presence in new space, music and festivals expanding beyond congregation,



Local Church Society: Interior Interviews



Person	Response
	development of community healing service and outreach to hospital and neighboring community
B	
C	
D	
E	
F	
G	
H	
I	
A0	I would expect to see growth especially with younger people. I would hope to see a greater emphasis on intellectual development and spirituality.
AA	
AB	
AC	I would expect to see an increase in membership.

question 6

What tells you God is present here in worship?

Person	Response
A	in the music and dedication to peace
B	
C	
D	
E	
F	
G	
H	
I	

question 7

Describe this congregation to someone new and tell how they would be nurtured here.



Local Church Society: Interior Interviews



Person	Response
A	Depending on the person's interest, she'd tell them about coffee hour, care for sick members, opportunities to help out, and the FUN activities!
B	
C	
D	
E	
F	The Saturday morning discussion groups are good. It is a welcome surprise to be accepted by small groups rather than the larger group.
G	People will embrace you and make you feel a part of something. It is a non-judgemental place to be.
H	
I	People will support others and invite them for the coffee time and introduce them to people so they feel welcomed. It is a nurturing place. If someone is sick, people will visit and provide meals. The heart of the congregation is the coffee hour.
A0	It is a very open-armed and open-minded congregation. A lot of what happens takes place outside of worship (fellowship before church).

question 8

Tell how people participate in the life of this church.

Person	Response
A	Friendliness varies, sometimes clicky, Kitty's name came up several times with involvement with kids and light-hearted gatherings, also various community service projects.
B	
C	
D	
E	
F	
G	There is a prayer chain. I like feeling the power of prayer, but it's great to have flesh and caring people, too.
H	
I	Some want to be involved and some want to be wallflowers. We do a little better than average in welcoming and participating.

question 9

Tell about the learning opportunities here.

Person	Response
A	Sunday school, Confirmation, Adult forum (choir members can't attend), book study, OWLS, young



Local Church Society: Interior Interviews



Person	Response
	mothers, new members, Bible studies, health forums
B	
C	
D	There is a youth group. All people are included.
E	
F	Most churches are like elementary schools of religion. That is needed, but they don't go beyond that. Most of the activities here are social events.
G	There is adult forum, Sunday school, read lessons, lead activities, Bible studies during the week.

question 10

Tell about how you and others feel about the changes in this community in the past 3-5 years.

Person	Response
A	Very crowded! Most of the walk-by traffic doesn't even notice congregation, the new addition is great! Internally, she thinks of Pastor Dan's recovery and the joy of having him back. Also, there has been lots of conversation and input from knowledgeable people on various topics which is good. They are FINALLY handicapped accessible!
B	
C	
D	



Civil Society: Symbols, Rituals and Metaphors

The most prominent symbols for the community around Grace University Lutheran are the 'M' of the University of Minnesota and the symbol of the Fairview Healthcare system. These are dominant. The University of Minnesota is one of the largest institutions of higher learning (55,000-plus) in the United States and in the world. The University of Minnesota / Fairview Healthcare Medical Center has a very rich heritage and tradition in healthcare innovation and healing. Fairview has Lutheran roots, in fact.

Grace is a brick structure like many of the surrounding buildings of the university structure. If one didn't know, it would seem that the church was built and exists to serve the needs of the education and hospital communities. It blends into its surroundings so well that many people on the streets don't seem to notice that it is a church. A pole on which a 'Peace' sign hung was taken down during construction of the addition. The plan is to put it back up this summer as well as develop a meditation garden. It would be a tranquil place for people passing by in an otherwise concrete and brick area.

Peace is a metaphor for this large community: hospital, university and church. The church promotes this idea on a sign outside their building. "Harvard Street Forum: Where conscience and calling embrace the world's needs". There is velcro at the bottom of the sign in order to display signs to promote an upcoming forum or activity.

The relatively quiet street also acts as a metaphor, as a single walking block would take a pedestrian to some of the busiest areas in the Twin Cities for walkers: The retail / entertainment center acts as a de facto town hall, with fellowship opportunities galore. The hospital setting seems to combine hope and stress.



Local Church Culture: Mission, Vision, Values

mission statement

The primary mission of Grace University Lutheran Church is to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ as an instrument of God's reconciling love in the world. We do this so that reconciliation with God may become a reality for all. (II Corinthians 5:18-21)

vision and values

In interviewing several members and visitors of Grace University Lutheran Church one theme was consistently in the foreground: hospitality/acceptance. This theme, present among the members, is further reinforced in bulletins that extend a welcome on the first page and again on the last, while providing a detailed list of news and program opportunities to the uninitiated. The bulletins and other material also encourage visitors to utilize the pastoral care and other resources of the congregation. Since 1985 the congregation has taken the step of becoming "Reconciling in Christ" meaning that they welcome "people of all ages, ethnic backgrounds, sexual orientations, educational backgrounds, and economic conditions." Their welcome brochure also mentions that they are a "Peace Site" who in their worship, prayer, study and life together strive for peaceful means of living out the gospel. When visiting the congregation I was immediately greeted and welcomed at the door and welcomed again and invited to coffee after the service by a different member. Once at coffee hour I was stunned by the boisterous conversations, in which I was invited to participate. Although being a welcoming congregation is an obvious priority, several people I talked with mentioned that this is sometimes done well and others not. At coffee, I was told stories of outreach and inclusion from people who often feel marginalized, specifically the parents of a child with Down Syndrome and a homosexual man. A visitor from the hospital experienced peace through the healing services at Grace, and also joy that her brother, who had left the church was willing to come to Christmas services there. Grace's hospitality has also extended beyond Christian fellowship, to host a Muslim student organization.

While certainly drawing these values of hospitality and acceptance from Biblical principles, the members I talked with were hard-pressed to state specific passages and how those passages informed the congregation's affairs. I was especially surprised that "saved by grace through faith" was not mentioned by anyone but the pastor. When reflecting on the mission statement, derived from 2 Corinthians 5, I was struck by how beautifully it describes the "ministry of reconciliation" for which the congregation strives, but no one that I talked with mentioned the letters of Paul when asked what Biblical passages resonate with the congregation.

The members further seemed to be called to action by the values of the congregation, especially in the areas of advocating tolerance and promoting recognition of our connection to, and parity with, the wider world. Peace and justice and the environment are also concerns that shape their mission in the wider world.

symbols, rituals and metaphors

When asking people about symbols in their congregation all roads led to the chancel wall mural. While it does have an official explanation each member that I talked with was happy to give their own interpretation of the congregation through the symbol. The official



Local Church Culture: Mission, Vision, Values

explanation is that the mural is based on the word "Grace". "The physical means of grace are represented in the four triangular segments. The top left signifies the action of God through the Holy Spirit in the descent of the dove. The upper right segment represents the water of baptism. The lower portions represent the elements of Holy Communion – the bread signified by the wheat on the lower left and the wine signified by the grapes on the right. The overall cross form and color scheme are derived from existing tiles in the side walls above the arches and the chancel floor." Congregational interpretations of this symbol range from how the congregation ties in to the past, but leads to the future, to earth, fire, wind and water around the cross, to an even sided cross showing the equality of men and women in the congregation, to a "pre-Christian cross" referenced in the Da Vinci Code, to a peaceful image that helps them center themselves, to an image of torture that is softened by the elements in the quadrants, but nonetheless avoided, to a cross that is reaching out to the wider world.

The second symbol common to all interviews was the ritual of coffee hour. Each interviewee perceived this ritual as integral to the life of the congregation. It is seen as a chance to get to see and visit with people you wouldn't otherwise run into, and a chance to invite people into the fellowship of the congregation. This seems to be the heart of the welcoming/accepting model that animates this congregation. It is also a place to discuss issues of concern to the church informally. The surrounding community is mostly academic buildings, meaning that most of the congregants come from elsewhere in the cities. Compared to the commercial/university/hospital environment this is a bastion of warm fellowship and embracing intergenerational community.

It is at this point that convergence ends, as many other symbols ranging from the "aesthetic of austerity" (simple, solid furnishings), to the active involvement of the laity, to the prayers of the people which can be added through cards that are dropped in the offering plate, to greeting at the door, to communion open and free to all, to the balance of old and new liturgical styles, vied for attention in the imaginations of the interviewees. The emerging pattern for these tertiary symbols is a community dedicated to diversity and equal participation among its members. However, for some the movement from being a receiver of hospitality, to becoming a giver of hospitality within the congregation, is a challenge.



Reflections



theological reflections

As you look at your completed report, what jumps out at you? What is God revealing to you about God's activity in your church and community?

God's activity in this church setting is shown through the unique congregation in such a unique setting and through their emphasis on ministry within this community. Grace gives visitors and members alike a feeling of being a healthy congregation. In addition, Grace stretches the congregation members way of thinking on societal issues; they think outside the box while keeping a traditional Lutheran way of worship. There is much potential for God to be active and revealed through Grace University Lutheran Church.

How is God at work in the various areas of: worship, outreach, discipleship, education, fellowship and stewardship?

God's activity is obvious through the active leadership displayed at Grace. The leaders have been able to effectively empower lay people to lead within and outside of the church. Also, the activity of fellowship is genuine. This is shown through opening the church doors to other groups who use the building space, including groups from other faiths. Financially, God's activity is obvious because finances continue to grow. Our group believes that people are more generous in their giving when they believe in what is happening. This shows that God's activity is alive and well within the generosity of the parishioners. During worship God's activity is evident because of the inclusivity of all types of people. All people are welcome at Grace. Education aspects also show God's activity because Grace is not afraid of the tough topics and these tough topics are not avoided. Grace is very good at educating people on social justice issues and in the Harvard Street Forums they participate in.

Where do you observe energy growing in your church? Why might God be creating energy in these areas?

Energy is evident at Grace because of the emerging families that are attending Grace. These young families and active youth bring hope for the future of Grace. Energy is also infused into Grace by the empowerment of lay people as leaders and in carrying Biblical teachings and into the wider world in people's vocations and careers.

Where do you observe energy on the decline? What choices does your church have in addressing these areas?

Energy is endangered at Grace because of encroachment issues—in some ways it seems like Grace is being swallowed up by the chaos of the surrounding area. Grace will need to maintain their stability in their ever-changing community. They need to remain a peaceful spot in the midst of the chaos that surrounds them. Also, the high turnover of people within the community could drain the church's energy in the long run. Grace needs to maintain relationships with the university and the hospital as well as the Synod because of the church's change in bylaws regarding homosexuality. These are all issues that people mentioned as creating fear and anxiety about the future of Grace.

As you look at the community demographics and interviews, what strikes you about this information? What is surprising? How might God be calling your congregation to address some of what you are discovering about your community?

The community surrounding Grace is transient and very busy. Our group was surprised that people within the community didn't seem to know much about the church or even that it was a church. We were also surprised by demographic information about the surrounding community, especially the large discrepancy in income levels for men and women. Also, we expected to find some sort of unifying organization in place in the community since it is such a busy, chaotic environment, but were surprised that we found none. Perhaps Grace could function as this type of unifying organization within the community.

What areas of ministry is God's presence most obvious? Why do you think this is?

God's presence is most obvious through the hospitality and welcoming atmosphere that Grace provides. They welcome the non-family member on a weekly basis. In all reality, Grace has to be good at welcoming the stranger because of the community that they are set within. On any given Sunday one-third to one-half of the congregation is made up of visitors! Welcoming the stranger is therefore a necessity for Grace. Also, people who attend Grace feel as if they are being spiritually fed at Grace. This makes them want to welcome others and help others to feel like they too belong. Therefore, welcoming is a cyclical activity.

When you read your mission statement (if your congregation has one) how is your congregation being faithful to the mission statement? Is your mission statement a reflection of what you see God calling your church to be and to do?

We feel that Grace's mission statement is an accurate reflection of the church. Members of Grace feel that the role of God within the community is stated obviously; they feel their role is to help people find reconciliation with God, themselves, and the world. This is shown through their constant roots in social justice and reconciliation issues. Grace is a Reconciling in Christ church. This status also helps them to live out their mission statement.



Reflections



What areas of ministry are in greatest need of God's (and your church's) attention?

There were two areas of ministry that our group felt that Grace could use some improvement on. These were strengthening Scriptural knowledge and strengthening the outreach that is already in place. During interviews people were quick to mention their Reconciling in Christ status, but very few could provide a Scriptural basis for this status. This was also evident when people were asked the meaning of the wall mural based on the theological doctrine of grace. We feel that members of Grace could gain a deeper understanding of how Scripture leads them and challenges them in what they are called to do. This would also give them an articulate voice through the Word of Scripture that would help their work in the areas of social justice and reconciliation through Christ.

After reviewing your completed report as a team, where do you see God leading your congregation in the future?

Any future plan for Grace will have to revolve around hospitality and areas of growth within the chaotic community they are a part of. Grace will be called to be a strong voice while still being a unifying voice within the community. In addition, Grace will have to balance the tension between social justice and reconciliation areas carefully with the Lutheran community so that the church doesn't give into the temptation to go their own way. By balancing this tension they can be a valuable voice for the larger Lutheran community.

civil society reflections

How does the congregation perceive the church building? As a fortress, a serving table, an Oasis, a pit stop, a home? What do members of the congregation think about their community?

It seems that the congregation perceives the church building as a home. The congregation members welcome visitors with open arms much like family welcomes visiting relatives.

The church building is a well used ministry tool - lively and diverse as is the community around them.

How does the community perceive the church building? As a refuge, a kitchen, a babysitter, a temple, a courthouse? How do they perceive the church members?

Those who use the new building space tend to see it as a gathering place or an oasis. Others simply see it as another building without realizing its role within the community

Those who use the new building space see the members as welcoming and helpful, open-minded and respectful of their perspective.

Outsiders may see it as a type of 'fortress' because it is so old, stable, and unique in a rapidly changing society. The peacefulness the building brings to a busy neighborhood gives it potential!

How does the church participate in the wider community by opening the building to community groups (i.e. AA, MS support groups, food shelter, community meals, counseling services, car repair for low-income families, etc)?

The church does an excellent job of opening the building to community groups. This availability is not widely known.

What relationships exist between the congregation and or individual members and other community groups? How does the congregation's interaction with its community help serve the mission of God?

There are a lot of individual people active with events or organizations that they are interested in or involved in. This involvement becomes very widespread throughout many communities, but not necessarily within the church's neighborhood.

What has the congregation learned from its neighborhood or community? What has the community learned from the congregation?

The congregation has learned how to be welcoming and hospitable because 1/3 of the congregation is visitors every Sunday. They have to be welcoming or they lose their visitors.

The Community possibly has learned stability and social action, and openness. They feel it is a friendly community.

What steps might the congregation take to make itself available as a partner in the community?

The garden idea is already in the works. This would be a quiet gathering spot.



Reflections



What steps might the congregation take to make itself available as a partner in the community?

Fraternities and dorms: Is there a university calendar published each school year? Get the church name put on the calendar. Focus on stressful times in the year and then plan different activities or speakers that would help during that time. Reach out to lonely students who are away from home for the first time, or at least the first extended period of time.

Due to the large volume of people who walk by they could have larger signs outside the church (like the GraceSprings signs), or another big sign like the one that was up during construction.

They can be a unifying site for community- organizing discussions and meetings.

Find a way to keep staff safe yet have an unlocked door.

How is God active in the faith community outside of your particular denomination? What does that activity look like?

Lutheran Student Movement is not far away. It is a gathering spot for students. Volunteers work with St. Martin's Table. It is a place to get something to eat or just hang out. Money raised is given away to selected charities.

God is also active in the various support groups, people from the hospital, as well as immigrants and interfaith gatherings.

What kind of practical and cultural values are displayed and lived out in this congregation? How does that affect their perceptions of purpose (their mission)?

Social justice issues, hospitality, reconciling in Christ are the key values that are displayed and lived out.

These values define and are the well-spring from which they draw their purpose.

If this congregation were not in this neighborhood, would it make a difference?

It definitely would make a difference to the congregation. It would change their mission completely. The church would be a completely different entity. Their location establishes their mission.

team reflections

What do you notice about pastors' tenures in a congregation in relationship to membership and worship attendance patterns? Is there a relationship?

There has been a longevity in pastors at this congregation and a seeming continuity of the pastor's views and goals within the congregation. During these pastor's tenure attendance and membership have continuously grown and the average age of the attendees has dropped somewhat with added young families and youth of all ages. There were a few unstable years early on in the formation of the congregation when the congregation was without a pastor for a period of time. This brought a decline in membership at the time, but also developed a strong lay leadership role.

How does stewardship and giving contribute or not contribute to a congregation's sense of mission?

Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also...when you give financially to an institution, especially the church, you develop an attachment to its mission and you have a personal stake in what happens in that place, which raises your level of commitment which raises your giving and the cycle continues...

The total income of the church has, for the most part, continued to grow, some years there seems to be a shortfall between the total income and the budget. However, mission giving has steadily increased throughout these years.

What is the mission history of this congregation? How has the congregation participated in God's mission in the past? What does that mean for the future?

The history of the congregation's missional activity can be summed up in this: "They see a need, they respond to the need in their congregation/community!" This began with Swedish immigrants trying to adjust and form a life here, and moved on to providing for students in transition, issues of war and peace (caring for returning soldiers and being socially and politically active), and providing ministry for the care of patients and families at the hospital. It continues with being a Reconciled in Christ congregation and a Peace site - continuing the hospitality to students, immigrants, hospital folks, and other needs they see.



Reflections



How has worship impacted your congregation members?

Most people said they were affected by the sermons and the music as well as weekly communion (open table). Worship sends them into the week prepared for another week, there is a connection between what they do at church and what they do throughout the week.

How people say they fight affects how they enter into and come out of conflict. How does that affect the congregation's ability to live out its mission?

The word "fight" was seen in a negative light by some - they said that they don't fight. If there are disagreements, however, people tend to go with the majority or they leave the congregation. It is noteworthy to mention that some of those who choose to leave also articulated their difference of opinion before just leaving. While it is healthy to get the debates out in the open, the mission is affected when people within the church who disagree with some social issues feel sidelined or silenced. The church's mission is lived out in a more unified way when all are like minded and the topics are well discussed, but if folks are in silent disagreement, the conflict will keep them from being healthy and active.

What values shine from this congregation's mission and/or vision statement(s)? Are they lived values? Are these values consistent with the values which they state in the interviews?

Hospitality, inclusion, acceptance, and social action are the central core of who they are. These are lived values and consistent with the values stated in the interviews.

What symbols and rituals give life to this congregation? What metaphors are used to describe this congregation's life? Where are they revealed?

There are two main symbols: the chancel mural and coffee hour after the service. Weekly communion (open table) is an important ritual that describes the congregation's life. The chancel mural does give life to the church, but each person has their own explanation of how this occurs. Coffee hour reveals fellowship, and GraceSprings gives an open welcome. They definitely focus on a welcoming theme and share it in the life of the congregation.

What effective leadership is being demonstrated in this congregation? Where do people see it?

Interviewees gushed about the awesome pastors. Pastors empower the lay people to lead. There is a broad base of people who take initiative to lead things within the church. Informality is good, but can be troublesome because some people aren't sure of where to enter in and become a part of things.

How does communication flow among leaders in the congregation? Between the congregation and its leaders?

The website is a good source of information, but needs to be finished. The newsletter is also a good place to keep people updated, but we are unsure how well it articulates the true interests of the congregation beyond logistics. The use of the new building needs to be communicated more as they adjust to all the various groups using it. Communication flows openly and informally overall, but this format can understandably hit a snag, especially when coffee conversation after the service is the key place to communicate.

What denominations are growing in the same area as this church? Why is that happening? What assumptions did you have about the prevalence of other denominations around the same area? Have your ideas changed?

Baptist General has grown from 5772 to 11034 (from 1990 to 2000). The Roman Catholic Church grew from 157,945 to 159,281, Assemblies of God from 5050 to 6004, and Christian and Missionary Alliance from 3425 to 5432. We honestly do not know exactly why this happens this way besides that the more Pentecostal groups are growing around the world and there are others who really are being drawn to traditional worship too. We were surprised by the diversity of denominations and learned about some churches we don't regularly hear about!

future reflections

Who are the most identifiable opinion leaders (most trusted or respected persons) in your church?

The pastors certainly have sway over how things are conducted. They are identifiable opinion leaders and are trusted and respected as leaders of the congregation. Leadership within the congregation, especially concerning what direction the congregation will take seem to be quite diffuse among the members, but concentrated in rituals like coffee hour and visioning meetings (we had over 30 people at our



Reflections



Who are the most identifiable opinion leaders (most trusted or respected persons) in your church?

presentation). Through this process of consensus building informal conversation leads to mission. Because have been so empowered and because decision making is done so informally the process is somewhat difficult to track. Officers such as the president Jean Stilwell serve to identify and codify the zeitgeist. While others such as Kitty Anderson have captured people's imaginations (her name showed up in multiple interviews, though as far as we can tell she doesn't have an official post).

Which of those opinion leaders are also appointed or elected leaders in your church?

The pastors, Jean Stilwell and all of the officers serve through an elected/appointed ministry.

What unique gifts for ministry has God bestowed upon this church?

God has blessed this church with its location among people in need. God has blessed them with curiosity for others and their views in the world. God has blessed them with a socially active membership and on the whole a membership that feels empowered to do God's work in this world.

What ministries does this church now do uncommonly well?

Welcoming, hospitality, "Reconciling in Christ" status, social and political engagement that are all stated concretely in their statement of affirmation. Healing has also become a major ministry embraced as a community priority.

What one or two ministries could you imagine as excellent or "flagship" ministries for your church in the next five years?

Rooting their social justice issues and "Reconciling in Christ" beliefs more deeply in scripture and growing outward from there. The ministries already at the fore we see as expanding to reach ever more people within the community.

What distinctive opportunities for ministry to this community can you envision for this church within the next five years?

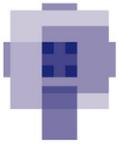
We see a possibility of the church becoming an oasis where people can wander in throughout the day and find the "peace which surpasses all understanding". We also see an opportunity for this sanctuary to become a hub for organizing the communities around them for ministry to each other, an open meeting space for community dialog. We also see the opportunity of strengthening relationships not only with the students and the patients in the hospital, but also those working in the area.

Does your church have the kind of ministers on staff that you will need to accomplish your ministry goals?

Yes. The staff seems to have the same goals and objectives as the congregation, they are open-minded and excited about the changes that will come in the future. This congregation has shown a steady increase in its staffed positions in the last few years, a pattern that we imagine will continue as the new growth of the congregation matures and bears much fruit.

What ministries will need to be strengthened or improved in order to enhance your church's overall effectiveness in ministry?

Grace needs to get its name and presence known in the community. Many amazing things are happening inside the doors, their greatest need now is to connect with the world beyond "the oasis". Also, centering in the gospel and their theological self-understanding as they



Reflections



What ministries will need to be strengthened or improved in order to enhance your church's overall effectiveness in ministry?

encounter increasingly diverse folks will give the flexible strength that is necessary for the branches of its ministry to branch further out.

In what ways can your church serve as a Sign, Foretaste, and Instrument of the Kingdom of God in your community?

The "Reconciling in Christ" status and 2 Corinthians base for self understanding, combined with ministries such as "Grace Springs" and hospital ministries show Grace University Lutheran to be a foretaste of God's hospitable reign. Their social action and peace activism show them to be an instrument of God's peace. For at least one mother whose daughter was in the hospital Grace's presence as a welcoming and healing place among, but apart from the hospital and university was a sign of hope, for herself and her world.

If you were to write an essay, dated five years from now, describing what your church has accomplished within those five years, what would the essay say?

The last five years have been a tremendous time for Grace Univ. Lutheran. The use of the new addition that was completed in 2005 has continuously grown. Its use has reached its full potential as the congregation has grown stronger roots in the Scriptures and their Lutheran understanding of God's grace. The congregation uses these roots to support an even wider reaching ministry that welcomes all to their oasis and reaches beyond its walls with the loving message of Jesus Christ. This message is communicated through direct service, organizing and providing space for communal discussion and through the messages displayed on our signage. (From the introduction section of "Grace University Lutheran Church: Wow! What an amazing five years!")



Additional Resources

