

Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church



Grace
Lutheran
Church

Congregational Assembly

(also known as Voters' Meeting)

December 4, 2022 // 12:30 PM

GRACE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH – DURHAM, NC

Congregational Assembly – Sunday, December 4, 2022

Our Mission

We Welcome Everyone to Walk the Way of GRACE: to GROW with Jesus, REJOICE in God, ANSWER with hope, CARE for the neighbor, and EMBRACE community.

Our Vision

GOD HAS A PLAN

FOR OUR LIVES, and so we teach how to walk in the path of Jesus Christ;

FOR OUR NEIGHBORHOODS, and so we work to build healthy, strong communities;

FOR OUR CITY, and so we share life with our neighbors in Walltown, Trinity Park, Duke, and the Triangle; and

FOR OUR WORLD, and so we go with Good News.

A G E N D A

1. Opening Prayer – Pastor Brooks
2. Reading and Approval of Proxies¹
3. Presentation of New Voters²
4. Approval of Minutes of Last Meetings: May 15, 2022 and Special Meetings on June 26 and July 10, 2022
5. Pastor's Comments
6. Statistical Report (May 2022-November 15, 2022)
7. Congregational Nominations for President, First Vice-President, and Regional Vice-President of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (See Page 2)
8. President's Report
9. Election of Officers
10. Funding the Ministry for 2023 - Spending Plan Approval
11. Announcements, Other Business, Open Discussion
12. Adjournment
13. Closing Prayer - ALL

We are grateful to You, Lord Jesus Christ, that You have established Your Church on earth, where You bless us with love and mercy in Your Word and Sacraments. We are grateful that Your Word is

¹ Proxy voting must be submitted via special form to the Church Office 72 hours prior to the Voters' Assembly and cite extenuating circumstances. (Bylaw 4.9)

² Voting membership is to be renewed annually through a commitment to grow as a disciple, participate in a ministry, and give financially (Bylaw 1.3)

LINKS TO PROXY FORM AND VOTER COMMITMENT CARD ARE LOCATED ON THE HOMEPAGE OF OUR WEBSITE

WWW.GRACEDURHAM.ORG.

COPIES ARE ALSO AVAILABLE IN THE CHURCH OFFICE. VOTER COMMITMENT CARDS WERE ALSO MAILED TO HOMES.

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proclaimed in our Congregation in truth and purity. Use us for the building of Your Kingdom on earth. Bless our efforts to bring Your saving Gospel to the unchurched and instill in us a desire to welcome everyone to Walk the Way of GRACE. Amen.

AGENDA ITEM #7:

Congregations are invited to cast nominations for **President** and **First Vice-President** and **Regional Vice-President** of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. The **President** and **First Vice-President** must be rostered ministers of religion - ordained of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod and members of voting member congregations thereof (so must **Regional Vice-Presidents**). President and First Vice-President are full-time executive positions. Both serve on the Board of the Directors of the Synod, the President is voting and the First Vice-President is non-voting.

The president, as the chief ecclesiastical officer of the Synod, supervises the doctrine taught and practiced in the Synod it has ecclesiastical supervision of all officers and agencies of the Synod, its districts and their presidents as chief ecumenical officer, he represents the Synod in contacts with partner churches and other church bodies. He exercises administrative oversight to see that officers, executives, and agencies act in accordance with the constitution, bylaws and resolutions of the Synod and performs other ecclesiastical and administrative responsibilities and duties to the conventions, districts, district presidents, commissions, boards, agencies, entities, offices, and officers of the Synod.

The first vice president, an elected advisor and assistant to the president, assist the president in discharging his responsibilities and represents him. He assumes the presidency if the office is vacated and performs the president's duties in a time of temporary incapacity. He also chairs colloquy Committees for pastoral and commissioned ministry and performs other duties as assigned.

The five regional vice presidents fulfill duties as assigned on a part time basis and stand, as ordered by the convention, in line of succession to the first vice presidency and presidency of the Synod. Grace Lutheran Church is eligible to nominate for the southeastern district regional vice president. To be eligible the nominee must reside in this region as of February 28, 2023 and throughout his time of service.

Voters' Meeting Minutes

Grace Lutheran Church

May 15, 2022

President, Chris Wethman, called the meeting to order and Pastor Brooks offered an opening prayer.

There were two proxies. Walt and Dede Crosmer gave their proxy to Scott Gesell. Motion made, seconded and approved to accept the proxies.

There were no new or reinstated voters at this meeting.

Approval of Previous Minutes of Voters' Assembly. Motion made and seconded to approve the Minutes of November 14th. Suggestion was made to add last name of President. Motions made and seconded to approve minutes with the addition of last name of president. Motion carried.

Pastor's Comments:

- Good to see everyone in person.
- Ministry has continued through COVID.
- Thanks to Barbara, Barb, Donna, Scott, Joe and Chris for support
- Recalled January 2020 meeting in the Wittenberg Room when hopeful conversations about Grace's future were held

Pastor gave report on recent SED Convention and the presentation by former District President Diefenthaler. His comments were in connection to whereabouts of families on Sundays. He witnessed families and children actively in hotels eating breakfast before they participated in sports which are scheduled on Sundays.

Pastor spoke about our mission field and how each of us has a role to fill. Focus should be on neighbors' needs and building community.

Statistical reports. Motion made (Donna Gesell) and seconded (Scott Gesell) to approve the Statistical Reports as submitted.

Ministry Reports. Motion made, seconded and approved to accept Ministry Reports. Question raised about Finances. Donna responded to question. Motion made seconded and approved to accept reports as submitted.

Organizing for Mission and Giftedness. Discussion about election of officers. Chris Wethman explained how we arrived at this moment with no slate of candidates. Handout distributed to help understand.

Sharon Brooks spoke about reaching out and not staying in the past. All have a role to play in the church. Walk the Way of GRACE T-Shirts were distributed.

No other new business to cover.

Motion made, seconded and carried to adjourn.

Joe Wethman,
Acting Secretary

Voter's Meeting Minutes June 26, 2022

Meeting Started at 12:41pm, Pastor opened the meeting with prayer.

Proxies were read by Christine. Gary Stuhlmiller motioned to approve the proxies. Tom McGill seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Christine presented the new voters: Dan Thomas and Marie Hammond. Pastor motioned to approve the new voters. Geoff Heintzleman seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Votes were counted to verify there was a quorum.

The new Constitution and Bylaws were presented. Geoff Heintzleman presented a graph illustrating the proposed structure. Questions should be directed to Pastor, Geoff or Chris.

Geoff made a motion to move the meeting to July 10, 2022, to discuss the final Constitution and Bylaws. Tom McGill seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Gary Stuhlmiller motioned to adjourn the meeting. Bev Hudgins seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Submitted by: *Becky Thomas, Secretary*

Voter's Meeting Minutes July 10, 2022

Meeting Started at 12:40pm, Pastor Brooks opened the meeting with prayer.

Proxies were read by Barbara Stiles. Twelve proxies were received, and Diane Pearson reinstated her voting status. There were no new voters. Gary Stuhlmiller motioned to approve the proxies. Dave Pittman seconded the motion. All were in favor.

A quorum was confirmed with 27 voters present in-person and 12 proxies.

The final Constitution and Bylaws post meeting 1 (June 26, 2022) were presented and discussed. A discussion regarding membership termination was held. After some discussion Dave Pittman called the question.

RESOLVED, to approve the Constitution and Bylaws as presented at the July 10, 2022, meeting; after amending the paragraph (*printed in red*) that had been added after the June 26th Voters' Meeting. It was noted that this paragraph was already listed in the Constitution, under Section ????. Gary Stuhlmiller made the motion; Tom McGill seconded. All were in favor.

RESOLVED, to recommend the Draft Constitution and Bylaws be sent to the Southeastern District for their review. Elmo Walston made the motion; Geoff Heintzleman seconded. A vote was taken by paper ballot, 33 voted to recommend, 1 opposed, Motion passed.

Gary Stuhlmiller motioned to adjourn the meeting. Tom McGill seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted
Barbara Stiles, acting Secretary

Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church

Statistical Report – May 15, 2022, through November 15, 2022

	Baptized	Confirmed
As of May 15, 2022	333	269
Deaths	-2	-2
Transfer to LCMS	-2	-1
Released to Other Churches	-1	- 1
Baptism	+1	N/A
Members Received by Transfer from LCMS Church	-	-
Members Received by Transfer from Other Lutheran Church	+2	+2
Members Received via New Member Instruction (Affirmation)	-	-
Members Received by Transfer from Non-Lutheran Church	-	-
Communicant Members Received (Jr. Confirmation)	-	+1
Self-Exclusion	-4	-2
Total Membership as of 11/15/2022	327	266
DEATHS:		
Mary Elizabeth (Molly) Eldridge	June 24, 2022	
Doris Rogers Schomberg	October 28, 2022	
BAPTISMS:		
Carey Lynn Kolba	May 15, 2022	
JR. CONFIRMATION:		
Emerie Aline Glifort	June 5, 2022	

MEMBERS TRANSFERRED TO LCMS:	
Raymond and Elijah Hecht	Transferred to Redeemer Lutheran Church (LCMS), Burlington, NC, August 16, 2022
MEMBERS RELEASED TO OTHER CHURCHES:	
Kay Wardell	Christus Victor Lutheran Church, ELCA 1615 E. NC Hwy. 54, Durham, NC, October 30, 2022
Mike Simosky, Suzanne Wardell, Caitlyn Simosky, Whitney Simosky	Released by self-exclusion, October 30, 2022
MEMBERS RECEIVED FROM OTHER LUTHERAN CHURCH (ELCA):	
Jan and Dean Kolba	Received from Trinity Lutheran Church (ELCA), Chelmsford, MA

Grace Lutheran Church Congregation President's Report to Voters - December 4, 2022

- In the months following the last regularly scheduled voters' meeting, a considerable amount of time was spent developing, revising, and editing new governance documents (Constitution & Bylaws). These documents ultimately were approved by the Southeastern District of The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod's Board of Directors.
- The PMC officially disbanded in July and all Lay Ministers were sent a letter thanking them for their service and inviting them to participate in the new structure.
- The three boards of the new structure have begun their work:
 - Resource Board led by Donna Gesell.
 - Board Members:
 - Mike Hunike, Joe Milko, Scott Gesell, Joe Wethman - Properties
 - Sue Heintzelman and Kathy Peterson - Office
 - Becky Thomas, Dave Pittman and Donna Gesell - Finance
 - Servant Board led by Geoff Heintzelman and Dwight Knoll.
 - Discipleship Board led by Pastor Brooks.
 - Board Members:
 - Gary Stuhlmiller, Bev Hudgins, Sharon Brooks
- The Grace Advisory Board will meet in January after the election of officers. At that time they will establish their meeting dates for the remainder of 2023.
- Participated in Capital Campaign planning and helped craft campaign materials.
- Created Voter Commitment Card as per bylaws.
- Attend weekly staff meetings.
- Some messages of thanks are due:
 - Sally Sump for painting Fellowship Hall
 - Judy Barnes for digitizing records (minutes, agendas) to ensure their survival
 - Barb Tippin for all of her help and assistance (with a smile, too)
 - Donna Gesell, Kathy Peterson, Dede Crosmer for helping to clean and organize the rooms downstairs post-Miss Mollie's
 - Kathy Peterson for taking over the participant scheduling
- Proofreading/editing weekly worship folder and e-news
- Updates to website

Serving Him,
Chris Wethman

Grace Lutheran Church, Durham, NC
Officer Elections
December 4, 2022

The following candidates have accepted nominations and will serve in the following roles upon election by the Voters' Assembly.

President Chris Wethman

Vice President.....Joe Milko

Secretary Dede Crosmer**

Treasurer Donna Gesell**

Congregational Representative.....Judy Barnes

** Term expires May of 2023 to coincide with ByLaw 7.2.2 which indicates that elections for Treasurer and Secretary are to be held in odd-numbered years. Elections for the remaining offices to be held in May of 2024.

Members shall serve no more than two (2) consecutive terms in a position without a break of at least 1 year. (ByLaw 7.2)

NARRATIVE MINISTRY SPENDING PLAN – 2023
GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH – DURHAM, NC

INTRODUCTION

Budgeting—planning our spending—is one of the more visible aspects of what we Christians call ministry. Our financial gifts, which are made possible by God, in turn make changed lives possible. This document tells you how we plan to prepare, encourage, and celebrate men and women who are Walking the Way of GRACE. Everything contained in this plan – from worship services, newsletters, and curriculum down to lighting, HVAC, and more – is given and intended by God that everyone may grow, rejoice, answer, care and embrace.

	Amount	% of Budget
<p>Grow With Jesus These funds will be used to purchase curriculum and/or provide material support to our ministries that encourage individual discipleship and growth in knowledge and skill. Continuing education for staff and Embrace Grace Materials are also included in this area. In addition, this amount includes funds for Grace 4Kids.</p>	\$ 7,391.00	18.44%
<p>Rejoice in God These funds will be used to support our worship life, including altar supplies, choir and music, livestreaming, and related activities.</p>	\$ 8,100.00	20.21%
<p>FOR 2023 <i>This area saw cost savings in copyright/licensing and related worship resourcing, as well as a lower anticipated expense for instrument maintenance.</i></p>		
<p>Answer with Hope These funds are intended to help members share Good News with others; included in this area are marketing and advertising, new member welcome and our online presence.</p>	\$ 3,936.00	9.82%
<p>FOR 2023 <i>New for 2023 is developing a marketing/advertising presence and improving our online activities.</i></p>		
<p>Care for Neighbors These funds address the variety of ways we minister to others both inside our parish and out in the world. Included are Stephen Ministry, Duke Lutherans, GriefShare and several other ministries of care programs.</p>	\$ 3,350.00	8.86%
<p>FOR 2023 <i>This total has decreased from 2022 as several line items have been assumed in other planning areas.</i></p>		
<p>Embrace Community These funds are intended to support and strengthen our community relationships. Included are our gifts to the Southeastern District and fellowship/relational programs.</p>	\$ 17,300.00	43.17%

Our Mission Statement: We welcome everyone to walk the way of GRACE: Grow with Jesus, Rejoice in God, Answer with hope, Care for the neighbor and Embrace community.

NARRATIVE MINISTRY SPENDING PLAN – 2023
GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH – DURHAM, NC

FOR 2023 <i>This new category includes our gifts to the District (amount unchanged for 2023) and our plans for facilitate relationship building and small group fellowship/social life.</i>		
Administration This area covers office expenses, equipment, and service contracts in support of the administrative affairs of the congregation.	\$49,151.00	14.9%
FOR 2023 <i>Funds have been added to the computer equipment area to replace computers that are close to 10 years old. Telephone expense has decreased due to a change in provider. Casualty insurance was increased minimally. The spending plan includes funds for the Archives Room as the process of digitizing records (minutes, agendas, etc.) continues. It also includes the necessary fees for Zoom meetings and the platform we use for the e-news, Constant Contact.</i>		
Staff Expense This area funds and supports our staff.	\$ 241,016.05	73.06%
FOR 2023 <i>God has gifted us with many talented professionals who serve with us and lead us in ministry. We joyfully give salaries and benefits to Pastor Brooks, Chase Benefiel and Barbara Tippin. Staff salaries increased year over year due to changes in job duties and cost of living adjustments. Employee expenses in the areas of Social Security, Medicare, Retirement, Disability and Health Insurance all experienced increases. As God calls us to be good citizens of our country, so we pay employment and related taxes to the government.</i>		
Properties This funding area is concerned with the maintenance and improvement of our physical plant.	\$39,738.00	12.27%
TOTAL SPENDING PLAN FOR MINISTRY 2023	\$369,982.05	

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FUNDING THE MINISTRY FOR 2023

FUNDING THE MINISTRY FOR 2023			
OPERATIONAL SPENDING PLAN			
		Administration	\$49,151.00
		Staff Expense	\$241,016.05
		Properties	\$39,738.00
		Total	\$329,905.05
MISSION SPENDING PLAN			
		Grow with Jesus	\$7,391.00
		Rejoice in God	\$8,100.00
		Answer with Hope	\$3,936.00
		Care for Neighbors	\$3,350.00
		Embrace Community	\$17,300.00
		Total	\$40,077.00
		SPENDING PLAN GRAND TOTAL	\$369,982.05

Operational Spending Plan			
Item	2022 Budget	9 mo. Expenses	2023 Estimate
Administration			
Archives	\$100.00	\$0.00	\$100.00
Computer Equipment/Service Contracts	\$1,000.00	\$1,500.33	\$1,500.00
Software Support/Training	\$1,000.00	\$891.89	\$1,400.00
Equipment Lease/overage	\$8,600.00	\$7,193.42	\$9,600.00
Office Supplies	\$2,400.00	\$1,482.62	\$2,100.00
Website Hosting	\$400.00	\$22.17	\$273.00
Grace Advisory Board/Leadership	\$1,000.00	\$382.48	\$600.00
Internet/telephone	\$5,200.00	\$3,791.96	\$4,400.00
Fire/Casualty Insurance	\$10,540.00	\$9,058.16	\$11,150.00
Worker's Comp Insurance	\$1,370.00	\$1,007.25	\$738.00
Grace House Mortgage	\$12,600.00	\$9,440.64	\$12,600.00
Miscellaneous	\$1,000.00	\$472.57	\$1,000.00
Salary Expense	\$1,900.00	\$1,313.23	\$1,750.00
Security/Safety	\$300.00	\$60.00	\$200.00
Postage	\$1,600.00	\$725.91	\$1,200.00
Communication	\$1,578.00	\$1,093.44	\$540.00
Total	\$50,588.00	\$38,436.07	\$49,151.00

Item	2022 Budget	9 mo. Expenses	2023 Estimate
Staff Expense			
Salaries	\$141,391.08	\$104,836.94	\$150,781.86
Housing Pastor	\$20,400.00	\$15,300.00	\$20,400.00
Employer SS	\$4,790.00	\$3,524.98	\$4,300.00
Employer MC	\$1,120.00	\$826.67	\$990.00
Health Insurance	\$43,859.28	\$32,894.46	\$46,885.56
Retirement	\$9,398.04	\$8,323.56	\$10,325.64
Disability	\$2,184.84	\$1,638.63	\$2,332.99
Sabbatical	\$5,000.00	\$0.00	\$5,000.00
Total	\$228,143.24	\$167,345.24	\$241,016.05
Properties/Facilities			
Church Maintenance			
Cleaning Service	\$8,500.00	\$7,040.00	\$8,450.00
Exterminator	\$340.00	\$252.00	\$340.00
Facility Supplies	\$1,800.00	\$752.63	\$1,400.00
Kitchen Supplies	\$600.00	\$147.94	\$400.00
Main/Service	\$10,000.00	\$17,380.61	\$10,000.00
A/C Contract	\$1,000.00	\$668.75	\$800.00
Total	\$22,240.00	\$26,241.93	\$21,390.00
Church Utilities			
Electric	\$10,500.00	\$7,254.00	\$10,000.00
Gas	\$2,400.00	\$1,612.41	\$2,400.00
Water/Sewer	\$2,400.00	\$1,526.69	\$2,200.00
Total	\$15,300.00	\$10,393.10	\$14,600.00
Grace House Maintenance			
Exterminator	\$340.00	\$228.00	\$348.00
Main/Service	\$3,500.00	\$1,279.00	\$1,000.00
Total	\$3,840.00	\$1,507.00	\$1,348.00
Grace House Utilities			
Electric	\$1,000.00	\$742.05	\$1,000.00
Gas	\$1,100.00	\$706.09	\$1,000.00
Water/Sewer	\$400.00	\$299.78	\$400.00
Total	\$2,500.00	\$1,747.92	\$2,400.00
TOTAL OPERATIONS SPENDING PLAN	\$322,611.24	\$245,671.26	\$329,905.05

Item	2022 Budget	9 mo. Expenses	2023 Estimate
Mission Spending Plan			
Grow with Jesus			
Educational Materials	\$1,500.00	\$1,175.96	\$1,600.00
Confirmation	\$600.00	\$0.00	\$300.00
Portals of Prayer	\$300.00	\$159.75	\$391.00
Library (Resource Center)	\$1,000.00	\$160.89	\$200.00
Teen Activities	\$400.00	\$140.00	\$1,200.00
Embrace Grace Materials	\$500.00	\$236.55	\$0.00
Pastor Cont. Ed	\$800.00		\$800.00
Pastor Books	\$500.00	\$135.38	\$500.00
Pastor Prof. Expense	\$450.00	\$0.00	\$450.00
Pastor Conferences	\$750.00	\$212.00	\$750.00
Stewardship	\$300.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
PALS Group Support			\$1,200.00
Total	\$7,100.00	\$2,220.53	\$7,391.00
Rejoice in God			
Altar Guild	\$900.00	\$575.84	\$900.00
Copyright License	\$1,000.00	\$705.00	\$800.00
General Worship	\$200.00	\$19.08	\$200.00
Guest Musicians	\$1,500.00	\$900.00	\$1,500.00
Tuning/Repair	\$1,900.00	\$0.00	\$1,500.00
Music	\$500.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Worship Resources	\$1,200.00	\$0.00	\$400.00
Supply Pastor	\$1,200.00	\$1,200.00	\$1,600.00
Livestream Equipment	\$2,000.00	\$0.00	\$1,000.00
Flowers/Plants	\$0.00	\$162.62	\$200.00
Total	\$10,400.00	\$3,562.54	\$8,100.00
Answer with Hope			
Marketing			\$2,400.00
T-shirts		\$600.00	\$300.00
Website			\$0.00
Visitor Welcome	\$150.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
GLC App	\$1,200.00	\$895.00	\$1,236.00
Total	\$1,350.00	\$1,495.00	\$3,936.00
Item	2022 Budget	9 mo. Expenses	2023 Estimate

Care for Neighbors			
Stephen Ministry Books	\$275.00	\$0.00	\$275.00
Stephen Ministry Training	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Care of Baptized Children	\$120.00	\$82.39	\$125.00
Lay Cont. Education	\$150.00	\$69.24	\$150.00
Grief Books/Postage	\$350.00	\$209.04	\$350.00
Grief Dues	\$300.00	\$300.00	\$300.00
Compassion Ministry - Christmas/Easter	\$240.00	\$133.23	\$250.00
Care Packages	\$550.00	\$116.97	\$0.00
Prayer Shawl Postage	\$380.00	\$23.60	\$200.00
Urban Ministries	\$400.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Duke Lutherans	\$700.00	\$0.00	\$700.00
Youth Servant Event	\$1,000.00	\$417.82	\$0.00
LWML	\$500.00	\$533.70	\$500.00
Grace House	\$500.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
New Ministry	\$400.00	\$916.09	\$500.00
Total	\$5,865.00	\$2,802.08	\$3,350.00
Embrace Community			
Southeastern District (SED)	\$15,000.00	\$11,250.00	\$15,000.00
Fellowship Food	\$400.00	\$399.60	\$800.00
Fellowship Coffee	\$100.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Fellowship Misc.	\$100.00	\$1,074.50	\$1,500.00
Total	\$15,600.00	\$12,724.10	\$17,300.00
TOTAL MISSION SPENDING PLAN	\$40,315.00	\$38,404.25	\$40,077.00