

APPENDICES TO 2015 VISION TEAM REPORT

August 2015

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APPENDIX 1: THE VISION PLANNING PROCESS

The Vision Process: An Overview

The beginning of the Vision Process really goes back to February 19, 2011, to a workshop held at Grace with the theme of “Catch the Spirit-Building for Tomorrow.” Pastor John Weber of Atlanta led 37 folks in a highly stimulating and thought-provoking workshop. First, Pastor Weber said the key word is GO! (As in GO and make disciples; GO down from the Transfiguration Mount, etc.). Our motivation must be to share the good news of Jesus and growth will take care of itself. Outreach efforts must be motivated by love and concern for the folks who may come visit, not by trying to get more "giving units" or more volunteers to do "jobs" in the church. If we have the latter motivations, folks will not stay around.

The Congregation Council formed the Vision Team after the approval of a Mission Statement for the Vision Team in February 2012. The vision process plan was presented as having five basic objectives to be discerned by and for the congregation of Grace Church.

1. Understand the Purpose of Our Church (Who we are, why we are here, and what this means)
2. Determine our Values as a congregation
3. Describe God’s Vision for us by the Year 2016 (a target date which is largely symbolic) as discerned by our members
4. Plot a Strategy for becoming that Church (purposeful and incremental steps representing outcomes of the Visioning Process)
5. Develop a Congregational Review and Update Process to track these steps and ensure that they are happening, or if not what adaptation is to take place.

The Vision Takes Shape

The Vision Team developed a plan in 2013 to solicit input from the congregation with surveys, questionnaires and a series of meetings, or gatherings, that were directed toward specific topics for discussion. Areas of strength of the Congregation were determined, as well as areas of needed improvement. From conversations with various community leaders, possible new ministries were identified, also considering the history of Grace and the talents, values, and desires of the Congregation. Additionally, based on the surveys, several areas of needed improvement were also identified. Considerable effort was expended on soliciting input toward crafting a “Dream Vision,” or a vision statement of the church of the future.

Using congregational input, the Vision Team drafted provisional goals in three categories: Near Term, Five Year, and 2030 Goals. These were subdivided by (1) Areas of Strength, (2) Areas of Needed Improvement and (3) New or Enhanced Ministries.

The Congregation was presented with possible new ministries and those present at the May 2013 gathering indicated ministries on which they would commit to work. The results of this selection process are summarized below:

DREAM DESCRIPTION FOR GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

May 15, 2013

Grace Lutheran: A Christian church known for proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ to a diverse community for the purposes of making disciples, loving our neighbors as ourselves, with vibrant ministries meeting existing and emerging needs.

Our Goal Development

The overall work of the Vision Team in developing the goals consisted of the following activities.

Planning

The visioning process was defined in terms of specific steps and time frames for completion. The emphasis in scheduling was to enable participation of as many members as possible.

Communications

Preparation of members for participation was a key activity of the Vision Team throughout the process. Email was used effectively to disseminate information, along with Lutheran Light and a new email bulletin called *Grace Connection*. Major events were publicized in the Sunday bulletins. Verbal reminders were announced ahead of the events at all services.

A survey tool called *SurveyMonkey* was used to send out survey questions and tabulate the results.

Facilitators and recorders were identified and oriented for small group assemblies using the model techniques from *Talking Together as Christians About Tough Social Issues* and the nominal group technique.

Teams were established to explore community demographics, trends, and ministry outreach opportunities in Oak Ridge, Clinton/N. Anderson County, Kingston/Rockwood/Harriman, Wartburg, and Loudon/Lenoir City.

It was a goal to engage as many members as possible in multiple ways to a sense of ownership, challenge, and commitment to our purpose, values, vision, and vital outcomes.

Assessment

The team organized Congregational Surveys to get input from members of the congregation on history, expectations, norms and values. History was explored to evaluate the past and to determine strengths and weaknesses based on how the church had responded to various challenges during its lifetime. A series of questionnaires asked members pertinent questions about attitudes, norms and values related to the church experience. A Congregational Health Inventory was developed using a model from Oswald and Friedrich's book, *Discerning Your Congregation's Future*. Information was sought via interviews or questionnaires from various community organizations, to determine the needs of people in Oak Ridge and surrounding communities.

Gatherings

Gatherings of the congregation were held to communicate survey information and for critical interactive discussions. These were scheduled as follows with the topics listed.

- January 19, 20, 23 Our History: What Can We Learn for the Future?
- February 16, 17, 20 Our Norms and Values: What Underlies our Choices?
- March 9, 10, 13 Our Present: Our Community
- April 13, 14, 17 Our Future: Grace in 2030
- May 4, 5, 8 Our Path Forward: How We'll Get There

The gatherings were instrumental in formulating the strategic goals discussed in the following pages.

Workshop

On Saturday, July 27, 2013 a workshop was held on long-range visioning, planning and revitalization through effective outreach, led by Rebecca Kolowe' of the Southeastern Synod. She reminded us that the first of the three great conversations for a vision process is the one with God, supporting it with prayer, individually, in groups, and in worship to try to discern what God is calling Grace Lutheran Church to be. She emphasized that drawing people in to be part of a congregation is best done by developing relationships rather than "hit and run" evangelism.

Prayer Sessions

Members of the congregation were asked to pray for God's guidance in determining the future of Grace.

Consensus

The Congregation Council presented the Vision to the congregation in interactive sessions, and members were asked to vote on the provisional goals. Only those accepted by a majority of members were included in the strategic plan.

Vision for Tomorrow Team Role

The Vision Team is responsible for preparing a written statement of Purpose, Values, Vision, Strategy, and Expected Vision Outcomes based upon the consensus of the participants in the gatherings. This document, once approved by Council and the congregation, will be published as an ongoing guide and strategic plan. It will be subject to periodic review as a "living document."

APPENDIX 2: WHY THE FIVE PRACTICES?

Note: The following was written by Pastor Damos, taken from Lutheran Light, September, 2014.)

He has given each one of us a special gift through the generosity of Christ. Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ. This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ.

Ephesians 4:3,11-13

God has given each one of us a special gift for ministry. Through the generosity of Holy Spirit, God equips us to do his ministry and build up the church, the body of Christ. Robert Schnase, Bishop of the Missouri Conference of the United Methodist Church, has authored the book *Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations*. Our council is using Schnase's book to stimulate discussion in the congregation so that we may further expand our envisioning process for Grace.

The five practices: Radical Hospitality, Passionate Worship, Intentional Faith Development, Risk-Taking Mission and Service, and Extravagant Generosity assist congregations to make disciples who "measure up to the full and complete standard of Christ."

These words (Five Practices) capture the core process by which God uses congregations to make disciples – congregations offer the gracious invitation, welcome, and hospitality of Christ so that people experience a sense of belonging; God shapes souls and changes minds through worship, creating a desire to grow closer to Christ; God's spirit nurtures people and matures faith through learning in community; with increased spiritual maturity, people discern God's call to help others through mission and service; and God inspires people to give generously of themselves so that others can receive the grace they have known."

Bishop Schnase goes on to say: "These fundamental practices are so critical to a congregation's mission that failure to perform them in an exemplary way results in a congregational deterioration and decline.... The most visible way God knits people together into community to fulfill the mission of Christ is through congregations, and these five practices give congregations a common language."

- Radical Hospitality
- Passionate Worship
- Intentional Faith Development
- Risk-Taking Mission and Service
- Extravagant Generosity

These practices are intentional actions to equip all of us to carry out the mission of the Church. The work of the church is putting discipleship into daily practice. Therefore, the ministry of the congregation is upon the faith formation of the individual in each of the five practices. "These practices stir the church to unexpected renewal and expanded vision."

Bishop Schnase concludes his book with several conversational questions. One is: “How would your church look if your congregation committed to performing these five practices with excellence?” (And I would add *passion*.) Good question; and that is the reason we are talking about five practices of fruitful congregations. As people of faith, we are daily learning how to practice our discipleship that strengthens, renews, and invigorates the congregation and its ministries. As the five practices becomes more a way of living, then “we will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God’s Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ.”

Note: For a summary of the “Five Practices” in a chart format, see the following page.



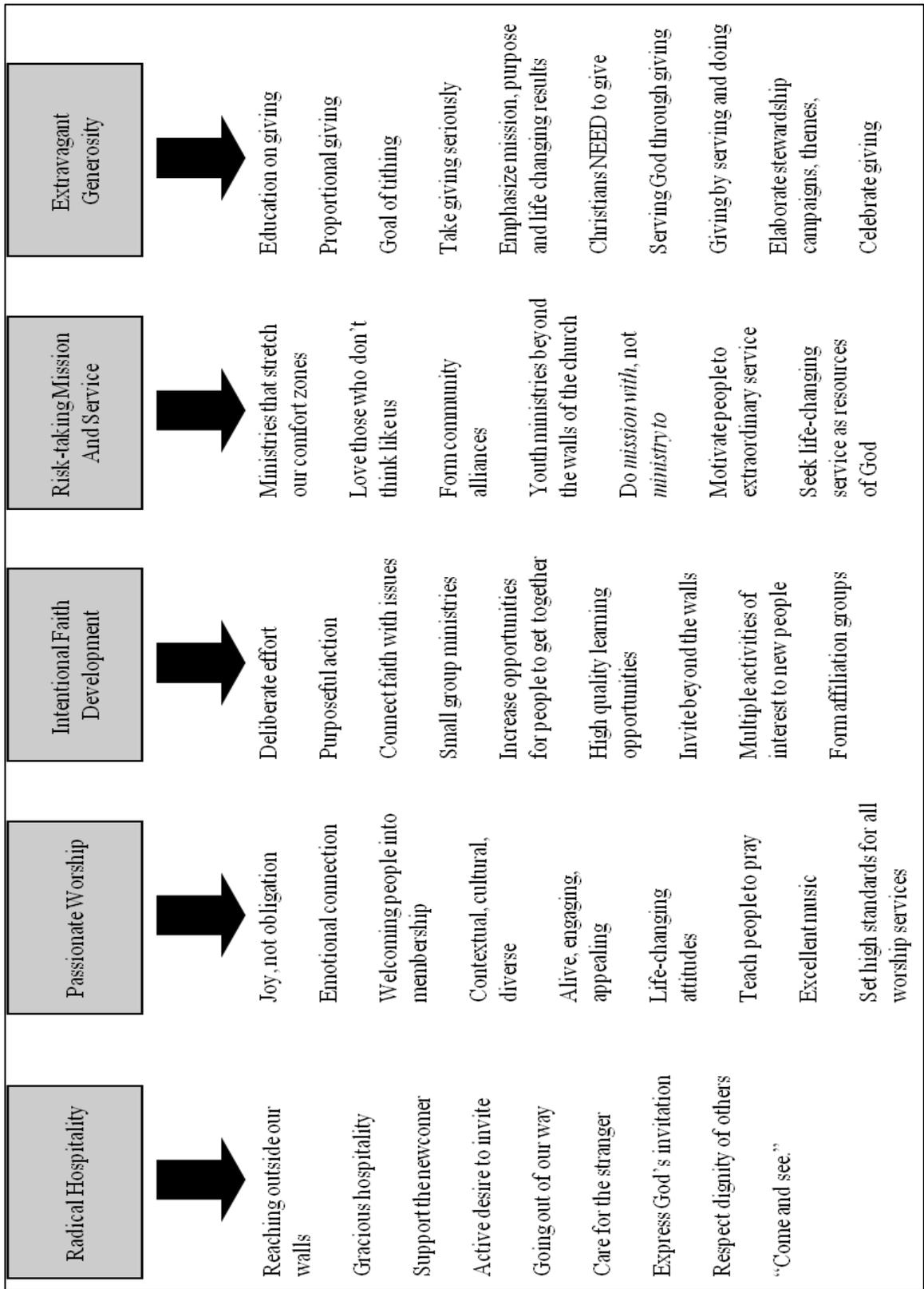
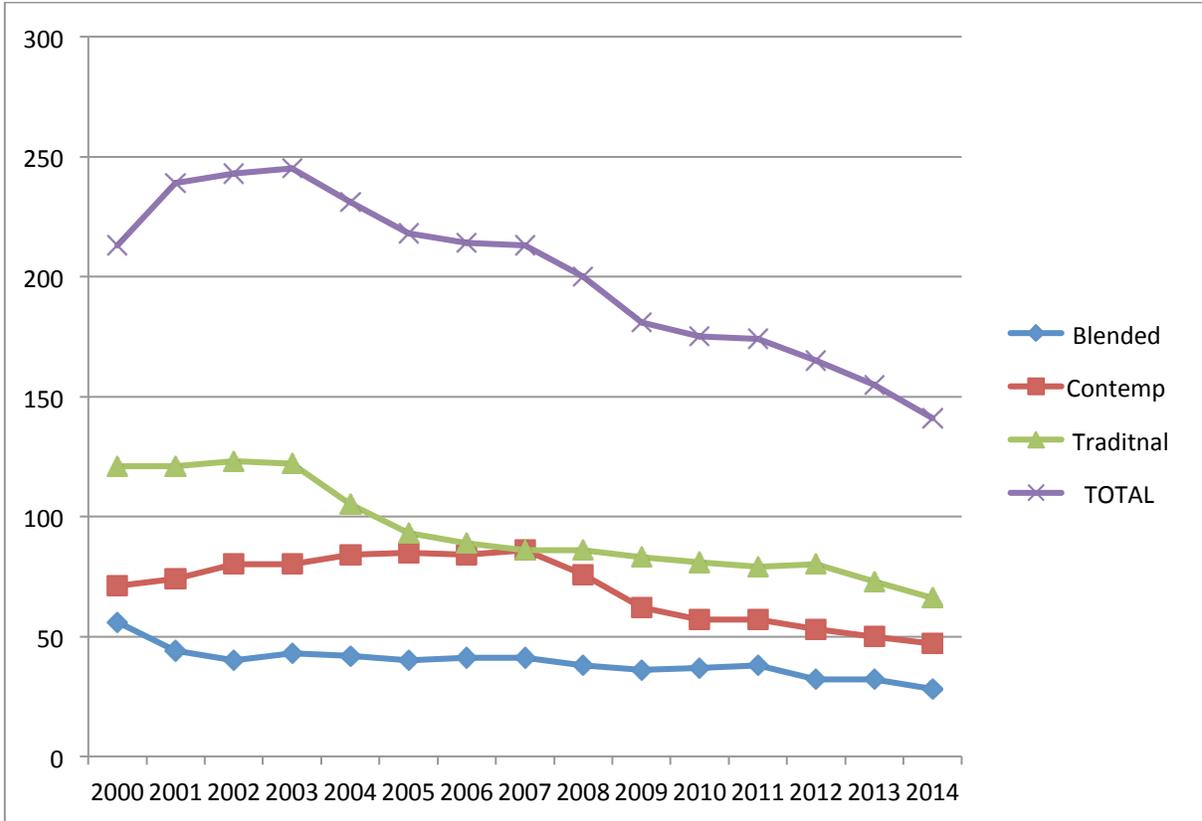


Figure 1. Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations Summary Chart

APPENDIX 3: HISTORICAL ATTENDANCE DATA FOR GRACE



YEARS

APPENDIX 4. VISION GATHERINGS: HISTORY SUMMARY

Saturday 1/19/2013 Small Groups

Group 1

Q1) What is surprising about history?

- So much stuff!
- Lack of individual memory
- Social/community service
- Resettlement of families
- Amount of talent and willingness to share
- Artistry produced by members

Q2) What strengths does Grace have?

- Diversity
- Skills/talents/gifts
- Music/Arts
- Acceptance of new individuals
- Community service
- ~Oak Ridge~
- Determination

Q3) Areas needing improvement?

- Growth/evangelism
- Area/community identification
- Youth participation
- Marketing

Q4) How has Grace dealt with challenges, times of difficulty?

Group identified the following challenges but did not address how they were dealt with:

- Growth/evangelism
- Human sexuality issues
- Education - adult
- Facilities
- Financial resources
- GLC footprint/location
- Pastoral call periods

Group 2

Q1) What was surprising about history?

Diversity of stuff done
Length of ministries, programs
Grace is like a flower, new petals come out as some fall
A lot of volunteer effort--such a variety of gifts and talents

Q2) What strengths does Grace have?

Diverse gifts and talents
Concern for social ministry
Forgiveness, acceptance of people as they are
Willingness to try new things
Imagination, risk taking
Power of the Holy Spirit

Q3) Areas needing improvement?

Membership growth
Inviting people we don't know well
Evangelism
Attracting young families
Sunday School (with recognition of present effort to do this)
Getting new people involved
Retaining members

Q4) How has Grace dealt with challenges, times of difficulty?

Group identified the following challenges but did not address how they were dealt with:

1950-51 Layoffs, many left OR, time of turmoil
Staff changes in mid-2000's
Active youth program: 1980's-2000's
Three services
Sunday School scheduling relative to services (time for SS is too short)
Lack of fellowship time

Q5) How has Grace dealt with opportunities?

Group identified the following opportunities:

- Ministry to the Latino community
- Welcoming LGBT persons more openly
- Ministry to mentally ill
- Ethnic diversity

Saturday 1/19 Wrap-Up

Q1) What can we learn from how Grace has dealt with challenges/problems?

E.g., Weak Evangelism, low youth/young families, aging

Reaches out
Strong socially
Cares
Good music--likes
Many talents
Willing participants

Q2) What can we learn from how Grace has dealt with opportunities that can help us going into future?

Decentralized
Resilient
Attack some/missed others
Have shared/clear goal
Enthusiasm
Fulfillment/accomplishment
Together "Grace makes a world of difference"

Q3) What strengths can we build on?

Knowledge/community knowhow
Buy-in to goal
Willing to participate/persistence
Service leadership
Diversity of gifts and talents
Willingness to listen/acknowledge

Q4) What areas does Grace need to improve on?

Evangelism/retention
Question about what it means to be Lutheran?
Need deeper spiritual sharing/conversation; other things will take care of themselves if we focus on Jesus and what He did and does for us
Increase language of Christ in church/family activities
More small groups

Sunday 1/20 Small Groups

Group 1

Q1) What was surprising about history?

Seminary interns
Didn't cover a lot of history
Proud of outreach (serving ?) we do
Very adaptable
"Idea" people
Lot of things didn't last (e.g., dinner clubs, Bible studies)

Q2) What strengths does Grace have?

Giving--meeting needs
Action efforts
Tasks -- diverse
Professional, creative people--gifts and talents (e.g., Art Festivals)
Lot of out of town service (e.g., mission trips)
Welcoming
Music

Q3) Areas needing improvement?

Money
Children's ministries
Space problems
Physical plant problems
Thought and built too small in the past
Property turned down (lot immediately west) and sold in past = lack of foresight
Plant layoffs--too dependent on one company

Q4) How has Grace dealt with challenges, times of difficulty?

Group identified the following challenges but did not address how they were dealt with:

Membership decline
Activities
Property
Empty lot
Age/diversity needed (need younger families)
Advertising and marketing
Few people --> do a lot of the work (viable workforce shrinking)

Q5) How has Grace dealt with opportunities?

Group identified the following opportunities:

Large Spanish population
Property next door bought when available (where Contact house is) and one on Manhattan
Reaching out to Woodland neighborhood
Children's ministries
Reaching out in our own neighborhoods (where members live)
We think "Oak Ridge" too much

Group 2

Q1) What surprising about history?

Ray McCormick (lay person) a main mover for Lutheranism starting
Each decade ---- sense for people relating to community needs
Earlier years--lots of connection to other area Lutheran churches and more interaction--may

not be as good in today's environment
Joint reformation (services?)
Activities with Faith Lutheran
Sponsorship of Lutheran college choirs
Programs and groups come and go
Mission trips done frequently for awhile (Hugo, Albany GA, Louisiana, St. Pete)
People involvement; community outreach
Diversity in congregation; acceptance by congregation
Members that teach in ORICL
Knowledge and talents of members

Q2) What strengths does Grace have?

Longevity
Care for each other
Degree of services provided
Pull together for common cause
Willingness to talk and express their viewpoints
Commitment to Christ --begins first
Multiple worship services
lots of ministries
Financial resources
Consider change and adaptability

Q3) Areas needing improvement?

Sunday service structure
Building fellowship
Growth---families with children
declining membership/aging
Greater involvement by larger percent of congregation
Neighborhood church environment
Remodeling justification and buy-in by congregation
Staff restructuring
Pastoral calls created difficult times
Uncertainties--community; country' congregation
Changing community demographics
Risks

Q4) How has Grace dealt with challenges, times of difficulty?

Group identified the following challenges but did not address how they were dealt with:

3 services w/ Sunday School
Education program growth and structure (Faith/Farragut has all education programs on Wednesday evenings)
Marketing approach within community and beyond
More involvement by greater percent of congregation membership
GLC membership growth and establishing an "interest" in being part of GLC
Leadership development--focus on young adults

Q5) [Appears group did not get this far]

Sunday 1/20 Wrap-up

Q1) What can we learn from how Grace has dealt with challenges/problems?

Go to God for help

Led by our pastors

Makes us more willing to help--may take longer but work together to come up with something good

When we were down in early 70's, did new programs (e.g. coffee hour, Moua's resettlement)

Got congregational buy-in

Led to new facility

Q2) What can we learn from how Grace has dealt with opportunities that can help us going into future?

Pray first--think bigger

It's been a mixed bag - missed some

We're not as welcoming as we should be

Opportunities are not always clear

Congregation comes together and give when we define opportunity that has a clear need

We can learn that we need to ask and not give up

Q3) What strengths can we build on?

Very generous and giving

Very talented and committed

Openness to diversity

Energy

Willingness to be open to seeking diversity

Willingness to change

Willingness to try new things

Q4) What areas do we need to improve on?

Recognize members

Evangelism

Children's ministry

Adult education

"How to" welcome

"How to" educate

"Equipping the saints"

Answer to sentence: Grace is a church that . . .

reaches out with one hand and pushes away socially with the other

can renew itself

church with longevity

church that cares and serves community

church that changes
church that has done a lot of things--events, activities

Wednesday, Jan. 23

[We did not separate into separate groups so didn't do separate wrap-up session]

1) Looking at our history timeline, what were you most surprised at?

Variety is mindboggling
How much was done with so little--the creativity
Outreach-- very generous service to the community
Blessed with Pastors

2) What strengths does Grace have that have been present through much or all of our history?

Leadership when planning sabbatical
Strong persistent people who had ideas
Worker bees who shared gifts
Strong volunteer effort
Welcome all who come
Caring, giving spirit

3) What were the major challenges or difficult times you identified?

Funding
Budgets done with "hope and prayer"
Oak Ridge population shifts
Social issues such as ELCA stand on sexuality

What have we learned from how Grace has dealt with challenges?

Need to be open to learning what other congregations are doing to get members
How do we compromise on issue of fewer services?
People would like to combine more services (have just one like on Friendship Sunday); it
would strengthen community feeling
Sunday School nearly eliminated by present schedule
Transportation
Congregation comes together during challenges

4) What areas do we need to improve?

Youth programs; more activity
More formal way of visiting elderly/home bound/disabled
Canvassing -- equipping the saints for evangelism

5) What opportunities has Grace had? How reacted to them? Have we missed out on some?

Thrivent Grant for Food Pantry -- overwhelming response

Refugee resettlement -- huge response
Family ministry -- missed opportunities
Reaching out outside Lutherans for members
Tongue in cheek: find jobs and market them to get Lutherans in frozen North to move here

Answer to sentence: Grace is a church that . . .

survives and helps others survive
is stagnant
welcomes
is ever changing
is gospel preaching church



APPENDIX 5: SUMMARIES OF SUNDAY MORNING QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

Vision Question 1: What comes to mind when you think of Grace Lutheran Church?

The Church

A Christ Centered Church involved in the community
Community of believers
ELCA Congregation
Grace is not Lutheran (women pastors, homosexual pastors, no position on abortion, no position on the Bible *being* God's word)
Dedicated Christian people
Lutherans
Christians – disciples of Jesus
Members of Grace
True Christianity
Caring people of God

Atmosphere

A church that reaches out to all
Full of Grace
Positive, upbeat atmosphere
Open
Sameness
Thought provoking
Shyness
Traditional
Too political
Secrecy
Divided
Conflict
Hidden

Place

A place of worship
A place to learn about God and scriptures
A place where I am renewed each week – a wonderful pause in a loud demanding world
Functional, expressive worship center
Where sinners come to celebrate being forgiven
A holy place

Refuge/Relationships

A safe place
Being greeted by friendly faces when arriving for services
"Home"
Lack friend opportunities, esp. for 9:30 group
My Home away from Home!
People – too many unknown
Place of refuge and contemplation
Place to be with friends
Our family and friends

God/The Word

The love of God and each other
Lack of adult education opportunities
We have gotten too lazy to learn and study the Word
Communion – multiple definitions

History/Memories

History, tradition, continuity, yet progressive
The elders and early leaders whose faith built this church and served as my mentor. I never enter without remembering and thanking them.
Tradition, rules, structure

Ministries/Ministering to Members

Core of terrific workers for the church
Good support for each other in sickness or times of trouble (food, prayer, etc)
Special concerns for ill, home bound, grieving, etc
Offer groups of interest

Ministries/Ministering to Community

Great social ministries (Free Market, Food Pantry, Food Baskets, etc)
Strong and meaningful community presence (food pantry, angel tree, etc)
Service/serving the community
Art – miss the Religious Art Shows
Help those in need

turn page over for more responses →

Vision Question 1 (Continued)

Volunteering

Opportunities – always room for volunteers and (sometimes) ideas
Volunteers for various needs
Would like less emphasis on volunteering – more on asking
Every member not serving

Discipleship

Care of children, programs, and Bible School
Children growing in faith
We do not adequately encourage and support our children

Leadership

Pastor Lorenz, Pastor Damos, Paula, Cathy, Susan
Devoted Pastor
Nobody knows where we are

Members

Welcoming congregation – warm
A generous group of Christians
Beautiful people
Friendliness, friendship
Gathering of God's people
Generosity
Giving
Prayer warriors
Talented, gifted members
Unappreciated (friendly, talented, generous, serving)

Values

Christian concerns for individuals and families in crisis and transition
Church that is open to innovation as long as Christ-centered
Compassion
Caring for others and strangers
Love
Forgiveness
Family – accepting and acceptance
Extremely generous congregation
Animals (i.e. not people)

Worship – Overall

Worshipping in many ways
Exceptionally good sermons, rich liturgy, wonderful music
Beautiful worship services
A good worship experience
Spiritual
Liturgy – too much
Lack willingness to change service times by members
Contemporary service that needs to be more contemporary
Too many services – lack of congregations (appearance of dying church for visitors)
The comfort and meaning of the morning liturgy

Worship – Music

Wonderful music
Music – some liked, some not
Great music and musicians
Lots of music opportunities
Small Choir
Need more member for Chancel Choir

Trends

Enormous changes
Older, an aging population
Decline
Too few members
Unsure how to increase membership in a local community with shifting demographics
Very few children and youth
Stodgy
Wishes – for change, for retention, for the future
The church has lost its way (so to speak)
Old – need a good reform

R E S P O N S E S

Vision Question 2: What are the purposes of Grace Church as you know and understand them?

Love God

To love God and the Lord and to help others do the same through our ministry
To witness to God's gracious outreach to all humankind to call forth faith in Christ
To worship the Lord with a joyous heart
Model Christianity
To show Jesus' love to all
To give thanks for our blessings
Love Everyone

Proclaim God and Gospel

Proclaim the word of God
Spread the word of God
To teach the word of God through Grace, Love, and Friends
Help increase understanding of the Bible and how it relates to us, in a modern society
Encourage individual and group understanding and expressions of faith and God
Observe the sacraments

Discipleship

Bring people to know Christ; disciple them
To affirm and build up the body of Christ, the community of believers
To help all members grow in their knowledge of the faith in God, and in each one's commitment to discipleship
Raise up our youth in a knowledge and love of Christ
To teach and lead by our example the new generation of our children
To reach out with God's message to any and all who have no church home, and to win back those who may have strayed from the faith
To establish an unshakable foundation in our faith in Jesus Christ
Carry the message in word and deed

Loving/Serving Congregation

To serve each other in the light of God's grace
Be a safe and welcoming place for all
Provide support to all in our congregation
A place where we can worship our God together
Provide worship experiences in different formats to make all feel welcome and nourished
To make worship important yet fun and exciting
Community of support for members
Discern God's will for the Church
To equip the people of God at Grace for serving (we are equipped by the Holy Spirit through reading God's word, Bible study, prayer, and worship)

Loving Our Neighbors

To send God's people out to serve others. To be the eyes, ears, hands and feet of Christ
Be good Christian neighbors
To provide opportunities to reach out to others in need
To minister to the sick, poor, emotionally needy
To serve the wider community and world as witness to God's grace in Jesus Christ
Show love through social ministries such as food pantry, blanket workshop, Pet Fest, etc.
To help our community

VISION QUESTION 2 (Continued)

Purpose and Quality of Life

To provide an inviting place of worship

Providing atmosphere for meaningful shared worship

To open our church doors so that everyone knows they are welcome here

Have we a purpose?

To fill the pews?

To serve the needs of people by means of individual commitment, and by use of monetary and material supplies to help people in need (can a goal be to move into "handup" in place of just "handout")

A community of individuals, frequently with a similar background and culture, who support each other through fellowship, communication and participation in common projects for both Grace community and the world community

Feed and enrich lives

Community leadership including calmness and understanding in this time of turmoil

Help with life and living (trauma, changes, uncertainty, unknown, illness)

Offer a variety of ways to worship and minister to the congregation

To help all people know the Church cares about them

To teach us to be better people

R E S P O N S E S

Vision Question 3A: How has Grace changed in the past 5 to 10 years?

Membership Trends

Socially and economically more diversified
Significant decline in membership and attendance
Too many losses, no replacements
Declining number of children and teenagers in attendance
Congregation increasingly older
Loss of elder members. So many of our Saints are in the Church triumphant
Have added some wonderful retired members

Worship

Decline of worship attendance
Services have become more divided
Poorly attended 8:30 service still creeping along.
9:30 service less contemporary, less experiential, less inviting
Smaller contemporary, music not as contemporary
Changed from Green Book of Worship to Red Book

Music

Shrinking choir size.
More music groups
Added Music Festival

Education

Lack of education
Loss of Sunday school and programs for young – not from lack of trying

Ministries

More outreach programs began
Added Free Market
Added prayer shawl ministry
There is quite a lot more emphasis on the social ministry to the community
There is quite a lot more emphasis on the social ministry to the community.
Strong volunteer group
Increased age of membership is really affecting our ability to offer some activities.
Decline in involvement in church and activities
Semi-demise of youth group

Facilities

Generous donation to allow remodeling of facilities
Improved facilities: Fellowship Hall and office area modernized, welcoming, and useable
The church entrance/canopy has been added
Added Memorial Garden at Grace - makes options available to our members.
Facility maintenance not done in a timely manner re: ceiling at altar and alarm system

Leadership

Paid more attention to child safety and protection - Education of volunteer workers
Loss of members due to serious disagreements in the church - problems handled poorly by Council.
Transitions in staff not handled smoothly – poor communications.
Staff changes: added full-time minister of music, went to part-time secretary and volunteers
Positives – Hired Paula Smith and Cathy Whitten
Tried director of family ministries, before that part timer youth leader
Greater willingness to try new things
Using new technology – data, communications, outreach
New Grace Connection email
Tried to increase attendance with little success
Change in membership and leadership
Rostered staff participate less in church fellowship activities

Finances

Budget problems - Loss of full-time office manager
Declining budget revenue is ignored and budgets reflect financial planning as though the church was still larger and financially thriving
Median income declining

turn page over for more responses →

APPENDIX 6: CONGRESSIONAL HEALTH INVENTORY

A. Questions:

Discerning Your Congregation's Future

Adapted from:
Strength at the Center
A Congregational Health Inventory

Roy M. Oswald, The Alban Institute

When is a congregation an effective Christian community? According to the early church, these elements need to be present: (1) proclamation, (2) community development, and (3) service. We at GLC term these (1) proclaiming the good news, (2) building congregational relationships, and (3) service and outreach. Several additional elements are also necessary.

Segment A

Proclaiming the Good News

Is this a "Good News" place?

- Message: A strong message of grace, faith, hope, and love is proclaimed in the congregation week after week.

1	2	3	4	5	6
Untrue					True
- Music: The Good News is put into fine musical form on a regular basis.

1	2	3	4	5	6
Untrue					True
- Worship: Worship opportunities continually uplift and move people to awe, surrender, acceptance of grace, and praise.

1	2	3	4	5	6
Untrue					True

Note which service you are scoring: 8:30 9:30 11:15
- Witness: Members share the Good News and a message of grace with one another.

1	2	3	4	5	6
Untrue					True

stan

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- Ministry: Members are consistently encouraged to identify their sense of God's call to daily ministry, and the congregation seeks ways to affirm and support members in this ministry.

1	2	3	4	5	6
Untrue					True

For Vision Team only:
 Add totals for Segment A. **Proclaiming the Good News** _____

Segment B

Building Congregational Relationships

Is this an inviting and supportive place?

- Acceptance: I feel accepted and warmly supported in this congregation.

1	2	3	4	5	6
Untrue					True
- Unity: There is a strong feeling of togetherness in this congregation.

1	2	3	4	5	6
Untrue					True
- Conflict: Rather than gossip about someone they dislike or with whom they have a disagreement, members consistently will share their disagreements directly with those persons.

1	2	3	4	5	6
Untrue					True
- Community Building: This congregation regularly provides social events where members can meet and get to know one another.

1	2	3	4	5	6
Untrue					True

10. Diversity: This congregation extends a warm welcome to a wide range of people (for example, people of different races, economic status, or sexual orientations; the physically challenged; the emotionally unstable; people of different ages, marital status, weight, and political orientations).

1 2 3 4 5 6
Untrue True

For Vision Team only:
Add totals for Segment B, **Building Congregational Relationships** _____

Segment C

Service and Outreach

Does this place have energy for those outside the fellowship?

11. I delight in the way this congregation reaches out to those outside our membership who are in need, pain, or difficulty.

1 2 3 4 5 6
Untrue True

12. This congregation gives me many opportunities to join with fellow congregants in service to a broken world.

1 2 3 4 5 6
Untrue True

13. I am pleased with the benevolence giving of this congregation.

1 2 3 4 5 6
Untrue True

14. In this congregation, we are consistently reminded that faith and action go hand in hand.

1 2 3 4 5 6
Untrue True

15. The neighborhood surrounding our church facility is aware that we are concerned about their welfare.

1 2 3 4 5 6
Untrue True

For Vision Team only:
Add totals for Segment C, **Service and Outreach** _____

Segment D

Faith Development

Does this place have high quality ways of passing on its teachings?

16. I am pleased with the quality of our Sunday school.

1 2 3 4 5 6
Untrue True

17. Our congregation offers at least one adult class of Bible study for every 100 members on our rolls (we have 373 members).

1 2 3 4 5 6
Untrue True

18. When an adult wants to become a baptized Christian in our congregation, we have a quality basic Christian instruction program of six to nine months that orients them well to Christian practice and belief.

1 2 3 4 5 6
Untrue True

19. Our congregation consistently supports and encourages our members to engage in meaningful Christian rituals in their private or family lives (for example, offering private prayer, saying grace at meals, reading devotional material, engaging a spiritual direction, and the like).

1 2 3 4 5 6
Untrue True

20. We make a point that we expect all our members to devote two hours to their congregation each Sabbath, one for worship and the other as part of an adult study group.

1 2 3 4 5 6
Untrue True

For Vision Team only:
Add totals for Segment D, **Faith Development** _____

Segment E

New Members

In Alban's research on congregations' assimilation of new members, we discovered that there are six stages a person goes through on the way from being an outsider to being an insider. These six stages are: (1) searching, (2) testing, (3) returning/affiliating, (4) joining, (5) going deeper, (6) being sent. We invite you to rate your congregation's effectiveness at each of these six stages.

Searching

21. Our members regularly invite their nonchurched friends and family members to attend our church with them.

1 2 3 4 5 6
Untrue True

22. Add two points to your score for each of the following items your congregation uses to attract new members.

- _____ Bells, carillons
- _____ A website
- _____ Ads in a daily newspaper
- _____ Radio/TV ads
- _____ Attractive, inviting buildings
- _____ 24-hour telephone messages for those who call after hours
- _____ Attractive signs outside the church indicating times for worship and Sunday school

- _____ Day care center, parochial school
- _____ Ad in the Yellow Pages
- _____ Facebook presence
- _____ Other _____

23. Add two points for every nonparish community group that uses your facilities on a regular basis. _____

24. Add two points for every social ministry program that reaches out to people in need in the community.

- _____ Meals on Wheels
- _____ Soup kitchen
- _____ Food pantry
- _____ Clothing bank
- _____ Senior citizen meal program
- _____ Senior citizen social group
- _____ Ecumenical Storehouse
- _____ Free Market event
- _____ Blanket Workshop
- _____ Holiday baskets
- _____ Angel Tree
- _____ Stars program
- _____ Prayer shawls
- _____ Knit caps for kids and adults
- _____ Other _____

Testing

25. Our congregation easily recognizes visitors and has people who go out of their way to make visitors feel wanted and welcomed.

1 2 3 4 5 6
Untrue True

26. It is rare that a visitor leaves our congregation without someone getting a name and address for follow-up purposes.

1 2 3 4 5 6
Untrue True

Returning/Affiliating

27. Add to your score the number of points indicated if your congregation has the following:
- _____ (10) Lay visitation teams that call on visitors within 48 hours following the visitors' experience with our church
 - _____ (6) Lay visitation teams that call on visitors within a month
 - _____ (10) A staff member who considers calling on parish visitors a high priority
 - _____ (6) A printed brochure or flyer that describes the nature of the congregation, outlines parish programs, and introduces parish staff
 - _____ (4) A letter of welcome that is mailed to all visitors within a week
 - _____ (6) A clean, attractive nursery that is attended by friendly, competent people
 - _____ (10) A high quality Sunday school for all grades
 - _____ (6) An active youth or young adult program
 - _____ (10) A coordinator of lay volunteers who interviews newcomers when they begin to attend regularly to determine what groups they might like to be part of
 - _____ (10) A variety of small groups (study, service, or decision-making) that are open to receiving newcomers
 - _____ (10) Periodic, short orientation seminars for visitors

Joining

28. Our congregation requires all potential new members to attend new member classes consisting of six sessions or more.
- | | | | | | |
|--------|---|---|---|---|------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Untrue | | | | | True |
29. Our congregation has a discipling program of six months or more for people new to Christianity.
- | | | | | | |
|--------|---|---|---|---|------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Untrue | | | | | True |

30. Our congregation invites members to observe personal spiritual disciplines on their own to support their spiritual growth.
- | | | | | | |
|--------|---|---|---|---|------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Untrue | | | | | True |
31. Our church receives new members at a worship service and celebrates their joining with a social event in their honor (for example, a congregational dinner or lunch with the pastor).
- | | | | | | |
|--------|---|---|---|---|------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Untrue | | | | | True |

Going Deeper

32. Our congregation consistently supports the idea that lay ministry is what Christians do in the world and community, and congregational activities are there to support this ministry.
- | | | | | | |
|--------|---|---|---|---|------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Untrue | | | | | True |
33. Our congregation has a written job description for every volunteer role in the congregation with clear time demands for each role.
- | | | | | | |
|--------|---|---|---|---|------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Untrue | | | | | True |
34. New members are interviewed regarding their motivations, skills, and growing edges to determine where they might like to contribute their time and talents.
- | | | | | | |
|--------|---|---|---|---|------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Untrue | | | | | True |
35. All congregational meetings end with a brief period of evaluation of both process and quality of decisions made, so that meetings can be improved.
- | | | | | | |
|--------|---|---|---|---|------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Untrue | | | | | True |

Being Sent

36. Our congregation consistently invites newcomers to work on New Member Ministries, especially to serve on lay visitation teams.
- | | | | | | |
|--------|---|---|---|---|------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Untrue | | | | | True |

For Vision Team only:
Add totals for Segment E, New Members _____

Segment F

Pastor/Parish Dynamics

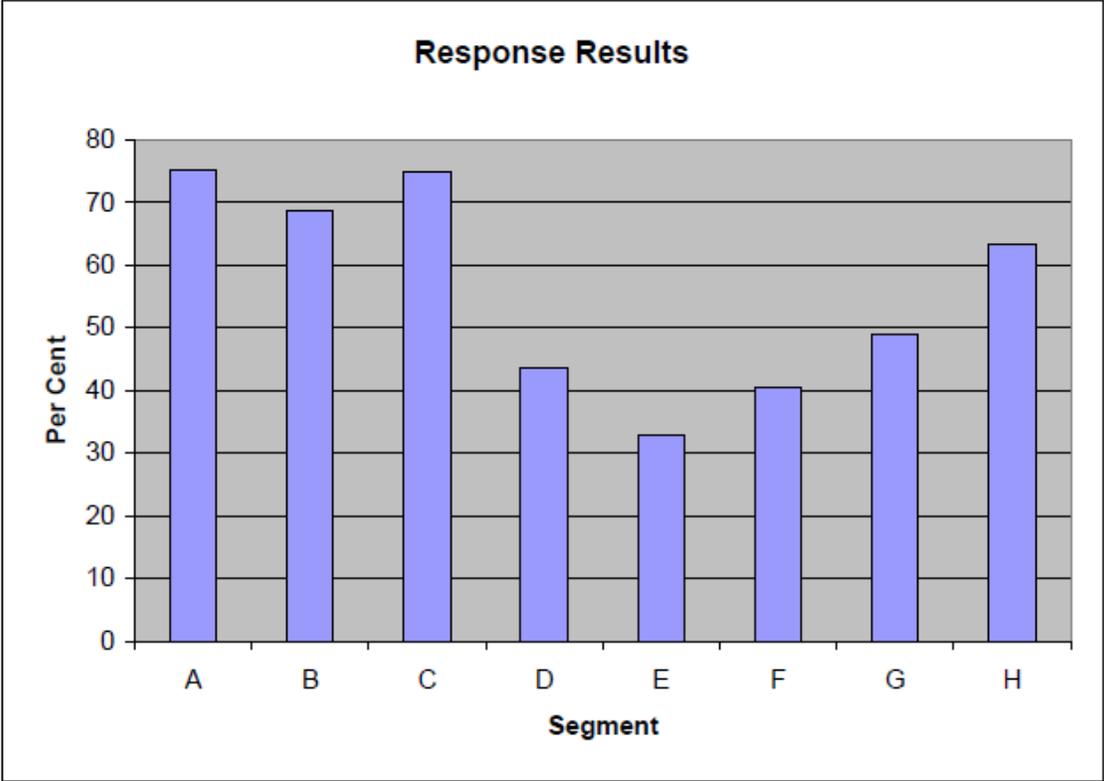
One of the most important relationships within a congregation is that between pastor and the parish. An effective clergy person can do little in a congregation if lay leaders do not work with their pastor in collegial ways. Alternatively, a cadre of lay leaders who love their church and want to see it grow can accomplish little if they do not have a pastor who works with them because a pastor can bottleneck their efforts. What is needed is a "good enough" collaborative relationship.

37. Our pastor enjoys broad support among the majority of people in this congregation.
- | | | | | | |
|--------|---|---|---|---|------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Untrue | | | | | True |
38. At least once a year our pastor and chief decision-making body engage in a mutual evaluation process.
- | | | | | | |
|--------|---|---|---|---|------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Untrue | | | | | True |
39. At least once every four years the entire congregation engages in a ministry evaluation process (an evaluation of the entire ministry of the parish, not just of the pastor).
- | | | | | | |
|--------|---|---|---|---|------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Untrue | | | | | True |

40. In addition to vacation, our pastor is encouraged to take two weeks of continuing education a year and is supported in this with a budget of at least \$1,500.
- | | | | | | |
|--------|---|---|---|---|------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Untrue | | | | | True |
41. Once every four years our pastor is encouraged to take a three-month sabbatical, in addition to vacation, for the sake of personal and professional renewal and growth.
- | | | | | | |
|--------|---|---|---|---|------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Untrue | | | | | True |
42. When conflict arises between our pastor and individuals or a specific group of people, we are open to calling in an outside consultant to mediate differences.
- | | | | | | |
|--------|---|---|---|---|------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Untrue | | | | | True |
43. At least once a year, the role of our clergy is reviewed, with role negotiations taking place between clergy and our chief decision-making body.
- | | | | | | |
|--------|---|---|---|---|------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Untrue | | | | | True |

For Vision Team only:
Add totals for Segment F, Pastor/Parish Dynamics _____

B. Congregational Health Inventory Results:



- Segment A Proclaiming the Good News
- Segment B Building Congregational Relationships
- Segment C Service and Outreach
- Segment D Faith Development
- Segment E New Members
- Segment F Pastor/Parish Dynamics
- Segment G Congregational Vision/Generous Giving
- Segment H Leadership

Scoring Note: Segment E = lowest score; Segments A and C = highest scores

APPENDIX 7: CORE VALUES EXERCISE

CORE VALUES SUMMARY

The Core Values Exercise was completed by 40 people in February 2013. Respondents were asked to rank each of 11 values between 1 (Strongly Agree) and 5 (Strongly Disagree). The average rankings were calculated and are presented in Chart 1. Note that the highest ranking value (most persons strongly agreeing) is GRACE VALUES SERVICE TO THE NEEDY IN OUR COMMUNITY AND BEYOND. The lowest ranking (most persons tending to be neutral) is GRACE VALUES OUTREACH TO THE UNCHURCHED. It is significant that the respondents tended to agree with our values, though few were strongly in agreement, but conversely, none were in strong disagreement with them.

Chart 2, Core Value Popularity, shows how many respondents considered each value a Core Value. It should not be surprising that the most popular value is GRACE VALUES SERVICE TO THE NEEDY IN OUR COMMUNITY AND BEYOND. Conversely, the least popular Core Value is GRACE VALUES RELIGIOUS ARTS AND CRAFTS.

The next page, after the charts, shows the results in spreadsheet form. This shows the average ranking (RATING) of each value, the number times a value was indicated as a Core Value (CORE), and the number of respondents (RESPONDENTS) that answered with a numerical ranking. Some respondents did not provide numerical rankings, but did provide written comments. Due to the numerous comments made, only SELECTED COMMENTS are included in this summary. The entire list of comments requires a more detailed consideration.

CORE VALUES SUMMARY

VALUE	RATING	CORE	RESPONDENTS	SELECTED COMMENTS
Grace values Christian education for all ages.	2.37	9	38	Needs improvement. Weak in children's Bible study, lacking in consistency and participation. There is a need to be creative in meeting the needs of children, to shape a program to meet broad age cross section.
Grace values open discussion of issues and development of consensus.	2.44	11	39	May be valued but there is still hesitancy by many to make their views known. As a group, we don't undertake open discussion often enough. Doesn't use methods and formats that initiate and foster dialogues.
Grace values service to the needy in our community and	1.27	28	40	Food pantry, baskets, angel/stars tree, school supplies, free market, blanket workshop, pet fest are good examples. Most are not to create disciples.
Grace values each person as an individual made in the image of Christ.	2.14	16	22	Need to be more open to all - make people feel comfortable enough to participate. We have a challenge doing so with the less educated and less affluent.
Grace values religious arts and	2.64	6	33	Not a core value. Valuing creativity, imagination, and resourcefulness in doing God's work would be a core value.
Grace values outreach to the unchurched.	3.03	15	37	Valued but not able to implement very well. Not practiced well or consistently. We are challenged at identifying and implementing the best approaches to doing this.
Grace values music of a variety of styles that express and enhance faith.	2	21	25	Strong area but not everyone can be or wants to be involved, leaving out large segment of the congregation. The work of our leaders is invaluable and the hope is that more may appreciate that.
Grace values good order and propriety in worship.	1.86	17	22	We need more "togetherness." We have some real shortcomings at our contemporary service. Appreciate the seasonal and prayer services very much.
Grace values open communication.	2.39	10	31	Need to communicate more - especially on controversial issues - talk it out. Open discussions valued but there is still hesitancy by many people to make their views known. Not sure how to increase comfort level.
Grace values Bible study.	2.28	16	29	Don't have a rigorous program for all ages. Not consistently practiced. We need Bible studies that allow input from those in the group.
Grace values opportunities to deepen and enhance spiritual development.	2.44	17	25	Done through sermons. Need for more activities. Not a lot of opportunities, such as small groups, Sunday school, Wed. evening programs.

APPENDIX 8. THE DREAM VISION SURVEY

THE “DREAM VISION”

A Christian church known for making disciples, loving their neighbors as themselves with vibrant ministries meeting existing and emerging needs. A church led and driven by fresh, bold visions of the future God intends for us. About triple current worship attendance, a highly diverse membership and growing. Many strong ministries. A safe, friendly place. Using state of the art social media in outreach. Bigger church facilities located in the mainstream of the community.

A balanced mix of youth and adults, a church that serves the needs of Oak Ridge, a church that is recognized and known in the community.

An active and over flowing youth group. Larger facility or new location. Family center with area for outreach ministries. Spirit filled congregation - every member active in a ministry. All members truly believing that Jesus is Lord, and actively confessing it to others in the church and outside.

Growth that nourishes greater richness in experiences that help us grow in knowledge, understanding, faith, and help us pass on our faith, with God's Love. Families of all ages and types. Opportunities for involvement across the age spans. Hope for a paid up church with no mortgage, expanding into our additional properties along with growth in membership.

Membership increase with all age ranges represented; families with children, youth, singles, adults of all ages. Grace continues to be leader in musical community and also offers visual arts and drama. Continues to offer scouts and other youth activities and continues to be leader in service activities such as Food Pantry and also encourages members to participate in other service activities.

More use of musical instruments at the traditional worship service and more educational opportunities to help all members to appreciate more the wonderful musical heritage of the church.

Very active group with just enough seats and all the seats filled. Diverse by age, race, ethnic group and sexual orientation. Known for our love and embracing others. Financially stable and perhaps endowed so that we don't have to worry about finances.

We have members involved in numerous ministries. Our education programs are packed, the courses are invigorating, challenging, and meaty. The children are everywhere!!!! They are connected with youth and adults. We have numerous Fellowship activities where we interact, rejoice in the Good News.

QUESTION: WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES AHEAD TO REACH THE “DREAM VISION” (Q51)

Summary of congregation responses to the last two questions of the online survey:

GENERAL

I think one of the biggest challenges is to stop focusing on the negative and focus on the positive.

We need to define what kind of a church we are. Maybe there is a status quo that is impeding our development of evolution whether progressive or regressive.

EVANGELISM, GROW GRACE

A much stronger evangelism outreach must be made to achieve this. A deep down centering in on God and the presence of God among us, and in the community will be needed as well.

Ability to effectively invite others. Ability to explain "Why Grace"

Open our hearts and minds to the impossible ideas. This may mean a very different Grace in 2030, but may be worth it if the Church is to survive. We may need to look at different and/or more assertive methods in growing membership.

Continually attracting new membership, as original founders die off.

Figure how to appeal to more people who may not have a church background and make them feel at home. Visitors should receive a visit from a member of the congregation and/or the pastor as soon as possible.

Get more members, and be more welcoming.

Grow family membership and participation.

Growing a younger congregation to carry on

Inclusivity

PUBLICITY

Expand publicity, outreach. Take full advantage of digital media.

ATTRACT MORE YOUNG FAMILIES

Attract more youthful members.

Attract young families

Attracting young families who will grow up in the church while maintaining the basic style

Get younger people/families involved.

RETENTION

Not very [many?]new members. The new members we get, we must embrace them somehow so that they feel welcomed and want to stay. A program should address this urgent need.

Getting new members to the church and getting everyone involved.

PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN

Getting the kids involved and have them want to bring a friend

Provide solid programs for children.

More youth choirs

Finding ways to expand the children's program and the people who would be willing to undertake that task.

DISCIPLING, FAITH DEVELOPMENT

An aging, older membership discipling younger people in ways that work.

Christian Education is a must for everyone. Every member must be involved in ministry.

INVOLVEMENT AND COMMUNICATION

Involving all members Improve communications with all members

SOCIETAL CHANGES

Changing societal roles in the family, different family dynamics, and changing values on church involvement.

A vision attuned to the ever-changing technology, community demographics, and social styles and patterns.

General decrease in interest in mainline religion

Growth of this city.

ATTENDANCE

Better schedule and better attendance -

Increased attendance and membership

AGING CONGREGATION

Aging congregation that sometimes equates getting older with getting less active.

An aging population who is unable to be as active as before.

BUDGET

A decline in overall membership is making it hard to meet budgetary costs. May need to address budget more closely than ever and make hard difficult decisions.

Budget deficit

Fix the budget, get more members, and be more welcoming.

QUESTION: WHAT ACTIONS CAN YOU TAKE TO REACH THE “DREAM VISION”? (Q52)

Summary of congregation responses:

GENERAL

I will pray and support our leadership for the time being until I can be more help.

Be open to change even when it isn't comfortable. Try a new program and just be positive.

be supportive, attend activities

Come up with ideas. Help implement them. Be able to market ideas, help organize groups, work with others.

Continue to lead by example

Continue what I'm doing and expand those areas where possible.

Continue what we've done and can do more, hopefully, when we retire

I am doing all I know to do. I am open to new or additional direction.

I am willing to volunteer to help in this cause any way I can.

I can voice ideas when I have them and help others make their ideas happen.

I have already taken many and one is starting the fire inside myself to believe in Christ and the Lord Savior our God, not just go through the motions of every Sunday and not really understand what we need to do.

Just keep doing what I'm doing

Listen with an open mind and pray

Prayer, dedication to God in the life I live for this time, and sharing in the corporate support of Grace Church.

Seek God's will for me and our church. Use my spiritual gifts and seek those of our members.

Contribute time, energy, and financial resources. Encourage thinking, meditating, planning, and acting outside the box.

Participate

Support programs

To listen and support the vision process. Help on specific tasks as needed.

Willingness to be a participant to make it happen

EVANGELISM, GROW GRACE

I can try to bring friends to church with me, as well as volunteer for ministries going on at the church.

I will continue to try to learn from other congregations that are finding more effective ways to do outreach.

Invite people to worship or participate in one of Grace's ministries

Invite, welcome and nurture.

Encourage others to attend Grace

Have my kids bring a friend

I will continue as I have in helping spread the word of God's amazing grace!!

Install camera in back of church to broadcast 8:30 & 11:15 services live (and rebroadcast if desired) plus broadcast special events on Grace's website. I suspect to hear 101 reasons why this doesn't make sense: privacy, broadcasting singing and music may violate copyright, people may not feel comfortable or be themselves when they know they're on camera. But I wonder if we care more about ourselves than making a congregational witness to others.

Making sure all visitors feel welcome and help them feel that this could be their church home

Talk about our church, encourage people to visit, pray

INTEGRATION

Serve on a commission to study how best make inclusion happen, and to extend other ministries of Grace farther into the community.

Reach out to newcomers and people who are already members who we tend to ignore or not notice.

RETENTION

One to one ministry to each heart. Prayer to convert us! Stronger Bible-based focus in all aspects of our ministry.

Support, nurturing care, trust, safety, consistency, love. Supporting things that support others in our Grace family. Even now, small things like our Fellowship time immediately after church helps develop bonds among members.

PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN

I will work on revitalizing Loaves and Fishes to help get kids feel loved at Grace. I can also pray for direction and energy for our Congregation.

INVOLVEMENT AND COMMUNICATION

Provide information or leads re social issues such as mental illness, homelessness, violence and abuse; encourage new membership; increase my own giving

ATTENDANCE

Better attendance

OTHER

Have worked on many projects, from chairing the building committee for the 1982-dedicated new sanctuary, secretary for the memorial garden committee, assistance toward the 50-year church history.

About what I'm doing now

Anything if possible

Fill out more of these and prove my point.

DON'T KNOW, UNSURE (Ten such responses)