

## **PROCLAIMING COMMISSION 2016 ANNUAL REPORT**

The Proclaiming Commission is charged with overseeing all evangelism outreach activities for Grace Church, publicity, and communications. Grace publications now proudly proclaim Grace's mission statement, "LOVE JESUS AND HELP OTHERS LOVE HIM TOO," and Grace's motto, "GRACE MAKES A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE." All Commissions and staff are urged to proclaim our Mission Statement and/or our motto, at every opportunity.

Members of the Commission in 2016 were Nancy Munro, Chair and Council liaison, Gayla Cutler, Christy Gipson, Pat Hope, Council Liason, and Stan Long. Sharon Boudreaux was a member and our third Council liaison through October. The Commission's on-going outreach programs and specific events in 2016 are summarized below. In addition, the group has worked to implement our 2015 Vision Plan (and Addendum) Goals and our communications plan. They mainly relate to improving our inviting and hospitality efforts and relationship development with visitors as well as website and Facebook improvements. Very importantly, we began planning toward more outreach to unchurched and formerly churched persons. The highlight of our publicity efforts in 2016 was that Sharon Boudreaux prepared an article on Grace's Mental Health Ministry that got national attention as it was featured in the October issue of the ELCA magazine, *Living Lutheran*.

Two new projects include:

**DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS TEAM:** A team consisting of Stan Long, Josh Williamson, Stacey Garrick, and Pam Williams has met to plan for TV monitors in the front and back entrances that will display announcements of activities at Grace to inform both the congregation and visitors.

**LIVING LUTHERAN GROUP SUBSCRIPTION:** Proclaiming arranged for a congregational group subscription to *Living Lutheran* (formerly *The Lutheran*), the magazine of the ELCA. This began in March 2016. *We need to know who wants to continue to receive it.*

Continuing activities and programs include:

**OUTREACH TO UNCHURCHED:** Proclaiming identified several approaches and is exploring them as time permits; Pat Hope reported on a workshop presented at the SE Synod Assembly by someone from a Nashville church. We are already doing most of what was presented. We will take a look at the Alpha Program and at an enhanced approach to the Catechumenate in 2017.

**INVITING VISITORS:** Proclaiming is encouraging all to help Grace become an "inviting" church as 70-85% of folks who visit churches in general come as a result of an invitation; we can significantly increase the number visiting by this means.

**HOSPITALITY FOR VISITORS:** Welcome notes are written and sent to first-time visitors who are seeking a church home. This is in addition to Pastor Norma's welcome notes to such visitors. Notes from others would be great in addition to these.

A Visitor Report on first-time visitors who are exploring for a new church home is now emailed to Proclaiming, other commission members, all Council members, and any members with responsibilities that would make it helpful. This is so they can be on the lookout to welcome such visitors if they come again, get acquainted, and invite them to activities of potential interest to them.

First-time visitor bags have been given after the worship service but need to be given more consistently.

Followup visiting by two-person teams may be revived in the future, as we can recruit visitors. Members are encouraged to follow the example of the 8:30 service folks who invite visitors to go to brunch after the service; could you invite visitors to lunch? To meet later for coffee?

The greeter program continues; Betty Shattuck continues to coordinate greeters for the 11:15 service and we are seeking a coordinator for the 9:30 service. Greeters are stationed at both front and back entrances. This enhances safety, helps those who might otherwise have difficulty opening our heavy exterior doors, and, for first time visitors, provides the opportunity to give directions to the sanctuary, nursery, Sunday School classes, or Jacob's Ladder as needed. Nancy Munro participated in a group planning enhanced greeter and usher training to be held in 2017.

**OUTREACH TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD:** Proclaiming helped recruit carolers for the Dec. 18 event and we had two neighborhood groups; one that caroled down Manhattan Ave. toward Purdue on both sides, and one that covered the rest of Willow Place, distributing mini-gift bags with invitations to our Christmas Eve and Dec. 25 services. On Tuesday, Dec. 20, the remaining gift bags were distributed on Gettysburg in both directions, and on all of Goucher Circle. We received positive reactions from several residents. At least one couple visited Christmas Eve worship as a result.

**OUTREACH TO NEW RESIDENTS:** Welcome-to-the-Neighborhood bags are placed in the front and back entrances for any Grace person to take to new residents in their neighborhood and new colleagues or acquaintances in other avenues of life.

**PET FEST & BLESSING:** Our fifteenth annual Pet Fest & Blessing, our premiere annual outreach event to the community at large, occurred on Oct. 1st with many people attending. Many were not Grace members. It brings in people from the community to celebrate and bless their pets, and honor the companionship that pets bring to our lives. This event is held in our parking lot, pavilion and school grounds. Much appreciation goes to Woodland School for again making their grounds available and for again participating with a pet-oriented art show. Pam Williams updated a Pet Fest website, Facebook presence and Twitter account. We raised \$623.65 from the bake sale, \$760.50 from the rummage sale and \$2,064 from the silent auction. There were some donations as well.

We did not undertake a 5K run/walk due to the effort involved and the lack of growth in participation and proceeds in the past years that we've held it.

Thrivent provided \$300 in match for what Grace raised and volunteer hours given. The combined proceeds of \$4694 from all venues, donations, and Thrivent match were distributed among all 17 participating rescue groups, giving a total of \$275 per group. Proceeds of \$80 from the microchipping went to the Heifer Project. Leftover rummage items were given to the Ecumenical Storehouse.

**In 2017 the event will be on October 7**—mark your calendars and invite your friends! Pet Fest cards are available to hand out to your friends and colleagues – on the shelf in the back entrance.

**HISPANIC MINISTRY OUTREACH SUPPORT:** Proclaiming Commission has provided significant support to the Hispanic Ministry Outreach goal adopted in May 2013. We have provided flyers for distribution and assisted with publicity within the congregation as well as in the community.

Nancy Munro continues to coordinate the English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes and is writing a letter of intent for a new grant from the Deaconess Community. Match is again provided by Thrivent Choice dollars from Grace and is anticipated from Altrusa. Grace has been blessed with many additional volunteers (Grace members and friends of Grace) who have made it possible to add four morning classes and a new Tuesday evening class in addition to the Wednesday and Thursday evening classes. We also added a beginner class for all the evening classes thanks to Jeniffer Navarro and other volunteers. The Monday morning class is a partnership with Altrusa. Colleen Ussery taught it through April and Gay Marie Logsdon took her place in May, then in August through late November when she was severely injured in an auto accident. Sylvia Countess stepped in to teach until Gay Marie recovers enough to return. In addition to the ESOL classes, we have added a weekly Spanish class that is thriving (taught by Jeniffer) and experimented with a Chinese class for a time, taught by one of our Chinese ESOL students.

Deep appreciation goes to member volunteers Margaret and Riley Cumberland, Betty Anne Domm, Judy Joy, Hannah Mustaffa, Jeniffer Navarro, Josh Williamson, Judy Rosenberg, and Alicia Rudat. Deep appreciation also goes to friends of Grace, including Kay Brookshire, Sylvia Countess, Jean Enochs, Dorothy DeVan, Anna Jakowska, Cliff Kirk, Carolynne (Kay) Moss, Amber Owens, Bryce Watson, and Phil Yager. We further greatly appreciate our paid child care workers, Lorraine Huynh, Kelci Duncan, and Rachel Lorenz, and backup volunteers Joanne Daly, Judy Joy, and Nancy Munro.

**SEMINARIAN PARTNER:** Grace signed up for a tenth year with the Seminarian Partnership program at Lutheran Southern Theological Seminary in Columbia, SC. At a cost to the church of \$500, a seminary student is “adopted” by Grace to give that student regular prayer support, encouragement and interaction. Our Seminary Partner for 2015-16 was Hillary Nelson who was in her second year at the seminary. Hillary visited Grace on Feb. 21, 2016. She preached at all services on Sunday and interacted with folks over lunch following the late service. We await assignment of our 2017 Seminarian Partner.

**MISSIONARY SPONSORSHIP:** Grace sends an annual contribution of \$2,000 to Pastor David Brondos for his ministry and supports him with prayer and occasional Love Offerings. He is on the faculty of the only Spanish-language protestant Seminary in Mexico City, training mostly Mexican but also central and south American citizens for the ministry. Pastor Brondos provides the Lutheran courses in this inter-denominational seminary and in 2012 started online offerings which continue on and have greatly expanded the reach of the Seminary well beyond Mexico.

**WEBSITE UPDATE:** Our Website Team consists of Pam Williams, Gloria Caton, and Stacey Garrick. After revamping the website in 2015 and adding a Pet Fest Website, Pam has had the ongoing role of webservant, keeping all updated. The new look has received enthusiastic reviews from all. The congregation is encouraged to make our website ([graceoakridge.org](http://graceoakridge.org)) your default page for your browser. We get consistent feedback that most visitors find us on the web before visiting services.

**FACEBOOK PRESENCE:** We profusely thank Sharon Boudreaux for continuing her daily updates to the Grace Facebook page. Please “like” the page and use it! Remember to give information to Sharon for posting there on upcoming activities.

**TWITTER ACCOUNT:** We have a Grace Twitter account and need more followers. Contact Pam Williams about how to sign up!

**VIDEOGRAPHY TEAM:** The Videography team consists of David Dixon and Dick Lorenz. They

videotaped both the September 20, 2015 11:15 service and the December 6 Christmas Cantata service. We hope to make copies of these available to members such as homebound or ill or anyone unable to attend those special services in 2017. We also hope to explore videotaping of sermons in 2017.

**COMMUNICATIONS AUDIT AND PLAN:** In 2015 Proclaiming completed a Communications Plan for Grace based on the results of our Communications audit. We planned our 2016 publicity efforts based on the Plan and are also working to enhance communications within the congregation, for example, by having the bulletin announcements emailed to the congregation each Thursday. *Suggestions are welcome for additional enhancements to our internal communications.*

**THE LIGHT NEWSLETTER:** A monthly newsletter is emailed to all members and paper copies are available to those without or not using a computer; they are included in visitor bags /Welcome to the Neighborhood bags. Pat Hope has ably been our newsletter editor in 2016 and will be in 2017 for which we are deeply appreciative. She has added many more photos and other new features. Take a look if you haven't!!

**GRACE CONNECTION EMAIL NEWS:** We used a few of these in 2016 and may again in 2017. Thank you, Merry Ann Hansen, for producing these!

**GRACE BROCHURES:** We continue to use the 2015 update of the Grace brochure that presents many of our ministries, programs, and opportunities for folks to get involved. It is used for visitors to the church plus Welcome to Neighborhood bags, etc. Sharon Boudreaux designed an additional multipurpose brochure/mailer that we hope will be finalized for use in 2017.

**PHOTOGRAPHY:** A team of photographers capture photos of most events for publicity and historical purposes. Photographers in 2016 included Sharon Boudreaux, Lindsey Burtis, Ingrid Busch, Terry Domm, Pat Hope, and Stan Long. Others are welcome to help anytime!

**PUBLICITY:** News releases on Grace activities are prepared and sent to print news media. Sharon Boudreaux, Pat Hope, Cleva Marrow and Katherine Smith prepared news releases in 2016. We discontinued ads in *Visions* magazine; we ran ads in *The Oak Ridger* and in the online *Oak Ridge Today*. Two persons appeared as usual on "Alive at Five at Four" to publicize the Pet Fest and Blessing.

**TAPE MINISTRY:** We thank Ingrid Busch for recording the 8:30 worship service each Sunday. Then the Bread of Life Ministry volunteers who bring Communion to our homebound and assisted living members also drop off a CD recording for them. The CDs continue to be in an organized storage pouch in the narthex for those who wish to take one home to an ill or homebound family member or friend.

**NAME TAG SUNDAYS:** Name tags are provided to all members on occasional Sundays to promote name recognition and fellowship among members and visitors. We try for about once a month.

**BOOTHS:** Grace had a booth at the Oak Ridge city Halloween Party. Thank you to the Mustaffa family and friend for staffing it!

**NEW SIGNS:** Proclaiming provided additional signs for use at the Pet Fest and Blessing and underwrote some of the other Pet Fest expenses as usual.

Submitted by Nancy Munro