

living grace



LUTHERAN CHURCH

Living Grace Lutheran Church Hawley, MN

"The community of Living Grace exists to make known God's love and grace by welcoming everyone, sharing the story of Jesus, growing in faith, and serving beyond ourselves."

Living Grace Lutheran Church – Timeline/Storyline

2011 Highlights:

January 2, 2011

February 5, 2011

July 29, 2011

Dec. 11, 2011

First Living Grace worship service at Hawley United Methodist Church

Synod established Living Grace as a Synodically Authorized Worshipping Community

Sister Krista Anderson begins ministry as Mission Developer

Charter Sunday where 42 people made their intention known to be part of this new faith community and to support Living Grace's ongoing mission development

2012 Highlights:

August 2012

September 2012

November 2012

Sister Krista attends the Mission Developer Training in Seattle, WA

Established an office on Main Street and moved worship to the Garrick Theater

Living Grace's Purpose and Guiding Principles were established

2013 Highlights:

February 17, 2013

February 28, 2013

March-June 2013

July 2013

Summer 2013

August 2013

September 2013

October 2013

October 19, 2013

Nov. 16, 2013

Nov. 22, 2013

Nov. 27, 2013

December 8, 2013

Dec. 15, 2013

Final Draft posted on Living Grace's Constitution and Bylaws as an ELCA Synodically Authorized Worshipping Community

Sister Krista ends call as Mission Developer to take a new call

Pr. Gary Garvey serves as Interim Pastor

Discernment process about direction for Living Grace begins

Living Grace celebrates its First Baptism

Hope Deutscher begins in an interim minister

Living Grace begins partnering with Salem Lutheran (Hitterdal) for Confirmation

Women of the ELCA Bible Study and Conversation held at Local home (11/2013)

Men's Breakfast monthly breakfast began. It transformed into a breakfast for all people at the Whistle Stop, then at The Garrick Theater.

First Annual Chili Cook-Off and Bison Football Game Event (Garrick Theater)

(Chili Cook-Off continued to be an annual event for several years)

ELCA agreed to Living Grace as a Congregation Under Development status and provided financial support in a two-year 2014-2015 grant totaling \$44,000 to support a full time Mission Developer. (From 2011-2013, the ELCA provided \$54,500 and our Synod provided \$15,005.52)

Living Grace participated in the Community Thanksgiving Service

(as part of the Hawley Ministerial Association)

Pr. Keith Zeh joined us for worship, which included a Service of Healing

Sunday School Program

2014 Highlights:

January 12, 2014

January 18, 2014

February 2014

March 2014

March 2014

April 2014

May 15, 2014

June 2014

Pr. Hope Deutscher installed as Mission Developer

Women's Ministry Breakfast Begins

Pr. Hope attends the Mission Developer Training Conference in San Antonio, TX

Living Grace participated in and hosted one of the Community Noon Lenten

Lunch/Worship Services, as well as Good Friday Community Service, UMC

Living Grace studied *Book of Faith Lenten Journey: 40 Days with the Lord's Prayer*

Living Grace began planning for NW MN Synod Bike Hunger Tour

(led by Pastor Steve Peterson)

Living Grace, Bethlehem-Ulen and Salem-Hitterdal hosted NW MN Synod Bike

Hunger Ride Closing Worship Service, Dinner and Backpack for Hunger Fundraiser. The event raised \$6,262 to support the REACH BackPack Program through a community awareness campaign and silent auction.

Sent kids to Pathways Bible Camp

Pr. Hope begins serving on the REACH Board of Directors representing churches, especially Living Grace (Hawley) (Served till July 2021)

August 2014 Pr. Hope, Dave and Kate Gausman attend Part 2 Mission Developer Training Conference in Minneapolis, MN (ELCA covered travel registration/lodging for training)

September 2014 Participated in *God's Work. Our Hand's Sunday*

Fall 2014 Began Confirmation partnership with Salem Lutheran-Hitterdal

October 2014 Began monthly *Feed Your Faith* evening conversations at Whistle Stop Café, (Ended 2015)

October 2014 Saturday Breakfasts at Whistle Stop became Breakfast at The Garrick

November 2014 2nd Annual Chili Cook-off held at Garrick Theater

Advent 2014 Living Grace youth and congregation adopted a local family with 5 children; giving them Christmas gifts, pantry staples, etc.

2015 Highlights:

March 2015 Held the first of several Movie Nights at the Garrick Theater

March 2015 As a partner in the Hawley Ministerial, Pastor Hope leads worship on a rotating schedule at Hawley Living, our congregation delivers the SNAP boxes once a year; and we participate in the community Lent and Thanksgiving services.

March 2015 Living Grace participates in and hosts one of the Community Noon Lenten Lunch/Worship Services, as well as Good Friday Community Service, UMC

April 18, 2015 Backpack for Hunger Breakfast-Ulen – Living Grace joined other ELCA congregations (GPR Parish, Salem-Hitterdal, Bethlehem-Ulen, Wild Rice Parish, Glyndon Lutheran). The event raised over \$10,000.

May 3, 2015 Confirmation Sunday: Gunnar Carley

Spring 2015 Ended confirmation partnership with Salem-Hitterdal

June 1, 2015 NW MN Synod began contracting for half of Pastor Hope's time to help with interim communication coordinating needs. (Ended May 31, 2016)

June 2015 Began Hosting Summer Friday Fellowship at members' homes

June 2015 A group of Living Grace members attend *Discovering Hope* Evangelism Event, Moorhead.

September 2015 Participated in *God's Work. Our Hand's Sunday*

Fall 2015 Began confirmation and youth ministry partnership with GPR Parish

Advent 2015 Youth led project collecting money and items for Ronald McDonald House, also made tied flannel blankets for House. We have volunteered several times preparing dinner.

2016 Highlights:

January 2016 3rd Annual Chili Cook-Off

Lent 2016 Living Grace continued to join Hawley Ministerial in weekly Lent noon worship/lunch services and Good Friday worship services

April 10, 2016 Teague Carley receives First Communion

May 1, 2016 Confirmation Sunday: Ben Kading, Isaac Kading, and Cade Carley

May 14, 2016 ELCA congregations/UMC-Hawley host *Backpack for Hunger Breakfast* – at UMC-Hawley.

Summer 2016 Prayer Chain and Pocket Prayer Shawl Ministry begin. Distributed pocket prayer shawls with SNAP food boxes in July.

Summer 2016 We secured a \$5,000 grant from Trinity Foundation. This grant was used to increase/improve areas of ministry, including musical ministry, evangelism and reaching out to new people in the community and other ministry-enhancing projects.

Sept.11, 2016 Hosted a 9/11 Pancake Breakfast open to the community at the Garrick Theater honoring/thanking military and emergency personnel.

October 2016 From 2011 up to and including YR 2016, ELCA churchwide has provided \$113,500 in partnership support.

November 2016 Men began a woodworking ministry, making olivewood crosses in Dave Gausman's shop. The crosses were sold and given as gifts to confirmation youth.

December 11, 2016 Bishop Larry Wohlrabe joined Living Grace to celebrate 5-year anniversary. In 5 Years: 2 Babies were Baptized, 4 Youth were Confirmed, 2 Youth received First Communion, 3 funerals, 250+ Sunday Services, 20 Holy Day Services (Christmas Eve, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday), Partnered with REACH and other ELCA congregations raising over \$20,000 to help the Backpack Program, Helped local family celebrate Christmas in 2014; helped families through Ronald McDonald House in 2015/2016.

- In an effort to continue raising awareness of Living Grace, Pr. Hope began serving on the NWMN Synod Council; wrote articles for *Hawley Herald* about Living Grace and our events/projects; attended Hawley Ministerial events.
- The past two years have been a time of exploration and transition. From June 2015-May 31, 2016 the NW MN ELCA Synod contracted with Living Grace for half of Pr. Hope's time as they had just lost their communication's coordinator. In September, Bishop Larry Wohlrabe suggested we consider a contract with Bethlehem Lutheran in Ulen, MN to help with part-time interim ministry for 6 months.

2017 Highlights:

- **March 2017:** GPR and Living Grace entered into a Ministry Partnership. The partnership includes Pr. Hope serving half-time at GPR and continuing half-time at Living Grace. The partnership is about thriving in ministry *together!* A Monthly Mutual Ministry Team (with representatives from all 4 congregations) began meeting monthly. The Mutual Ministry set these initial goals for our collaboration: 1). To have joint worship services and events, intentionally inviting one another into each other's space. We have done this through special events, open houses, Lenten services, Viking Park Outdoor Parish Worship service; Gran's Patriotic Service and annual auction/bake sale; Movie Nights at The Garrick Theater, etc. and 2). Pr. Hope to be present in all 4 churches; and Pr. Jim to be more present at Living Grace.
- **June 2017** – Pentecost Sunday, Living Grace held an Open House inviting Gran-Park-Rollag members. It was very well attended by all 4 congregations!
- **July 2017** – We worshipped together at GPR Parish's Outdoor Service at Viking Park.
- Youth came together for Luther League, preparing for the National Youth Gathering.
- Women from Living Grace, Gran, Park, Rollag congregations explored the possibilities of gathering for fellowship, studying God's Word, and serving others.

2018 Highlights:

- **May 2018:** Women's Mutual Ministry Kick-Off Event held at Garrick Theater featuring Taunya Todd; theme: *Growing in Faith*. During 2018, a Women's Mutual Ministry Team was developed to support current ministries and help evolve other ways that women from all four congregations and the community could grow in their faith and support one another. Women Held bi-monthly One Night Book Discussions: *Present Over Perfect* by Shauna Niequist; *Christian Atheist* by Craig Groeschel (became a weekly adult bible study unconnected to women's ministry); *When God Doesn't Fix It* by Laura Story; March: *Unexpected* by Christine Kaine; May: *Sensible Shoes: A Story about the Spiritual Journey* by Sharon Garlough Brown. Bi-monthly/monthly Bible Discussions at local restaurants/churches. The women also hosted Faith and Creativity Retreats; a Spiritual Retreat, events to collect purses/bags for women, men and youth that were distributed to REACH-Hawley and Mary's Place-Detroit Lakes.
- **May 2018:** We have also come together to create a Pocket Prayer Shawl Ministry, distributing over 700 little prayer shawls at the 2018 NWMN Synod Assembly, funerals, community services and individuals at the four churches. GPR and Living Grace partnered with Bethlehem Lutheran in Ulen to make over 600 pocket prayer shawls for the NW MN 2018 Synod Assembly.
- **June 2018:** Living Grace sent 5 people (4 youth and Pastor Hope) to the National Youth Gathering.
- **Fall 2018:** Joint dinner at Ella Marie's Café – food and fellowship – building a bigger table!
- The partnership has not only started breaking down walls, but we have also come together for fun, food and fellowship for a variety of activities and events, including: taking a bus trip to see Twins Games; eating dinner together at Ella Marie's Café; youth have attended the 2018 National Youth Gathering, Middle School Gathering, and participated in fundraisers and outreach activities together.

2019 Highlights:

- Participated with GPR Parish in the NWMN ELCA Synod's Practicing Resurrection: Congregational Vitality 2.0 with Rev. Dr. Rick Morse, from the Hope Partnership for Missional Transformation.
- Summer Evening Worship/Fellowship Events (Tuesday evenings – dinner and worship)
- Women's Mutual Ministry Events: Winter Breakfast and Collection of Purses; Mother-Daughter Heirloom Tea Event; Faith and Creativity Retreat; Bible Studies/Book Studies
- GPR/Living Grace Youth opportunities: Confirmation, Synod gatherings, fundraising events and special activities.
- Regular Sunday morning Worship (September-May); Tuesday Evenings (June-July-August)
- Hartford Homes Bible study (Third Thursday of each month, open to community)
- Pr. Hope provides a Bible study at Northside Terrace on the 5th Tuesdays of a month.
- God's Work. Our Hands Outreach activities.
- Serving meals at Ronald McDonald House
- Youth helped distribute *SNAP Food Box Distribution* in October
- Pr. Hope serves on the REACH Board; several members volunteer at the REACH thrift store!

2020 Highlights:

- As 2020 offered us challenges in the midst of living into and being the church outside the building during a pandemic, it also offered us opportunities: how could we find ways to be together and carry out our mission of serving our neighbors, even if health officials suggested we physically distance, wear masks and care for one another?
- **March 2020:** Living Grace and GPR began an Online Ministry offering weekly worship services through Facebook, www.livinggracehawley.org, www.gprparish.org, and our YouTube Channel. We also provided Holy Week, Christmas and youth-related specials. Our YouTube Channel now has over 100 subscribers. As well, our weekly Wednesday morning Bible study was on Zoom.
- Pr. Hope, having a background in documentary producing (audio/video editing), was able to edit pre-recorded worship services. Tech support from Rollag Lutheran's Brent Helgeson, Austin Peterson and Sophie Helgeson made it possible to provide this service.
- **Women's Mutual Ministry:** On February 16, 2020, a Purse & Tea Event was held where we gathered and assembled 75 purses and bags for REACH to distribute to women, men and youth in need. In March, women took to Zoom to hold weekly and bi-weekly Book studies.
- **Summer 2020:** Fill the Pick-Up: GPR and Living Grace collected food for the Barnesville Food Pantry and REACH Food Pantry during Outdoor Worship Services on the lawn of Rollag Lutheran. The pick-up was filled with food and household items, along with cash. We gathered hundreds of pounds of food and cash to help feed our hungry neighbors.
- **Transformational Ministry:** Even before the pandemic started, a group (from GPR/Living Grace) began working with the Northwestern MN Synod and Rev. Rick Morse to ask key questions and look to our future and how we might be a transformative church, addressing the needs of our communities and congregations. We had great conversation and started dreaming of what our future could look like.

2021 Highlights:

- Living Grace continued Worshipping online (YouTube, Facebook link and website) only through June, 2021. We also offered a Thursday evening Fellowship gathering time on Zoom.
- **June 2021:** Began worshipping in-person on Tuesday evenings, returned to Sunday mornings in October.
- **On-going:** Continued partnership with GPR to provide online worship services. Phase One of Online Ministry with GPR/LG Partnership was to set up Rollag with livestreaming equipment/software through financial donations and memorial gifts. Phase Two will include developing a Mobile Recording Unit to use at Gran, Park, and Living Grace, and outdoors at Rollag.
- **Women's Mutual Ministry** Online Book Study continued through 2021 meeting 2x/month. An Advent Prayer Retreat was held at Rollag Lutheran.

Our Ministry and mission continues...where will the next 10 years lead us? This is what Jesus instructed his disciples – and us – to do: This is what our future is focused on:

Jesus, undeterred, went right ahead and gave his charge [to the disciples]:

“God authorized and commanded me to commission you: Go out and train everyone you meet, far and near, in this way of life, marking them by baptism in the threefold name: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Then instruct them in the practice of all I have commanded you. I’ll be with you as you do this, day after day after day, right up to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:18-20, The MSG)