

A HISTORY OF GRACE



**"FOR IT IS BY GRACE YOU HAVE BEEN SAVED, THROUGH FAITH -
AND THIS IS NOT FROM YOURSELVES, IT IS THE GIFT OF GOD."
EPHESIANS 2:8**

**THE HISTORY OF
GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH
1996-2020**

Sturgis, South Dakota

**Published by
The Grace Lutheran Church
100th Anniversary Committee
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Preface – Pastor Kris Garlick.....	4
Governor’s and Mayor’s Proclamations.....	5-6
Greetings from the Bishop and Former Pastors.....	7-9
Looking Back From 1920-1995.....	10-15
History of Grace Lutheran 1996-2020.....	16-44
Interviews with the longtime members of Grace Lutheran	
DeWayne Hayes.....	45
Eldon Herring.....	45
Dode Lee.....	46
Ruth and Bob Mechling.....	47
Arvid and Paulette Meland.....	48
Ernie and Eleanora Miller.....	52
Vicki Monahan.....	48-49
Eileen and John Raforth.....	50
Ted and Eva Sigman.....	51
Mary Ann Stroschein.....	52
Church Staff 1996-2020.....	53-54
Presidents of Church Council/GLCW.....	55
Confirmation Classes.....	56-58
Photographs.....	59-62
Photographs of Pastors.....	63

Every day - 100 years of Grace!

It is with humble gratitude that I contribute to the Grace Lutheran Church's 100th Anniversary writings. I recall the eager anticipation and excitement around planning a yearlong celebration for the Centennial. Then, little did we know, the COVID-19 pandemic would bring the world to its knees in February 2020.

Closures happened and changes were made to the way we worship. But through it all, God's graciousness has not lapsed. Blessings still abound at this church.

What is God's plan for the next 100 years? Only God knows. Yet, if I know God's people at Grace Lutheran, they welcome it - they will receive our Lord, Jesus Christ, with great joy and hope.

God's blessings Grace,
Pastor Kris Garlick
(2017- Current)

"Look, I myself will be with you every day until the end of this present age." (Matthew 28:20)



EXECUTIVE PROCLAMATION
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA

WHEREAS, on October 27, 1920, Grace Lutheran Church Congregation was established; and

WHEREAS, the Congregation worshipped in the old Sturgis City Hall until a church building was completed in 1928; and

WHEREAS, on July 10, 1960, the present church building was dedicated; and

WHEREAS, Grace Lutheran has served the spiritual needs of its members and the community for 100 years; and

WHEREAS, the theme for this day will be Embracing a Century of Grace; and

WHEREAS, Grace Lutheran Congregation offers thanks to God for the love, mercy and opportunity God has shown them for 100 years.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, KRISTI NOEM, Governor of the State of South Dakota, do hereby proclaim October 25, 2020, as

GRACE LUTHERAN DAY

in South Dakota.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused to be affixed the Great Seal of the State of South Dakota, in Pierre, the Capital City, this Twenty-eighth Day of September in the Year of Our Lord, Two Thousand and Twenty.



Kristi Noem
Governor of South Dakota

ATTEST:

Steven J. Barnett
Secretary of State

**GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH
100 YEAR PROCLAMATION**

Whereas, as October 25, 2020 has been proclaimed as Grace Lutheran Church Day: and,

Whereas, on October 27, 1920 Grace Lutheran Congregation was established; and,

Whereas, the Congregation worshipped in the old Sturgis City Hall until a church building was completed in 1928; and,


Whereas, on July 10, 1960 the present church building was dedicated; and,

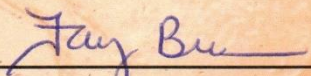
Whereas, Grace Lutheran has served the spiritual life of its members and the community for 100 years; and,

Whereas, the theme of this day will be a Century of Grace; and,

Whereas, Grace Lutheran Congregation offers thanks to God for the love, mercy and opportunity which God has shown them for 100 years and pray that God will grant us the same love, mercy and opportunity over the next century and beyond; now

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that I, MARK CARSTENSEN, Mayor of the City of Sturgis, do hereby proclaim October 25, 2020 as Grace Lutheran Day.

Signed 
Mark Carstensen, Mayor

Attest 
Fay Bueno, Finance Officer



South Dakota Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

October 25, 2020

Pastor Kris Garlick
Grace Lutheran Church
PO Box 577
Sturgis, SD 57785-0577

Dear Pastor Kris and Members,

Siblings in Christ, grace and peace to you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit! - "Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever." (Psalm 118:1) Today, I pause to give thanks to God for your faithful ministry over the last 100 years. Because of your faithfulness to the guidance and love of God's holy Word, new believers, children and adults alike have been welcomed and cared for by God through the sacraments. Thank you for being Christ to people that seek to be in relationship with Grace Lutheran and its people.

Together we are church, it is a delight and joy to be in partnership with you now. But I also pause to give thanks for all the saints that have gone before us, that have faithfully labored on building Grace Lutheran Church, oftentimes this faithful labor came with great personal sacrifice. I would invite us to be mindful of the legacy these faithful saints gone before us have left us to nurture and continue with the same dedication and faithfulness in an ever changing world.

Let us pray: "We thank you, Lord God, for brave and believing people who planted your message in this place. We praise you for the gift of your Holy Spirit, who worked in them to gather and give order to this community, and those who still sustain it. Remembering all those who have gone before us, we pray that we may follow as they followed, in the way, the truth, and the life, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen." (ELW pg. 75)

God's blessings be upon you today, and in the future, as you continue to serve and witness in Jesus' name.

In Christ,

Bishop Constanze Hagmaier
South Dakota Synod, ELCA

cc: Synod Congregation File

PASTOR WILL AND HELEN OLSEN'S ANNIVERSARY GREETINGS

The Johnny Appleseed grace begins, "O the Lord is good to me, and so I thank the Lord." As you, the people of God at Grace Lutheran Church, celebrate this centennial, these words run true. For one hundred years, the Lord has been good to you. Not every day, of course, but over the long span of years, your congregation has been blessed to be a blessing. Providing ministry has been done --- to ranchers and farmers of Meade county, merchants and workers of Sturgis, administrators, teachers and students in the schools, soldiers, federal workers and patients at Fort Meade. You have diligently spread the Gospel and shared responsive service to all of them.

The face of this community is different because you are here and have been here to make a difference --- all for the sake of Jesus. He has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light and sent you into the world to make a difference --- and you have responded with your service, witness and community leadership. Thus, it is fitting to set aside these days of celebration to thank the Lord and the Lord's people here. May you know the joy of sharing grace with your community for at least another 100 years. Congratulations as you continue to know and share God's blessing.

Peace be with you! Pastor Will and Helen Olsen

GREETINGS FROM REV. SUSAN FOX (WIFE OF REV. MICHAEL J. FOX, 2006-2011)

Greetings Members of Grace Lutheran Church!

I have so very many precious memories of our time in ministry. Surely Pastor Mike would have been right in the midst of all the activities! Thank you for the kind invitation to send this letter of greeting.

As you know, my life drastically changed on September 11, 2011, at the death of my beloved husband, Rev. Michael J. Fox. Through the grace of God, I was ordained in 2010 and have served parishes in Buffalo, SD, Viroqua, WI, and currently in Ridgway, PA. I did say to God that if He insists on moving me east, I will soon be in the ocean! However, I walk by faith, and trust in His perfect plan (and do not believe I will serve on a cruise ship).

In celebrating with you on the 100th anniversary of Grace's ministry, I am reminded of these powerful words:

*God's word is our Great Heritage
And shall be ours forever;
To spread its light from age to age
Shall be our chief endeavor.
Through life it guides our way;
In death it is our stay.
Lord, grant while time shall last
Your church may hold fast
Throughout all generations.*

Please accept my warmest and most sincere wishes for a beautiful and memorable celebration. As brothers and sisters in Christ's church, we share a mutual desire to grow in God's grace and to serve Him in the ways that please Him. May your celebration be a time of renewal and commitment as you strive to serve Him in the next 100 years. God has faithfully and richly blessed your congregation. May He continue to do so *'throughout all generations.'*

For the love of Christ,
Rev. Susan E. Fox

GREETINGS FROM REV. BOB AND SUSIE WAITE

Dear Grace Lutheran Congregation,

Let me begin by quoting The Apostle Paul in his letter to the Philippians, Chapter 1:3ff (NIV): "I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus....And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ – to the glory and praise of God."

For my part, I have not taken another position as pastor since leaving Sturgis, although I have served as an interim pastor and officiated at many funerals and weddings. I served as the West River Red Cross Chaplain for several years, and Susie and I became teachers and disaster consultants for the Red Cross and the State of South Dakota. Since 2007, we have worked disaster relief for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) before finally retiring last year.

I am happy to be in contact with many of you and with Grace in Sturgis through Facebook. Although not a big user of modern technology, I am thankful for the ability it affords me to have continued relationships with you and others. Seriously, who takes the time to sit down and write a letter these days? Not many, I'm afraid.

Susie and I would prefer to greet everyone in person, and break bread together in a Sunday morning worship service. But since that is not possible, please know that we are thinking about you all and praying for you as you celebrate your anniversary.

May God's richest blessings be with you all as you continue to gather in His name and proclaim His word.

Together in faith and Our Lord's service,
Pastor Bob and Susie Waite

LOOKING BACK 1920 -1995

(Taken from the 1995 history compiled by Bob Lee and Rev. James Olson with references recorded in their volume and the 1960 dedication of the new church building)

Old-timers remember some Lutheran services held at Alkali before 1918. But in the year 1918, Rev. Halvor Jensson of Rapid City held Lutheran services in the old Sturgis City Hall, thus beginning the work which led to the present congregation. Pastor Jensson left this territory that same year and a missionary and Norwegian Synod pastor, Rev. N.A. Stermo, conducted about three services.

Bethel Lutheran Congregation of Lead, organized 25 years before, was encouraged by the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America to minister to Sturgis. On Pentecost Sunday, May 23, 1920, the Rev. A. H. Trygstad of Lead, conducted services in the City Hall. Two services were conducted in June. Near the end of the second service, a discussion was held as to the possibility of organizing an English Lutheran Congregation in Sturgis. Temporary officers were appointed to prepare a constitution and the group decided to hold services on the second and fourth Sundays of the month. With the help of Rev. Trygstad, a Ladies Aid was organized on June 26, 1920. The Ladies Aid became an important factor in the growth and development of the congregation.

At a Harvest Festival held in the Sturgis City Hall on October 27, 1920, the constitution committee reported and presented the model constitution of the NLCA to the group. The model constitution was adopted unanimously as read, except that voting membership was extended to both males age 21 and over and females age 18 and over.

Young people met monthly in their homes, riding horseback to attend confirmation classes. They were confirmed in 1922 at the Whitewood Church, because at that time, Sturgis was still without a church building. Among these youngsters was Charlotte Lehmann Orr who remained a member of Grace Lutheran Church well past her 100th birthday.

Rev. Trygstad, who served Whitewood, Lead, and Sturgis, resigned in December of 1922 and was succeeded by Rev. M. E. Hauge, who served until March 1925. At the time, the membership was about 18 women and 8 -10 men. Rev. Hauge, together with the Ladies Aid Secretary, Mrs. John Hoel, were chiefly responsible for the campaign which raised enough funds to make possible definite steps for the building of a church. Rev. Hauge and Mrs. Hoel organized a building fund campaign among women's groups throughout the Norwegian Lutheran Church in America. Some 2,500 letters were sent out and the ladies netted \$2,600 for building purposes. On December 21, 1924, Mrs. W.A. Thurston, president of the Ladies Aid, presented the deed to the lots on the corner of First and Sherman Streets as a Christmas gift to the congregation.

Rev. Hauge resigned to accept a call in Minnesota and in March of 1925, Rev. R.C. Storsteen, provided two worship services a month at a salary of \$225. By 1927, fourteen families claimed membership. and Rev. R.O. Aga and Rev. E.G. Sihler had conducted occasional services. The Rev. O.G. Malmin was installed on June 19, 1927, and in the fall the first Sunday School was held.

From 1920 to 1926, the congregation considered the construction of a church building. Two building plans were discussed – one with and one without a basement. 16 votes were cast for the basement plan and 10 for the plan with above ground rooms. Plans were drawn for a 30 x 50 stucco building with N.B. Keffeler receiving the contract. The Cornerstone Laying took place on September 25, 1927. The first worship service was held in the new church building on December 11, 1927, one of the coldest days of that winter.

Rev. Malmin resigned on July 1, 1928 and Rev. Irvin Suby came to serve both the Whitewood and Sturgis congregations. Soon after, financial effects of the Depression were beginning to be felt by the congregation. Payment of Pastor Suby's salary began to lag. He asked for a 3-month vacation without pay because of ill health and upon his return, he submitted his resignation. The congregation called Rev. O.M. Skindrud, under whose leadership, the ministry and congregational activities grew.

At a special meeting on April 16, 1935, the congregation voted to purchase lots east of the church building for a parsonage. The lots were purchased from R.E. Sparks for \$350 and on January 12, 1937, it was reported that \$3,082.93 had been spent on building the parsonage, just \$8.07 under receipts for it.

Several pastors were called after the resignation of Rev. Skindrud in January of 1940. Rev. Ralph Okland arrived as pastor of Grace, as well as Whitewood and Newell. Early in 1941, a Board of Deacons was organized. In 1942, Newell called their own pastor. Rev. Okland was then able to devote more time to serving Sturgis. He served the Armed Forces as a Chaplain from 1942-1944. He held services and counseled at Ft. Meade, as well as worked with the German prisoners of war that were brought here from Ft. Robinson, Nebraska, to help with the sugar beet harvest at Vale.

In 1945, Grace Lutheran celebrated its 25th Anniversary. Rev. Suby returned to deliver the message for the day. Rev. Okland served until October of 1946. He reported a substantial growth in the membership. The post-war years prompted growth in religious membership. Rev. E. Melvin Bremer was installed on January 14, 1947. At his installation, the new pastor and his family received gifts of groceries and cash at the potluck dinner and program. Pastor Bremer recalled:

“We'll never forget our trip from Butte, Montana, to Sturgis...For three days we drove with our old Ford, pulling a two-wheeled trailer in a snowstorm over the mountains and then below zero weather.....We arrived at the Sturgis parsonage after dark on the 3rd day. The lights were all on. It was warm...and even the beds were made. What a welcome! What a surprise and blessing!”

The polio epidemic hit Sturgis in late spring of 1948, forcing Bible School to be rescheduled. The community Board of Health's action to ban public events or limit attendance at events such as high school commencement also prompted rescheduling the annual congregational picnic and service in the Sturgis City Park.

In 1950, a new Sunday School building (Parish House) was completed. Membership was growing and numbered 457 by 1952. The congregation voted to hire Miss Ruth Goetz as the first parish worker. She taught 34 kindergarten students, high school Bible class, mid-week Bible hour on Wednesdays, and 5th and 6th graders (who were released early from school on Fridays for religious training). She assisted with Luther League, Ladies Aid evening circles and chapel services, attended Sunday School meetings and directed Christmas programs for the primary department. Late in May of 1954, (after the resignation of Pastor Bremer in late 1953), Miss Goetz resigned to care for her ill parents. Miss Verna Syverson accepted a call as parish worker in 1954 and in 1956, that position was filled by Miss Margaret Snedeker. Miss Lenore Anderson of DeKalb, Illinois, came in June of 1958.

Rev. Verlyn O. Smith accepted a call in July of 1954. As the congregation grew, the need for a larger church became more and more evident. After careful consideration, the congregation voted to build a new church instead of enlarging the old church. Shortly after, Pastor Smith accepted an instructor of religion position at Augustana College.

Rev. Harvey A. Grote arrived in April of 1956. It was during his ministry, the congregation voted unanimously to build a new church. The congregation elected a 23-member building committee to oversee construction of a new church. Ground-breaking ceremonies were held on May 24th, 1959. The original church was sold to Trinity Lutheran Church of the Wisconsin Evangelical Synod and moved to a site on the corner of Baldwin and Marshall Streets in Sturgis. During the building phase, Sunday services were held at the Dakota Theater on Main Street. Dedication of the new church building took place on May 12, 1960. Mr. and Mrs. E.E. Grunwald's son-in-law, Robert J. Aldern, art instructor at the University of South Dakota, completed a mural on the west wall that summer.

In April of 1960, the long association with Immanuel Lutheran in Whitewood ended. Also, in April, Pastor Grote and Russell Molstad attended the Constituting Convention at which a new church was formed. It combined the old American Lutheran Church, Evangelical Lutheran, and United Evangelical Lutheran Church. In May, for a short time, Sunday services were held at the drive-in theater east of Spearfish. Lenore Anderson resigned as Parish Worker.

Intern Jon Simundson began a one-year assignment to Grace in 1961. He organized a community church survey in cooperation with seven other Sturgis churches. Results from the survey prompted Rev. Grote and Simundson to make many personal calls to prospective members. He also followed up on Sturgis Welcome Service visits to newcomers to the community who identified themselves as Lutheran or unchurched. He and his family left in August of 1962.

In 1963, a new church constitution and by-laws were adopted, which eliminated the Board of Trustees, Deacons and Deaconesses, and substituted a Congregational Council. The Council decided to hire Joy Daum to work in the church office. Rev. Grote resigned and Chaplain Herbert Cleveland of the Ft. Meade VA Hospital was named Interim Pastor.

Rev. Roy Gilbertson began serving in April 1964. First National Bank purchased the two lots on which the parsonage had stood. The church moved the building and filled in the basement. Proceeds from the sales were used to build a new parsonage on a Fleet Street lot. Many volunteers

helped build the new parsonage. Pastor Gilbertson and his family stayed in the homes of congregation members until the new parsonage was ready.

In 1964, the congregation voted to sponsor delayed broadcasts of the Sunday worship service every week over KBHB radio station. In the beginning, the council agreed to pay for the unsponsored broadcasts. For a while, the men's Lutheran Brotherhood picked up the cost. Eventually, in 1980, broadcasts became self-supporting through sponsors from the congregation.

The constant need for roof repairs dominated much of the council business throughout 1965-1967. A loan for \$5,000 was obtained for a new roof. Lengthy negotiations with the architect ended in a small settlement. The funds went for repayment of loans secured for roof repairs.

During Pastor Gilbertson's tenure, the ecumenical Blue Hare Youth Center was established in the Parish House basement. It gave the youth of the community a place to meet on a regular basis for wholesome, chaperoned activities arranged by a Youth Council.

In April of 1968, Rev. Gilbertson accepted a call to North Dakota and subsequently became Bishop of the Western North Dakota Synod. (He died unexpectedly while vacationing in Montana in 1988.) Chaplain Cleveland again filled the vacancy until Rev. Gerald Christopherson came in September of 1968. He became known as 'Pastor Chris.' He maintained his flying skills as a pilot for the SD Air National Guard. He served Grace for over 13 years and his time was marked with many improvements to the physical facilities of the church, changes to the constitution, and the purging of non-participants from the membership rolls. The cry room was added, carpet installed in the nave, chancel and Parish House, and the Parish House and the parsonage basement were remodeled. Other projects included the repair of the church roof (again), addition of a garage at the parsonage, and the placement of new steel siding on the parsonage. In addition, a Memorial Plaque was erected, a sound system placed in the church, and Embassy Carillon chimes controlled by a 24-note organ keyboard installed with memorial funds. Changes to worship included the use of contemporary as well as traditional forms of worship, pastoral exchanges with the local Methodist Church during the summer, and the participation of children in communion before confirmation. Following the disastrous Black Hills flood of June 1972, Grace distributed financial aid to its members who had sustained losses.

Grace joined in the Sturgis/Fort Meade Centennial in 1978 by hosting a Centennial-themed Father-Son Banquet with period material borrowed from the Old Fort Meade Museum. The congregation formed an "Over Thirty" club and attended family retreats at Outlaw Ranch. The Black Hills Motorcycle Classic gave the GLCW an opportunity to serve breakfast in the church basement. This generated funds for many church projects

In 1976, the congregation voted to sponsor eight members of a Laotian refugee family. Somsak (Sam) and his wife, Noi, along with six sons arrived in October. Many in the congregation helped them settle into the community. The congregation borrowed \$9,000 for a mobile home for them and assisted Sam in finding a job as a school custodian and Loi as a motel maid.

A monthly newsletter called Grace Notes, edited by parish secretary Rita Boy, was mailed to each member. The newsletter continues to be published. The council initiated the newsletter to better inform the congregation of timely news from the council, GLCW, Sunday School, and committees.

Pastor Chris had a reputation as an excellent singer and often demonstrated it at church and community functions. Grace Lutheran was host to the annual community Christmas concert featuring the combined choirs of most of the Sturgis churches. The event started in 1979 and continued at Grace for 12 years until the new Community Center Theater was built.

Pastor Chris resigned in 1982, as he had accepted a position as Chaplain at the Rapid City Regional Hospital. Office secretaries who served while he was pastor were Barbara Pierce, Joyce Hanson, Stella Hilburn, Sandra Sigman, and Rita Boy, who began her work in March 1979.

Rev. Harold Verhulst accepted Grace's call in the spring of 1982. During his time, the youth group initiated the Thanksgiving meal to senior citizens 70 and over. A new sound system was installed from memorial funds and air conditioning was installed in the parsonage. In August, the GLCW had made a profit of \$3,476 at the Motorcycle Rally breakfasts. The first of a series of Valentine's Day "Sweetheart Nights," honoring congregation members with significant wedding anniversaries, became an annual affair. It was during Rev. Verhulst's tenure that delegates to the 1984 ALC National Convention voted to form the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. This merged the ALC, the Lutheran Church in America, and the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches. This united 5,376,000 Lutherans in one church body. Grace became a member of the Bear Butte Conference of the SD Synod.

In 1985, the church amended the church by-laws to lower the voting age of members from eighteen to their age at the time of confirmation. It also voted to employ Joe Severson of Mission Hill, SD, as Director of Youth and Education. Then, in 1987, the congregation decided to consider expanding the church and Parish House. They voted to hire an architect to design a joint facility. In 1988, the congregation sponsored another refugee family, Yohannes and Meaza Belayeah of Ethiopia. They were houseguests of John and Eileen Raforth until housing could be found for them. They relocated to Hartford, Connecticut, within a few months.

At the annual meeting in 1989, the congregation ratified its new constitution which followed the guidelines set forth by the ELCA. The GLCW came to the rescue again and paid for the roof repair. Joe Severson developed health problems and a special offering was sent to him in Minneapolis where he was undergoing treatment. A serious fire occurred on September 2, 1989, causing more than \$30,000 in damages to the Parish House. A meeting resulted in a decision to remodel the Parish House and connect it to the church on two levels. Temporary classrooms were provided by Tom Monahan, Jan Weir, and the Kinkade Funeral Chapel and a church office was set up in the nearby Norwest Bank building.

In 1990, Joe Severson, who was completing five years in parish work, announced that he had accepted a position as assistant spiritual director for a WHEAT team. Pastor Verhulst accepted a call to Tea, SD, ending his 8 years at Grace Lutheran. Rev. Jack Hill and Rev. Clarence Jacobsen rotated

in the pulpit until Rev. Gene Peterson began his interim service. He finished his interim in 1991 when Rev. James B. Olson answered Grace's call. Pastor Jim moved to Sturgis bringing his innumerable boxes of collectibles. His snow village displays each Christmas were a highlight for the season. Children's messages were made a regular part of the worship services as he was impressed with the participation of children in worship.

Shortly before Olson's first Christmas in Sturgis, the congregation received a gift of more than \$270,000 from the estate of the late Rose Blair, who had been active in the church's affairs. The bequest was designated for an educational unit in memory of her late husband, Strauther, and their daughter, Beverly. Strauther, besides having been president of the congregation, had been a leader in its building programs. Beverly, who had served as church organist for a time, died of a brain tumor in her senior year at St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota. Much of the work had already been completed and the renovated facility was in use when the bequest was received. The Blair legacy enabled the congregation to repay the mortgage balance of \$150,000 at a savings of over \$200,000 in long-term interest payments. \$50,000 of the Blair bequest was invested in an Endowment Fund to enhance the mission outreach of Grace Lutheran apart from the general operations of the congregation. The Endowment Fund was enhanced by gifts from the Anita Matz estate and an anonymous donor, growing to \$61,948 at the end of 1994. Dedication of the Blair Educational Unit occurred on Sunday, November 8, 1992.

Pastor Olson pushed for early planning for the 1995 75th anniversary of the church. Sturgis Mayor Chris (Bob) Mechling proclaimed June 24-25 as "Grace Lutheran Days" in Sturgis. A Reunion Banquet and Festival Worship Service were held with "Lift High the Cross" as the theme of the observance. An informal open house in the Fellowship Hall offered an opportunity to renew old acquaintances and celebrate the life of Grace Lutheran. A valuable history of Grace was written by Bob Lee (an author and local historian) and Pastor Olson.

Significant improvements were celebrated, all financed with memorials, gifts from members, and contributions from the Grace Lutheran Church Women. An elevator and new furnace for the main church building was installed, the Fellowship Hall renovated, brick siding was added to the east side of the parish House, and the sanctuary windows were painted. Once again, the church roof needed repair. Grace's local artist Evelyn Morrison beautified the kitchen with her rosemaling. A new Allen organ was purchased in 1992 and a digital piano for contemporary worship was purchased in 1994. The GLCW Rally week breakfast earnings aided significantly to many of the projects.

By the annual meeting in 1995, the church membership had grown to 733 baptized and 59 confirmed. The South Dakota Synod elected the second woman to become an ELCA bishop when the post went to Rev. Andrea DeGroot-Nesdahl of Bismark, North Dakota. This closed the first 75 years in the history of Grace Lutheran.

THE NEXT 25 YEARS

1996 – Pastor – James Olson, Office Manager – Rita Boy

After the 75th anniversary of the establishment of Grace Lutheran in 1995, the church continued its strong path as part of the Sturgis community. Deb Haivala, President of the Church Council handed the chairmanship to Dan Boy. Leadership synod-wide came from Bishop Andrea DeGroot-Nesdahl, who came to preach during the Sturgis Rally on August 4th. It was also a working trip when she was found flipping pancakes the next morning in the basement for the Rally Breakfast.

The radio broadcast continued to bring the good news of salvation to the KBHB listening audience. Listeners heard the voices of Arvid Meland, Seth Kunert, Bob Bender, Bob Haivala, and Ken Krueger share the news offered during Sunday services. Assisting ministers heard on the radio were Margie Hershey, Seth Kunert, Carla Alexander, Bonnie Matlick, and Deb Enright.

Grace Lutheran Women continued their outreach mission by purchasing a mixer/bread maker machine for Outlaw Ranch. Many campers reaped the benefits of freshly-baked bread and rolls lovingly made in this machine. The women quilters received accolades from KOTA-TV and the Rapid City Journal for the hundreds of quilts made and sent worldwide. This publicity generated a \$25 donation plus public interest and many inquiries. GLCW hosted the Bear Butte Fall Women's Retreat at Outlaw Ranch with the Olympic theme, "You Can Be A Winner." The steering committee, which included Lynette Kvanvig, Evelyn Morrison, Liane Meyer, and Marlene Kotab, developed an Olympics theme. Margie Hershey led the Bible studies and Pastor Jack Hill assisted at the communion service.

Other dollars were gathered for the worldwide mission of the South Dakota Synod. The Synod challenged each member to give one dollar for a Cameroon roof project and one dime for education in that area. Cameroon was named our sister synod in Africa and held a special spot in Grace Lutheran's hearts and minds. Matching funds from Lutheran Brotherhood, together with GLCW funds, helped erect new roofs for churches in Cameroon.

Jeff Homann, Sturgis High School senior, received a \$750 PACT (Parish and College Together) Scholarship. This scholarship was in partnership with Augustana College in Sioux Falls.

Grace was pleased to help celebrate the 75th anniversary of Immanuel Lutheran in Whitewood on September 8th. Some members had a special association with this church, especially longtime member Charlotte Orr, who was confirmed there when Grace had no building of its own at that time.

Pastor Olson reported that three crises in Sturgis called for the formulation of a crisis intervention policy and team for the high school. He noted that recent crises had been very draining. Most tragic was the death of teenager Sara Williams who was killed in a car accident. He regretted that there was no team for grief counseling for our youth. A crisis team was soon formed to help the youth through these emotional tragedies.

GLCW hosted the confirmation reception at the parsonage on October 26. To celebrate the Christmas season, they helped Pastor Olson host an open house on December 22 to display his antiques and Christmas village. It was a blessed time of fellowship and fun with the Grace family.

1997 – Pastor – James Olson, Office Manager – Rita Boy

The spring of 1997 found the youth of Grace Lutheran busy raising money for a trip to a youth event in Texas. Arvid and Paulette Meland coordinated the Easter breakfast served by the high schoolers and donations went to fund the Texas trip. Their 1996 trip to New Orleans to the Youth Conference had been canceled because there were more registrants than could be allowed at the gathering. As an alternative, youth that were not allowed to attend the New Orleans Gathering, now attended a Global Missions Event. Eighteen of our youth and three chaperones traveled by bus and took part in volunteer work with other youth from across the country. The youth also received a \$500 grant from Aid Association for Lutherans and shopped for children at the Rockerville Children's Home. Later in the year they drew names from the Angel Tree and bought gifts for 23 children in the Sturgis area who were suggested by Social Services.

The women of Grace continued their mission work. Besides the quilts and kits that were sent abroad, the women took charge of a sweater drive. Over 600 sweaters were collected, boxed, and sent to Lutheran World Relief. With a matching grant of \$450 from Lutheran Brotherhood, a substantial donation was sent to Cameroon for metal roofs for unfinished churches.

A joyful celebration was held in honor of the 100th birthday of Mary Hildebrand, a faithful servant of Grace Lutheran. Many attended the party and signed a giant birthday card for this centenarian. Mary was also honored by Black Hills State University with the presentation of an honorary degree. Other awards were given to children just beginning their journey of faith. Perfect attendance pins were awarded to Sunday School students in May. Teachers and leaders were recognized for their contributions to Grace's education program.

Helen Miller was thanked for her continued work with the Welcoming Committee. She and her committee members had visited sixty households since the committee's inception. Of those, eighteen units joined the church. Volunteers called on people who had filled out visitor cards at a service to welcome them and give them information about the church.

To encourage the idea of evangelism through fellowship, a new program called 2x4 groups was implemented. Members gathered in small groups to share a meal and conversation. Many friendships were cemented during these times of fellowship.

Anna Ginter, on behalf of the Grace Lutheran Church Women, requested permission from the Church Council and the congregation to designate the Parish Commons Area as the Rose Room. This designation would honor Rose Blair, whose generous estate helped fund the education/office addition to the church. All agreed to the request and with that, the room was decorated with rose accents in Rose's honor.

The year was not totally filled with joyful happenings. Pastor Olson was diagnosed with pneumonia. Blizzards affected attendance and services had to be canceled. Flooding and weather-related issues had Lutheran Social Services requesting Christmas gifts for flood and blizzard victims and their families. Grace was affected with lower attendance and lower offerings affected the budget. The weather cleared for Christmas and Pastor Olson held an open house at the parsonage on December 21st. He had an amazing showing of his large snow village collection. The season ended with Pastor

reporting that the Christmas services had the highest attendance since 1986 – approximately 600 people celebrated Jesus’ birth. Lutherans were still staying faithful even through their hardships.

1998 – Pastor – James Olson, Office Manager - Rita Boy

Church Council President Dean Rasmuson called for a Congregational Leadership Retreat early in January of 1998. It was a productive retreat in which congregants discussed past accomplishments and targeted improvements or changes to the ministry for the future. Long-range goals were identified for the anticipated growth of the church.

A 4% membership growth was evident with many New Member Sundays. March 22nd saw the welcome of 8 new units with 24 new members. Seven new families joined in August and two new families of five each joined in November. To give these and all members a service choice, Grace began holding Saturday evening services for the summer. Grace was growing and implementing suggestions from the Leadership Retreat.

Grace was looking to the future with the completion of a webpage. Darrell and Edie Schanbeck and Christian Kotab helped the church step into the future when the page was put online on August 21st. After that first day, the council was pleased to announce that several emails came into the church.

Mission work – spiritually and physically – was very evident with the visit to our sister synod in Cameroon, Africa. John and Eileen Raforth, along with Bishop Andrea DeGroot-Nesdahl, and 20 others, visited the African nation from November 8th – December 6th. John shared with and taught his veterinary skills to a group that raised cattle. Eileen taught nutrition and sewing to the women in the villages. The South Dakota Synod asked congregations to help support this mission. \$5,000 built a new roof and \$3,000 could fund a motorcycle. Grace supported the mission as it participated in a Love Offering of items such as medical supplies, school supplies, and children’s items. The supplies were packed and shipped to Cameroon to arrive there the same time as the South Dakota delegation. Grace was proud to send some of its own members to help with such an important project. Participation in this project increased the church’s awareness of the global mission of the church.

Other mission work came in the form of offering office space to Lutheran Social Services. In May, the congregation voted to allow space in the Parish House for counseling services. Many were helped because of the convenient space. Funding became available from other community sources to those who could not financially afford counseling.

Education in all forms remained a priority for the church. Grace continued its relationship with Augustana College by participating in the PACT (Parish and College Together) Scholarship Program. Lisa Flage was the honored Regent Scholar who received \$550. Vacation Bible School was coordinated in partnership with First Presbyterian Church for 4-year-olds to 6th graders. The fall education leaders were Deb Haivala and Lesli Swanson acting as Sunday School Coordinators, Betsy Luptak as Lay Coordinator for Confirmation, and Shawn Mechling as Youth Forum Coordinator.

Improvements to the church meant continued brick work, including tuckpointing to the outside of the building. An anonymous \$4,000 donation along with a gift from the Grace Lutheran Women

were thankfully received and used for the project. Beautification also came from the Sturgis Pride Committee in the form of 400 petunias which the Worship Committee planted around the church. (They requested additional help for further plantings!) Offerings continued to grow with general giving ahead of the previous year and a \$4,670.22 income above the budget. Air-conditioning for the sanctuary continued to be a point of conversation by the council.

Nationwide, the ELCA passed a "Formula of Agreement" with the Presbyterian, United, and Reformed Churches. This meant that barriers were removed between these churches and all could share communion and ministers. To celebrate, First Presbyterian and Grace Lutheran held an October 18th joint service to acknowledge the Formula and to recognize each other's ministries. It was a step forward in unifying people of faith and a recognition of our call to a common mission in Sturgis.

On December 6th, between 50 and 60 people decorated the church for the Christmas celebration. The fun continued with a soup supper, hayride, and caroling at the nursing home. Grace was indeed grateful for a year filled with blessings.

1999 – Pastor - James Olson, Office Manager – Rita Boy

In the cold month of January 1999, Grace Lutheran was finally seeking bids to install air conditioning in the church and parish house. This process still involved many months of planning and 3 bids were finalized in July. After lengthy discussion by the council, ACCU TEMP's bid was accepted. The church was 'cooled down' in August after many years of discussion and delays.

Other large expenses for the upkeep of the building included an exterior painting project. Black Hills Painting finished the church exterior work for \$9,769 in the summer of 1999. The indoor carpet fund continued to grow. Pastor Olson reported that Peggy Glaeseman had given a donation of \$3,000 toward new carpeting.

In his report to the congregation, Pastor Olson prayed "that the Holy Spirit would continue to guide the congregation into becoming a servant people who live with a sense of commitment, celebration, and willingness to share the love of Jesus Christ with one another and to all people." Grace held fast to those words as committed members were celebrated for their work for the church and for those outside of the church.

Highlights for our members included special recognition of Rita Boy. The church celebrated her 20th anniversary of employment as the church secretary. A cake was ordered and shared with all on Sunday, March 21. John and Eileen Raforth were thanked for mission work in Cameroon in 1998. Raforths shared stories about the trip and displayed many items from Africa. Council leadership changed during the year with the presidency handed to Linda Black. President Ken Kruegar had resigned because of a change of residency.

Lenten services were shared with the First Presbyterians and provided a rich opportunity for fellowship and preparation for Easter. Although the stormy, cold weather continued into the Easter season and especially into Holy Week, 50 brave souls attended an Easter Sunrise Service at the Rotunda at the National Cemetery. The other Easter Services were also well-attended.

Fall found the congregation busy with back-to-school activities and family gatherings led by the Evangelism/Parish Life Committee under the leadership of Jeff Ward. A 'Banana Split' Carnival and Family Night was planned for September 19. 7th-12th grade students organized the event with see-through ice cream boats donated by 'Lil Dipper and a rain spout from Campbell Supply. Everyone enjoyed the creation of a giant banana split and all relished the icy treat. The event showcased the Especially Jazz Band, and the children enjoyed popcorn, balloons, and face painting. That fall, two Scholarships were awarded to Cara Luptak and Lisa Flage. These two Grace Lutheran women would continue their education at Augustana College.

The Grace Lutheran Church Women continued their mission work with fall quilting and Bible studies. They gave a special thank-you quilt to Pro Rodeo Hall of Famer, Marvin Garrett, for his program at the Father-Son Banquet. 3,828 people were served at the Rally breakfast which was co-chaired by Paulette Meland and Eileen Raforth. Because of this project, the women's group was able to send \$1,000 to Lutheran World Relief for 'Project Comfort'. Names could be sent to be engraved on stones at the National Headquarters Building. GLCW submitted the names of Minnie Harris and Mary Hildebrandt, longtime members, and quilters of Grace. GLCW also voted to donate \$2,200 for the air-conditioning, \$2,500 to Cameroon for a motorcycle, \$800 to the Grace Youth for the Youth Gathering expenses, \$300 to Lutheran Social Services and \$1,400 to the Mission Investment Fund. Because of the Lutheran Social Service contribution by the GLCW, private funds, and other churches' donations, counseling services continued at the Grace location.

All photographs had been taken for a new church directory to be released in the new year and all was in place for the turnover to the new millennium beginning January 1st, 2000. The country waited in fervent anticipation for the new century.

2000 – Pastor – James Olson, Office Manager – Rita Boy

2000 was a memorable year for Grace Lutheran as it celebrated its 80th anniversary of the founding of the congregation. Although the observance was low-key, a highlight was the visit of Pastor Harvey Grote and wife Cora in June. Pastor Grote was installed at Grace in April of 1956 and served until 1963. The church entered a float in the Cavalry Days parade to celebrate the anniversary.

Activities were planned for all ages in the congregation. Seventeen youth and three adults attended the ELCA National Youth Gathering in St. Louis in July. This was a significant experience for the group as they grew in their faith journey. The Father-Son Banquet, organized by the GLCW, was well-attended with Randy Brennick presenting the program on dogsledding (with his dogs included in the show). Profits from the banquet were given to Bonnie Matlick to help with her expenses from a liver transplant.

4,140 breakfasts were served during the Motorcycle Rally. Coordinators were Eileen Raforth and Paulette Meland. Again Grace 'rallied' together to serve visitors to Sturgis. Caring people worked together to raise funds for church projects and for many causes beyond the church walls.

The sanctuary received a new coat of paint and new carpet was ordered for the main church, and the 1st floor and basement of the Parish House.

December giving began with 35 boxes delivered to Grace's homebound members and those in nursing homes. GLCW members baked special Christmas goodies to brighten the day of and celebrate Christmas with those members unable to attend services.

2001 – Pastor – James Olson, Office Manager – Rita Boy

Pastor Olson said in his report to the congregation in the Annual Report that the actions of the South Dakota Synod Council called him to a new synod staff position. The position was to serve as Coordinator, Rostered Ministries and Office Manager for the South Dakota Synod. He accepted the call and what course God had in mind for him. The congregation began the challenge of finding a new minister.

The work of the church continued to hold fast to the mission statement – “Seek out Christ. Grow in Christ. Serve Christ.” Growth in Christ and service in Christ was revealed through the 98 children and coordinators of Vacation Bible School. The children hauled rock, planted flowers, and then joyfully sang and visited with residents at the nursing home. The Endowment Committee disbursed \$5,032 to worthy recipients from Grace and the Sturgis community. Other service came from volunteers who made major improvements to the church building. 3/8” tempered safety glass insets were installed in the balcony railing. Marty Geffre assisted in the routing needed to safely put the glass in place with a rounded top edge. Endowment money and Maynard Paulson memorial funds paid for new glass. A concrete pad for an Irmgard Hardy memorial bench was laid. Irmgard was one of the first members to be confirmed at Grace.

More volunteering came from Deb Haivala and helpers who painted the upstairs Sunday School rooms, making them cheerful places to learn about God's love and mercy. The Men of Grace, with 11-15 men attending regularly, raised money for new sidewalk on the west and south sides of the church. One of their fundraisers was a wild game dinner. They also took over ushering duties.

A recognition reception was held during coffee hour to honor and thank Dee Storjohann for her many years of service as a church organist and accompanist. What a gift of music she had shared with Grace.

The year ended with Grace thanking God for the many blessings of the year and beginning the search for a new pastor to lead the church.

2002 – Pastor - James Olson (January), Bob Waite (April – December), Office Manager - Rita Boy

A farewell for Pastor Olson was held on February 3rd. The congregation thanked him with a gift and offered best wishes for his work in his new synod staff position. Pulpit supply was covered by Pastor Howard “Skip” Smith of 1st Presbyterian who filled the gap during the Lenten season. On April 1st, Pastor Bob Waite began as interim pastor. He had been a pastor in many churches, including a mission church. He had recently left the Piedmont Valley Church.

The Property Committee had a busy year as they kept the church building in good condition. The rough, uneven, and cracked sidewalks in front of the church caused some falls and stumbles. 130 lineal feet of sidewalk was removed and replaced. Iverson Construction (David, Judy, Rich, and

Randy) donated the sidewalk as well as new speaker brackets for the large speakers at the rear of the sanctuary. Discussion was held about the sale of the parsonage, as Pastor Waite remained in his home in Piedmont and the parsonage was now in need of some repairs.

Families and the children of our church became a focus as the church took a giant step forward into the Faith Family Style Program. The program, led by Deb Haivala, guided decisions for 2002 and enriched the lives of families in the spirit of Jesus. A record number of 41 children attend Outlaw Ranch Camp throughout the summer and 20 high school youth went to the Atlanta Youth Gathering.

GLCW's faithful members collected 408 sweaters, 40 layettes, 7 sewing kits, 67 health kits, and 57 school kits and sewed 532 quilts to send to Lutheran World Relief. They sent \$2,500 to the Cameroon Mission and hosted a Fall Harvest Tea on November 2nd. Members of the church and the community enjoyed friendly hospitality with an entertaining program and of course, pie. Ten women attended the Fall Outlaw Ranch Women's retreat. Faith-building ranged from the youngest to eldest of Grace Lutheran.

2003 – Pastor – Bob Waite, Office Manager – Rita Boy

2003 began with the installation service of Pastor Bob Waite on January 26th. Pastor and wife Susie remained in their Piedmont home, so the congregation again discussed the sale of the parsonage at the Annual Meeting. A motion was made to sell the home since it was becoming a financial burden to the church. Sale profits would be put into an account to earn interest to offset the pastoral housing allowance. The congregation voted to sell the parsonage and the home quickly sold for \$126,000. The congregation was grateful to realtor Pat Baldwin who graciously donated his commission on the sale of the home.

In March, the congregation was pleased to celebrate the 100th birthday of Charlotte Orr. Charlotte became a member of Grace Lutheran in 1922. She was the most senior member at the 1995 anniversary. She was a prayerful woman of faith and an inspiration to all who attended her birthday reception at the Sturgis Senior Center. GLCW sent flowers for her celebration.

The Property Committee addressed the large glass windows in front of the church. The windows were in disrepair as was the roof of the parish house. Both were major expenses with the estimate for window repair coming in at \$9,500 and the roof at \$14,600. Lowe Roofing replaced the fabric roof and Hauser Glass, a Minnesota-based company specializing in stained glass repair and restoration, repaired and installed a new storm window over the tall stained-glass window in the sanctuary. This treatment eliminated water damage and preserved the stained glass that reflected on the altar area.

Community-building events included sharing Lenten services with First Presbyterian Church. Pastor Skip Smith and Pastor Bob Waite shared the pulpit during this most holy time. The First United Methodist congregation attended the services as they were in the process of building their new church. The Lenten season ended with the youth performing a Reverse Advent Service on Good Friday – a spiritual service for both the participants and the congregation.

Other church unification events included the joint Vacation Bible School in June. 130 children from Grace Lutheran, St. Thomas Episcopal, First United Methodist, and St. Francis of Assisi learned about the love of Jesus, sang songs of praise, and worked together as fellow young Christians. Then in the fall, the 4th Annual Pumpkin Bowl was held at Woodle Field. The high school youth raised \$535 and with Thrivent matching funds, \$1,070 was given to the Sturgis Public Library Building Fund for furnishings for the teen room.

As the year progressed, young and old members were united by the intergenerational ministry of Faith Family Style. Prayer partners shared special moments together and activities were shared by all ages in this transforming ministry. Nineteen youth and four advisors traveled to Atlanta, Georgia, for the ELCA Youth Gathering along with 25,000 young people from around the world. This 5-day event was an uplifting and spiritual experience for all.

2004 – Pastor – Robert Waite, Office Manager – Rita Boy

Jeff DeKraai, the 2004 Congregation Council President, began the new year with these words in his President's letter – "I personally thank all for continuing the mission of our church, which we all know is to make Christ known." He also shared some good news, some bad news, and a few surprises.

The good news meant that many main goals were accomplished – the installation of a new sound system and the success of the Changing Children's Lives Campaign with Lutheran Social Services. The church voted to allow the purchase of the new sound equipment with help from the Grace women. The equipment was installed with the expertise of Dennis Milek, Tim Patmore, and Dick Ruby. Other positives were that the church was financially very responsible and free of debt and the Endowment Fund had grown. This meant the continuation of generous contributions to many deserving church and community applicants.

Good news came through the weekly worship volunteers, especially through the help of the large group of assistant ministers. Marilyn Bates, Bonnie Lange, Bonnie Matlick, Carla Alexander, Margie Hershey, Deb Enright, Tim Potts, Tim Patmore, Gene Schneider, and Gary Meyer all served the congregation through their Sunday service. Saturday night services continued in the summer months with an average of 46 in attendance. There was discussion about offering Wednesday night services.

The women, assisted by many faithful men, hosted many motorcycle enthusiasts during the August Rally Breakfast. A profit of \$16,686 was netted, which helped pay for electrical work, the new sound system, and for the hosting of the Outlaw Ranch Women's Fall Retreat. The Men of Grace hosted their first steak dinner and were continuing to become more active.

Bad news and a surprise resulted in the resignation of Pastor Waite for health reasons in November. When Pastor Waite considered rescinding his resignation and returning to Grace, advice from the Synod Office was that he should not be rehired because he was initially hired against Synod advice. He had left a local church, and Synod policy advised that a pastor should not serve immediately at another church within the same locality. Pastor Waite said he would not go against the Synod advice.

Other sad news was the resignation of Marion Hoyt as the church librarian. All were thankful to Faye Jacobs for taking over the position.

Grace was flourishing within its boundaries, but it was not thriving in its outreach. The council felt that the church needed to work outward. The church was pleased to embrace 120-125 children for Vacation Bible School as it looked for more opportunities to fulfill the church statement to “Seek out Christ. Grow in Christ. Serve Christ.”

2005 – Interim Pastor (April – December) – Dennis Reich, Office Manager – Rita Boy

With the advent of 2005, Grace was blessed with Pastor Dennis Reich from Greeley, Colorado, who became the Interim Pastor. One of Pastor Dennis’s goals was to update the church’s computer system. Once the computer was replaced, he suggested training for both Office Manager Rita Boy and Mary Ann Stroschein who also helped in the office.

The children’s ministry continued to be a top priority for the church. Over 125 children were involved in Vacation Bible School and our outreach meant working with other community churches to bring many children to know the message of Christ. Grace sent 54 youth to summer camps and fundraising began for the 2006 high school youth trip to San Antonio, Texas. Grace members and the Sturgis community were generous as the youth sold wreaths, baking pans, and provided yard work. The High School Youth Pumpkin Bowl raised \$1,000 for the new football/track concession stand. The youth also sold beads for Hurricane Katrina victims. Grace was proud of the personal service our young people provided to others, their donation to the ELCA World Hunger appeal and to the local food pantry. Of course, they still continued to have fun with each other with movies and popcorn, the local Halloween Haunted House, and continued growth in their Christian faith in the newly-enlarged youth room.

Home communion to Grace’s members started on August 21st of 2005. Eucharistic ministers were trained, and 5 teams would soon bless homebound members with the gift of the Lord’s Supper.

After 13 years of blessing Grace with their dedicated custodial services, Liane and her husband, Gary, resigned as custodians and Cindy Milek was hired as their replacement. A reception for the Meyers was held on June 19th. Another new staff member began after the resignation of Librarian Faye Jacobs. Rita Schwartz began as Grace’s new ‘Book Lady.’

Pastor Reich was instrumental in beginning the Wednesday Night Live program. It was successful beyond anyone’s wildest dreams. WNL began on September 14th, 2005 with a praise service. Over time, various musicians helped provide the contemporary music. Those involved were Andy Geffre, Dennis Milek, Marlene, Gordon, and Christian Kotab, Marcia and Trevor Potts, Liane Meyer, Tammy Hencke, and Jim and Irene Heinert. The program began targeting our youth but soon grew to involve a wide range of ages. Contemporary praise music filled the sanctuary with music projected on a small screen in the front of the church. Liane Meyer donated many hours on her computer to get the songs ready for each service. She also supervised Wednesday evening meals.

Excitement built as the church extended a call to Pastor Michael J. Fox on December 18th. In his letter to the congregation at the end of the year, Pastor Reich shared some personal thoughts of Grace Lutheran. Pastor Dennis described the congregation as “the best congregation I have ever served. I have felt a profound sense of God’s presence and love. The congregation has restored my soul.” The church members were touched and humbled by his words.

**2006 – Interim Pastor – Dennis Reich (January – March), Michael J. Fox (April – December)
Office Manager – Janet Davison**

Grace was blessed by Pastor Michael J. Fox’s acceptance of a call. He began serving on Palm Sunday, April 2nd of 2006. Reverend David Van Kley served as the preacher for Pastor Fox’s installation at 4:00 p.m. that same day. Grace showed its appreciation to Pastor Reich at a potluck dinner for him on March 26th. Rita Boy resigned after many years of faithful service to Grace. With the hiring of Janet Davison as the new office manager, the church office experienced a total transformation of staff.

In July, the youth attended the San Antonio Lutheran Youth Encounter. Chaperones were Tim Potts, Marie Kaufman, Colleen Schneider, and Deb Haivala. This trip gave all a spiritual lift and memories for a lifetime. But Pastor Fox was quick to admit that after 10 days of bonding, he was worn out. In October, the Pumpkin Bowl (chaired by Shawn Mechling from Grace and Karen Lynass from St. Francis of Assisi Church) was held at Grunwald Auditorium because there was too much snow at Woodle Field. The Catholic and Lutheran youth met in a friendly competition unified by the purpose of raising funds for Alex Kaufman, a young member of Grace. Twelve of the 9th graders received the rite of Confirmation on October 29th.

The GLCW continued important mission work and involved the children in a bandage project. They ripped sheets into 3” strips that were rolled into bandages and sent to Lutheran World Relief. The women also began a new prayer shawl project. They knitted and crocheted prayer shawls for those who needed extra comfort and care. The shawls were distributed along with a card sending blessings and words of comfort to the recipient.

Worship was enhanced with the music ministry that continued blessing the services. Pastor Fox appreciated this ministry, as he was a musician himself and had the gift of a fine tenor voice. The adult choir, the Sounds of Grace, the Wednesday Night Live Band, and children’s music programs were thriving. The Sounds of Grace provided a contemporary service on the radio on the second Sunday of each month with the traditional service broadcast on the other Sundays of the month. A digital piano was purchased using funds from the Grams memorial. Ann Kniffen left as church organist and pianist and choir accompanist. She was appreciated for all her years of faithful service to the church during an appreciation coffee hour for her along with longtime office manager, Rita Boy. Margie Hershey began as organist, but soon resigned as choir director and organist. She began serving as a TEEM Pastor in Bison, South Dakota. Her bright, cheerful spirit, as a musician, choir director, and assistant minister were sorely missed when she moved to pursue her career as a pastor. Marlene Kotab took over as accompanist and choir director in October of 2006.

2007 – Pastor – Michael J. Fox, Office Manager – Janet Davison

New puppets, new hymnals, new Bishop, new worship tools – Grace was embracing the changes in the church.

As Grace anticipated spring, the 40 days of Lent began with a large Ash Wednesday Service. Over 200 attended the service. The offering was sent to the ELCA Disaster fund. A highlight of the year was the performance of the first community Easter Cantata. Concerts were held on Palm Sunday and the Tuesday of Holy Week. Singers from across the hills area joined to bring the Easter story to a large crowd at Grace Lutheran.

The Caraway Street Children's Ministry was the brainchild of Cindy Milek. She had presented the idea of this new faith-building opportunity for children and she was now helped with the direction of Randy Bender. The Caraway Puppet Ministry was off to a good start. The GLCW paid for the initial cost of \$1,225 for this new children's ministry which included one puppet, thirteen scripts, puppet patterns and training materials for this group of children's ministers. GLCW also sewed many of the puppets which would be used during worship and for the children's Christmas Program. The cast members trained May 11-12 and presented their first service on Mother's Day, May 13th.

New ELCA hymnals were now available. The congregation voted to buy new hymnals at the fall meeting. Members of the congregation honored loved ones by purchasing 300 hymnals for Grace's use. Pastor Fox worked with the Worship Committee and accompanists on the new liturgies within the hymnals. Accompaniment for this new book of music would be played on a new piano for the sanctuary. A "Pick-a-Key" piano fundraiser was begun under the direction of Marlene Kotab. Members could buy one or more keys on the new piano. With the donations a new digital instrument enhanced the services. The piano was paid for in record time with these generous donations and a blessed gift from the GLCW.

The Motorcycle Rally Breakfast was another success. 2,457 meals were served. Besides breakfast profits, \$2,417 was gathered from the sale of quilts made from old rally t-shirts, backpacks, pillows, etc. – all sewn and donated by the quilters from Grace.

Reverend David B. Zellmer from Lutheran Memorial Church in Pierre, South Dakota, and Grace Lutheran Church in Hayes, South Dakota, was elected June 1st to a 6-year term as Bishop of the South Dakota Synod of the ELCA. He was formally installed as Bishop on September 15th at First Lutheran Church in Sioux Falls.

Pastor and Susan Fox both had joyful moments during 2007. Pastor Fox celebrated his 30th anniversary in the ministry on August 26th. Susan announced that she would be installed as an intern at Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Spearfish on June 24th. Pastor Fox also announced that he planned to use his mother Pauline's memorial money to purchase a screen, a projector, and a computer for Grace's sanctuary. This gift would enhance the worship services for years to come.

The youth continued their active ministry. They participated in a 30-hour famine on behalf of World Hunger (sponsored by World Vision) on March 23-24. Over \$2,656 was raised for World Vision and a large wheelbarrow full of food was donated to the Kiwanis Food Bank. The youth conducted a

scavenger hunt throughout the town and collected food items beginning with each letter of the alphabet. In the fall, they held the Pumpkin Bowl Flag Football Tournament at Woodle Field together with the Catholic and First Presbyterian youth from Sturgis. With the sale of lunch, they netted \$400 which was matched by Thrivent Financial funds. The \$800 was given to the Caitlin Budahl family for medical expenses she incurred after an accident.

Events outside of the walls of Grace Lutheran included a community-wide celebration with the completion of the new Sturgis Public Library on May 4th.

GLCW started a program to celebrate children's milestones – the first day of Sunday School, first Bibles, first communion, confirmation, etc. They wanted to take a more active role in these activities and provide continuity so that the Grace children would feel special and remembered during these important Christian celebrations. Grace continued to be a family of believers dedicated to the support of our families and our community. Besides many quilts and kits, the GLCW sent 10 special quilts to "Project Linus" for use in American hospitals for sick infants. Their missions stretched across the world and in our own community and country.

Grace awaited the holy season of Christmas with Advent anticipation. A new 12' Christmas tree for the sanctuary was purchased. Evelyn Morrison and Sue Whitford formed new bows to enhance the wreaths and greenery for the church. All celebrated the birth of Jesus and thanked God for the many blessings of 2007.

2008 – Pastor – Michael J. Fox, Office Manager – Janet Davison

Under the leadership of Pastor Mike, 2008 began with hope for a blessed future. Thirteen new families had been added to the rolls by the end of 2007. Activities for the new families and children were planned by the Education and Youth Committees. The Worship Committee continued to suggest improvements to worship and embrace future opportunities for our Grace members.

Worship was enhanced by the dedication of a new baby grand piano in the sanctuary on Epiphany Sunday, January 6th. Along with the new instrument, the congregation began using new hymnals. The hymnals were purchased by families in the church and each hymnal contained the names of those contributors or a memorial to a special member. The old hymnals were given to churches in the Vale, Newell, and Buffalo congregations. New usher teams were organized by Gary Steinlicht.

Another exciting project included the approval of the purchase of a large screen and projector for worship in the sanctuary from Fowler Multimedia System for \$16,204. Dennis Milek presented the project to the congregation. The congregation voted to purchase the equipment on August 3rd. Dennis, and a number of volunteers, were instrumental in the installation of this new technology. It was installed in time for Sunday School Rally Day on September 7th. The equipment was a gift from Pastor Fox's mother's memorial.

The Grace Youth Group began planning their trip to the 2009 New Orleans Youth Gathering. Fundraising efforts included a flamingo flight which travelled from yard to yard of Grace members. The flock flew to the next yard upon receipt of a contribution to the trip. The youth also organized

and ran a carnival night with a puppet show and games for children, including a cake walk, fishpond, and everyone's favorite game – pin the tail on the pastor.

Vacation Bible School was led by Colleen Schneider. Laurie Lorius was the Sunday School Superintendent. She organized a presentation of memory work by the students on May 4th during the worship service. Cindy Milek and Randy Bender helped Caraway Street land on the Grace doorstep with a children's ministry program including puppets and actors bringing the message of love and salvation. Evelyn Morrison made and painted small Blessing Bowls for the pre-school age children who were beginning Sunday School.

Improvements to the church included the painting of the downstairs kitchen, a pet project of Evelyn Morrison, Grace's rosemaking artist. Evelyn left her artistic gift on the walls of the kitchen and the SonShine Room. Carroll Erickson donated a steam table and grill for the kitchen. This equipment became integral to the serving of the Motorcycle Rally Breakfast. The GLCW, Men of Grace, and church funds contributed toward the purchase of a new gas stove in the downstairs kitchen through Owens Supply from Cash-Wa Distributing Company.

Activities outside the church included the presentation of "The Wizard of Oz" by the Sturgis Area Arts Council. Pastor Mike sang and acted his way into history with his rendition of the Cowardly Lion. The Grace women sponsored the remake of a bedroom at the Crisis Intervention Shelter Service. They sewed 422 quilts and 101 layettes and collected supplies for 665 school kits, 33 health kits, and 6 sewing kits. At Christmastime, 17 boxes were delivered to our treasured homebound members and 10 gifts were shared with our nursing home members. Susan Fox was installed as the SAM Pastor at Buffalo Lutheran Parish on April 20th. Families gathered at the Community Center for a day of family swimming on November 16th and the Youth Group held their annual Pumpkin Bowl. Funds raised were given to Zach Adam, a junior at Sturgis High School, who had been diagnosed with cancer. Thrivent Financial added matching funds.

The ELCA Disaster Response answered the call to be of aid to many in the nation who were affected by severe weather. According to the National Weather Service, there were at least 500 more tornadoes in 2008 than in 2007. The summer brought widespread flooding across the Midwest where some places experienced 100-year, and even 500-year flood levels. Over 40,000 households registered for assistance. An active Atlantic hurricane season, earthquakes, and wildfires, plus a presidential election and the unfolding of a damaging recession found many people requesting prayers and care from workers across the United States. Flooding in the Midwest meant tens of thousands of evacuees and dozens of counties declared as disaster areas.

The Sunday School Christmas program was held on December 17th followed by birthday cake and punch served by the youth in the SonShine Room. The congregation gladly gathered that day since church services had been canceled December 14th due to the cold weather. December 2008 ended with words from Pastor Mike to the congregation in the December newsletter: "I am grateful to the LORD for all those who serve. I echo the words of Jesus, 'Well done, thou good and faithful servants.'" Grace members remained grateful for their church and for the faithful workers who continued to serve and help those in need.

2009 – Pastor – Michael J. Fox, Office Manager – Janet Davison

2009 found Grace at the starting gate of a new year. Pastor Mike asked, “What will it hold for us? Only God knows.” In answer, God blessed the church with fun, faith, fraternity, and friendship.

The Grace Youth had fun in January when they hosted a Chili Cook-off Fundraiser. All proceeds went to the youth bound for New Orleans. Winners for the best chili were: 1st-Pastor Mike, 2nd-Deb Haivala, and 3rd-Terrin Black. In February, they made and sold 150 Valentine Bouquets.

Grace members tried to stay faithful during March when severe snowstorms raged across the area. Meetings were canceled as all braced against the storms. Pastor Fox was heard to say, “We will continue broadcasting our services on KBHB. We just need two people to show up – the pastor with a message and a musician.”

Fun was also found in the theater as Pastor Mike played Hysterium in the Sturgis Area Arts Council’s summer production of A Funny thing Happened on the Way to the Forum. He was a great hit with the audience. In the church newsletter, Pastor wrote, “I believe I have found my favorite hobby – and that’s musical plays.” More fun was experienced when Roxie Chowen and Annabelle Aga brought their accordions to church and played a Sunday morning polka service.

Faith and friendships were strengthened as our 23 youth and 5 chaperones attended the ELCA Youth Gathering in New Orleans in the summer of 2009. Two busloads of youth and chaperones from 7 surrounding Northern Hills towns traveled together. The gathering was a memorable event in the life of the youth and adult chaperones as they grew in their faith and ministered to each other. The theme of the gathering was “Jesus, Justice, and Jazz” and its focus was on service and justice. Together with 37,000 other attendees, our youth took part in servant work to people still devastated by Hurricane Katrina. Friendships between adults and children at home were created through the mentoring of the confirmation class. They met at suppers held before Lenten services and grew to be friends as they discussed various issues about their faith and families.

Fraternity among Sturgis churches came with the newly formed Sturgis Alliance of Churches. Made up of ministers and laypersons (2 from each church), they worked side by side at the first annual baked potato feed. This took the place of the pancake supper which the ministers had held several years.

Fraternity among the Men of Grace offered the congregation many successful breakfasts. With the funds generated from the meals, they were able to purchase a freezer, coffee pots, baking sheets and pans, a fax machine, and a digital camera. Other funds were donated toward the purchase of a new kitchen stove which was delivered on January 4th.

The Grace Women, always a sustaining force in the church, continued their faithful support of Cameroon with their sponsorship for Madame Satou Marthe’s School. The school lost its sponsorship with the Democratic party of Norway, so needed ELCA assistance. GLCW supported 5 women at the Women Centre in Ngaoundere.

Faithful members continued to care about improvements to the church both inside and outside. Discussion led by Pam Pletan, representing the monument/landscaping committee, revealed that a

new monument and accompanying landscaping payment would come from memorials. The monument would be an engraved relief of Jesus with the children, surrounded by memorial bricks. Dale Stroschein's memorial money was designated toward a new camera which was compatible with the sanctuary's projector. The new camera was dedicated during the May 24th service when Dale's ashes were laid to rest. A new stove was delivered to the basement kitchen and other renovations were discussed by a GLCW kitchen committee. Al and Pam Weidenbach donated all the materials to build a new 10'x12' storage shed behind the church. Al and Lonnie Weidenbach built the new shed. Roxie Chowen and Candy McKay dedicated memorial money from their mother Rosella Bracewell's funeral toward the purchase of new Other Song Books.

The Church Council brought forth the issue of continuing to provide one 9:00 a.m. service on Sundays. Two services (8:00 a.m. and 10:30 a.m.) had been held from September through May. At the Semi-Annual Congregational Meeting, the congregation voted to continue the one service at 9:00 a.m. followed by Sunday School, coffee hour, and choir.

Another issue of discussion was the series of resolutions passed at the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Conference. "Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust" expressed the ELCA's teaching on human sexuality. The statement provided guidance on key matters, such as marriage, family, same-gender relationships, protection of children and youth, sexual intimacy and cohabitation. Pastor Fox asked all to engage in a prayerful time of discussion of the next steps God would have us take as a congregation.

Grace ended 2009 with long-lasting fun, faith, fraternity, and friendship when the Caraway Street Players shared a presentation of the Christmas play, "Missing Christmas on Caraway Street." They moved their set to the Sturgis Community Center and presented the play to the entire community. Randy Bender directed this fun-loving cast of puppets and human characters. Roxie Chowen gathered Sturgis children to provide joyful carols. The proceeds of the play were split between the Sturgis Ministerial Alliance and scholarships to the Community Center. Working together to spread the good news of Christ's birth was a blessing to the church and our community.

2010- Pastor - Michael J. Fox, Office Manager - Janet Davison

Early in the year, news was received of the death of Pastor Gerald Christopherson. He had been a pastor at Grace from 1968-1982. Christopherson was known as a former Air Force pilot and had chosen the ministry over a military career. He died on January 12, 2010.

As with any home, the church building continued to need updates. Improvements to the church included new countertops in the downstairs kitchen in January and the Men of Grace purchased two new refrigerators. The landscape committee began the outdoor improvement project which was highlighted by the idea of a professional artist creating a sculpture in front of the church. "Jesus and the Children" would be the name of the new sculpture and bids were solicited from local artists. Dale Lamphere, South Dakota's Artist Laureate, was selected to carve the sculpture. Later in the year, Mr. Lamphere presented a miniature model of the proposed piece. Engraved bricks were sold to help pay for the project. The women made new banners for Thanksgiving. New Lenten paraments were purchased by the women of the church and glass insets in the main front entrance doors were ordered from Western Doors of Sturgis.

In music news, a major fundraiser for a new piano in the sanctuary was held with the final \$2,000 given by the Grace Lutheran Church Women. Members could 'Buy-a-Key' on the keyboard for \$50. The new piano was paid for in record time again. In June, The Land O'Lakes Boys Choir performed a concert in the church and Grace hosted the singing boys and their directors. Pastor Fox, a fine actor and musician, along with other members of Grace, performed in the Sturgis summer musical, "Annie Get Your Gun." Roxie Chowen and Dan Chapman led the Sunday School music program.

Members of the church made new commitments to the Lord when Margie Hershey (former assistant minister and choir director) was ordained on July 10 in Bison and began her ministry. Pastor Fox's wife, Susan, was also ordained by the LCMC on July 17 at Ladner. Another longtime member, 95-year-old Marian Larsen, was honored for her over 25 years of service as a church organist. During the youth trip to New Orleans at the Memorial Arch, Bryan Cooley asked Pastor Fox if he could serve as his intern during the fall semester. Bryan, a Sturgis High School student, served as assistant to Pastor for the fall. Ethan Dschaak, a Meade School Elementary Principal, gave testimonies to the power of faith and family as he began his battle with cancer. God was present in the many situations in the Grace family.

Service to our community continued as Pastor Fox and Tim Potts, together with Paul Bisson, served on the Sturgis Senior Life Care Committee. It explored the building of a new multi-unit assisted living center for our community. The new facility was built and named Aspen Grove Assisted Living Facility.

The Caraway Street Ministry continued its success. Children were blessed by fine actors who led the children to a safe place on Caraway Street, where they learned the books of the Bible, Bible verses, and how to be a Christian wherever they were. The Youth and Family Committee distributed the blessing bowls, 3rd Grade Bibles, and helped the children celebrate their first communions, confirmation, and graduations.

The youth lost the Annual Pumpkin Bowl football game to the Catholic youth but were successful in raising money for two projects. They donated the proceeds to Aubrey Bonnicksen for her cancer treatment and to the Sturgis Area After School Snack Program. A collection of canned food was donated to the Sturgis Food Pantry. As part of the World Hunger project, they also experienced a 30-hour famine. This gave them a feel for what it was like to go without food, and experience some of the hardship that millions of people experience every day. Pastor Fox also organized a lock-in makeup session for 7th-8th grade confirmation classes on May 26th. He led them in a meaningful discussion about their personal statements of faith and how they would live out their Christ-filled life.

The year came to a close with lights, music, and gifts as Grace welcomed the Christmas season. The Caraway Street Players won the "Star of the Show" award at the Parade of Lights. Iverson Construction allowed the float-builders use of their shop. GLCW delivered boxes of baked goods and gifts to the homebound members. Nursing home folks were especially blessed with hand-painted glass ornaments from Grace's resident artist, Evelyn Morrison. The peace and joy of the Christmas season brought 2010 to a close.

2011 – Pastor – Michael J. Fox, Office Manager – Janet Davison/Debbie Patmore

In the January Grace Notes Newsletter, Pastor Fox offered Six New Year Resolutions:

- ❖ Forget the past and honor God more.
- ❖ Live for Christ in the world.
- ❖ Trust God with a strong faith.
- ❖ Remain faithful to my church and congregation.
- ❖ Witness to the lost each day of my life.
- ❖ Cultivate the talents God has given me for His glory.

Grace was inspired by these goals and began 2011 enthusiastically with activities and churchwork by young and old. Caraway Street Children's Ministry added a new taxi and magic box to their set. Quilters contributed to the churchwide mission with the sewing of 516 quilts to be given locally and worldwide, and by their collection of 69 health kits and 110 layettes which were sent to Lutheran World Relief. Busy hands continued serving the world. Memorial money from the Merle Boy Family was used to purchase new purple choir robes. GLCW donated an additional \$500 for the final number of robes needed for the choir. The new robes were dedicated on May 1st. The old green robes were donated to a Lutheran church in Pierre. \$750 was given to support the Woyatan Church in Rapid City.

The Buy-A-Brick Fundraiser for the Lamphere sculpture began in earnest. Each purchased brick would be engraved and placed at the base of the statue. Mr. Lamphere invited all to come to his studio to see and discuss the sculpture.

In April, the Sturgis Alliance of Churches sponsored the first Good Friday Crosswalk. Beginning at Grace Lutheran, the walkers visited seven churches along their pathway as a remembrance of the seven last words of Jesus. This meaningful journey once again united the family of Christians in the Sturgis community.

The church building received a facelift when four glass panels were inserted into the front doors. Much-needed light in the entry welcomed the members on a sunny Sunday morning. The doors now made the church more inviting.

In May, Grace was sad to receive the resignation of Janet Davison, office manager. She and husband Phil moved away from Sturgis to Arizona. A farewell for Janet and Phil Davison was held on May 15. Phil was a former council president, a member of the Caraway Street Players for 4 years, and a youth leader. On May 19th, the council recommended Debbie Patmore as the new office manager. Following Pastor Fox's advice, the Grace Youth continued to cultivate their talents. The Annual Pumpkin Bowl monies were donated to Ethan Dschaak, a cancer survivor. The students gave to Soles 4 Souls, a shoe donation distributed to the needy. They served over 100 at the Annual Grace Senior Thanksgiving Dinner. This dinner, prepared and served by the youth, thanked the older generation of the church by honoring them with a traditional Thanksgiving meal.

The Grace Women hosted the September Bear Butte Conference Fall Retreat at Outlaw Ranch with the theme, "Don't Be a Scaredy Cat." Pastor Mike and wife Susan attended the retreat and served at the final communion service on Saturday, September 10th.

The Grace women attending the retreat had no idea that it would be the last time they would enjoy a Pastor Mike service and receive Holy Communion from him. On September 11, 2011, Grace's beloved Pastor Michael James Fox died in his sleep at his home. It was the congregation's own 9-11 tragedy. The congregation found out the devastating news when they arrived for the Sunday morning service. His beautiful, music-filled funeral service was held on September 17 with many ministers and community members joining the Grace family in their grief. A meal was held at the St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Fellowship Hall and many churches donated desserts and salads. Susan Fox presented a \$5,000 memorial (\$4,000 to the statue project and \$1,000 to the radio ministry) to honor Pastor Mike. GLCW also gave a \$500 memorial. The Bishop's office suggested that Grace should take its time to find a new pastor.

In Pastor Fox's annual report on caring he had written: "Since I have been here at Grace as your pastor, we have experienced sudden and tragic deaths, and I have seen how caring and loving this family of God at Grace truly is. I commend this congregation for showing the love of Christ in word and action." DeWayne Hayes, the congregation president, commented, "I am sure he would appreciate the way all of you responded to his sudden death." The Grace Family took this time to act as loving brothers and sisters to each other and tried to follow Pastor's words. Pastor Willard Olsen later accepted the position of interim pastor and was a perfect fit in helping the church heal from this loss. 2011 was a sad and prayerful year for the Grace church family.

2012 – Interim Pastor – Willard Olsen, Office Manager – Debbie Patmore

In 2012, Lutheran Social Services named Grace Lutheran as the Distinguished Congregational Partner of the Year. Grace continued offering space to LSS for a weekly counselor for the Sturgis area.

Cindy Milek was hired as the custodian and Debbie Patmore helped update the office with a new computer system.

The highlight of the year was the setting and dedication of the new "Jesus and the Children" sculpture by Dale Lamphere. Iverson Construction (spearheaded by long-time church members, Judy and Dave Iverson) donated the materials and labor for the pad upon which the sculpture was set. The dedication was held Tuesday, September 18 at 2:30 p.m. Bishop David Zellmer was present to bless the work and Dale Lamphere spoke about the piece. All were recognized for their vision and work which made the statue a reality. It was unveiled by Mr. Lamphere. This statue was a beautiful addition to the church, but also contributed to the artwork of the Sturgis community.

The youth ministry was active within the church. Caraway Street, the children's puppet ministry, was continuing its success. 18-24 children were usually in attendance and two casts were rotating the programs on Sunday mornings. Favorite work of the Sunday School students was the music with leaders Roxie Chowen and Dan Chapman. Twenty children and 10 adults attended Elementary Adventure at Outlaw Ranch in April. Money from the GLCW helped pay for the registrations and Einer and Gail Mortenson, owners of the Sturgis Bus Company, generously gifted transportation to and from Outlaw Ranch. The children also had a Service of the Lady Bug and planted rose bushes in memory of Pastor Mike Fox and Tom Monahan. The blessing was performed at dusk so that the bugs would stay on the plants overnight. Caraway Street players, the Sunday School children, and the high school youth worked together to make a float for the Parade of Lights in December. Again,

the Sturgis Bus Company showed generosity in allowing the float to be decorated and housed in their fleet garage. The float was awarded the Heartstrings Award. Parents were asked to teach the Confirmation classes, which proved to be both possible and fruitful. With the passing of Pastor Fox, Colleen Schneider and Judy Hall assumed the teaching load for the 7th and 8th grade confirmation classes. The confirmation students did an excellent job of decorating the church for Christmas.

A “Heavenly Harp-Serenity” concert was held on Wednesday, September 12th. The concert was jointly sponsored by Grace and the Sturgis Center for the Arts. The concert was held in remembrance for victims of 9-11 and as a tribute to Pastor Michael Fox.

September 27th marked the 50th year of broadcasting for KBHB radio in Sturgis. The partnership of KBHB and Grace Lutheran brought the good news of Christ to a large listening audience as it broadcast the service at 9:00 a.m. each Sunday morning.

Controversy still arose nationwide concerning the ELCA’s Social Statement, “Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust.” The subsequent implementation of the resolutions adopted by the ELCA in 2009 continued to create discussion among members across the country. Grace exhibited concerns about staying within the ELCA Synod because of the issue of human sexuality. Pastor Will delivered two lectures about this issue. A simple survey was conducted, and the results demonstrated that a large majority (76%) of Grace desired to remain in the ELCA. Pastor Will Olsen advised all to exercise time and patience and to continue as a community, as the Body of Christ, His Church. He wrote, “The community and our relationship with God will save us, heal us, strengthen us, and be a source of life, health, and pleasure for eternity.”

The call process for a new minister continued. Pastor Henrique Fleming was offered the call and he accepted near the end of 2012. A “Thanks for Being our Pastor” potluck dinner and card shower was held on Sunday, December 2nd for Pastor Will. He had stayed with the Grace family for 15 months. Grace began the season of Advent, a time of preparation for Christmas and the New Year, and, with the guidance of Pastor Will, we continued the healing process.

2013 – Pastor – Henrique Fleming, Office Manager - Debbie Patmore

Pastor Henrique Fleming was installed at Grace on Sunday, February 24, 2013. Because Grace had sold the old parsonage, housing for the new pastor and his family was of primary concern. Soon discussion was held about the purchase of a new parsonage.

The upkeep and beauty of the church continued to be of concern to the church family. In May, on Mother’s Day, the Sunday School children planted rose bushes in the front of the church in memory of Pastor Christopherson, Joe Severson, and Anna Ginter. 2000 ladybugs were released during the Service of the Ladybug. Then in June, the mural at the front of the church was professionally cleaned by the daughter of the artist (Robert J. Aldren) who had originally painted the mural. A new sound board was installed in the balcony and wireless headphones were purchased. Outdoors, new bricks were ordered to add to those complimenting the Lamphere sculpture.

Grace members were honored for their talents and good community work. Sharon Rank, assistant to the Meade School Nurses, was chosen Employee of the Year for the school system. The church

honored Evelyn Morrison on September 15, praising God and thanking her for her gift as an artist to our church, but primarily for the creation and painting of blessing bowls which were given to all children at their baptism. Evelyn passed away that December. Her books were donated to the church library and two rosemaling hangings were placed in the Rose Room.

Early on Friday, October 4th, rain changed to heavy, wet snow on the plains of western South Dakota. Strong wind gusts up to 50-70 mph accompanied the snow and by Saturday, record snowfall was recorded. High snow drifts, road closures, snapped trees, a loss of 43,000 livestock, and power outages devastated western South Dakota. The National Weather Service said the storm's "intensity, devastation, and hardships" would cause it to "long be remembered as one of the region's worst blizzards in history." The Sunday School children and the Caraway Street players were recognized for their monetary contribution to the Rainbow Bible Ranch. Their cookie sales raised money to help replace the camp's horses that were lost during Winter Storm Atlas.

Pastor Fleming held quarterly recognition Sundays for the Confirmation students. At the end of each period, discipleship and class attendance pins were awarded to the students. They also shared their memory work with the congregations during the worship service. There was always applause for the fine work of these young students.

Special get-togethers were held in the summer as members gathered for potluck dinners and worship in the city park. In September, the Tim and Tonya Atyeo family hosted 40 people at their home after the Rally Day Sunday celebration. The Sturgis Brown High School Culinary Arts Class served the congregation for Stewardship Sunday in October and another special event was the Caraway Street players' community presentation on November 24th at the Sturgis Community Center.

Grace Lutherans were relieved to have 2013 come to a peaceful close. The devastating Winter Storm Atlas had paralyzed the entire region. A positive outcome came from neighbors helping neighbors, and from the communities' and churches' outpouring of love and concern for their fellowmen.

**2014 – Pastor – Henrique Fleming,
Office Manager – Debbie Patmore (January – May) and Randy Bender (June – December)**

2014 found Grace reaching out to help its neighbors – some close to home and others across the world. An initial breakout of Ebola was confirmed in December 2013 and the disease continued to spread throughout Africa. On August 8, 2014, the deteriorating situation in West Africa was declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern. This is designated only for events with a risk of potential international spread or that require a coordinated international response. Liberia was one of the countries that was reporting 300-400 new Ebola cases every week during the peak of the epidemic. Over the duration of the epidemic, Ebola spread to seven more countries: Italy, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, Spain, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Grace collected money to aid in the mission of the stopping of and treatment of the disease, especially in Monrovia, Liberia. Resources saved 150 families from this pandemic.

Changing Lives International Ministries (CLIM) was a favorite program of the Fleming family. CLIM became another project in which Grace helped the neighbors across the world. Contributions to CLIM were sent to help build a school in Liberia. \$2,870 was distributed to CLIM because of a fundraiser supper and a tea which featured the Caraway Street puppets and the Sunday School children.

Pastor Fleming urged the congregation to embrace a two-fold direction for the year. His goals were to have the congregation spend time together in prayer and in Bible Study for renewal of their spirits and to focus on stewardship. Bible Studies were increasing, with studies held on Sundays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays. Pastor Fleming felt that all should bring their time, talents, and treasures to the altar, as the church members entrust themselves to God. Prayer partners, an important part of church life, met and greeted each other in February. This adult/child relationship was recognized as a vital way for children to see where their faith life could continue to grow throughout their lives.

The confirmation students continued to review their own Bible studies in front of the congregation during three Confirmation Recognition Services. Confirmands learned material at home and demonstrated knowledge in front of the congregation. They received pins for memory work, service, and sharing of their faith with others outside the Grace Family. Continuing the mission connection, the Confirmation class prepared and delivered Thanksgiving baskets to needy families and organized and participated in the Trunk or Treat Night Out.

In May, Deb Patmore resigned as Grace's office manager. Sharon Assmus, Dawn Geppert, and Tina Sigman filled in until Randy Bender was hired in September as the new office manager.

Another help to our neighbors at home came with the purchase of 'Gracie'. She was a 1998 Ford 15-passenger bus which was wheelchair accessible. The pending purchase ended as a generous gift from Al and Glynda Smith and they asked the congregation to pledge their support to this bus evangelism program. The bus was soon to accomplish its mission by bringing wheelchair-bound members to services, transporting youth to Youth Gatherings, and women to gatherings in the Black Hills area. The bus was blessed on a Sunday morning and subsequently delivered her first rider, Marilyn Bender, who was then able to attend the Community Christmas Concert. Carrying Caraway puppets dancing to catchy music, Gracie wended her way through the Sturgis Christmas Parade of Lights.

Gifts to the church did not end with Gracie. New brick purchases were laid by Sam Erion around the outdoor sculpture. Pew Bibles were donated through a family's Thrivent monies and were distributed throughout the church. On March 9th, a breakfast fundraiser was held for John Nelson, a husband and father of a Grace family who was suffering with health issues. Through generous donations, spearheaded by Marlowe Kinkade, an outdoor landscaping project was completed by Rockingtree Landscaping. New carpet and new computers were installed and a new parsonage on Evergreen Street was purchased from longtime member, Ruth Paulson.

The year ended with one last outreach to the Sturgis community. A Community Christmas service and dinner were held on Christmas Day. Over 100 were served. Along with that gift of worship and a meal, the Congregational Life Committee delivered Christmas gifts to those who had lost a loved

one throughout the year. The GLCW continued their longstanding tradition of delivering Christmas boxes and greetings to the elderly and shut-in members of the Grace Family.

2015 – Pastor – Henrique Fleming, Office Manager – Randy Bender

Pastor Fleming, wife Hannah, and their three children moved into the new parsonage on Evergreen Street. It had been owned by members Maynard and Ruth Paulson. An open house was held on February 22.

Bringing families together was the theme of congregational life. A Senior Valentine's Day Dinner was arranged as a joint venture between the youth and the Mutual Ministry Committee. 2x4 groups began to meet. This included 4 family units who met monthly for dinner or an activity. These social events gave them opportunities to share in Christian fellowship as they grew to know each other. Bringing individuals together involved Gracie, the church bus. She made one of her first voyages in a nasty winter storm on February 22nd to pick up 5 individuals for a Wednesday night supper and service. The bus also united Grace women with other Bear Butte conference women when they were transported to the Spring Gathering at Custer in April.

Bringing families together meant praying for each other. Pastor Fleming offered participation in a Praise and Prayer Line at 6:00 a.m. on Wednesdays during Lent. Participants entered the Prayer Line on their phones and spent one-half hour being connected in prayer for the needs of the church and community. Prayer was the theme for Lent and the congregation was invited to 40 days of prayer beginning on Ash Wednesday and guided by the Holy Spirit. With the end of Lent, Easter morning arrived with a sunrise service led by the Alliance of Churches at Bear Butte.

With new technology and improved sound equipment available, a decision was made to have Haggerty's Musicworks measure and analyze the acoustics of the church sanctuary and discover how to improve the sound quality. New baffling for walls, speakers, and a sound system were purchased using monies from the Doreen Rothe Estate. Mrs. Rothe, a former member of Grace and organist from 1972-1979, had bequeathed a life insurance policy for approximately \$23,000. Haggerty's installed the new sound system on October 20th at a cost of \$14,000. Other monies from the Estate were put into a music fund for future purchases.

Other physical changes to the church building included the removal of 2 half pews. This offered handicap accessibility to visitors and members in need of extra space. A new Grace Lutheran sign was erected on Junction Avenue pointing the way to the church. Action Mechanical installed 2 new furnaces and GLCW purchased a new coffee station in the basement kitchen.

A proposal was brought to the church council about beginning a Wednesday night program for the children. This fell directly in line with the Strategic Mission Development Plan with its emphasis on youth and family. In the fall, an educational program for pre-school through 8th grade was implemented. Classes were followed by a meal and then Wednesday Night Live services. The program grew to be known as Kids' Alive. KayDe Roth began as facilitator for the Wednesday night children's program. As part of service projects generated at these Wednesday night activities, the confirmation classes collected baskets of food to distribute for Thanksgiving. Many families were blessed by the generosity of Grace Lutheran members and the hard work of the confirmands.

2015 closed with important changes at Grace. Randy Bender accepted a new position with Kinkade Funeral Home. The council offered the office manager job to Laurie Lorius. Pastor Fleming also tendered his resignation and relocated to parishes in Rapid City. His last day at the church office was December 13th and his last day at church was December 15th.

2016 - Interim Pastor - Willard Olsen, Office Manager – Laurie Lorius

Pastor Will Olsen returned as the interim pastor. Laurie Lorius began working each afternoon on a part-time basis as Grace's office manager. In other leadership positions, Tessa Gunderson took over as the Sunday School and Kids Alive coordinator, enlisting help from many other members.

Improvements to the church included purchasing 10 new side banners representing the 5 liturgical colors and symbols. Purchases were made from the memorial money from the Angi Schemmel, Judy Iverson, and LaVonne Holland families. A loan was approved by the church council to fund much-needed exterior improvements. Iverson Construction was hired to renovate siding, gutters and the sidewalk.

Members of Grace and Lutherans worldwide celebrating important life moments included Eldon Herring, who celebrated his 100th birthday with a brunch on February 28. Pastor Will and Helen Olsen celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on July 20 and invited the membership to a reception held at their home. A year-long worldwide celebration began in November as Lutherans recognized the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation.

Grace continued serving the people of the church and community by using Gracie (the church bus) to bring members from Heritage Acres and Aspen Grove senior living facilities to church each Sunday. The Worship and Evangelism Committees hosted worship services, potluck picnics, an ice cream social and sing-along at the Sturgis Park Woodland Shelter and on the church lawn. Rachel Circle (along with help from Thrivent Financial Services) hosted a coffee fundraiser on August 21st to benefit Paul Clark, son of Karla and Dana Clark and grandson of Dee Storjohann and Curtis Clark. Paul had numerous medical expenses. Our Wednesday quilters completed over 350 quilts.

For "God's Hands, Our Work" Sunday, baskets of food and necessities were assembled. They were distributed to the first responders of Sturgis on September 11th. The Youth Group hosted a breakfast and necessity drive on December 11th to help those less fortunate in our community. They also hosted a Halloween Carnival and members generously donated cakes, cupcakes, decorated treats, candy, and donuts for over 60 children who attended.

As a response to an ELCA resolution passed at the Synod Assembly, worship in November included a Military Service Recognition. Past and current service personnel were honored.

2016 was a year to reach out to the community, the world and to church members. Pastor Will led the church through a time of healing and reflection, and Grace began the search for a new pastor to lead the church forward.

2017 Pastor – Kris Garlick, Office Manager – Laurie Lorius

2017 began with celebration. An appreciation farewell brunch for Pastor Will and Helen Olsen was bittersweet for Grace Lutheran. The church healed with Pastor Will's shepherding and leadership and it said good-bye to him on January 8th. Grace was now ready to welcome Kris Garlick. Her official start date was February 1st. Pastor Garlick was enrolled in the Kairos Program with Luther House of Study in Sioux Falls. She would continue with her studies while she became the new pastor. The parsonage on Evergreen Street was made ready for her in May and Pastor Will and Helen organized a welcome party with root beer floats and plenty of pastors. Significant repairs continued in the parsonage as Pastor Kris made it into her home.

Pastor Garlick's first wedding was the union of Jenifer Hall and John Paul, both a son and daughter raised at Grace Lutheran. Within her first weeks at Grace, she also officiated the funeral services of longtime members Dorothy Short and Hannah Oedekoven. Dorothy had been a member of Grace for over 70 years.

As the year progressed, Grace settled into a time of renewal with the leadership of Pastor Kris. Bingo and game nights with hot chocolate and popcorn for snacks added dollars to the building repair fund. Members enjoyed gathering for fun and fellowship.

At the urging of Pastor Will, representatives from the Hills area met as a planning committee for the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation. Marlene Kotab represented Grace Lutheran as part of the committee. After many weeks of preparation, a regional festival of hymns, scriptures, prayer, and music was celebrated on Sunday, October 29th at Calvary Lutheran in Rapid City. Bishop David Zellmer delivered the sermon, and the 70-voice choir was directed by Marlene Kotab.

The education of Grace's children continued as a priority mission of the church. The Caraway Street Players brought the Good News to the children of the church every Sunday morning. But they were sad to say good-bye to Director Randy Bender, one of the original actors and organizers of Caraway. Cindy Milek graciously and expertly stepped into the leadership role. The Wednesday Kids Alive program doubled its enrollment. Outlaw Ranch counselors conducted the Vacation Bible School program in July. The Sunday School program was renamed 'Journey with Jesus' and Vicki Monahan and Cindy Milek worked together to coordinate the Sunday education programs. In December the Journey with Jesus children donned costumes and reenacted the Nativity in a video which they entitled, "A Christmas Story."

Librarian Dawn Geppert handed over the library duties to Glynda Smith.

The building committee's main project was the residing of the church building. New gutters were installed, and the exterior doors received a fresh coat of paint.

Soon it was nearing year's end and Grace began a celebration of Christ's coming with the Advent preparations. A new 12' Christmas tree was purchased for the sanctuary. New Advent banners were purchased to beautify the altar area. Servant projects included preparing gift bags for the Crisis Intervention Services Shelter by the confirmation class and the Stewardship Committee through the Thrivent Servant Project. The Grace Lutheran Church Women continued the tradition

of taking gift bags of baked goodies to our elderly and homebound members. The youth learned to make lefse and then sold it to raise money to purchase items for the Optimists' toy drive. Christmas came with celebration and joy.

**2018 Pastor – Kris Garlick, Office Manager – Laurie Lorius (January – May)/
Keri Fischer (May – Present)**

Easter was an exciting time at Grace Lutheran. The pre-school to 5th grade classes of the church held a resurrection egg project. The Sturgis Easter Cantata was performed on Palm Sunday and Tuesday of Holy Week. The confirmation students conducted their first performance of a living Last Supper drama on Maundy Thursday. They formed prayer stations around the church and a hand-washing station was part of the service. A beautiful Easter sunrise service was held at the Lion's Club Park Gazebo before the regular Easter service.

With the increase in membership and children's activities, the church council decided to return to a full-time office manager. After a search was conducted, Grace hired Keri Fischer as the new office manager in May. A committee was also formed to research the need for a part-time youth pastor. During that time, a Grace Lutheran Scholarship Program was initiated with the first recipients being Aisha Plaggemeyer and Madison Pankratz.

The congregation voted to extend a call to Pastor Kris Garlick on July 29th. She accepted the call and Pastor Garlick was ordained on September 22nd. Bishop David Zellmer led a glorious service of readings, special liturgy, hymns, and special musical guests. A reception for Pastor Garlick was held in the church basement's SonShine Room.

Changes to the church included a tv monitor at the back of the church to aid the pastor and assisting ministers during worship. A new church directory was printed, thanks to the organization of Gloria Wiedmann. 30 new members were installed into the Grace family. New Advent and Christmas banners for the sanctuary were purchased.

Service projects outside the church included a 'God's Work, Our Hands' collection for the Sturgis Crisis Intervention Shelter Services in September. Then on October 24th, the confirmands and the high school youth participated in 'Kids Against Hunger', a food-bagging activity to aid hurricane victims. 6,264 meals were bagged through this project. The youth raised \$758, including a \$250 Thrivent grant. The youth made 10 tie blankets for the Crisis Intervention Shelter and held a Halloween Carnival for the children of the church and community.

2018 came to a close with the choir performing at the 40th Annual Community Christmas Concert. Following a tradition of the season, a special Grace Lutheran Christmas Music Sunday Service was again performed to celebrate the Christ Child's birth. Musical selections by the children of Grace, the adult choir, and many special performers enhanced this special service as Grace celebrated Advent – a time of preparation for Christ, the Son of God.

2019 Pastor – Kris Garlick, Office Manager – Keri Fischer

2019 brought an encouragement to members to interact with each other and between differing age groups. The Evangelism Committee formed 2x4 groups (4 groups of 2 people) who would create

fellowship opportunities. The committee organized prayer partners, which not only included adult/children partners, but also high school students/children partners. They would meet for various activities throughout the year.

The Annual Congregational Meeting was called to order on January 20 and a proposal to hire a Youth Ministry Coordinator was brought forward. This person would be hired for a 20-hour week to coordinate education and activities for the children and youth of Grace. The motion passed and soon Jenn Aldren was hired as the new coordinator.

In February, members of the Saving Grace Relay for Life Team held their annual "Sweets for Your Sweeties" event near Valentine's Day. This successful team donated their profits to the American Cancer Society.

The season of Lent found a rotation of ministers preaching the Wednesday Night Lenten Services. Sturgis, Belle Fourche, Spearfish, Piedmont, and the Lutheran Campus Ministry took part in the rotation. The ministers chose the theme, "Toward Morning – A Lenten Journey." The Alliance of Churches held the annual Crosswalk on Good Friday – a time to reflect on the walk of Jesus to the cross. At Eastertime, two new white Easter banners arrived to enhance the beauty of the sanctuary. A 6:30 a.m. Easter Sunrise Service was held at the Lion's Club Park Gazebo. It was followed by an Easter Breakfast and the joyous Easter Service at 9:00 a.m.

The women of the church remained active in their service. In April, the Grace Lutheran Church Women hosted the Bear Butte Conference Spring Gathering. The program was given by Dadra Avery and Shawn Koontz, counselors from Sturgis Brown High School. The women also paid ½ of the expense for a new kitchen supplies storage cabinet placed in the basement hallway. The other half of the expense was donated from the Loretta Moser Memorial Fund. The quilters donated 65 quilts to the Long-Term Care Unit at Rapid City Regional Hospital, along with 25 lap quilts and 75 Bibles to the hospital. GLCW purchased new white paraments to beautify the altar.

Blessed events happened among the young people of the church. One event was the prayerful sendoff of Cole Hemmah. Cole had been helping with the Wednesday night youth program and now was going to New Zealand. He was sent on his way with a prayerful laying on of hands. Gage Shoun, another son of the congregation, began duties as an assistant minister. Eight children of God professed their faith in the rite of Confirmation. This group had raised money and gathered donated supplies for the Sturgis Animal Shelter. A Red Bucket collection by the young children was quite successful. The children gathered loose change and donations from the congregation to aid in a project generated by Lutheran World Relief. From their collections, 4 pigs, 2 goats, and 2 hens and chicks were purchased. In May, a McDonald's GLC night event raised enough money to help fund camp scholarships to every child who requested one. Vacation Bible School was overloaded with children led by our local staff and counselors from Outlaw Ranch. New flooring was installed in the high school youth room. Money came from an Endowment Fund Grant.

June 1st found the South Dakota Synod with a new Bishop. Reverend Constanze Hagmaier was elected to a 6-year term. She had received her Master of Divinity in 1999 from Ruprecht Karl's University in Heidelberg, Germany, emigrated to the U.S. in 2000, and was ordained in 2001. She replaced the retiring Bishop David Zellmer.

Heavy rains came during the summer of 2019. Major flooding in the Sturgis Park and washing out of bridges forced the outdoor service to be moved to the church lawn.

Another new assisting minister was added to the fall roster. With former assistants Donna Trigg relocating to Arizona, and Maddie Kreutz beginning college, Garland Dobler began her rotation as an assisting minister. She served along with Gage Shoun, Tim Patmore, Tim Potts, and Kim Weber.

A kick-off event for the new school year was highly successful. Over 150 attended, with children and parents taking part in a church scavenger hunt. The evening ended in a supper and worship service.

The Grace Lutheran Centennial Committee began plans for the 100th Anniversary of the church. The theme was chosen from entries by the congregation. – “Embracing a Century of Grace – Then, Now, and Blessings to Come.” Kasey Shoun, a Grace member artist at Tom’s T’s in Sturgis, designed a blue and gold logo for use on the outdoor signage, bulletin covers, and for the Centennial shirts that members ordered. The year-long celebration began with a joyful service on October 27th. Former Pastor James Olson spoke at the service and special music was provided by the Adult Choir, the Children’s Choir, and Sarah Carlson and Lorrie Redfield. Pastor Kris Garlick gave the sermon. A delicious brunch following the service was coordinated by Ruth Mechling and catered by Lori Jeffrey-Kirk. Pastor Herb Cleveland was the second of our former pastors to celebrate the centennial with Grace remembrances on November 24th.

A meaningful Children’s Christmas Program was presented on December 11th. Woolly lambs, Mary and Joseph, angels, shepherds, and kings brought the news of the birth of Jesus. A family potluck supper provided the opportunity for parents of the children to bond as a Grace Lutheran family of believers. The season of Christmas gave the youth opportunities to share in service projects, too. The 3rd and 4th grades served the Fire and Police Departments fresh-baked goods and the high school youth went servant shopping for families that needed help with presents for Christmas. All felt the meaning of Christmas come alive for the families of Grace.

2020 Pastor – Kris Garlick, Office Manager – Keri Fischer

The Grace congregation was poised to enjoy a yearlong celebration for its 100th Anniversary. The Centennial Committee (Al Smith, Marlene Kotab, Mary Ann Stroschein, Cinthia and Clay Lange, Bonnie Lange, Ruth Mechling, and Alex Boy) planned an August outdoor picnic, an evening banquet and Centennial program, and a festive service followed by a social gathering. Ruth Mechling and family headed a Centennial Pancake Fundraiser. The Grace Lutheran women generously offered a \$2,000 grant for Centennial expenses. Marlene Kotab began researching the last 25 years of church history for the Centennial History booklet. Bonnie Lange organized an October visit by Bishop Constanze Hagmaier. No one guessed that a worldwide COVID-19 pandemic would interrupt the months of planning.

COVID-19 likely began in a marketplace in Wuhan, China in December of 2019. Researchers believe that the new virus probably mutated from a coronavirus common in animals which jumped over to humans in the marketplace. On February 11, 2020, the World Health Organization announced an official name for the disease that caused the outbreak. The new name was COVID-19, abbreviated from ‘CO’ for corona, ‘VI’ for virus, and ‘D’ for disease. The number 19 indicated that the disease began in 2019. Although beginning in China, the virus quickly spread worldwide. By February 6, the

first American life was lost to the virus and by September, the United States recorded more than 200,00 deaths.

As a result of the virus spread, changes in the Sturgis community and Grace Lutheran began with the cancellation of celebratory events during the Lenten season. The 14th Annual Sturgis Community Easter Cantata rehearsals began and then stopped early in March as the pandemic spread across the nation. The children's voices were stilled for the Palm Sunday service and the Confirmation Classes' Last Supper Drama and the High School Youth's Black Friday service were canceled. The Round Robin Lenten Services among churches in Sturgis, Rapid City Trinity, Belle Fourche, and Spearfish halted as the pandemic called for safe distancing and avoidance of crowds. The Alliance of Churches and the Kiwanis Club postponed their Annual Potato Feed and Soup Supper community fundraisers. Grace Lutheran's doors were closed to regular Wednesday and Sunday activities and worship services.

But throughout the tragedy, God's work continued through faithful volunteers. Together with Pastor Kris and Assisting Minister Tim Patmore, Sunday services, although closed to the public, continued to be broadcast on KBHB radio. Grace musicians Dan Chapman, Danilee Pudwill, Marlene and Christian Kotab, Candy McKay, and Marge Erion-Johnson shared uplifting music during the broadcasts. Soloists offered special music and Tim Potts, Garland Dobler, and Kim Weber assisted Pastor Kris on Sundays when Tim Patmore was unavailable. Christian Kotab was the sound technician and Deb Patmore served as the computer/screen operator for the many months of closure. Many families sent in recordings of music, prayers, and readings to enhance the radio broadcasts. Congregation members gathered at the Community Center parking lot, sharing the 9:00 a.m. broadcasts as they 'attended church' in their vehicles.

Over 200 home Holy Communion kits were delivered for Easter by Grace volunteers. A phone committee called members of the congregation to offer words of encouragement and to uphold each other in prayer. Although members were physically separated, they were united in the Holy Spirit as they shared the Easter service and the Lord's Supper in their homes. One listener expressed it in these words:

"I've appreciated the messages. Listening on the radio requires us to listen carefully and intently. And with no distractions, no expectations, the Word of God speaks to me loud and clear."

Volunteering continued into the community as high school youth unloaded countless boxes of food at the Sturgis Food Pantry. The church offered help with grocery or prescription pickup along with the Good Deeds program. Good Deeds provided Sturgis residents who were elderly, with compromised health conditions, or are not wanting to leave their homes to travel, the opportunity to utilize a free shopping and contactless delivery service.

The church gladly celebrated the high school graduation of Annie Calhoon with a drive-by car parade in front of a congratulatory banner at the front of the church. Later that afternoon, Sturgis students enjoyed the first outdoor graduation ceremony at the high school.

Pastor Kris, Youth Director Jenn Aldren, and the Caraway Street actors continued outreach to children who now were experiencing virtual learning in their homes. VBS and all Lutheran Outdoors

programs were canceled, so, in lieu of face-to-face programs, children were greeted by their Grace teachers with online programming. Pastor Kris offered a word of hope on Facebook through Cuddle Duds and Christian stories. Special Caraway Street ZOOM broadcasts brought stories to children at home and for Vacation Bible School, children took part in “Baking Through the Bible.”

The Church Council decided to reopen services on July 19th. Restrictions were set by the Synod Office - wearing of masks, use of hand sanitizer, and socially distanced seating. Then came the influx of motorcycle enthusiasts for the Annual Sturgis Motorcycle Rally. The GLCW made the decision to cancel the annual breakfasts during the event. Church services were pre-recorded and sent to KBHB for the two Sundays of the Rally. Christian Kotab, sound technician for the church, recorded the music and reading of the liturgy by the Grace worship musicians and ministers, and sent hour-long broadcasts to the radio station. The church remained closed to worshippers until September 13th.

Changes in church personnel came that summer. Cindy Milek was commended for her faith-filled work for the Caraway Street Ministry and her resignation was sadly accepted. Jenn Aldren, Education Coordinator, resigned her position to begin a nursing program in Rapid City.

In the midst of the pandemic, joyful events included the baptisms of Debbie Merritt, Makenzie Magdanz, Winston Douglas, and Andria and Jared Williams’ twin boys, Jasper and Benjamin. Otto and Kelly (Mechling) Magdanz were welcomed as new members of Grace. Pete and Mikayla Wilson’s children donated their profits from their summer lemonade stand to the Building Fund. At the beginning of a very different school year, an outdoor Back-to-School Blessing and Prayer Station Night was held on September 2nd. Wednesday night youth activities resumed for grades 5-12. Confirmation and Youth Group began on September 23rd with Confirmation scheduled for Sunday, October 18.

Plans were finalized for the October 25th Centennial Service. Bishop Hagmaier confirmed her participation. Mayor Carstensen agreed to read the proclamation naming October 25th as Grace Lutheran Church Day. Gary Meyer wrote a centennial song entitled “One Hundred Years.” Ruth Mechling and her hospitality committee prepared treats to hand out to the congregation during a drive-by reception and parade. Letters of congratulations were received from former pastors and Executive Proclamations arrived from Governor Kristi Noem and Mayor Mark Carstensen. Although different in appearance, Grace still celebrated their 100 years of blessings.

This document is a continuation of the historical document published by Bob Lee and Pastor James Olson in 1995 in celebration of Grace Lutheran Church’s 75th Anniversary. Information for this history was gleaned from that document and from the annual reports, monthly newsletters, and church council and committee reports and minutes. With such a history to stand on, Grace Lutheran’s body of believers can look forward to the future of the church and its mission of faith to help God’s people

“Seek out Christ...Grow in Christ...and Serve Christ.”

CENTENNIAL THEME: “EMBRACING A CENTURY OF GRACE.”

ANNIVERSARY VERSE: “FOR BY GRACE YOU HAVE BEEN SAVED, THROUGH FAITH- AND THIS IS NOT FROM YOURSELVES, IT IS THE GIFT OF GOD.” EPHESIANS 2:8-9

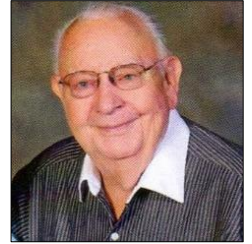
PRECIOUS MEMORIES FROM LONGTIME GRACE MEMBERS

DEWAYNE HAYES

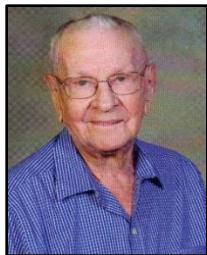
DeWayne Hayes began his membership at Grace Lutheran in the mid-1940's while he was in high school. During the 1950's, DeWayne moved away from Sturgis but rejoined the church in 1990 upon his return to the community. He has remained active since then.

He recalls his confirmation in 1947 and his two terms of service on the church council – once in the early 1990's and again in the 2000's. A highlight for DeWayne was the annual Rally Breakfast. He flipped pancakes and brought his special brand of humor to the kitchen crew every year.

A poignant memory for DeWayne was the death of Pastor Mike Fox while he was president of the church council. At approximately 8:00 a.m. on Sunday, September 11, 2011, Tim Patmore called him with the sad news. Donna Trigg, who was also a member of the council at the time, arrived at DeWayne's home where they proceeded to call all the other council members to meet prior to the regular Sunday service. Pastor David Baer from the Whitewood Immanuel Lutheran Church was phoned. Pastor Baer immediately came to Grace Lutheran to lead the service and give a very healing sermon to the grieving congregation. The regular radio broadcast was canceled that morning. DeWayne recalls how fortunate the congregation was to have Pastor Will Olsen agree to be the interim pastor until the vacancy could be filled.



ELDON HERRING



Eldon Herring, who was Grace Lutheran's oldest member, was born in 1916, in a prairie dugout on the banks of Mitchell Creek, southeast of Ottumwa, SD. He was 104 when he died on July 1, 2020, short of the centennial celebration.

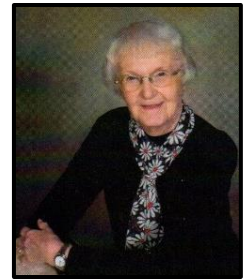
Eldon, a child of Norwegian heritage was raised on the prairies of South Dakota by a mother who valued education. The family moved to Piedmont so that the children could attend high school. Eldon, with a twinkle in his eye, would say, "I graduated high school third in a class of three." He attended college at Southern Normal in Springfield, SD and then taught in a one-room schoolhouse in Moon, SD, near Newcastle, Wyoming.

In 1942, Eldon enlisted in the US Army Air Corps and served during WWII earning the rank of 1st Lieutenant. After his discharge, he moved his family to Brookings where he received an agronomy degree. He worked as a soil scientist with the Bureau of Reclamation in Huron, SD, and then moved to Sturgis where he worked for the Soil Conservation Service. He later worked as a Manual Arts Therapist and Supervisor at the Ft. Meade Veterans Hospital planting gardens, growing plants, and maintaining flower beds for the patients and staff.

Eldon joined Grace Lutheran after moving to Sturgis and was a faithful pancake flipper for the annual Rally Breakfasts in the basement of the church. He was a soft-spoken kind man who took great pride in his Norwegian traits and ancestry. He loved his Grace Lutheran Church and the many friends he made there who enriched his life. Eldon lived in his own home until his 101st birthday. After his wife Mary's passing, he moved to Brookings to be closer to his family. In many conversations by phone, he always sent greetings to his church family in Sturgis.

DODE LEE

Dode Lee was born in Rapid City in 1924. She often spent weekends there with her Grandmother Behrens who lived two blocks from the First Presbyterian Church. Dode would walk there to attend Sunday School. As a young adult, teenager, and into her early 20's, she did not continue to attend church. But she did not lose her belief in Jesus or even question it. She graduated from high school in 1942 and lived in Rapid City until she and her husband, Bob, moved to Pierre. After 4 years, they moved to Sturgis where she has lived since then.

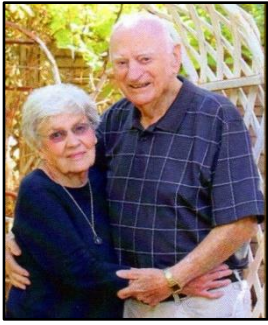


With the birth of their children, Christine and Mark, she felt that it was important for them to learn about Jesus and His teachings. She had already taught them to be kind and forgiving. Bob and Dode became members of Grace Lutheran in 1959. Chris was confirmed by Pastor Roy Gilbertson. It was his last confirmation class at Grace. Mark was confirmed by Pastor Gerry Christopherson two years later.

Dode has been a member of Grace Lutheran for 59 years. She has a close connection with the church and knows that her spiritual needs are being met and then some. She appreciates Pastor Kris Garlick's "right on" sermons and her loving care...especially with the children. Dode often expresses her appreciation for the musicians, the assisting ministers, and the beautiful ritual at the altar every Sunday morning. At 94, she is not able to be physically active in church but feels welcomed and loved. Having been a member at Grace for a long time she has seen many changes, experienced different pastors, and has been blessed in one way or another by all of them.

Special memories include time spent with Pastor Jim Olson who shared her husband Bob's Norwegian heritage and Pastor Christopherson singing "O Holy Night" on Christmas Eve. She fondly remembers Pastor Mike Fox's Bible studies and the overwhelming reality of his death. She is thankful that Pastor Will Olson came to take care of the congregation when all needed him and his wife Helen's sparkling eyes and smile for all. Dode appreciated Susie Waite (Pastor Bob Waite's wife) quietly putting her arms around her when her granddaughter, Sarah, was killed in a tragic car accident. In Dode's words, "Lots of blessings. I am blessed."

RUTH AND BOB MECHLING



Ruth Mechling, a 100% Norwegian, came to Sturgis in the early 1950's to be employed as a Registered Nurse at the Ft. Meade V.A. Hospital. She transferred her membership from Zion Lutheran Church in Garretson, South Dakota to Grace Lutheran.

Chris "Bob" Mechling was born at Faith, South Dakota, but graduated from Sturgis High School and then, Black Hills Teachers College. During his college football-playing days, he was scouted by the Baltimore Colts. Sturgis was fortunate that Bob stayed to contribute his many other talents to both the community and to Grace Lutheran Church.

Bob served in the Korean Conflict and upon returning to Sturgis, met Ruth. Bob was brought up in the Roman Catholic faith and wanted Ruth to join his church. Ruth did attend instruction two times. But she told Bob that they could not get married as she felt that she could not convert to Catholicism. Bob replied, "OK, I will be a Lutheran." They were married at the Garretson Lutheran Church in 1953 and Bob was confirmed at Grace Lutheran in 1954 by Reverend Verlyn Smith.

Ruth and Bob both became involved in the church. Both served on the church council and served as the church's treasurer. Ruth was and continues to be active in the Grace Lutheran Church Women, especially as a member and officer of the Rachel Circle. She served or continues to serve on the Worship Committee, the Centennial Committee, and the Altar Guild. Her special talent for organization and dedication to the families of the church were found in her 20 years as the Father and Son Banquet Chairperson and her many years as a Sunday School teacher. As part of the Church Women United, she assisted with the May Friendship luncheon and program.

All five of the Mechling children (Mark, Kelly, Todd, Kris, and Shawn) were baptized and confirmed at Grace Lutheran. All attended Sunday School and were involved in all activities (camps, teaching youth groups, and church council). Two daughters were married at Grace. The next generation of Mechlins was also blessed at Grace Lutheran. Three grandchildren and two great-grandchildren were baptized at the altar of the church.

Ruth has some fond memories of Grace. One such humorous memory is when the Mechling and McFarland families sat pew to pew at services. Inevitably giggling would ensue, which usually led to a bit of a discipline problem. She also fondly remembers the large red apples that the church handed to the children after the Christmas programs. She recalls having communion offered only six to seven times a year.

Sturgis and Grace Lutheran are fortunate to have been blessed by the Mechling Family. In addition to her numerous church duties, Ruth served as a nurse at the V.A. Hospital for 40 years. Bob's career was with the South Dakota Army National Guard, ultimately attaining the rank of General. He served as the Sturgis mayor. As mayor, he signed the Executive Proclamation from the City of Sturgis marking June 24 and June 25 of 1995 as Grace Lutheran Days in honor of the church's 75th Anniversary. Grace Lutheran has been and continues to be a major focus of the Mechling Family's lives.

ARVID AND PAULETTE MELAND



Arvid Meland grew up on a farm near Florence, South Dakota, and attended Goodhue Lutheran Church. The Melands moved to Sturgis in February of 1964 and joined Grace Lutheran Church shortly after Pastor Harvey Grote left. Arvid claims a long and faithful membership of 56 years. His children Rebecca, Stephanie, and Paul were all confirmed at Grace. Arvid married Paulette in 1973 and their son Christopher was baptized at Grace and was a member of the confirmation class of 1995.

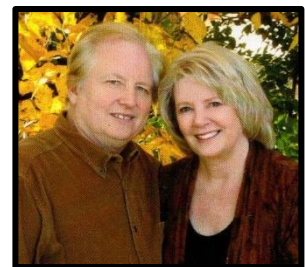
Arvid, an active member of the church, remembers giving sermons in the 1960s-1970s on Soil Stewardship Sundays, a day established by the ELCA. As an employee of the Soil Conservation Service, he was the perfect candidate for the job. Arvid also taught confirmation classes with Cindy Edison. He served on the church council for multiple terms and was appointed treasurer of the church in the 1960s after the building of the new church. He recalls the generosity of members when the council decided to ask the congregation to make contributions to lower the loan. Arvid led the church council as President in 1970.

Paulette has also shared her time and talents with the congregation at Grace. She is a soprano in the Grace Choir and is an expert quilter. Her latest donation of quilt art is on display in the stairwell of the steps to the basement of the church. Paulette and her organizer partner, Eileen Raforth, chaired the Motorcycle Rally Breakfasts in the 1990s and 2000s. She has mixed dozens of eggs for the breakfast and is a delightful addition to the breakfast crew. Paulette was elected President of the Grace Women and served two terms in 1995 and 1996.

Arvid and Paulette can be seen each Sunday and Wednesday in the pews of Grace, often accompanied by their grandchildren. They are seen at the coffee table, the Wednesday night suppers (often helping in the kitchen) and are known as faithful members of Grace Lutheran Church.

VICKI (GLAESEMAN) MONAHAN

Vicki Glaeseman Monahan's family moved to Sturgis in 1954, making Vicki a member of Grace for approximately 65 years. As a 9-year-old, she attended the groundbreaking and laying of the cornerstone of the present church building. She recalls attending services at the Dakota Theater as the new church was constructed and remembers how exciting it was to attend church in such a cool place, with such comfy seats and a stage! Attendees marveled that only a few of the 'spike heels' managed to get caught in the honeycombed floor mats in the theater lobby!



Vicki's special memories include potluck suppers with wonderful desserts, followed by playtime with friends. She treasures Christmas Eve Candlelight Service memories, many of which were blessed by the moving rendition of "O Holy Night" sung by Pastor Chris. The gift of a brown paper bag bursting with ribbon candy and peanuts is a favorite childhood recollection. Worshiping on Easter Sunday mornings with dear family and friends also remains a highlight for her. She remembers attending Kindergarten and Sunday School in the basement of the little white church and in the Parish House classrooms. She has used the original kindergarten tables in her pre-school classroom at Grace for the last 45 years.

During a transition between ministers, youngsters were blessed with guidance from three wonderful pastors (Pastors Harvey Grote, Herb Cleveland, and Roy Gilbertson) during their confirmation years. Wednesday afternoon early releases for religion education was a weekly routine for most church-going children. Grace's Junior Choir practiced on Wednesdays and sang nearly every Sunday from the church balcony, all lined up in their light blue choir robes. Lenore Anderson (Hines) was the choir's director, and the children sang her favorite piece, "Beautiful Savior," once or twice each year.

In the 1960s, Grace Lutheran was the home of the 'Blue Hare', a popular community teen venue established by Pastor Gilbertson. The group met in the basement of the Parish House which was equipped with table and chair seating, blue walls, a snack bar, music, black lights, and a large silhouette of a rabbit head painted on the east wall.

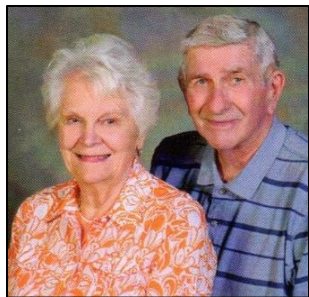
Vicki and her late husband Tom were married by Pastor Gerald Christopherson. Pastor 'Chris' also baptized their children, San and Shanna. Both children were confirmed by Pastor Jim Olson, married at Grace, and since have celebrated the baptism of their 5 children. After the Parish House fire on September 2, 1989, which damaged the basement and filled the building with smoke, Tom designed, drew, and donated a complete set of blueprints for the present-day education and office annex. This saved the church over \$20,000 in architectural and building fees. Sunday School classes were held in the Tom's T's building on Main Street and at the Kinkade Funeral Chapel during this construction period.

Vicki's continuing gift to Grace Lutheran has been her work with the children's education program. She taught Sunday School and VBS in college and later when her children entered the program. She served as Sunday School Superintendent and Children's Choir Director and taught Vacation Bible School during the summers. She served as the VBS Director for 10 years and as the VBS Craft Coordinator/Instructor for another 10 to 12 years. In the late 80s, she taught Confirmation classes and in the early 90s served as the Fundraising Coordinator for the Grace Youth's goal to attend the Atlanta National Lutheran Youth Gathering. Her favorite fundraising project was the weekly relocation of the famed pink flamingo flock to the innumerable front lawns of the good-hearted members of Grace Lutheran. She continues her service as the 'Journey with Jesus' Sunday morning teacher and helps with the VBS crafts during the summers.

Vicki also recalls the celebration of her mother's 80th birthday. Peggy Glaeseman was very instrumental in promoting the idea of serving the first Grace Motorcycle Breakfasts during the Sturgis Rallies.

Grace has played a tremendous role in Vicki's world since age 4. She grew up at Grace, has worshiped, laughed, and cried there for her entire life. In her words – "It is home!"

JOHN AND EILEEN RAFORTH



John and Eileen Raforth have always answered the call to help the church at home and in the mission fields. Before moving to Sturgis, while living in Minnesota, they spent a summer living with a family in Ethiopia while doing mission work there. After their move from Minnesota to Sturgis and beginning their membership at Grace Lutheran in late 1978, both quickly became involved in the workings of the worldwide church. In 1988, the church sponsored a refugee family, Yohannes and Meaza Belayeah of Ethiopia. They were houseguests of John and Eileen Raforth until housing could be found for them.

Because of his education in Veterinary Medicine, John was called to work with cattle farmers in the mission fields in Cameroon, Africa. On three separate trips John educated the farmers in the control of disease in their cattle herds and how to test for tuberculosis. Along with the others who were in the missionary group, John helped the local members construct new churches

Eileen has also answered God's call from 1 Peter 4:10: "Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms." In 1998, she traveled with John to Cameroon and shared her sewing skills and nutrition education with the women there. Other mission trips took her to Turkey and Liberia, Africa.

As faithful members of Grace Lutheran Church, the Raforths used their varied skills to serve at home, too. John served on the church council twice, taught Sunday School, adult Bible studies, and confirmation. Once he retired from his veterinary practice, he volunteered for Meals on Wheels and delivered home communion to Grace members.

Eileen's contributions began with her work with the Grace Lutheran Women and the Martha Circle. Most notably, Eileen served as the Motorcycle Rally Breakfast Co-Chairman with Peggy Glaeseman during the first years of the breakfast and for many years after. She served as the GLCW chairperson in 2005. Because of her expertise in sewing, she was a perfect fit for the Action Chairman. With her guidance, hundreds of quilts, altar cloths, minister and acolyte robes, banners, chrismons for the church Christmas tree, baby kits, school kits, and Christmas bags have been sewn or assembled. Recipients across the world have benefitted from her organizational and sewing skills. Along with John, she has delivered Meals on Wheels and home communion, and has served on the SD Synod Board, the church council and altar guild, and led the Search Bible Study. Many confirmation students and teens, with Eileen as the teacher, have baked unleavened bread for communion or lefse for fundraisers. She bakes and cooks as well as she sews.

These two busy Grace members have taught others that service comes with membership. John, always passionate about mission work, relates that his hope has been that Grace would become more mission-minded and be mindful of the great disparity throughout the world.

TED AND EVA (AGA) SIGMAN

Eva (Aga) Sigman has been a member of Grace Lutheran Church since her birth in 1933 (87 years). Born when her siblings had whooping cough, Eva could not be taken home to the Aga Ranch. Her grandmother took her to be baptized and named her Eva Bertha Pauline Aga. Mrs. Bertha White (a niece) and Mrs. W.A. Thurston accompanied her. These were important women of the church. Mrs. White was the first president of the Grace Lutheran Ladies Aid and the 1926 appointed chair of the Building Committee for the first church. Mrs. Thurston was president of the Ladies Aid in 1924 and presented the deed to the lots for the church building. She was also a member of the building committee who obtained sufficient funds to proceed with the building of a parsonage in 1935.



The Aga family has a long tradition with the church. Grandpa Joseph and Grandma Clara moved to Sturgis from Colton, SD, in 1924. Joseph was a sub-contractor and helped build the original church. Clara served as church organist beginning on Christmas Day, 1924. She also bought the communion rail.

Eva's parents were married in Lead (because there was no church in Sturgis) by Reverend Reuben Aga (Grandpa Joseph's brother). All six children of the Aga family (2 boys and 4 girls) grew up attending the Rural Alkali School which now sits on the property used during the Sturgis Threshing Bee. Eva's brother, Marvin, eventually took over the ranch when their father retired.

Ted Sigman grew up in Sturgis, graduating from Sturgis High School one year before Eva – Ted in 1950 and Eva in 1951. Ted went on to teach science and math for 32 years and coached Sturgis football and wrestling. He was a member of the Presbyterian Church until marrying Eva.

Ted and Eva were married on August 10, 1952, the same week as the Sturgis Motorcycle Races (what would become the Motorcycle Rally). Ted pushed Eva down Main Street (which remained open) in a wheelbarrow to celebrate the day. Reverend Bremer married them. He had also confirmed Eva when she was a Freshman in high school. 14 days later, on August 24th, Ted left for the army. He served in Korea until April of 1954. They are the parents of 4 sons-Tim, Dan, Mike, and Richard, who is deceased. The boys were baptized and confirmed at Grace.

The Agas built the first house in the Murray addition with other acres being purchased by Eva's siblings, Marvin and Carolyn. Ted was instrumental in building roads there and getting electricity connected to that area.

Eva fondly remembers the original church. She especially misses the beautiful stained-glass windows. Of special remembrance, is the window depicting Jesus in Gethsemane that faced east. It glowed in the morning sun during Sunday services. She also remembers the High School Church Choir processing into the church singing, "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty."

The Sigmans served the church with gladness. Ted served as a teacher for confirmation – teaching his nephew, Lynn. He was a church council member, serving as president in 1975. Eva remembers volunteering as a babysitter when mothers could bring their children to the basement during services. Women took turns watching the little ones "to keep the services quiet and uninterrupted." Eva taught Sunday School, and both she and Ted washed innumerable dishes for the rally breakfasts.

The Sigmans epitomize the Bible verse, "Well-done, good and faithful servants." Matt. 25:23

MARY ANN AND DALE STROSCHEIN

Mary Ann Stroschein was born on a farm near Redfield, SD. She attended rural grade school and graduated from Redfield High School. While working in Brookings, SD, she met Dale who had been raised on a farm by Toronto, SD, and was a pharmacy student. When he graduated, he wanted to live in the Black Hills. After a couple of moves, they were fortunate enough to purchase the Sly & Freeman Drug Store with partners Carl and Alice Klein who they met when working in Belle Fourche. Mary Ann and Dale raised two sons. Bob lives in Lakewood, CO, and Tim is in Gillette, WY and has a son named Sam.



The Stroscheins moved to Sturgis in March of 1962 and were warmly welcomed into the Grace Lutheran Congregation. Dale served as president of the Congregation in 1969 and Mary Ann served as the first female president in 1980 and 1981. Mary Ann also served as president of GLCW several times and has remained a faithful member of the Martha Circle. She has always helped in some way for the rally breakfasts.

Mary Ann not only served the church locally but served on the SD Synodical board for two terms. She attended many of the Synodical Conventions and enjoyed meeting women from across the state. She accompanied the youth to gatherings in Sioux Falls.

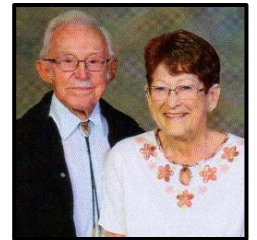
Dale and Marlowe Kinkade, along with Bob Morrison and Arvid Meland, took on the project of raising money to support the Radio Broadcast. They invited the men in the community and the congregation for a donation of \$10, to participate in a steak dinner, games, and socializing. Dale and Marlowe sold the tickets and Bob and Arvid did the cooking.

In 1982, Pastor Harold Verhulst suggested a Thanksgiving dinner for the Senior Citizens (70+ year-olds) to be cooked and served by the youth and parents. Karel Aga, Elaine Wolsky, and Mary Ann chaired the first turkey dinner. The Youth Group served the dinner with all the trimmings to a full house. Because of its success, the dinner continues to be served each year.

One of the best memories Mary Ann has is that of many families from Grace spending Labor Day weekend at Outlaw Ranch for a family camp. It was enjoyed by all.

ERNIE AND ELEANORA MILLER

Ernie and Eleanora have always been eager to share their stories of early days in the Sturgis area. Eleanora, 88, recalls the days of her youth working in the sugar beet fields while growing up in Vale. Ernie, 96, was born in Michell, and moved to the Vale area in 1928. Ernie and two of his brothers were drafted in 1945. He traveled to the Philippine Islands, but then was transferred to the Pacific Theater in Japan. He says of the terrible tropical storm encountered on the way, "the ship about sunk, but heaven above saved us."



Ernie talks about driving a taxi, and operating the Sturgis Bus Service with his brother, Eddie. In 1947, they bought the Sturgis-Ft. Meade Taxi Company and later, started the Sturgis Bus Company. After 40 years of transporting students, they were operating 22 buses. About his 50 years as a school bus driver, he says, "I drove bus for 55 years, and I'm still alive. I tell people, you haven't lived a true Christian life until you have driven a school bus. No other job is so rewarding."

Eleanora and Ernie were married in 1952. Their children are Melvin and Lynelle. Eleanora was the Sunday School superintendent during Rev. Christopherson's ministry. When the Endowment Fund was established in 1991, Ernie became the first president. Exhibiting that 'true Christian life,' they sit in the same pew they have shared for their many years at Grace.

1996-2020 CHURCH STAFF

PASTORS

James B. Olson	1991-2001
Robert A. Waite	April 2002 – November 2004
Michael J. Fox	2006–2011
Henrique Fleming	2013-2015
Kris Garlick	2017-2020

INTERIM PASTORS

Dennis Reich	2005-2006
Willard Olsen	2011-2012, 2016

OFFICE MANAGERS

Rita Boy	1979-2006
Janet Davison	2006-May 2011
Deb Patmore	May 2011–May 2014
Randy Bender	June 2014–2015
Laurie Lorus	2016–May 2018
Keri Fischer	May 2018–Present

CUSTODIANS

Liane Meyer	1992-May 2005
Cindy Milek	2006–Present

ASSISTING MINISTERS

Carla Alexander	Debra Enright	Bonnie Matlick	Gabe Shoun
Marilyn Bates	Margie Hershey	Gary Meyer	Donna Trigg
Roxie Chowen	Maddie Kreutz	Tim Patmore	Kim Weber
Bryan Cooley	Seth Kunert	Tim Potts	
Garland Dobler	Bonnie Lange	Gene Schneider	

ORGANISTS/PIANISTS

Ann Kniffen	1985-2006	Marlene Kotab	2006–Present
Dee Storjohann	1973-2001	Lynette Kvanvig	1980's–Present
Margie Hershey	2006	Candy McKay	2006–Present
Roxie Chowen	2006-2017	Marcia Potts	2006–Present
Colleen Hendrickson	2006-2007		

PROJECTIONISTS

Debbie Haivala	Deb and Tim Patmore
Connie Hurlburt	Michelle Williams
Cindy Milek	

SOUND TECHNICIANS

Christian Kotab	Tim Patmore
Gordon Kotab	Dick Ruby
Dennis Milek	J.D. Williams

WORSHIP MUSICIANS

GUITARISTS/VOCALISTS

Dan Chapman
Jim and Irene Heinert
Christian Kotab
Gordon Kotab
Lynette Kvanvig
Gary Meyer

VOCALISTS

Roxie Chowen
Marge Erion-Johnson
Bob Grams
Tammy Hencke
Marlene Kotab
Candy McKay
Liane Meyer
Marcia Potts
Danilee Pudwill

DRUMMER

Andy Geffre
Todd Winkel

BASS GUITARIST

Dennis Milek

CHOIR DIRECTORS

Margie Hershey 1986-2006
Marlene Kotab 2006 - Present

CENTENNIAL COMMITTEE

Allyn Smith, Chairman	Alex Boy	Cindy and Clay Lange
Marlene Kotab, History Book	Bonnie Lange	Ruth Mechling
		Mary Ann Stroschein

PRESIDENTS OF GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

1996	Daniel Boy
1997-1998	Dean Rasmuson
1999-2000	Linda Black
2001	Ronald Merwin
2002	Gordon Swanson
2003	Scott Amundson
2004	Jeff DeKraai
2005	Kent Kreutz
2006-2007	Phil Davison
2008	Larry Schemmel
2009-2010	Clint Hall
2011-2012	DeWayne Hayes
2013	Bryan Hencke
2014-2015	Deb Kopetsky
2016-2019	Kent Kreutz
2020	Jeff DeKraai

PRESIDENTS OF GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH WOMEN

1996	Paulette Meland
1997-1998	Ramona Hultman
1999-2000	Ardith McFarland
2001-2002	Emma Ogdahl
2003	Helen Miller
2004	Paulette Meland
2005	Eileen Raforth
2006	Ramona Scherer
2007	Sue Whitford
2008	Mary Ann Stroschein
2009	Angi Schemmel
2010	Darlyne Kopren
2011	Deb Enright
2012-2013	Mary Ann Stroschein
2014-2016	Sheri Boy
2017-2020	Deb Patmore

CONFIRMATION CLASSES

1996

Laura Jewell
Christian Kotab
Meghan Little
Zarah Mattox

Carrie Merwin
Levi Olson
Jeremy Pickar
Tyler Trigg

Chaska Weisz
Miaken Zeigler

ADULTS

Gerald Derby

Gary Reimer

Michael Spicer

1997

Deanna Bird
Katie Christians
DeWayne Collins
Ryan Hansen
Nicole Heggem

Kelsey Hurlburt
Darren Jacobsen
Erin Little
Jamie Peterson
Eric Preszler

Ryan Reimer
Elizabeth Rindelaub
Seth Schwartz
Andrew Severson

ADULTS

Marcy Jutting

Lesli Swanson

1998

Levi Beckman
Rebecca Beckman
Karen Brinkman
Jeffery Christians
Paul Clark

Nicholas Cobb
Scott Flage
Jacquelyn Galles
Andrew Geffre

Sarah Heibult
Rachel Luptak
Michelle Plaggemeyer
Derick Westbrook

ADULTS

Daniel Egger
Karen Jordan

Robert Jordan
Wayne Laird

Rollie Schlenker

1999

Trinity Bruse
Danilee Chapman

Kayla Davison
Michael Erion

Dustin Jordan
Jordan White

2000

Gary Collins
Jessica Davies
Megan Draine

Darren Johnson
William Kaufman
Ashley Klapperich

Vivian Kreutz
Jon Paul Miller
Jonathan Zeigler

2001

Maranda Berg
Keela Bruse
Lisa Davison

Erik Haivala
Danielle Heinert
Ryan Klapperich

Erica Luptak
Kimberlee Thuringer
Leslie Whitford

2002

Carin Black
Caleb Chapman
Mariah Russell-Crane

Adam Geffre
Sonja Halverson
Kristin Mortenson

Jared Reimer
Thomas Rindelaub
Autumn Trescott
Breanna Vilhauer

2003

Destiney Aga
Christopher Bergman
John Bisson
Mikkal Black

Jeffrey Collins
Nicholas Kuno
Emily Meyer
Ryan Russell

Sara Scherer
Emily Swanson
Matthew Ward
LaKayla Westbrook

2004

Randy Aga
Kevin Boy
Alexander Grebin
Heidi Hendrickson

Alex Kaufman
Dylan Miller
Nicholas Noyes
Kelsey Patmore

Trevor Potts
Nolan Schneider

2005

Cassandra Amundson
Stacy Davison
Taylor Fernen

Shannon Jordan
Sienna Mathiesen
Samantha Merwin

Josh O'Dea
Tera Potts
Brandi Rossow

2006

Zachary Adam
Laurie Aga
Daniel Bergman
Terrin Black
Caitlin Budahl

Ashley Clark
Michelle Gouldin
Leif Halverson
Crystal Huisman
Andy Meisner

Megan Merwin
Callie Miller
Kaitlin Schneider
Kaitlin Ward

2007

Tyler Beck
Bryan Cooley
Jacob DeKraii

Kyle Hencke
Paige Hermanson
Taylor Kreutz

Elizabeth Meisner
Lacey Scherer
Evan Weyer

2008

Taber Baldwin
Kristin Beck
Zachery Bergman

Franke Gonzales
Jennifer Hall
Allison Lorus

John Paul
Austin Mundt

2009

Nicole Amundson
Elizabeth Bertolotto

Sara Grebin
Sawyer Mathiesen

Daniel Noyes

2010

Larissa Adam
Katelind Cochran
Andrea Collins
Courtney Dahlberg

Chloe DeKraai
Koby Dobler
Tanner Jordan
Casey Kreutz

Tessa Rossow
Brody Jorensen
Seth Hoppe

2011

Corey Aga
Emily Bertolotto
Nick Grams

Cole Jordan
Sarah Milek
Jordan Mullen

Jeffery Noyes
Jason Schneider

2012

Bradley Anderson
Austin Hall

Jaxson Mathers
Joseph Rossow

2013

Christian Avery
Brynn Dobler

Krista Milek
Jordana Shuck

2014

Kameron Cochran
Connor Crane

Mackenzie Dahlberg
Joel Fleming

Aisha Plaggemeyer
Christopher Mullen

2015

Annie Calhoon
Kaitlen Hoppe
Cassidy Jorensen

Madison Kreutz
Nora Nelson
Brianna Paul

Cathrine Selting
Tyler Selting

2016

Madison Pankratz

Sarah Jordan

2018

D'Metrie Aga
Elizabeth Aga
Kaidyn Meyers

Traeton Monahan
Jocelyn Nohava
Carson Pankratz

Makenna Rock
Gage Shoun

2019

Austin Atyeo
Jeslyn Deserly
Landry Haugen

Keeley Heikes
Owen Koontz
Taesha Monahan

Brianna Neuschwander
Jake Vliem

2020

Koyer Kelly
Morgan Myers

Reeve Ross
Breanna Shoun

“Sing to the LORD, all the earth.” 1 Chronicles 16:23



2016 Grace Choir

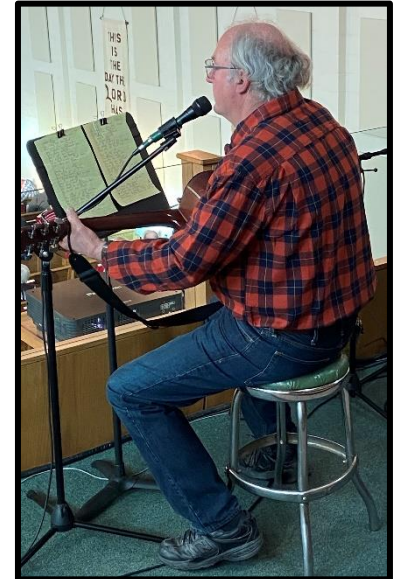


Grace Musicians

**Marcia Potts, Danny Chapman,
Tammy Hencke,
and Marlene Kotab**



Pastor Herb Cleveland and Grace Musicians
L-R: Candy McKay, Marlene Kotab, Dan Chapman,
Danilee Pudwill, and Marge Erion-Johnson



**Song
Writer
and
Musician**
Gary
Meyer



**Summer
Worship at the
Sturgis City Park**
L-R: Bob Grams,
Andy Geffre,
Dennis Milek,
Roxie Chownen,
Candy McKay,
Marcia Potts,
Marlene Kotab,
Christian Kotab,
and Tammy
Hencke

“Serve the LORD with gladness! Psalm 100:2



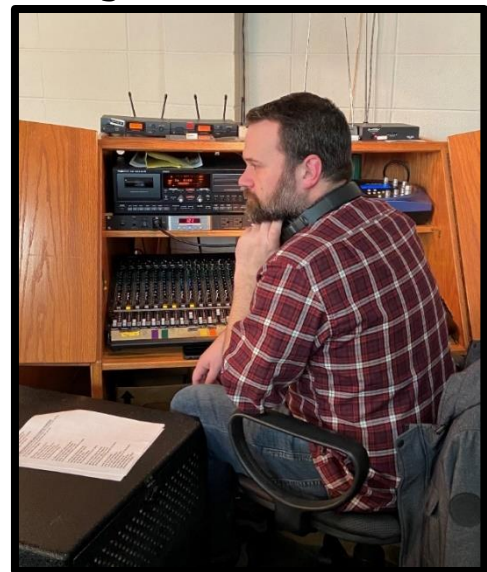
2018 Youth Group

Bus Drivers - 2018
Back L-R: Bill Rossow, Sue Whitford, and Al Smith
Front L-R: Bonnie Lange, Carl Erickson, Mel Hanes, and Kent Kreutz



2013 Quilters
Eileen Raforth,
Sharon Assmus,
Arlene Ennis,
And, Ruth Paulson

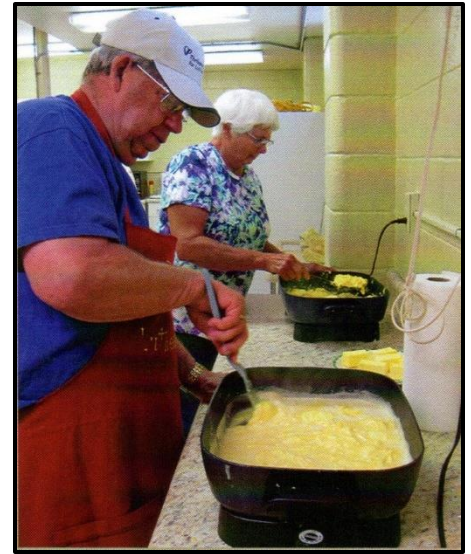
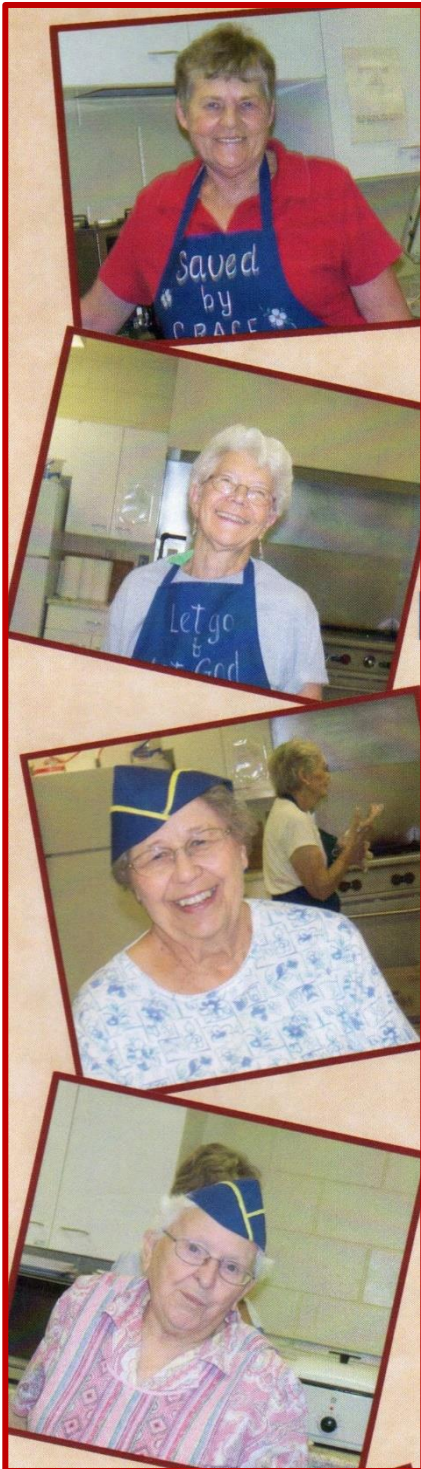
Working the Sound- Christian Kotab



**Mechling/Magdanz Family –
Centennial Pancake Supper**



“Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the LORD and not for men. Colossians 3:23



**Motorcycle Rally
Breakfast
Workers**



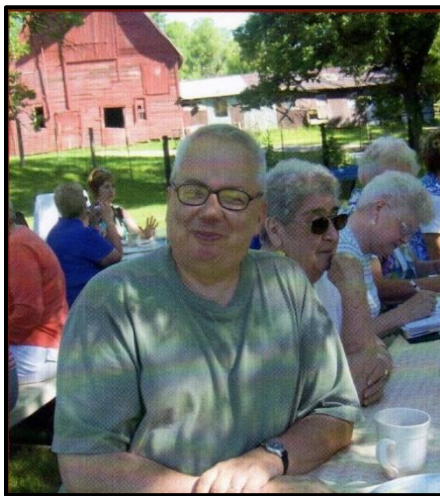
**Vicki Monahan and
Caraway Street Players -
Children’s Ministry**



**“Train up a child in the way he should go.”
Proverbs 22:6**



**Arvid Meland, Pastor Will
and Helen Olsen - 2020**



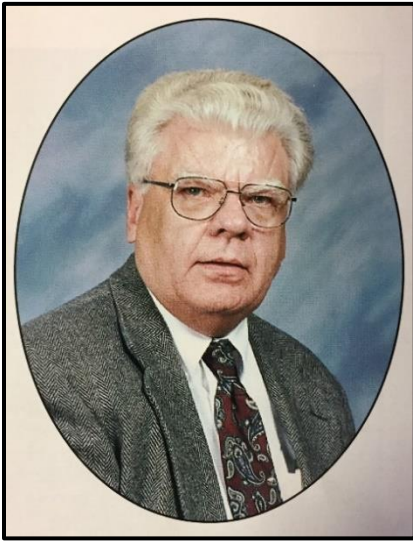
**Pastor Mike
and Susan Fox - 2006**

**Pastor Kris Garlick
preparing and blessing
the Easter Home
Communion Kits
during the 2020 Pandemic**



**Centennial
Kickoff
Sunday,
October 27,
2019**

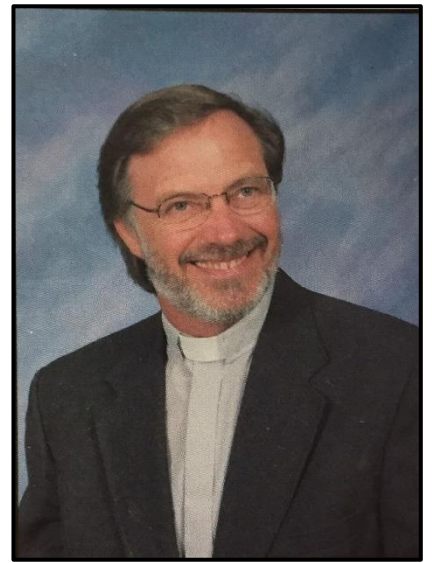




Pastor James B. Olson
1991-2001



Pastor Michael J. Fox
2006-2011



Pastor Robert A. Waite
2002-2004



Pastor Willard Olsen
2011-2012, 2016



Pastor Henrique Fleming
2013-2015



Pastor Kris Garlick
2017-Present