

Pastor's Annual Report to the Congregation, 2009-2010.

We always give thanks to God for all of you and mention you in our prayers, constantly remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. I Thessalonians 1:2-3

As we look back to the past year of ministry, clearly the main focus of our congregation's time, energy, and resources was in implementing the capital improvements as envisioned in last year's capital appeal campaign. It is a joy to see these improvements become a reality: a new roof, new sanctuary coat of paint, new external and sanctuary doors, and soon a new outside concrete entry area. The design of a building really does have an effect on its inhabitants, and we have embraced all these improvements wholeheartedly. A big thanks to Robert Humphrey and the rest of the capital improvement team. They have been good stewards of that to which they have been entrusted and their efforts have benefited us all.

Worship and music are among the strengths of this ministry. This past year we took steps toward renewing worship by continuing our exploration of the new liturgical resource made available by our denomination, Evangelical Lutheran Worship (ELW). I commend the congregation's willingness to go outside its comfort zone to learn a new liturgy. For some, the process is not always a pleasant one. Yet we recognize that a vital worship life is essential to our communal identity. No single liturgy has yet to emerge as a clear favorite that fits well with the congregation, but these endeavors take time. Our Celebration Music Team also continues to provide variety to our Sunday mornings in timely and innovative ways. We are all indebted to our fine music ministry staff, both Lois Simon, the Director of Music, and Alayne Brown, our organist, for the fine leadership they have provided in this area of ministry.

In 2009 our congregation began to feel the effects of the struggling economy. A handful from our membership suffered layoffs. At times our budget has struggled in keeping up with expenses. There are still reasons to be thankful in seeing the work of God. Giving to the capital appeal campaign has steadily continued, securing hope for the future. A "Jobseekers" small group ministry was started at the beginning of the programming year that has born fruit in offering support and fellowship to those in crisis. In many ways this group models what it means to be the church in such uncertain times: sustaining faith in God through mutual support, built upon Christ's love as experienced in Scripture and fellowship. We do not know what the coming year has in store for us, but we must remain vigilant, continuing to celebrate God's accomplishments in our midst and proclaiming God's love for the world in word and deed.

In November I joined an entourage from Epiphany Lutheran in Suwannee on a mission trip to Haiti through the Haitian Timoun Foundation (HTF). There we encountered partnerships established in Christ's name to improve the lives of others in this beautiful yet impoverished country. Upon my return, it was my hope to bring a group from Amazing Grace to Haiti in the Fall of 2010. Then on January 12, the earthquake hit Haiti. Amazing Grace stepped up and responded out of love and concern and gave immediate aid. But now we are at a crossroads. If our congregation wants to sustain the support of Haiti, we must now shift from "emergency response" to "recover response". Mission trips will eventually resume. Various and specialized skills will be needed. In the months to come we will be in discernment over determining specific ways Amazing Grace can support Haiti. My prayer is that some of us from

Amazing Grace Lutheran Church – Annual Report 2009-2010

Amazing Grace will go on a mission trip to Haiti in the coming year. Please consider if this trip is something God is calling you to do.

Seeking ways for us grow spiritually as a congregation, this past Lent had an emphasis on fasting. Though perhaps only around 15 individuals participated, it was healthy for our congregation to be willing to experience God in new, even (dare I say) non-classically-Lutheran ways. Those who participated reported the fast to be a faith-enhancing experience, finding that with God amazing things can happen, new ways of living can be attained. This one of many opportunities offered last year to grow in your walk as Christians. At this stage in the life our church, willingness to try new things is crucial to our growth and evolution: In discipleship, an active faith is a growing faith.

As we turn the page on another year, a great big thanks to outgoing Council President Susan Stubbs. She provided invaluable wisdom and solid leadership in the past year.

In looking ahead to 2010-11, we will continue working on the capital improvements. We will continue to seek ways to invite and include new comers. A crucial question we need to address together is around mission: Who are we and where are we going? It is tempting for a church to coast, simply replicating what was done the previous year. Together, pastor and congregation, we need to refine Amazing Grace's focus and purpose.

Finally, on a personal note, the last year was an eventful one for my family as we celebrated the addition of our baby girl, Helena. I am grateful that you, the congregation, granted me a two-week paternity leave. Thank-you so much. It allowed me to be an undistracted father during that critical time of joy and adjustment for our family.

Respectfully Submitted,

The Rev. Jason Talsness

President's Report

As we reflect on the 2009-2010 Program Year at Amazing Grace Lutheran Church, there is abundant evidence of the Holy Spirit's work in our congregation! We are blessed by God in so many ways, and we respond to that blessing with joy and dedication to His work.

We have seen several changes over this past year, some challenging and others blessings. We continue to come together as a faithful family to support each other in loss, in new life, and in our common work. We continue to reach out to our community and to the world with God's love. Council committee chairs have shown caring and dedication to their programs, working hard to create ways to help bring God to his people.

New leaders and seasoned leaders have stepped forward to make our programs rich and fruitful. New projects, both inside and outside of our building, increase the welcoming spirit that is such a strong part of Amazing Grace.

We have experienced the impact of other external forces on our congregation. The downturn in the nation's economy has hit many our congregation's families directly, and our operational funding as well. Despite these difficult financial times, I am inspired at the commitment of this congregation to the work of God's church. Gifts of time, talent, and treasure continue as faithful members trust the Lord to see us through, while we remain focused on His work.

The work of the Council and the Congregation balanced practical concerns and the mission work we are called to provide. Focus on foundation structures such as the constitution and other core documents helped ensure a solid practical foundation for the work of our church. Improvement in our physical building helped ensure a solid physical foundation for the work of our church. And focused financial planning helped ensure a solid financial foundation for the work of our church.

As I conclude my term as your congregational President, I am humbled and honored by the opportunity to serve in this role. A special Thank You is in order for the many ways that each and every Council member assisted me in my role, to Lee Bennett and Wayne Linke for mentoring me in this role, and for members of this church family who helped me along the way.

Thank you to Pastor Jason for his guidance and counsel over this past year. Your perspective and support provided a base for me to work with confidence.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Stubbs
Congregation President

1 Peter 4:10

Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.

Amazing Grace Lutheran Church – Annual Report 2009-2010

Parish Report for the calendar year, 2009

Baptisms:	Baylor Manning Oleksinski Anastasia Doreen Hewitt Jacob Anand Chandler Jaycean William Ray Bartholf Brett Louis Tornese Kaelin Emily Tornese	
Confirmed:	Alice Herchek Troy Hickey Tiffany Linke Nina Siso	
New Members:	Debby Brady Samantha Duong Wendy MacKinnon Logan Johnston Jeanne Erdner	Daniel Duong Brandon Duong Hailey Wilson David Wroolie George Erdner
Transfers:	Deborah Pinthus Dorothy Mack Dakota Mack	David Mack Nathan Mack Anita Holden
Weddings:	None	
Funerals:	Stan Burt	
Total Membership:	320	

Financial Report

During 2009, total operating revenues were \$203,792, total operating expenses were \$200,509 and principal payments on our mortgage were \$15,440. This amounted to a deficit of \$12,158. Ending operating cash was \$27,340. Our 2009 budget called for \$213,000 in operating revenues, \$204,590 in operating expenses, and mortgage principal payments of \$15,440. We were short on operating revenues by \$9,208; however, we spent \$4,081 less on operating expenses.

On our dedicated accounts, excluding the capital campaign, we had revenues of \$12,418 and expenses of \$11,244. This amounted to a surplus of \$1,174. Ending dedicated cash was \$10,386. Dedicated accounts include, among others, funds for youth, worship and music, pastor's discretionary, and council designated.

We began our capital campaign in earnest during 2009. We began 2009 with \$11,425 in our capital campaign. During 2009, we raised \$80,333, spent \$47,855 and ended the year with \$43,903 in cash. Our expenditures included a new roof and gutters, painting the sanctuary, replacing the front doors, supporting Lutherranch, investing in computer equipment and paying our consultants Kairos.

Many thanks to our counters: David Ludvigson, Janet Hutchins, Gary and Shirley Haselow, Bob and Kendra Koch, David and Jackie Rager, and Chuck and Kathi Van Acker. Special thanks to our devoted Treasurer, Bob Lee, for his tireless service and to Kathi Van Acker, our dedicated Financial Secretary.

Respectfully submitted,

Jacob Crowe
Financial Administrator

Property Committee

This year has been busy for the Property Committee. Many small and large projects were completed, and more continue. Some of the projects included:

- Assisted Georgia Power in replacing ballast on pole light behind the church
- Caulked and replaced broken windows in sanctuary
- Continued caulking and maintaining all exterior windows
- Repaired leak on exterior of Fellowship Hall
- Assisted contractors in installation of two front doors and three interior doors
- Patched, repaired, and painted frames of new doors
- Filled holes in landscape near sign in front yard
- Continue maintenance such as changing air filters, monitoring light bulbs, monitoring plumbing problems, etc.
- May 8, 2010 was a church workday. Thanks to all who came out to help and give of their time.

Many thanks to all who have helped me during the past two years during my term on council as property manager. A special thank you to Wayne Linke, Bob Mackinnon, Lee Bennett, Peter Risbergs, Bob Lee, David "Lud" Ludvigson, Parry Moss, Lisa Moss, Roger Nagy, Terry Plaster, Gwen Plaster, Jacob Crowe, Traci Crowe, Wendy Oleksinski and Yolaine Jacques (church secretary). Please forgive me if I have overlooked anyone.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Humphrey
Chair
Property Committee

Action Committee

In 2009, the action Committee assisted with the October “Blessing of the Animals” service, the annual Ministry Fair (in conjunction with Large Groups) and helped to sponsor a benefit concert for the Lawrenceville Co-Operative Ministry. A special thank you to LeeLinda Baggett and the AGLC cookie bakers, who provided over 20 dozen cookies for the reception following the concert.

In consultation with Pastor Talsness, future plans include building on these successes, adding more opportunities to invite visitors to Amazing Grace and working on an overall Evangelism Plan for Amazing Grace.

Respectfully submitted,

Elaine Schwartz
Chair
Action Committee

Worship and Music Committee

The Church is the congregation of saints, in which the Gospel is rightly taught and the Sacraments are rightly administered. From the Augsburg Confession, Article VII.

Our worship each Sunday morning and most Wednesday evenings is the very core of our existence as a congregation, so all members of Amazing Grace Lutheran Church take part. This is also the part of congregational life in which the church staff has much of the primary responsibility and authority, especially Pastor Jason. The Worship and Music Committee is a “committee of committees”. Its main function is to coordinate the efforts of the church staff and the subcommittees that make our worship happen.

These are the subcommittees, in alphabetical order:

- **Acolytes.** The acolyte ministry includes those who light and extinguish the altar candles, and who carry in banners and the Cross on special Sundays. This is the entry-level ministry for our members, open to baptized members between the ages of approximately 6 to 16 years of age. Coordinating the service of acolytes is currently handled by the Hospitality committee. Plans for next year include getting senior acolytes more involved in training and mentoring the newer acolytes.
- **Altar Guild.** This ministry has responsibility for the sanctuary, including, but not limited to, making sure that the appropriate paraments are in place, making sure that the elements for communion are available and in place in the sacristy. It is a long standing tradition in Lutheran churches that few people ever see the Altar Guild working, yet the results of their work is plain for all to see every Sunday morning. Judy Lee is the head of the Altar Guild.
- **Hospitality.** This ministry is responsible for making Sunday morning worship a welcoming experience. This committee includes the ushers, greeters, communion assistants, and coffee makers. Recently, Wayne Linke took over as chairman of this committee on the resignation of Connie Ferguson.
- **Lay Assistants.** These are the people who serve as lectors, cantors, and by preaching children's sermons. Pastor Jason coordinates the efforts of the members of this committee.
- **Music.** Our music ministry is lead by our professional music staff. Lois Simon is Music Director and Alayne Brown is organist/pianist. Pastor Jason is also deeply involved in this ministry. The music committee includes all church musicians, including both vocalists and instrumentalists.
- **Tech Guild.** This is the newest formal ministry. Bob Schwartz is chairman. We are in the process of recruiting volunteer members for this committee. The Tech Guild is responsible for all technical equipment used in worship. The projection screens and the sound system are the main things that the Tech Guild is responsible for.

Special worship services, including special festival Sundays and liturgical seasons like Advent and Christmas, Lent and Easter, Reformation Sunday, Pentecost, etc., and occasional services like Funerals and Weddings, are handled by all of the subcommittees working together. This working together is not limited to W&M subcommittee members. Our special worship services

Amazing Grace Lutheran Church – Annual Report 2009-2010

often include having the Sunday School students work with church musicians. Our church musicians also work with the Sunday School in providing music for the Sunday School students.

Amazing Grace has a long tradition of variety in our worship. This past year, we've used three main liturgy settings. Lutheran Book of Worship Setting Two is our primary organ-lead worship service. Now the Feast and Celebration is our primary piano & guitar lead "contemporary" music based worship service. With One Voice Setting Five is a service we use sometimes lead on music played on the organ, and sometimes lead by piano & guitar. From time-to-time, we'll also have special "Celebration" services in which we'll use different music. We also tried out both the new Evangelical Lutheran Worship Setting Six and Setting One organ-lead liturgy, and this summer we plan to test Evangelical Lutheran Worship Setting Two as a piano & guitar lead liturgy.

On behalf of the entire congregation, I'd like to extend special thanks to these members for their contributions: To former and current subcommittee heads, Connie Ferguson, Judy Lee, Wayne Linke, and Bob Schwartz. To the church music staff, Alayne Brown and Lois Simon. To all the vocal and instrumental musicians who sing or play instruments to accompany worship. To the Hospitality Committee & Altar Guild members, and all Lay Assistants. To the parents of Acolytes who go out of their way to get their kids to church early enough for them to prepare for service. And finally, to the dedicated volunteers who will soon be joining Bob Schwartz in the Tech Guild.

Respectfully submitted,

George Erdner
Chair
Worship and Music Committee

Education Committee

The Education Committee conducted a Bible Study assessment in March/April. The purpose of the assessment was to provide the congregation with an awareness of their Bible usage. It was the hope of the education committee this would help us as individuals and as a congregation in determining our strengths and weaknesses related to the Bible – and possibly provide direction for future educational studies. A total of 47 assessments were completed. At the time of this report, the results were being totaled and will be shared with the congregation at a later date.

Children's Education – Grades K-5

The 2009-10 program year saw a change in leadership for our Children's Sunday School program. Eric Dover took charge of our K-5 program. Eric had worked the previous year during Alexandra Talsness' leadership allowing for an extremely smooth transition. Attendance was solid at the beginning of the year, falling off after the first of the year. Weekly attendance averaged eight children per Sunday. We are using the One Room Sunday School with different areas of the room set up for music and storytelling. Special events during the year included a Children's Family Service in December, Easter Egg Hunt in April, and Hefer service project that the congregation was also invited to participate in. We would like to extend our thanks to the following people for their help throughout year: Debbie Dover, Wendy and Tim Oleksinski, Wendy Mackinnon, Lois and Rick Simon, Bob and Elaine Schwartz, Kathy Berfield, Jennifer Helfrich, PJ Speddon, and Meghan O'Hara.

Confirmation – Grades 6-8

Confirmation is held each week there is Sunday school in the youth room. The emphasis this year was Lutheran theology and identity. We studied the function of the church, Grace, baptism, Holy Communion, Martin Luther, and Theology of the Cross. New this year was the use of Augsburg-Fortress' "Here We Stand" confirmation series, the addition of a Lenten mentor program as well as the expectation that the confirmands memorize Bible verses. Thanks to the following who helped Pastor Jason with confirmation this year: Liz Linke, Wendy Oleksinski, Jennifer and Ken Helfrich.

Post-Confirmation Sunday School – Grades 9-12

Parry Moss filled a void in our education ministry with his leadership of our post-confirmation education class. This is the second year for this program. Attendance was small and the age span created some challenges; however, a level of trust developed among the class allowing for great discussions.

We started the year discussing ideas of interest to the youth, but changed to a Bible study towards the end of the year. We started at Chapter 1, verse 1, and went straight through, talking about the major stories, and will be finishing Genesis by the end of the school year.

Adult Education

My thanks to John Rhilinger who willingly continued leadership of our adult education for a second year. His knowledge of the subject matter and enthusiasm are a great asset and the result has been a stronger program.

There was a consistent core of 12-15 participating throughout the year. Discussions began with the Reformation and moved forward. The last several months have been a very close and slow reading of Romans. The class format is more of a facilitator/participant setting with the direction of discussion very member-driven.

Thank you to Jim Herchek for stepping in as a substitute for John when necessary.

The last Sunday of the 2009-10 program year will be May 23rd.

Youth Ministry

The youth had a fun year, starting with the Raven Cliff Falls Trail hike. The Helfrich's hosted a pool party on 9/13/09, and a bowling party was sponsored by the Sheets on October 4th. Our Service Project of raking leaves for those in need was delayed until November 8th due to lack of leaves. Jimmy Herchek sponsored the Lazer Quest activity on November 15th. In December we had a Christmas Party at Wendy and Tim Oleksinski's home. Game Night was sponsored by Jason on January 22nd, and the youth collected for Souper Bowl of Caring on February 7th. March 14th was our Spaghetti Lunch, sponsored by Wendy and Tim Oleksinski. It was delayed from Valentine's Day due to weather. The Youth helped serve and provided live music. We fed 70 people and collected \$279 for the Mission Trip.

March 12 – 14, Lutheran Youth Group Gathering did not happen due to lack of interest. We are scheduling a Lock-In on May 14th, sponsored by Wendy MacKinnon and Liz Linke, and a Paint Ball party on April 25th, sponsored by Jim Herchek.

Respectfully submitted,
Parry Moss

Vacation Bible School – Children's Day

Wendy Oleksinski was, once again, our VBS director. We tried something a little different in 2009. In lieu of a week of Vacation Bible School, we held a one-day event called Children's Day 2009. Approximately twenty children participated in the day consisting of both members and visitors. We did centers including story time, music, yoga, crafts, snacks, and a jumpy castle/face-painting/hair spraying center!

It is impossible to hold an event like this without a lot of help. There are a list of people that we need to thank: Bobbi Burke; Tracie Crowe; Samantha Duong; Eric & Debbie Dover; Miranda Espinosa; Jessica Ferguson; Robert & Wanda Humphrey; Jennifer Hutchins; Yolaine Jacques; Jill Knueppel; Laini Lee; Liz Linke; Tiffany Linke; Wayne Linke; DJ Ludvigson; Dustin Ludvigson; Wendy MacKinnon; Kristen Marzec; Gary McHugh; Stef McLeish; Tim Oleksinski; Terry & Gwen Plaster; John & Kathy Rhilinger; Sharon Ritchie; Bob & Elaine Schwartz; Susan Stubbs; Pastor Jason Talsness; Peter Talsness.

After overseeing this program for several years, Wendy has stepped down. At present, we are still trying to lock down leadership for VBS 2010.

Respectfully submitted,
Janet Hutchins

Small Groups

I have enjoyed being Small Groups leader for Amazing Grace. There is not a specific budget for this ministry, so I have no expenditures to account for. You may ask why? Well small groups are the close groups of two to ten people who are often the ones who run this church.

I found it fun to find out these groups and ask if they need anything and few times did they need anything except representation on Council not an attitude of give us, just that they use the church at scheduled times and they need to be protected in their times and privacy.

I look forward to helping the next person find the joy of delegating because successful small groups run themselves.

May God leave you happy and blessed.
Kevin O'Hara

Care Card Ministry

This ministry offers comfort to those church members who are in need whether it be illness, surgery, misfortune, or death. We have special cards that are mailed out to those in need. There are also special cards for joyous occasions to celebrate like the birth of a child or a wedding.

So far this year, I have mailed out 22 special cards.

Respectfully Submitted,
LeeLinda Baggett

Cookie and Bread Ministry

This ministry is a small gesture that sends a big message. It means so much to our visitors to know that they are not just a new face in the Sunday morning crowd. We welcome first time visitors to our church with cookies or a small loaf of bread. The baked goods are handed out to visitors on the Sunday morning of their visit.

We currently have twenty-one volunteer bakers who prepare the baked goodies for our visitors. In a three-month period, the volunteers bring their baked goodies once. A huge

thank-you goes to these bakers for volunteering their time and effort to this ministry. You are truly making a difference to a potential member of our church family.

Yours in Christ,
LeeLinda Baggett

Large Groups

Large Group Ministry is responsible for planning and coordinating fellowship gatherings. Also we assist other groups with set-up, clean-up and supplies for various events. We purchase supplies and keep the pantry stocked with coffee, paper products, and supplies for hospitality, and all types of gatherings.

This past year we have had a number of events beginning with the lunch following the dedication of our new roof on June 28, 2009. The men's group roasted a pig for this event which was well attended. On September 13, 2009 our annual picnic was held. We were blessed with beautiful weather and we had a large turnout. In addition to the usual hamburgers and hot dogs our amazing fishermen provided a variety of wonderful fish.

On November 21, 2009 we had our annual Thanksgiving Dinner followed by a Worship Service. Turkey and all the trimmings were enjoyed by all. Beginning on February 24, 2010 and continuing for five weeks soup and sandwich suppers were held each Wednesday before the Lenten Worship Services. We had a great turn out and had a wonderful variety of homemade soups each week, one week I counted nine different soups, it was amazing. Easter Sunday April 3, 2010 a light breakfast was served following the 8:30 service. A Mother - Daughter Celebration is planned for Sunday evening May 2, 2010.

We have assisted with numerous gathering throughout the year including confirmation, a baptism, and several funerals.

On a personal note I would like to thank my family, my husband Terry, and my daughter and son-in-law Tracie and Jacob Crowe for all their help and support. We truly have an Amazing Congregation! Great cooks and willing helpers make all our gathering fun and special.

Thanks be to God for all who have participated in bring us together for great fellowship, worship and praise.

Respectfully submitted,
Gwyn Plaster