



ANNUAL REPORT

2025

 (760) 346-1273

 hopepd.org

 45900 Portola Ave,
Palm Desert, CA 92260

A NOTE FROM OUR BRIDGE PASTOR

There's a saying: "We make our plans and God laughs." I'm not sure where it originated, but it echoes Proverbs 19:21, "You can make many plans, but the Lord's purpose will prevail."

Well, I experienced those truths in 2025. I was enjoying retirement...making plans...when one morning, while having coffee with a friend, my phone rang. It was Bishop Nagler. He asked me to prayerfully consider returning to Hope Lutheran to serve as Bridge Pastor following Pastor Tom Grevlos's interim tenure...while the search for a new Senior Pastor continued.

Through prayer and discernment, I came to believe the Lord's purpose was gently overriding my plans...maybe even smiling at them. And because of my deep love for this church, I accepted the call, returning to Hope as Bridge Pastor in November 2025.

It was a joy to step back into ministry with our staff, Council, and all of our fabulous volunteers. And what a gift to end the year together at our Christmas Eve services celebrating the birth of our Savior.

My priority then...and now...is simple. To serve Hope well by helping this incredible church be ready for the next Senior Pastor God is already preparing.

I am confident God is already at work, guiding both our Search Committee and the pastor who will be called here. The right person, at the right time, to lead Hope into its next season and the bright days ahead.

I'd be remiss if I didn't take a moment to not only thank, but to brag on the outstanding staff team we have. They've all been through a lot of change over the past couple of years and they've risen to the challenge. Hope is strong because of them.

And thank you...Hope Family. You've walked through change too. And yet you've remained faithful...in worship, in giving, in serving. That says everything about the heart of this church.

I believe this is the year a new Senior Pastor will be called to Hope, and that we will step into a season of growth and vitality we haven't yet seen.

In the words of the Apostle Paul..."Every time I think of you, I thank my God."
(Philippians 1:3)

Know you are loved,
Pastor Gerald Sharon

Palm Desert

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MISSION STATEMENT

"At Hope Palm Desert our vision is to share the free and unmerited love of God in Christ Jesus."

2025 CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL MEMBERS

Council Position

President
Vice President
Treasurer
Secretary
Youth
Human Resources
Stewardship
Property Management
Worship & Music

Council Member

Mary Fay Pinnow
Toni Hafey
Marge Guentzler
John Stevko
John Stevko
Toni Hafey & John Donnelly
Kim Buchanan
David Shelep
Reynold Worch

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING AGENDA

June 14, 2026 at 11:30am in the Sanctuary

1. Call To Order
2. Opening Devotion
3. Opening Hymn: Now Thank We All Our God
4. Approval Of The Congregational Meeting Agenda
5. Approval Of Minutes
6. Pastor's Report
7. Committee Reports
8. Approval Of Financial Report
9. Approval Of Budget For 2026/2027
10. Nomination and Election of Council Members
11. Old Business
12. New Business
13. Adjournment
14. Closing Prayer

STATISTICAL REPORT

OUR ONLINE MINISTRY GREW RAPIDLY IN 2025.

• Average weekly online worship services attendance	330
• Average weekly online kids attendance	343
• Average weekly online student attendance	58

ON CAMPUS MINISTRY

• Average weekly worship services attendance	440
• Average weekly kids attendance	22
• Average weekly student attendance	19

MEMBERSHIP

• Membership, December 31, 2024	1371
• Members received during 2025	
◦ By Baptism – children	7
◦ By Baptism – adults	5
◦ By Affirmation of Faith	0
◦ By transfer from ELCA Congregations	0
◦ From other sources	0
• Total members received 2025	12
• Members removed during 2025	
◦ By death	20
◦ By transfer	3
◦ For other reasons and statistical adjustment	0
• Total members removed 2025	23
• Membership, December 31, 2025	1360
• Total Confirmed Membership end of 2025	1360
• Number of Baptized youth who were confirmed in 2025	3
• Households with at least one member	1224
• Total weddings	0

DIGITAL COMMUNICATION TEAM

Christina Jutovsky: Social Media & Marketing Director

John Wilson: Multimedia Producer

ONLINE MINISTRY

Producing 6 Services Weekly

On YouTube & Rumble

(Kids, Students & Adults)

PRODUCED TOTAL SERVICES: 312

SOCIAL MEDIA

Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok

REACHED PEOPLE

 Facebook: **243,000** **56% increase** 

 Instagram: **88,000** **60% increase** 

 TikTok **55,000**

 YouTube: **95,000** **20% increase** 

Total Reach: 481,000 **32% increase** 

NEW FOLLOWERS & SUBSCRIBERS: 2294

50% increase in subscribers 

Total Posts: **Over 2500**

MARKETING & ADVERTISING

(all on campus & online)

(Filmed, edited, posted on YouTube)

HOPE WEBSITE

28,578 Page Visits

Recap Videos (event highlight reels)

Street Advertisement Banners

Slides, Thumbnails & Graphics

TOTAL REACHED
481,000

STUDENT MINISTRY

Nick Orth: Student Minister

A YEAR OF GROWTH, SERVICE, AND DISCIPLESHIP

In 2025, Student Ministry experienced a year marked by spiritual growth, community impact, and expanded opportunities to walk alongside students in their faith journeys. Through camps, outreach efforts, leadership development, and new partnerships, students were encouraged to deepen their relationship with Christ while serving others with compassion.

Our mission remains clear: to disciple students, empower leaders, and meet young people where they are both within the church and in the community.

LIFE-CHANGING EXPERIENCES

Summer Camp - Camp Pondo

- **85 students | 10 leaders**

Summer camp continued to be a transformative experience where students encountered God through worship, biblical teaching, and meaningful relationships. Many students experienced Christ, deeper community, and a stronger commitment to growing in their faith journey.

Manhood Camp

- **20 students | 5 leaders**

Manhood Camp focused on building faith, character, and leadership among male students. Through teaching and mentorship, students were challenged to grow emotionally, spiritually, and relationally.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH: STUDENT IMPACT

Student Impact is a monthly outreach held on the **third Saturday of every month**, where students and leaders serve families in need.

This year we:

- Distributed **12 tons of food**
- Prayed with families through hardship and storms of life
- Celebrated victories and moments of joy alongside our community.

This consistent outreach has helped students live out their faith in practical ways while building relationships rooted in compassion and hope.

RAISING UP LEADERS: INTERN PROGRAM

In 2025, we welcomed two interns into a focused discipleship and leadership development program.

STUDENT MINISTRY

Nick Orth: Student Minister

In 2025, we welcomed two interns into a focused discipleship and leadership development program.

Interns grew in:

- Personal spiritual formation
- Leadership and relational skills
- Teaching and theological understanding

Each intern taught once per month, gaining hands-on experience in ministry and growing in confidence and biblical knowledge. This program is helping prepare the next generation of ministry leaders.

EXPANDING OUR REACH: RESCUE A GENERATION PARTNERSHIP

One of the biggest milestones this year was partnering with **Rescue a Generation**.

Desert Hot Springs Campus – Success Club

- **18-week program**
- Serving **32 students**

Through mentoring and life coaching, students are being equipped to:

- Overcome setbacks
- Develop emotional regulation
- Set and achieve goals
- Navigate pain and loss
- Build healthy relationships

Working closely with school faculty on campus allows us to provide consistent support and encouragement in students' everyday environments.

LOOKING FORWARD

As we move into the coming year, our focus remains on intentional discipleship and broader community engagement. Our goals include:

- Deepening discipleship in every area of student ministry
- Expanding onto more school campuses with Rescue a Generation (RAG)
- Training interns or student volunteers so they can facilitate Success Clubs with RAG
- Supporting Christian clubs on **five school campuses**

THANK YOU

None of this would be possible without the faithful support of our volunteers, donors, prayer partners, and church family. Your generosity continues to create opportunities for students to grow in faith, experience community, and encounter Christ in meaningful ways. Together, we are shaping lives and building a strong foundation for the next generation.

KIDS MINISTRY

TEAM:

Carlos Vega: Elementary

Karla Vega: Nursery Coordinator

Mia Wedeking: Early Childhood

Valeria Jimenez: Check-in & Data

Riley Shultz: Kids Intern

Every Sunday:

Fun, Faith Filled Curriculum & Activities for Kids
During Service

Parents Night Out:

- Hosted 5 events throughout the year.
- Welcoming up to 85 kids for fun filled experiences in our Hope Center.
- Connected families to additional community outreach events, building ongoing relationships beyond the Hope Center.

Hope Children Center:

- Every Wednesday, we gather for worship and Bible teaching, along with our online Kids Studio.

Camp Hope:

- 180 Kids & Volunteers.
- \$7,800 Raised for over 500 showers through Overflow 9:12 Mobile showers.

Spooktacular:

- Over 2,200 people attended from community.
- Over 75 volunteers.
- 40,000 pieces of candy given out!

Winter Wonderland:

- A beautiful Nativity Play led by our Sunday Kids.
- 100 fun fidget gift bags bringing smiles to every child.
- A 20x40 ft tent transformed with artificial grass, interactive inflatables & games, and a Santa photo op faithfully and joyfully serving families even in the pouring rain.

Hope Outreach:

- Five successful outreaches serving the unhoused community, welcoming them into our church with compassion and dignity.
- Hot food and hospitality including our Hope Pantry.
- Each outreach brought together a wide range of vendors, with dedicated volunteers, providing essential care and connection. Along with Overflow 9:12 mobile shower unit.
- Through these efforts, two unhoused individuals have committed to long-term support programs, taking meaningful steps toward stability and restoration.

HOPE CHILDREN CENTER

What a year of growth, joy, and God's provision! As 2025 comes to a close, we are celebrating a season filled with learning, laughter, and the steady shaping of young hearts.

Our students, ages 4-10, have mastered the spelling and definitions of ten core values — including generosity, responsibility, resilience, determination, and gratitude. These little ones don't just memorize words; they live them. Many now lead their own circle times with confidence, sharing reflections, prayers, and thoughtful insights that inspire us daily.

Overflowing with Children — Literally!

We are thrilled to share that the State of California Department of Social Services approved our capacity expansion. Hope Children Center can now welcome 86 children at a time, supported by a roster of 121 students. Our TK/Kinder program is thriving with over 30 children, and we already have a waiting list for Fall 2026. God is clearly moving in this ministry.

Pickleball Fever Has Hit Hope!

If you visit our campus in the afternoon, you'll hear cheers, laughter, and the unmistakable pop of pickleball. Our students have created their own daily tournaments, and the sign-up sheet fills up faster than we can post it. All ages are showing impressive skill — and even more impressive sportsmanship.

Supporting Families Through the RIVCO CAPP Program

We are grateful to offer the RIVCO Tuition Supplement CAPP Program to twenty-eight children. This blessing not only covers full tuition for qualifying families but also provides Hope with a monthly stipend from the State of California. It allows us to welcome a beautifully diverse group of children from across our community.

Our First Grant — and a Beautiful New Shade Structure

Hope received its first-ever grant of \$25,000, which funded a brand-new shade structure over our beloved sandbox area. Our children now enjoy a cooler, safer, and more comfortable space to play each day. What a gift.

A Strong, Joyful Team

Our dedicated staff has returned for a second year together. With six fully qualified part-time team members and a newly hired Assistant Director, we are well equipped to provide a safe, nurturing, and faith-filled environment for our cherished Washington Charter students.

Be the reason someone smiles today.

Virginia Plavec

Child Care Director

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

STILL GOING STRONG!!!

Many churches that would have gone through the numerous changes that Hope Lutheran has in the last couple of years would be floundering but because of YOU we are still going strong! Because YOU understand that it is about JESUS, not a particular person(s). I am so proud to be a part of a church such as ours – continuing our mission of “Inspiring people to find and follow Jesus”.

We can also see the handiwork of the Holy Spirit – sending us Pastor Tom as our Interim and especially now with Pastor Gerald as our Bridge Pastor and Heather, our worship leader in the Modern service, joining our staff. We are truly blessed! We know, also, that the Holy Spirit has someone special in mind for us to be our new Senior Pastor, we just need to be patient – hard to do – but it will happen.

It is not always easy adjusting to something new – especially for Lutherans – but you have all handled it with grace and love.

THANK YOU!!

Mary Fay Pinnow, President

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

The Music Department at Hope continues to bring worshipful experiences to Sunday and special services. The Hope Choir presents music on Sundays from October through May, including special cantatas for Christmas and Easter. Instrumentalists are included for festival Sundays, Christmas, Reformation and Easter bring brass players and choir cantatas often feature a string and wind ensemble.

Michael Cundari continues as Choral Director leading the adult voices to add to our worship experiences. As organist, I play for the Sunday traditional services, special services during Lent and other events. I also play for memorial services. I am starting my 8th year as Director of Music/Organist at Hope.

The “Music at Hope” Concert series begun in 2021, continues to grow. For the 2025-2026 season, 11 concerts will be presented by 9 different ensembles. These concerts bring as many as 300 people to our church.

Douglas Wilson

WORSHIP AND MUSIC COMMITTEE

Our Worship and Music Committee exists to plan and coordinate the liturgical and musical life of our congregation. We ensure worship services are meaningful, orderly, and spiritually engaging and handling logistical tasks like selecting and training lay volunteers.

Our volunteers are a vital resource in the church to support the various areas necessary to keep our services running effectively. These volunteers include scripture readers, greeters, ushers, altar guild, Hope Chorale, Bell choir, audio/visual technician (Evan Zahler), communion assistants, coffee and flower deliverers.

Kudos go out to these seen and unseen volunteers and their teams who give their time and talents. They work BEFORE, DURING, and AFTER the service to ensure a productive, Jesus-based worship observance. We thank Doug Wilson and Michael Cundari for their awesome musical and choral talents integrating their music and voices into our worship services.

We bade farewell to our Interim pastor Tom Grevlos, and welcomed our Bridge pastor, Gerald Sharon, as our Search team continues their quest to find a Senior pastor for our congregation.

WE ARE SO GRATEFUL FOR OUR PASTORS AND VOLUNTEERS IN PROVIDING AND MAINTAINING A POSITIVE EFFECT IN OUR SERVICES. YOUR DEDICATION TO THESE MINISTRIES OF HOPE LUTHERAN CHURCH IS GREATLY APPRECIATED! THANK YOU!

Reynold Worch
Worship and Music Committee

CELEBRATE RECOVERY

Celebrate Recovery (CR) is a Christ-centered, 12-step recovery program for anyone struggling with hurts, hang-ups, or habits of any kind. It provides a safe and authentic place to find community and to explore the issues that can control our lives.

In February, Celebrate Recovery celebrated its 7th anniversary. Cheryl Baker, Co-founder of Celebrate Recovery, joined us to share her powerful testimony at this special event. CR continued to meet every Thursday night at 7:00 pm in the Hope Center.

It is important to understand that only 3 out of 10 people attend Celebrate Recovery for alcohol or other chemical addictions. CR addresses a wide range of recovery areas, including but not limited to:

Some examples are:

- Anger
- Codependency
- Eating Disorder
- Financial Recovery
- Food Addiction
- Gambling Addiction
- Love & Relationship Addiction
- Physical- Sexual- Emotional Abuse
- Sexual Addiction
- Grief
- Anxiety
- Low Self Worth

The weekly Thursday night program includes a **Large Group meeting** with live worship, followed by either a recovery-focused lesson or a testimony from someone who has experienced healing through Celebrate Recovery. After the Large Group, participants break into **gender- specific Open Share Groups**, followed by a time of fellowship known as **Hope Café**.

Midweek small groups, called **Step Studies**, work through Celebrate Recovery's four-workbook curriculum. In 2025, CR started two Step Studies and successfully completed two. Some Step Studies met in person, while others met via Zoom.

At the beginning of each year, the leadership team sets ministry goals. In 2025, two key goals were to raise new leaders and to grow the volunteer base. We are grateful to have achieved both. The expanding leadership and volunteer teams have helped the ministry run more smoothly and effectively.

We are thankful to continue offering **Celebration Place**, Celebrate Recovery's children's program, as well as **The Landing**, CR's middle and high school ministry. The Landing has met regularly as part of the Thursday night CR program, allowing the entire family to participate in recovery together.

Several members of the leadership team also participated in community outreach events, sharing information about Celebrate Recovery, educating the community about the dangers of fentanyl poisoning, and providing training on the use of Narcan to help save lives from overdose.

To stay connected, encouraged, and equipped, the team held leadership meetings and hosted several fellowship events throughout the year for volunteers. Additionally, **eight leaders attended the annual Celebrate Recovery "Summit" Conference** at Saddleback Church in Orange County.

Thank you to the staff and congregation of Hope for their tireless support. The team is continually encouraged by the life change happening through the tools of Celebrate Recovery and the grace of God. We are excited to continue serving our church and surrounding community by providing a safe place to heal from life's struggles and challenges. We invite you to come and experience Celebrate Recovery on any Thursday night.

Gesa Sharon, Ministry Pastor

ALTAR GUILD

The Hope Altar Guild has been happily supporting our wonderful pastors by serving at our worship services. We continue to provide communion at both the 8:00am and 9:30am traditional services every Sunday. The modern service offers communion at its 10:30am service on the first Sunday of each month.

We have had a few people retire from service this year but have added a few more volunteers. We also have snowbird volunteers who are out of town during the hot summer months, so if you are here during the summer, we'd love to have you volunteer your services. I would love to hear from you if you are willing and able to help prepare the communion elements once or twice a month. We need help with both the traditional and modern services. It entails the volunteers coming to the church either on a Friday or Saturday, before your Sunday to serve, to fill the communion cups with wine and grape juice and fill the chalices with the wafers. It usually takes no longer than one hour for the setup. I hope to hear from you.

I thank all of you who continue to serve on the Altar Guild. Your service helps our Pastors and the Congregation in the worshiping of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Blessings to you all.

Barbara Oeding
Chairperson

BASESHORE SCHOLARSHIP FUND

The Baseshore Scholarship Fund, established in the memory of Ira Baseshore, is for the youth of Hope Lutheran Church attending college or seminary. The Baseshore Scholarship is to be used for books, supplies, etc., but not to be used to pay for tuition. In 2025 Hope Lutheran Church did not award any scholarships. Total value of assets including accrued interest is \$51,487.83.

For interest about participating in the Baseshore Scholarship Fund, please contact the church office or email gabe@hopepd.org. The scholarships are given out of the fund's yearly income. Scholarships Fund donations are greatly appreciated.

Gabe Den Hartog
Office Manager

COLUMBARIUM

The columbarium of Hope Lutheran Church provides a special place for inurnment of cremated remains of deceased church members, former members and their spouses and children. Also included are friends from the church who regularly attended and supported our ministry.

Management of the columbarium: on behalf of the church council, the Office Manager manages the columbarium working with the Chairman to approve all applications as well as keeping records regarding niche reservations and persons inurned in the Columbarium, including names, dates of birth and death, and inurnment dates.

COLUMBARIUM (Continued)

2025 activity: There were eight inurnments and one reservation made in 2025. A brochure, "The Columbarium at Hope Lutheran Church", is available to the congregation at the church office and the Information Center. The brochure describes the Columbarium benefits and information about reserving and selecting a niche for you and your loved ones.

Financials: The ending balance on December 31, 2025 was \$7,467.15.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Change and transition continue in the life of our church. Five pastors bade us farewell beginning in May 2024 with Senior Pastor Derek Fossey's move to Utah with his family. Continuity was maintained during this transitional time with the hiring of veteran Interim Pastor Tom Grevlos who, after 18 months, and with his wife Jeanne's retirement, concluded his successful tenure at Hope in mid-November 2025. Multi- talented Pastor Gerald Sharon, who had retired in August 2024 after 45 years of ministry, graciously returned to Hope in November 2025 as our Senior Bridge Pastor following Pastor Tom's departure. Pastor Gerald's extensive experience and executive level leadership will pave the way for our transition to the selection of a new Senior Pastor and filling other pastoral vacancies. As we concluded 2025, Pastor Rick announced his retirement from Hope to continue his consulting business which focuses on training the next generation of faith-based leadership. Pastor Carl Witt and his wife Cheryl continue to enjoy his second retirement from Hope in February 2025, as they chalk up more cruise time.

Particular focus has been on the formalization and infrastructure development plan for Human Resources - e.g., a comprehensive review and update of the Employee Handbook, assistance to the Search Committee (for the Senior Pastor vacancy), updating job descriptions for the Senior Pastor, Interim Senior Pastor, Bridge Pastor, and Ministry Pastor positions; conforming job titles to duties performed and updating organizational charts. Additionally, job descriptions for new staff have been developed while those for existing full- and part-time staff have been updated. Regularly HR meets with leadership to address and hone current and future needs.

Key to our church organization is our talented pastoral staff that is headed by Senior Bridge Pastor Gerald Sharon. We built on the fine work of all the pastors who have served Hope and incorporated this with the more recent insights and talents of Pastors Gerald, Tom, Rick, and Gesa to map out ministry plans to strengthen church ministries and build a solid foundation for the future. Church outreach in the community and online continue to blossom.

Pastor Gesa Sharon, our Ministry Leader, has enthusiastically and tirelessly expanded the many ministries here at Hope, including Celebrate Recovery, Hope for All, and Women of Hope and coordinated and partnered to provide opportunities for women to gather and highlight the work of the Lord. She has also expanded her preaching at the Traditional and Modern services given the vacancies in full-time pastoral positions.

HUMAN RESOURCES (Continued)

Deacon John Baynton, Care Ministry Coordinator, provides assistance at services, visitation, and coordinates with pastoral staff and Stephen Ministry to meet the many needs of our congregation.

Under the leadership of Pastor Rick, our Modern service and online ministry continued to grow by leaps and bounds. He is supported by his creative team supported by John Wilson, Video Creator and Technical Director, and Christina Jutovsky, Marketing and Social Media Director, along with Production Leader Frank Michel. Pastor Rick also expanded and enhanced programs in the following key areas: a) production and media operations through a production internship program; b) a student ministry intern program; and c) implementation of an expansion plan for 2025-26 of the Hope Children's Center (HCC) ably led by Director Virginia Plavec with Assistant to Director Marla Capra, and Mia Wedeking, Early Childhood Director, and Carlos Vega who serves as the HCC Children's Ministries Director while assisting with middle school, supervising interns, and Hope's outreach, "Giving Hope to the Unhoused."

For the sixth consecutive year, the HCC is at full capacity. Added benefits include more families attending church services, children baptized and participating in youth ministries, plus other activities and camps. Growth continues with young families through the Hope Children Center (HCC). Given the growth of HCC, the program was expanded in 2025.

On the Student Ministry front, Nick Orth, Intern, Student Minister Pastor, completed his first year of seminary study to become an ordained pastor. With mentoring by pastoral staff and a committee headed by volunteer mentor and retired Pastor Mark Holmerud, Nick also assists at the Traditional and Modern services. He continues to lead Student Ministry programs and supervise Student Ministry Interns.

Following Pastor Rick's departure, the above reporting relationships have shifted to Senior Bridge Pastor Gerald Sharon. Additionally, Heather Stanley's role has expanded to that of Modern Service Director. For continuity across both the Modern and Traditional Services and to recognize pastoral staffing vacancies, the same sermon is delivered at both services.

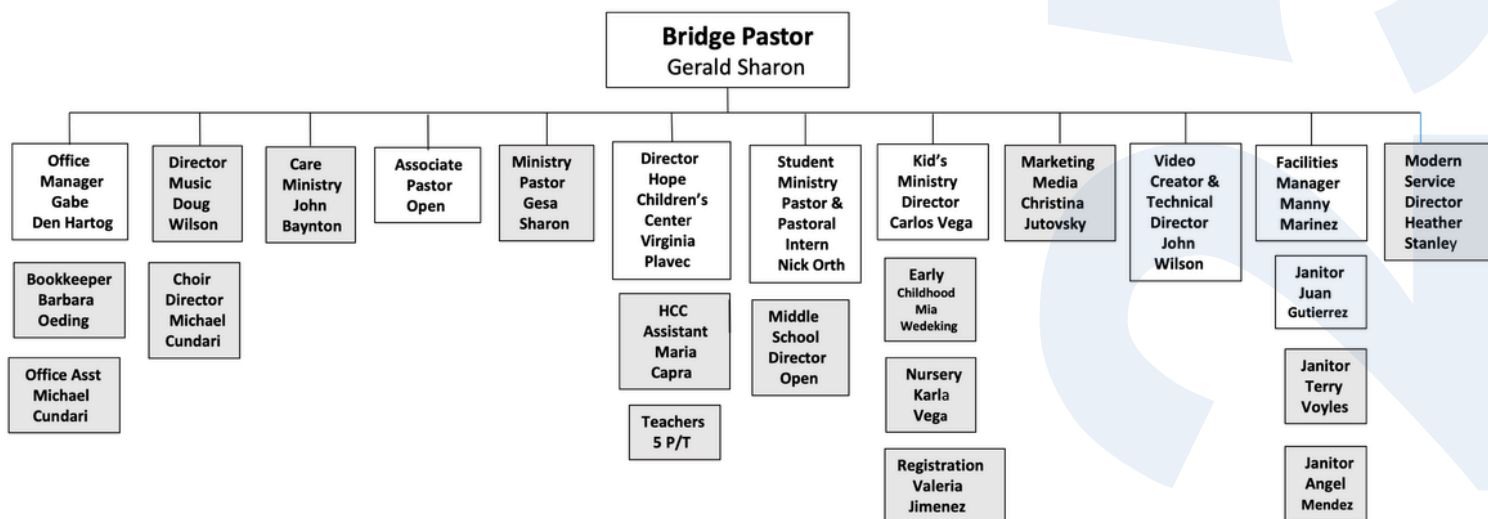
Doug Wilson, Director of Music, and Michael Cundari, Director of Hope Choir, comprise our dynamic musical duo. They work closely with our talented Hope Choir, provide the Music at Hope Concert series, host numerous musical programs, and perform and coordinate programs including those at Christmas and Easter.

What an exciting year at Hope. We look forward to the new year and the many paths ahead for our church made possible by our Lord.

Toni Hafey and John Donnelly

HOPE STAFF

Hope Lutheran Church Organization Chart



LEGACY COMMITTEE



"Even if I knew that tomorrow the world would go to pieces, I would still plant my apple tree today."

Martin Luther

Mission of the Legacy Committee

The Legacy Committee of Hope Lutheran Church Palm Desert is chartered to promote and encourage gifts and bequests to Hope Lutheran Church Palm Desert. Gifts and bequests directed to Hope Lutheran may be donor-allocated by percentage to the Legacy Fund as a gift in perpetuity or to the general ministry of Hope Lutheran Church at the discretion of the donor(s). Legacy Committee members also serve as trustees of the Legacy Fund.

Current Status of the Legacy Fund

The Legacy Fund began 2025 with a balance of \$353,834.24 and ended the year with a balance of \$339,948.50. Grants totaling \$14,153 were distributed from the fund on February 28, 2025, and awarded as follows:

- \$4,000 was granted for scholarships for children in need at Hope's Children's Center.
- \$5,000 was granted for scholarships to students attending Camp Pondo. According to Pastor Tom, 10 students received funding who would not otherwise have been able to attend this life-transforming week.
- \$5,153 was granted to ELCA Disaster Response for flood relief efforts.

LEGACY COMMITTEE (Continued)

The Value Line Asset Allocation Fund was the committee's first investment in 2020 and provided satisfactory returns through 2024. However, in 2025 there were minimal gains relative to the S&P 500. As a result, the committee decided in November to remove the total balance from Value Line and reinvest 50% into the Vanguard S&P 500 ETF and the remaining 50% into a Schwab Money Market account.

Current Status of the Legacy Circle of Hope

The Circle of Hope consists of congregation members who have chosen to include Hope Lutheran Church in their estate plans and have communicated their intent to a pastor or a member of the committee. Today, there are more than 30 members who make up the Legacy Circle of Hope.

If you would like to partner with us through gifts and/or bequests to support God's work through current church missions or gifts in perpetuity, please contact a pastor or any member of the Legacy Committee.

Finally, I would like to express my sincere thanks to Pastor Tom Grevlos for his diligent work and contributions until his departure in November 2025. Thank you as well to our current committee members: Pastor Gerald, Bonnie Pridonoff, Kim Buchanan, Vicki Graves, Marie Olsen, Jim Parry, and Dick Schroeckenstein (currently on medical leave).

I remain deeply appreciative of their commitment to our mission.

Gary Eilefson, Committee Chair
651-238-2578

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

Our property is being well maintained by Manny Martinez and his team. In addition to the general maintenance of our aging systems like plumbing, and heating and air conditioning, Manny's team has continual responsibility for setup and tear down for all our services, special events, etc. We have moved forward with more desert landscaping, and our playground is receiving some upgrades. No major property expenditures are anticipated or budgeted at this time.

MEMORIAL FUND

NAME	CATEGORY	BEGINNING BALANCE 1/1/2025	RECEIPTS 2025	UTILIZED 2025	ENDING BALANCE 12/31/2025
ALL THOSE LOST TO COVID		\$1,050.00			\$1,050.00
BOTZ, MARYLS		\$375.00			\$375.00
BUNTROCK, CLAYTON		\$200.00			\$200.00
COLLINS, WILLIAM		\$1,510.00			\$1,510.00
DEVELON, MARILYN		\$1,445.00			\$1,445.00
DEW, REV. ROBERT		\$3,126.00			\$3,126.00
DEW, REV. ROBERT	FLOWERS	\$500.00			\$500.00
DOLL, RONALD		\$100.00			\$100.00
FAIR, LORRAINE		\$500.00			\$500.00
FOSSEY, BRUCE		\$750.00			\$750.00
GARTIN, TOM		\$375.00			\$375.00
GATES, BILL		\$100.00			\$100.00
GOETTELMAN, VIRGINIA		\$51.00			\$51.00
GRIFFIN, BARBARA		\$100.00			\$100.00
HAECKEL, MM		\$43.00			\$43.00
HAGEN, BRUCE		\$100.00			\$100.00
GARUM, BOB		\$100.00			\$100.00
HEPSTINSTALL, CALVIN		\$50.00			\$50.00
HERMAND, DEBBIE		\$100.00			\$100.00
KEERAN, HEIDI		\$1,250.00			\$1,250.00
KILLINGSWORTH, ARMOR		\$0.00			\$0.00
MACFARLANE, EILEEN		\$525.00			\$525.00
MCGINNIS, PATRICK		\$30.00			\$30.00
MARION, GREG		\$50.00			\$50.00
MILNER, ANNA		\$50.00			\$50.00
MINER, ROBIN		\$20.00			\$20.00
MUCKENFUSS, JOYCE		\$275.00			\$275.00
MUELLER, LEZLIE		\$1,060.00			\$1,060.00
MULLER, RONALD		\$1,350.00			\$1,350.00
QUISITO, MARSHA		\$50.00			\$50.00
REIFSCHNEIDER, ROBERT		\$5,100.00			\$5,100.00
ROGERS, BRITA		\$20.00			\$20.00
RUUD, LEE		\$200.00			\$200.00
SEEFURTH, TOM		\$271.00			\$271.00
VICK, ROBER		\$500.00			\$500.00
TOTAL		\$21,326.00			\$21,326.00

QUILTERS OF HOPE

2025 was a productive year for Quilters of Hope.

We continued to meet the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of every month through June and took the month of July as a summer break and returned to quilting in August and continued to meet twice a month until December when we took another short break for the holidays.

We were blessed with donations of fabric from members and friends of Hope.

Thanks to our Quilters of Hope: Alice Daby, Bonnie Harkinson, Carol Beers, Carol Simpson, Charlene Such, Eileen Donnelly, Emily Johns, Frank Deniz, Jane Dreiske, Jody Risius, John Baynton, Juanita Cours, Julie Fremstad, Kathleen Herring, Kathy MacKey, Linda Spencer, Luealla Grangaard, Marge Ruffolo, Marggie Link, Mary Ellen Peterson, Michelle Tuck, Peggy Schauer, Ruth Fikes, Susan Dellinger, Susan Sommerfeld, and Vickie Raines.

Together we completed a total of 104 quilts. Of these, 4 were given to graduating high school seniors, 2 were raffled during the Palm Springs Pride Event, 10 were given to Bridges2Hope, 30 were given to Lideres Campesinas, and 60 were sent to Lutheran World Relief.

In August we received a Thrivent Action Team Grant of \$250 to help with the cost of materials. We had a special "Tie-In" event prior to Quilt Sunday.

Quilters of Hope give thanks for everyone who supports this ministry through donations of materials, time, money, and/or talents. Each quilt represents approximately \$30-\$40 of materials and 5-6 hours of labor to complete.

We look forward to another productive year in 2026 and sharing quilts around the community and world.

In His Love and Service
Ruth Fikes

WOMEN OF HOPE MINISTRY

The Women of Hope continue to follow God's leading as we pursue our ministry goals: to create a safe environment for the women within and beyond Hope to find community, grow in faith, support one another in their calling, engage in ministry and action, and promote healing and wholeness in the church, our surrounding community, and the world.

This year's leadership team included Gesa Sharon, Carole Olson, Barbara Savery, Ginny Gilman, Julie Fremstad, Monika Hoover, Sandy McGinnis, Ruth Fikes, and Peggy Grabow. We are deeply blessed by this dedicated team and the beautiful variety of gifts each woman brings. Their shared love for serving, supporting one another, and answering God's call continues to strengthen and sustain this ministry.

We grew in faith through our ongoing "Esther Circle" and "Monday Night" Bible studies, faithfully led by Barbara Savery and Gesa Sharon. In addition, we offered three Saturday morning Summer Studies, each hosted by a different presenter, providing fresh perspectives and meaningful opportunities for spiritual growth.

We actively lived out our call to ministry and action by continuing to support numerous local nonprofit organizations, women in leadership, ELCA Disaster Relief, and other ministries here at Hope through financial giving. We distributed hand-knit hats, collected hygiene items, and assembled 575 Bags of Hope for individuals experiencing homelessness in the valley. Through our annual Angels of Hope Christmas gift outreach, we provided gifts for 306 children from six elementary schools in the valley. We are deeply grateful for the generosity of the congregation and the many volunteers who came alongside us to make these projects possible.

In February, we held our two annual fundraisers: Thankoffering Sunday and the Tour de Palm Springs. Participants supported our ministry by walking, running, or cycling, with all registration fees returning directly to benefit Women of Hope at Hope.

Throughout the year, we hosted two Gatherings featuring guest speakers, live music, food, and our annual prayer partner reveal and exchange. We also enjoyed two fun "Girls' Nights Out." In April, Carol Buchanan hosted a Cooking Class, and in December, Stephanie Chambers guided us through a delightful evening of candle making.

All our gatherings and events are designed to bring together women both from within our church and from the wider community in worship and fellowship. It is always encouraging to see women of all ages spending time together—laughing, learning, listening, sharing, and creating in community.

With each passing year, we grow increasingly thankful for the many ways the women of Hope and the entire congregation support our mission. This encouragement strengthens the Women of Hope leadership team as we reflect on the year behind us and prayerfully plan for the year ahead.

Gesa Sharon, Ministry Pastor

CARE MINISTRY

Care Ministry at Hope has been one of those things that has always happened in the background. There have always been people checking in, meeting with, and caring for each other at Hope. So, my entrance into ministry at Hope was not the start but a continuation of the care that has always been done here, just with the added help that I could contribute as a dedicated deaconal minister in this ministry area.

I started as the Care Minister at Hope June 1st 2025. Since then, I have provided care to those in need; gone on visitations to those who cannot leave their home, are in nursing homes, or who are in hospitals or rehab facilities; brought communion to those who cannot make it to church on Sunday; and have been present and available for spiritual care conversations for those who need it.

As a way to start a regular time of prayer and reflection, I experimented with a Taizé service on the first Wednesday of September, October, and November. This was a practice done at Hope in the past and I thought there could be some benefit to bringing it back. The results were mixed with one well attended month and two less well attended months.

In December we held Hope's first Longest Night Service, meant to bring a moment of rest and space to not be okay during the holiday season. For a first time event, it was well attended. It is my hope that this service will continue into the future and be able to provide a dedicated space for people during the holiday season.

Throughout this time, I have also been providing oversight for the Stephen Ministers. We have a great group of Stephen Ministers at Hope who provide care and support for those who are going through hard times. We trained and commissioned 3 new Stephen Ministers this fall bringing our current number to 12. These are folks who are trained to listen and have caring conversations with people who are struggling with any number of things such as: losing a job, death of a spouse, being a primary caregiver, etc. I am thankful for all of the wonderful work that they do in helping to care for people in and around Hope.

Hope is a place full of love and care for friends and neighbors. Hope is a place where people are loved and supported throughout their lives. Hope is a place where people can see and feel the love of God. My call to you then Hope, is to keep loving people, keep caring for people, and to find new ways to share that love and support each other. Know and share the love of God.

Ephesians 4:32

Deacon John Baynton

TREASURER'S REPORT

Dear Church Family,

It's a privilege to share a brief update on our finances from the past year. First, I want to say thank you. Your faithfulness in giving continues to make everything we do possible, from ministry, to outreach, to caring for people in our community. We truly couldn't do it without you.

Financial Overview:

In 2025 our total income was just over \$2.04 million and our total expenses were about \$2.16 million. We ended the year with a deficit of \$117,797. While no one likes to see a deficit, it is important to understand that this reflects continued investment in ministry, staffing and maintaining our facilities.

Where our income comes from

The majority of our income, about three-quarters, comes from tithes and offerings. The rest comes from areas like our Children Center and other ministry activities.

How Funds were Used:

Our largest expense area is staffing, which supports our pastors, ministry leaders and staff who serve week in and week out. Beyond that, funds go towards ministry programs and support, maintaining and operating our facilities, supporting the Children Center and administrative needs.

Our Financial Position:

Even with this year's deficit, our church remains in a strong financial position. We have about \$6.3 million in total assets and over \$5.2 million in equity. This means we have a solid foundation that allows us to continue ministry with stability.

Looking Ahead:

As we move forward, we are focused on being wise and careful stewards of our resources, monitoring our expenses closely and encouraging continued and faithful giving. Our goal is to ensure long-term sustainability while continuing to grow and serve effectively.

In Closing:

Again, thank you for your generosity, your trust and your commitment to the mission of our church. We're excited about what God has done this past year and even more excited about what's ahead.

Respectfully Submitted,
Marge Guentzler, Treasurer

HOPE PALM DESERT BALANCE SHEET AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2025	
ASSETS	
LEGACY FUND	\$339,949.00
BASESHORE FUND	\$51,488.00
COLUMBARIUM FUND	\$7,467.00
BUILDING & FUTURE FUNDS	\$174,258.00
HOPE CHILDREN CENTER	\$30,465.00
WOMEN OF HOPE	\$6,910.00
OPERATING ACCOUNTS	\$99,202.00
CURRENT ASSETS	\$712,030.00
FIXED ASSETS	\$5,593,921.00
TOTAL ASSETS	\$6,305,951.00
LIABILITIES	
CURRENT LIABILITIES	\$752,785.00
LONG TERM LIABILITIES	\$360,571.00
EQUITY	\$5,192,595.00
LIABILITIES & EQUITY	\$6,305,951.00

HOPE PALM DESERT DEBT ACTIVITY IN 2025

5 YEAR ADJUSTABLE LOAN RESET ON 06/01/2025 TO 7.375 %

PAYMENT IS NOW \$3,147 PER MONTH

LOAN BALANCE AS OF THIS WRITING IS \$306,805

BUDGET

HOPE PALM DESERT - FINAL RESULTS 2025

REVENUE	JAN-DEC 2025 ACTUALS	JAN-DEC 2025 BUDGET
CONTRIBUTIONS	\$1,510,070.00	\$1,768,500.00
CHILDREN'S CENTER	\$391,445.00	\$490,085.00
KIDS/YOUTH MINISTRY	\$78,544.00	\$69,500.00
MORTGAGE (DESIGNATED)	\$60,565.00	\$25,742.00
TOTAL INCOME	\$2,040,624.00	\$2,353,827.00
EXPENSES		
ADMINISTRATION	\$136,053.00	\$125,850.00
FACILITIES	\$282,020.00	\$354,495.00
CHILDREN'S CENTER	\$251,415.00	\$234,301.00
KIDS MINISTRY	\$134,376.00	\$170,810.00
STUDENT MINISTRY	\$94,032.00	\$131,826.00
MINISTRY SUPPORT	\$316,124.00	\$321,299.00
STAFFING	\$944,401.00	\$1,005,984.00
TOTAL EXPENSE	\$2,158,421.00	\$2,344,565.00
SURPLUS/LOSS	-\$117,797.00	\$9,262.00

STEPHEN MINISTRY

God's Love in Action

Our congregation's Stephen Ministry equips lay people to provide confidential, one-to-one Christian care to individuals in our congregation and community who are experiencing difficulties in their lives. Pastors will always be on the front lines of care, especially during times of crisis. But there are always many more needs for ongoing care than pastors can effectively meet by themselves. Stephen Ministers are trained to support and extend the care that pastors continue to provide.

Stephen Ministers are "there" to walk with people who are hurting during life's challenges. Everyone faces tough times during their lives...maybe the loss of a loved one, a terminal illness, divorce, unemployment or a chronic illness. Stephen Ministers listen, pray, and provide encouragement and support to hurting people. We are a confidential ministry, so the relationships and identities remain private.

If you, or someone you know, could benefit from the care of a Stephen Minister, please contact Pastor Gerald or Deacon John.

If you think you might want to become a Stephen Minister, please contact Laurie Marvin or Gabe.

Bob Bateman
Stephen Minister



HOPE FOOD PANTRY

This is the first year the Food Pantry is included in the annual report so I wanted to give you a little background on how it all began.

When I began my journey as Hope Office Manager almost 8 years ago, it never entered my mind I was about to embark on a journey of empathy, enlightenment and a sense of empowerment. Let me explain...

Late one afternoon, a person in need stopped by the church. I offered him the use of our water fountain and bathroom and since it was a Monday and he had a valid identification I was able to give him \$5.00. He looked at the cash and looked back at me and simply said, "I'm hungry, I really could use some food". After searching for any food in our kitchen I realized there was no food to give him. I felt horrible turning him away hungry.

Soon afterwards, I brought a box of canned goods and placed it in the lobby of the office. I made a promise that day, that holds true today, no person who comes to Hope looking for food will be turned away empty handed. Word soon got out about the food box in the lobby and our congregation responded, food donations arrived at the church office and my makeshift food pantry in the lobby was born.

Soon food donations flooded the office, with support from Pastor Derek I was given the opportunity to move the donations to the Hope small kitchen. Cash donations soon began to arrive and early support from staff such as Doug Wilson our Choir Director, who was able to give the church a donation that allowed me to purchase additional shelving space to place the food donations our generous congregants donated to the pantry.

Ella Manor was the first person who volunteered at the pantry. I'll never forget stopping by the kitchen one afternoon to check in on her to find this spunky woman on her hands and knees scrubbing the refrigerator shelves. I'll never forget her. She loved and supported the food pantry until she died. Her family continues to check in with me from time to time to ask about the needs of the pantry and recently dropped off a generous check of support.

Today, we have volunteers to keep the pantry open all day every Monday and for four hours on Tuesdays and Thursdays. On other days of the week, we have containers in the office with food to give to anyone who comes to the office hungry.

Our volunteers are: our lead Carole Johnson, Kim Mathey, Tom Johnson, Dana Zahler, Melody Schneider, Kathleen Herring and Terry Voyles. Thank you all very much.

I want to take this moment to thank each and every person who has donated food, socks, clothes, wipes, and checks to allow us to purchase food and other essentials of the pantry.

Gabe Den Hartog

HOSPITALITY TEAM

Hope Hospitality team comprises many components. I was asked by Paster Derek to supervise this dedicated group of ministry leaders and volunteers.

Food/coffee preparation Sunday mornings – We have a dedicated team of volunteers who arrive at church at 6:30am every Sunday when they are scheduled and often on weeks they are not scheduled, to offer their assistance. They pick up donuts, cut and sort them on trays and set them out for everyone to enjoy. They assist in setting up the Info Center with useful literature and the monthly newsletter. They assist in cleaning up. Our lead is Todd Den Hartog who supervises volunteers, orders supplies, picks up the donuts and fills in wherever there is a need. Hope volunteers are Janis Andre, John Everett, Mary Sinclair, Joe Hilton and Lori Hilton.

Greeters and Ushers – This group of volunteers greet our congregants with a smile as they arrive, hand out bulletins and are the first contact for newcomers to the church. Our ushers assist with seating requests, as well as leading congregants as they line up for communion, and pick up the weekly offering. The lead in Traditional services is Reynold Worch. I want to thank the many volunteers including Laurie Marvin, Jane Dreiske, Duke Frey, Geoff Bloom, Donna Sanger, Ken Sanger and Joe Young.

The lead in Modern Service is Todd Den Hartog. I want to thank the many volunteers who greet and assist with offering and communion including Carole Johnson, Martha Curtiss, Marge Guentzler Amanda Greenfield, Jim Barger, Deb Barger, Larry Graves and Vicki Graves, David Shelep, Frank Deniz, Sandy McGinnis and Bonnie Madonna.

Altar Guild – Lead Barbara Oeding. Thank you!

Readers – Lead Reynold Worch, Thank you!

I also want to thank the many volunteers that assist during special events, celebrations of life receptions and last-minute help. If I missed your name I apologize. Each of you is very important to me.

Gabe Den Hartog

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING MINUTES

02 February 2025

Call to order by Council president Mary Fay Pinnow at 11:40am, followed by devotion, hymn and prayer led by Pastor Tom Grevlos.

Congregational Agenda: Toni Hafey moved that we "**accept the agenda as presented,**" seconded by Jim Parry. **Motion approved by voice vote.**

Approval of 04 FEB 2024 Congregational Meeting Minutes: Martha Osborne moved that we "**accept the 04 Feb 2024 Minutes,**" seconded by Linda Griffith. **Motion approved.**

Pastor's Report: Interim Senior Pastor Tom Grevlos relayed that Hope is a healthy vibrant church that is a welcoming, mission-focused, risk-taking community of faith. He thanked the church staff for their support and assistance. Hope is a ministry of generosity and stewardship. He expressed his gratitude to the members of Hope for the opportunity to be our Senior Interim Pastor and Consultant.

Pastor Carl Witt, Jr, Interim Associate Pastor/Pastor Emeritus' report is located on page 7 of the Annual Report 2024.

Pastor Rick Bailard, Teaching and Coaching Pastor's report is found on page 8 of the Annual Report 2024.

Committee Reports: Members were asked to refer to the 2024 Annual Report for the various committee reports.

Financial Report: Rick Greaves gave an account of a financial summary for 2024 in the Annual Report 2024 and presented a slide presentation from the Finance Committee on our proposed budget for 2025. He then accepted questions and discussions from congregational members. Watch our spending and getting an audit were two of the concerns that arose during these discussions.

Jim Parry moved that we "**accept the Financial Report,**" seconded by John Donnelly.

Motion approved.

2025 Budget: Sue Young moved that we "approve the 2025 budget as presented," seconded by John Donnelly. **Motion approved.**

Election for Congregational Council Members: Mary Fay Pinnow, Kim Buchannan, and John Donnelly Rick Greaves moved that we "**elect Mary Fay Pinnow, Kim Buchanan, and John Donnelly to our Congregational Council,**" seconded by Ruth Finks. **Motion approved.**

Old Business: None.

New Business: A video was shown as a summary of all the wonderful things - activities, camps, celebrations, outreach programs...that happened at Hope in 2024.

Adjournment: Joe Young moved that we "**adjourn the meeting,**" seconded by Reynold Worch. **Motion approved. Meeting adjourned at 12:25 pm.**

Closing Prayer: Pastor Tom Grevlos.

Respectfully submitted,
Reynold Worch, Council Secretary

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING OPENING LITURGY

Recognizing that our faith is a living, busy, active and mighty thing, may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with each of you.

And also with you.

Teach us to love you with all our heart, soul, mind and strength.

Receive our prayer, O God.

Descend on our hearts, that we may love others in the ways Jesus loves us.

Receive our prayer, O God.

Empower us to be enthusiastic in pursuing your vision for our congregation.

Receive our prayer, O God.

Move us to engage issues in our community in Christlike ways, and to pursue deep and authentic relationships with those with whom we serve and partner.

Receive our prayer, O God.

Strengthen us to face the barriers we encounter in doing your work, learning to work with others amid disagreement.

Receive our prayer, O God.

Give us the ability to adapt to the cultural, economic and social changes that occur in the neighborhoods we serve.

Receive our prayer, O God.

Guide us to be a healthy congregation that learns from its failures as well as its successes and offers wisdom to others.

Receive our prayer, O God.

As we strive to become the church that we proclaim to be, raise up leaders who focus on the gospel of freedom, forgiveness and reconciliation as given to us through God's indescribable act of love in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Renew us daily in our baptism, that we may discover vitality in our relationships with you, each other and those we serve in the world.

Amen.

Founded on Faith



1 Found - ed on faith, the church— a live by grace—
2 Your gift, O Christ, re - news our life each day,
3 In - spired by prayer, we live the Spir - it's call,
4 Grow - ing in grace for God's cre - a - ted earth,
5 Found - ed on faith, called forth, em - pow'ed to serve,



pro - claims the gos - pel here and ev - 'ry place.
Bap - tized in you, we learn and teach and pray.
Em - pow'ed to serve with gifts, both great and small,
we yearn for jus - tice, peace, and hu - man worth;
we share God's end - less love with - out re - serve.



The word of God re - sounds through time and space;
Fed by your love, with thank - ful hearts, we say:
we bring the liv - ing hope of God to all.
the world re - stored, in faith ful care in church.
Thus let us shout a - loud the liv - ing Word!



Al - le - lu - ia!

All Creation Songs, 1048

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