

MINISTRY SITE PROFILE



PART 1: CONTACTS & DEMOGRAPHICS

Name and Location

Name: Grace Lutheran Church of Northeast Minneapolis
Cong ID: 30751
Synod: Minneapolis Area Synod

Type Of Ministry Site: Congregation – Organized
Year Organized: 2007
Size Of Community: Large City (250,000 or larger)

Contact Information

Ministry Site (Office Contact)

1500 6th St NE, Minneapolis, MN 55407

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President of Congregation

Bryan Boyce

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Chairperson of Call Committee

Sheena Schar

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Demographics

Languages Spoken (most spoken, second, third)

In the congregation: English

In the surrounding community: English, Spanish, Somali

Race/ Ethnicity (largest, second, third, fourth)

In the congregation: White, Indigenous, Black, Hispanic

In the surrounding community: White, Black, Hispanic, Multiple Races

Gender comparison in congregation (in percentages)

Female: 50% **Male:** 45% **Nonbinary:** 5%

Age distribution in congregation (in percentages)

19 years or younger: 10%

20-34: 30% **35-49:** 15%

50-65: 30% **Over 65:** 15%

Number of Paid Staff

Clergy: 1

Other lay: 1—Church administrator & Food shelf coordinator

Other: 1—Music Director

Congregational Information

Average Weekly Worship Attendance: 50

Average Attendance in Christian Education: N/A

Parish Type: Single site

Distance members live from church facilities (in percentages)

1/2 mile 28% **1/2 - 1 mile** 26%

1-3 miles 30% **more than 3 miles** 16%

Community Type (select one)

Bedroom community	College/University	Farming	Inner city	
Mining/logging	Ranching	Industrial	Resort	Retirement

Budget of the Congregation/ Organization

Last fiscal year: 2023

Total budget for the last fiscal year: \$257,000

Total debt of the congregation at the end of the last fiscal year: \$19,000

Mission support to the ELCA/Synod for the last fiscal year: \$8,000

Total savings, reserves, endowment at the end of the last fiscal year: \$44,200

PART 2: WHO WE ARE & OUR VISION FOR MISSION

Trends in the Community Context and the Congregation

Characteristics: *Write a description of your surrounding community in terms of socio-economic status, demographics, primary areas of employment and lifestyle.*

Grace is rooted in the heart of Northeast Minneapolis, an eclectic part of the city that is home to many cultures that weave together into a beautiful and diverse tapestry. The legacy members of our neighborhood know this area as “Nordeast”, a call back to the days that this neighborhood was mostly home to Polish and other Northern European, working-class immigrants. Next Northeast became an enclave for artists and musicians because the housing was affordable and the vibe is creative. Each year thousands of people come to Northeast for Art-A-Whirl, a neighborhood-wide festival with hundreds of local artists displaying and selling their work.

In recent years, Northeast has continued to be a landing place for new immigrants to build community and start new businesses. Central Avenue is a cornucopia of international food and goods from all over the world. In Northeast, we deeply value patronizing local business and diverse cultures. You are hard pressed to find a chain restaurant in our neighborhood because that’s just not part of the culture. As the waves of immigration shift, so has our community. Many from Somalia and the Middle East still live in the community and recently have been joined by an influx of new immigrants from Ecuador and other Spanish-speaking countries. Our food shelf has seen a large increase in Spanish-speaking families seeking food and assistance recently.

Because of our older, more affordable housing stock, parks, and schools, Northeast has seen a rise in Millennials, many of whom have sought out a family-friendly neighborhood that has an artsy vibe and microbreweries. Most of them are white collar workers, a notable shift in a part of the city historically home to blue collar and service workers. Crunching the numbers, we see that the median value for a home is \$316,286, which is \$30,000 lower than the city-wide average. Still, only a third of homes in our neighborhood are owner-occupied; 57% are renters, and that number may be on the rise considering the Twin Cities’ affordable housing crisis.

A big shift in Northeast over the last few years has been a saturation of new development in the form of fairly expensive, luxury apartment buildings. These are aimed at young, upwardly mobile, working adults. This has had a gentrifying effect on housing prices that has made it harder for our “starving artist” and new immigrant communities to stay in this neighborhood. The neighborhood has tried to push back on the gentrification that is happening because we know how special this place is and we don’t want to unravel the beautiful tapestry of this community.



Trends: *List three changes or trends within the congregation which have occurred in the last 3-5 years.*

With the resignation of our last pastor, we lost the leadership stability she brought to our LGBTQIA+ ministry, Queer Grace. Described as “church by and for queer folks,” this ministry gathered people outside of Sunday morning for worship, Bible study, and community. Several Queer Grace participants also worshiped alongside our core congregation, but departed with the pastor. Gradually, Queer Grace has stopped meeting, but there is still appetite and need for such a ministry within and beyond our congregation.

Over the last five years, Grace has witnessed a generational shift in leadership. We’ve seen our Gen X, Millennial and Gen Z members taking on roles on the council, joining volunteer teams, preaching on Sundays, and driving justice-focused initiatives. This shift accelerated when our interim pastor actively encouraged people to share their gifts. As legacy members have expressed their need to slow down and rotate out of ministry roles, such change has been both welcomed and a source of anxiety. This leadership shift also correlates to membership growth: in the last five years, most new members have been young and middle-aged adults, several with children. With the presence of Generation Alpha in our midst—some born in just the last year—we look forward to working with a pastor who will empower new leaders.

There has been an express and intentional push towards community building and outreach in the last few years. We’ve been investing in our relationship with New City School, who shares our building, we’ve expanded our congregational volunteering at Little Kitchen Food Shelf, we’ve partnered with more local organizations to provide basic needs to members of our community, and we’ve begun to work through some of the relational hurdles within our own culture that keep us siloed and disconnected.



Context: *List three ways that the community in which you are located has been challenged by change and transition in the last 3-5 years.*

We are currently in the midst of a fresh wave of immigrants from Ecuador and other Spanish speaking countries. Our area has long been a place where immigrants settle as they build support systems and integrate into American culture. At present there is not enough infrastructure and community support for Spanish-speaking families. Our community is scrambling to meet the new and unique needs of this wave of new neighbors. As this group grows in our community, they will support each other and find welcoming space to share the beauty of their culture, enriching the diverse tapestry of Northeast. We hope to be an intentional part of the welcome.

Financial hardship has become an issue in many spheres within our community both for nonprofit and for-profit businesses as well as for individuals and families. We've seen the closing and consolidation of many local churches in the last five years as funding and religious affiliation within the community have steadily decreased. We've also seen the closing of several of our longstanding local restaurants and businesses post-COVID, and unlike before, those storefronts are standing vacant for extended periods instead of new businesses moving in to fill the coveted space. For individuals and families, the affordable housing crisis is widespread around the metro area, as is the rise in encampments of unhoused people. In Northeast we have seen an increase of unhoused people and multiple families sharing single family units. Our food shelf has been stretched significantly in the past year serving these neighbors, and for the first time we have had to cap the number of families we serve each week.

The murder of George Floyd and the subsequent uprising were events that fundamentally changed the citizens of Minneapolis, it's an experience that lives within all of us as collective trauma. Policing in Minneapolis has continued to result in the deaths of unarmed BIPOC residents, and as a community full of immigrants, queer folks, the unhoused, and members of the global majority, we know that a new video of police violence could very possibly be filmed on Central Avenue in our neighborhood. Justice issues were brought to the forefront in 2020, but in the subsequent years much of the attention and activism has lost momentum—in the white population, because of growing apathy, and in BIPOC communities, because of collective exhaustion. There have been small movements towards accountability and change in our systems, including new MPD standards that have been imposed by the federal government. However, the last three high profile murders by police have been dismissed without charges and police reform initiatives at the city and state level have been largely stalled or blocked. Issues of racial inequality remain in our education system, healthcare outcomes, income disparities, and housing. All of these were intensified by COVID. As a city we have a lot of work still to do for the human rights and dignity of all our neighbors to be protected equally, and as a congregation we know we have much internal work to do.

Programs: *Describe your congregation's current programs for mission and ministry.*

When Grace gathers for worship, God moves through many ministers. Alongside the preacher, leaders read Scripture, lead children's lessons, and offer prayers. At the communion table, other disciples prepare and serve gifts of grain and grape. Throughout the year the band supports our music director in enlivening the congregation's song, and in different seasons the choir lifts up our hearts. Sunday after Sunday, greeters and ushers engage in-person worshipers, while sound and streaming ministers help us share worship over Facebook and Zoom.

Several ministries tend to the wellbeing of the congregation. Fellowship ministers help strengthen the ties of relationship between members on Sunday, and homebound members are wrapped in prayer shawls crocheted by Grace's crafters. A senior Bible study gathers year-round to ponder Scripture and life, and seasonally there are congregation-wide gatherings for reflection and prayer (*Holden Evening Prayer* during Lent is especially beloved). Golden Friends regularly convenes our seniors for social connection and occasional service opportunities. Grace's Racial Justice Working Group connects periodically for education and to create resources like our Lenten land acknowledgement. Throughout the year, our Council meets to coordinate mission and pray for our community, sometimes meeting off-site as a reminder that God has rooted us in Northeast.

God equips Grace to serve our neighbors in a variety of ways. Our largest neighbor-focused ministry is Little Kitchen Food Shelf, a no-boundaries, no-restrictions food shelf serving Northeast and beyond. In 2023, neighbors came through our doors 2,255 times, and we gave away 93,823 pounds of food. We also feed neighbors at monthly community dinners, inviting partner organizations to serve a meal while a local mending group repairs clothes.

Grace is a generous congregation, and hosts multiple donation drives throughout the year. We not only collect school supplies for our building partner, New City Charter School, but also work with the school social worker to make sure students have appropriate winter gear for recess. We partner with local organizations like The Drawer and My Very Own Bed, collecting supplies that they share throughout the Twin Cities, and we donate hand-tied quilts to Southern Anoka Community Assistance to keep our neighbors warm. We participate in "God's Work, Our Hands" Sunday, sending our members to pick up trash, to package diapers and menstrual products for LKFS, and to write to our representatives.

As a congregation committed to our community's flourishing, Grace is a member of the Northeast Minneapolis Arts Association (NEMAA) and participates in the annual Art-a-Whirl festival. We host a day where artists of every age can get creative with cardboard, and we promote local artists connected to the church. Building on the legacy of Queer Grace, our members host a table at the Twin Cities Pride Festival. Through collaborative art projects and an affirming presence, we share God's love and welcome. As the founders of Grace Center for Community Life, our members constitute the majority of its board. Showing up to guide that nonprofit's mission ("empowering lives through faith, learning, and service"), we care for our building partners.

Goals: *What are the primary goals of your congregation? Please refer to any Strategic Plan that has been adopted.*

While Grace's Council has not adopted a strategic plan, our conversations and discernment reveal four primary goals centered around connection.

Goal 1: Connection to God. We want to meet God in music, prayer, and learning. We cherish arts and other creative expressions, and we love to be adventurous and playful. We want to follow Jesus in making a refuge for all who have been harmed by the church or are uncertain about faith. We want to feel the Spirit empowering us for ministry, to serve in partnership and to grow in welcome.

Goal 2: Connection within our congregation. We want to encourage one another's gifts for service and build up a collaborative leadership culture. We want to intentionally create space for people to heal from religious trauma and grow in faith. We want to nurture relationships across generations, making room for grief and joy, and we want to communicate better, so that Grace will be a place where people feel at home.

Goal 3: Connection with our neighbors through Grace Center. We want to maximize the impact of the community center we founded, inviting more partners to join. We want Little Kitchen Food Shelf to feed neighbors with excellence. We want to invest in the families, students, and staff at New City Charter School. We want to create space for building a sense of belonging, whether that's around a table at community dinners, with a hot glue gun at Art-a-Whirl, or at any event we host.

Goal 4: Connection beyond our local community. We want to live a wide welcome for LGBTQIA+ people and to broaden our participation in matters of social justice. We want to leverage our resources to repair the harm caused by racial inequity. We want to build partnerships with other churches who share these desires and organizations who are already at work.

Energy: *What is your congregation or organization really excited about right now?*

We are energized when people joyfully share their gifts. Members in the band and in the choir help us raise our voices in song. Others are excited to spend time with kids and present themed object lessons. Our congregational retreat last October arose out of a member's willingness to facilitate and her enthusiasm for conversations about culture and leadership. Each time someone is willing to share the ways that God has gifted them, we catch a glimpse of grace.

We are energized when we respond to God's call to make a positive difference in the lives of others. Members are eager to meet tangible needs, generously providing winter gear for New City School, clothing for The Drawer, and diapers for Little Kitchen Food Shelf. Folks delight in filling grocery bags with good food at LKFS. We have made a space of refuge for people hurt by the church, a place of welcome that also challenges us to acknowledge Dakota land and to interrupt oppressive systems. There's a growing desire to build relationships with

neighbors beyond our walls. When we hear God's inclusive love proclaimed on Sundays, we are moved to follow the Spirit's leading.

We are energized through fresh expressions of faith. Members still find meaning in traditions like singing *Holden Evening Prayer* but are also excited to sing songs gifted from the global church and learn to pray from non-Lutherans. We have cultivated a sense of playfulness in worship, from Christmas plays to sprinkling water at thanksgivings for baptism. When we hold new babies, the Spirit stirs us to pass down to them a compassionate and creative faith in the footsteps of Jesus.

Partnership: *How does this congregation see itself as a member and active participant in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the synod?*

Grace supports the Minneapolis Area Synod financially, but most members are not engaged in synod-wide initiatives. In 2024 we sent voting members to Synod Assembly, largely because this assembly elected a bishop; in other years, our people have not prioritized participation. Grace is more likely to partner with other Northeast churches, ELCA or beyond, than to seek relationships with ELCA congregations specifically.

Grace considers itself a place for cultivating the next generation of ELCA pastors. In the past five years, we have welcomed several students from Luther Seminary to lead and learn among us. When we create space for people to belong, even if they don't feel connected to the institutional church, we trust that the Spirit will nonetheless bless the whole church through them.

Ministry Site Characteristics

This section invites us to reflect on twelve pairs of ministry characteristics. In each case, which describes the congregation more accurately? Do we trend a little more towards a given characteristic or definitely trend that direction?

As a community, we trend a little more towards being informal and spontaneous *rather than* being formal and programmatic. We trend a little more towards not having stated goals or plans *rather than* having clearly defined goals and plans for the future. We trend a little more towards being demographically homogenous *rather than* being racially and economically diverse.

As for our leadership style, we trend a little more towards welcoming ideas that are provoking and challenging *rather than* preferring ideas that are tried and true. We trend a little more towards relying on our leaders for direction *rather than* relying on group decision-making. We trend a little more towards perceiving conflict as something destructive *rather than* using conflict constructively.

In terms of our programming, our facilities are definitely used often by community groups *rather than* only being used for our own activities. We trend a little more towards training people to minister within our community *rather than* training people to minister outside our walls. We trend a little more towards focusing on ideas and beliefs *rather than* focusing on skills and action.

When worshipping together (our “theological perspective”), we trend a little more towards being less obvious about our Lutheran heritage *rather than* being obviously Lutheran in identity and practice. We definitely trend more toward not being very active in the synod and ELCA *rather than* participating consistently in synod and ELCA activities. We trend a little more towards focusing on contemporary issues and topics *rather than* focusing on biblical studies and doctrine.

Purpose, Giftedness, and Mission

Purpose: *How does this congregation understand its reason for being in the light of God’s call to mission and service? Who are you? Why are you here?*

God has rooted Grace Lutheran Church in the heart of Northeast Minneapolis, calling us to be a place of connection: a welcoming spiritual home that serves neighbors with joy.

We have felt holy energy while engaging in fresh expressions of faith, when people share their gifts in worship and mission. But when anxiety over change and loss overwhelms us, we silo ourselves according to generation or ministry and focus on problem-solving rather than on loving each other. God calls us again to be a place of connection, reshaping us into a welcoming spiritual home. When we live out this calling, we build up a collaborative leadership culture where everyone’s gifts are encouraged. When we live out this calling, we nurture relationships across generations, making room for grief, joy, and conflict. When we live out this calling, we communicate with love and intention, inviting one another into a faith that follows Jesus adventurously.

We have felt holy energy while making a positive difference in the lives of others, when we meet tangible needs and leverage our resources to address poverty and racial inequity. But when the complex causes of need confront and confound us, we resist change and focus on problem-solving rather than on loving the people in front of us. God calls us again to be a place of connection, recommitting us to serving neighbors with joy. When we live out this calling, we strengthen Little Kitchen Food Shelf with volunteers and resources. When we live out this calling, we show up for students at New City School and other community members, learning how to advocate for a future where neighbors will flourish in thriving communities. When we live out this calling, we partner with others excited to see a world that (as we see it) echoes God’s dreams for dignity and delight.

Giftedness: *What are your gifts and resources for fulfilling this purpose? What are the congregation's top three assets and how are they being used? Are there obstacles that must be overcome to be able to use these gifts and accomplish the mission?*

God equips Grace with many gifts to live out its calling. Each of these gifts is an asset to our mission, but also encounters obstacles through which we are discerning a way forward.

Gift 1: A culture of service. Most members volunteer in several different ministries, finding personal fulfillment in accompanying each other and our neighbors. As noted above, we've seen our Gen X, Millennial, and Gen Z members taking on more active roles in ministry. However, the joy of serving can run afoul of obstacles like a culture of efficiency ("We've always done it this way"), pride of ownership ("Ours is the best way"), and unaddressed conflict in our congregation ("We have difficulty trusting each other with hard feelings and conflicting values"). Besides volunteer burnout ("I don't want to do this anymore"), we notice that our pastors can slip into over-functioning ("I'll just do it"). We see a way forward in a pastor who helps us cultivate collaboration ("Let's do it together, faithfully and imperfectly, learning together and loving each other through change") and calls forth the gifts we didn't see in ourselves that help each person name the way they want to be a servant leader.

Gift 2: Little Kitchen Food Shelf. LKFS is our largest neighbor-focused ministry and the pride and joy of our congregation. In 2023, volunteers from Grace and other faith communities gave away 93,823 pounds of food. In 2024, we made some bold shifts: changing our hours and providing hospitality. Structural obstacles prevent LKFS from its full potential. Volunteer recruitment and training tends to be decentralized and inconsistent, and we often rely on Google Translate to serve our Spanish-speaking neighbors. Meanwhile, grant funding is decreasing while food insecurity in our city is on the rise. We see a way forward in diversifying and supporting our volunteer base, making use of new technology, seeking strategic partnerships, and cross-training among volunteers.

Gift 3: Grace Center for Community Life. When Grace formed as a congregation, we created a separate 501(c)3 organization to purchase and manage a community center. That organization, often called Grace Center, transformed an unused public-school building into a place that houses New City Charter School and various community groups alongside Grace and its ministries. Grace Center brings so many neighbors near, but our people are hesitant to engage them. One obstacle is that we have not cast a vision with Grace Center staff and board about how the congregation can love the people who share this space. One way forward is to strengthen communication and relationships between the congregation and Grace Center.



Mission: *In light of the way you have described your ministry context in this Ministry Site Profile, what are the top three mission priorities which, if accomplished, hold the most promise for the continued development of this ministry?*

In order to live out our purpose with the gifts God has given us, we will prioritize as a whole church three things: cultivating collaboration; strengthening Little Kitchen Food Shelf; growing relationships with partners through Grace Center.

Cultivating collaboration. We will prioritize healing certain aspects of our culture that keep us siloed and prevent us from serving joyfully. We will name and disrupt the ways we put efficiency over relationships and encourage appreciation for different styles of leadership. We will put intention behind cross-generational communication, such that more people feel joint ownership of our ministries. We will nurture and develop individual gifts, discerning how the Spirit might bless the world through them. We will root culture shift in our connection to God.

Strengthening Little Kitchen Food Shelf. We will prioritize making our largest neighbor-facing ministry the best it can be. We will diversify and support our volunteer base, seeking strategic partnerships and cross-training among volunteers. We will encourage our dedicated staff member in pursuing funding opportunities, ensuring that volunteers carry out on-the-ground maintenance tasks. We will ensure that every child of God that visits LKFS will leave with full grocery bags and full hearts.


Growing relationships with partners through Grace Center. We will show up for the wellbeing of our neighbors closest at hand. We will learn what New City School staff and students need and discern how our individual gifts can bless them. We will invite more community groups to participate in monthly community dinners. We will take ownership of these relationships, working in partnership with the Grace Center board and staff.

References

Synodical Bishop

Rev. Jen Nagel

Elected in 2024, Bishop Jen is the fourth bishop of the Minneapolis Area Synod.



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 612-870-3610 (office)



Inside the Congregation

Amy Fields

Amy is a member of the congregation who experienced the creation of our congregation in 2007 and currently volunteers in different worship ministries.



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 612-819-8775



Outside the Congregation

Jane Ojile

Jane is the Executive Director of New City Charter School. She can speak to the relationship between Grace and New City and how we might strengthen our partnership.



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 612-623-3309 (office)



Member of the ELCA roster

Rev. Robert Lyndes

Bob is an ELCA pastor and healthcare chaplain who in retirement has reengaged his membership at Grace, building relationships and preaching.



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 763-587-1438



Anyone else who knows your setting well

Ashley Teter

Ashley is a third-year student at Luther Seminary who served at Grace for a contextual education class and has since continued to worship and lead in the congregation.

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PART 3: OUR LEADERSHIP NEEDS

The Leader We Seek

Roster Type: Minister of Word and Sacrament

Position Type: Pastor

Minimum Degree Required: Master of Divinity

Full Time or Part Time: Full time

Language Proficiencies: Bilingual (Spanish) Preferred

Experience (select one) **0-3 years** 4-9 years 10 -15 years 16- 20 years 21 + years

Ministry Tasks & Gifts

What are the five most critical tasks required in this position?

1. Building a sense of community
2. Conflict management
3. Innovation and creativity
4. Recruiting and equipping leaders
5. Strategic mission planning

What are five gifts for ministry essential for this position?

1. Build a sense of community among the people with whom they work.
2. Help others develop their leadership abilities and skills for ministry.
3. Deal effectively with conflict.
4. Be able to share leadership and work in a team.
5. Appreciate cultural diversity in language and customs.

What are five gifts for ministry that are very helpful in this position?

1. Be an effective communicator
2. Organize people for community action.
3. Bring joy and good humor to relationships.
4. Be creative and innovative about their tasks.
5. Have talents in the areas of music, arts, and writing.

Mutual Expectations

Please list the five primary areas of activity or focus that you wish your newly-called pastor to give special attention to during the first year of ministry at this congregation or organization

- A. Build relationships and discern gifts among the people.
- B. Get to know and build relationships with our neighborhood.
- C. Work with the Council on strategic planning and vision casting.
- D. Identify interpersonal problems and manage conflict in the congregation.
- E. Nurture the momentum of creativity and joy in all aspects of congregational life.

Please list the five ways that this congregation will support and encourage the rostered leader during the first year of ministry in order to help the leader accomplish these responsibilities:

- F. We will show up with openness and vulnerability and willingly engage challenging situations, conflicts, and difficult conversations.
- G. We will bring an adventurous spirit, a willingness to try new things, and our passions for justice concerns and community partnerships.
- H. We will care and pray for the mental and spiritual health of our pastor and provide space for healthy check-ins and leadership development.
- I. We will meet with the pastor to communicate, connect and encourage.
- J. We will commit to stewardship, continued congregational contributions, and service.

Compensation, Benefits, and Professional Expenses

Parsonage: No

Social Security Tax Offset: Yes (7.65% of base salary)

Maximum amount available for defined compensation: \$100,000, including benefits and retirement savings

Pension: 403(b) managed through Portico

Medical: Silver+ A or higher

Vacation Weeks: 4 weeks of vacation, 2 weeks of study leave

Sabbatical Policy: Currently no

Parental Leave Policy: 12 weeks paid

Background Checks Required: Yes

Auto/Travel Reimbursement: Currently no

Professional Expenses Account: Currently no

First Call Theological Education: \$250

Continuing Education: \$500

Please offer any comment or explanation regarding the compensation package, especially as it compares to synodical recommendations or guidelines.

We are committed to meeting synod compensation guidelines for rostered leaders and budgeting for health insurance and retirement. Learn more at <https://mpls-synod.org/for-congregations/compensation-guidelines/>. For policies that we do not currently have, we are open to crafting them with our new pastor in 2025.

Other Supporting Resources

Are you able to supply the following items, if requested?

Mission and Vision statement of the congregation: Currently no

Printed history of the congregation: Yes, see <https://gracnempls.org/about-us>

Strategic Plan/Goals and Objectives: Currently no

Budget: Yes, see <https://gracnempls.org/about-us>

Annual Report: Yes, see <https://gracnempls.org/about-us>

Position Description/Duties and Responsibilities: Currently no

Communication Piece (publicity, newsletter, etc.): Yes, see <http://tiny.cc/ScrollArchives>





PART 4: COMMENTARY

You are encouraged to offer information or commentary that will help the reader appreciate the vision, opportunities, challenges and nature of congregation. Use this opportunity to creatively promote and commend your ministry possibilities.

Grace Lutheran Church is a unique and beautiful community rooted in Northeast Minneapolis. Come experience what God is doing in and through us!

We are a playful, Protestant congregation. Our community includes cradle Lutherans, folks raised in other Christian traditions—from Roman Catholic to Pentecostal—and some who are spiritual or agnostic. Even though our worship is shaped by the four-fold pattern of Gathering, Word, Meal, and Sending found in Evangelical Lutheran Worship, we tend to lay aside composed liturgical settings for fresh prayers and an eclectic musical repertoire. When we celebrate Holy Communion, our pastors sing a paraphrase of the words Jesus shared with his disciples, set from everything from a medieval Christmas carol to a South American *corito*. We have a multigenerational approach to ministry that values children and integrates all ages into our Sunday service and outreach opportunities. Our adventurous and informal style welcomes the gifts of many people—from a choir to a house band, from children’s lesson leaders to pastors who write pageants or poems—that all help us experience worship with the heart of a child. We need a pastor who will have an inclusive approach to integrating art, music, creativity, and childlike playfulness into our congregation’s life.

We are the founders of Grace Center for Community Life, a community center that empowers lives through faith, learning, and service. In 2008, our newly formed congregation submitted a proposal to the Minneapolis School District to purchase an unused facility. Under the auspices of Grace Center, a separate 501(c) entity from the congregation, this building now brims with life: New City Charter School students and staff learn and grow in classrooms; community soccer leagues practice in the gym; a chapter of Alcoholics Anonymous convenes in the cafeteria; and, worshipers gather in the sanctuary—when they’re not serving in the food shelf, sharing coffee and meals in the Multipurpose Room, or meeting for ministry in Grace Commons. More possibilities wait on the horizon. We need a pastor who will help us cast a vision about how we can build better relationships and partnerships in our neighborhood, and who will work with Grace Center board and staff members to help us love the neighbors who share this space.

We are a young congregation with over 100 years of history. In 2007, three separate Lutheran churches came together to become a new creation. Over the last seventeen years, we have welcomed new generations and watched sorrowfully as people left over change and conflict. In our transition process we found that there are still residual hurts and unmourned grief from our merger and subsequent member loss, which manifests as anxiety about money and attendance. When anxiety goes unchecked, people in our congregation become siloed according to generation and ministry. We need a pastor who can help us engage conflict, heal relationships, and move together at the speed of trust.

As mentioned previously, the murder of George Floyd fundamentally changed the people of Minneapolis and has driven a move towards justice in our neighborhood and in the people of Grace. Our weekly prayers integrate current events and justice needs, keeping in front of us the names and needs of the marginalized across the world. We have a racial justice team that has worked on a land acknowledgement and publicizes opportunities for learning and justice action for our congregation to participate in. In our largest step on our journey towards justice, the Council leveraged our resources to repair historical harm caused by racist lending and redlining practices in our community. We eliminated the interest on a contract for deed that we hold with House of Refuge, a historically Black Pentecostal church; this reduced the income Grace receives monthly and allowed this congregation to retain the building even though they were deemed ineligible for a bank loan. This decision had both support and dissent from within the congregation, letting us know that we have more learning and growth to do internally so that we can continue to act bravely and justly externally. We need a pastor who will be justice minded and who will help us to deepen our knowledge and passion for the antiracism work that being placed in the heart of Minneapolis demands of us.

We love to serve. One of the big things we named about ourselves in the past year is that the majority of our congregation is made up of hard-working helpers. Most of us love to pitch in and get things done but are uncomfortable taking charge, casting vision, and disagreeing publicly. Some might describe us a congregation full of golden retrievers—good natured and loving and loyal! These traits have strengthened our many programs for ministry and mission, but they are also challenged by the stress of pastoral transition and tasks that feel intangible (like the work of a transition process!). We need a pastor who will help us live into our gifts and dream big dreams, who will push us out of our comfort zone and help us learn to lead in our own way.

We have experienced God in the wideness of welcome. In 2016 we voted to become a Reconciling in Christ congregation, joining a network of Lutheran ministries affirming people of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions. Subsequent leadership by queer-identified pastors has helped us live out the sacred and transformative practice of welcome. We are positioned to be a refuge for people who have been hurt by the church and

are looking for a different kind of community where they can come as they are and be truly accepted. Several members of our congregation identify as part of the LGBTQIA+ community, and it would be valuable for our next pastor to identify closely with that community as well.

As part of the RIC process, our congregation adopted the following statement of welcome, which we now extend to you:

“Welcome to Grace Lutheran Church! We are a congregation with a long history of loving God and serving our neighbors. We welcome and celebrate all of you, including race, culture, sexual orientation, gender identity, ability, age, and family. We welcome you to share fellowship with us in your joys and struggles. If you hunger for a good meal, a bag of groceries, the bread of communion, an opportunity to serve your neighbors, or a welcoming church home, there is a place for you at Grace!”

PART 5: COMPLETION OF THE PROFILE

Discernment Process and Adoption

Process: *Please describe the process used to gather information, formulate responses, and officially adopt this Ministry Site Profile. (Approximately 100 words maximum)*

Grace’s Transition Team listened to people share at a congregational retreat in October 2023, at cohort-based conversations in January-February 2024, and at a congregational conversation in April 2024. This profile was vetted by the congregation in September 2024.

Date on which this Ministry Site Profile will be adopted by vote of the Congregation Council:
September 18, 2024

Call Process Administrator

The name of the person on the synod staff that the bishop has designated as the Call Process Administrator for this call process.

Karen Ohm

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ELCA • LGBTQ+ Affirming

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