



ANNUAL REPORT 2022



Evangelical
Lutheran Church
in America

A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDING BISHOP ELIZABETH EATON



Dear friends in Christ,

We have seen many changes throughout the years and throughout the world. Sometimes we've been left yearning for the days when things didn't feel so complicated. Other times, we have seen something new happen and have asked, "Why did this take so long?" The church has been through its own changes as well. Some of these have left us wishing for simpler times while others have us waiting for even more to come about.

But, dear church, God still is unchanging. God's love is still the foundation on which the church was built. While we have seen many changes, both in the world and at the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the eternal love of God and the good news that dwells with Christ's death and resurrection continue to provide hope for everyone. This is why our mission remains steadfast, whether that is through our traditional mission work in places near and far or from new ventures and visions that encourage us to think of different ways to reach even more people.

The writer of Hebrews reminds us: "Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God" (13:16). That could not be truer in the work we have been doing in each expression of the church. Your gifts continue to benefit the good work of spreading the good news throughout your communities, your synods and the whole church. We are all answering the call to continue to do good work with the help of your support, whether that is through your resources, your time or your talents.

I am grateful for your generous support of each expression of the church. God calls all of us to continue to do the good work, and you continue to answer that call. We also continue to join you in that call and will remain true to looking toward God's unchanging promise. There is still much change and learning that will come before us, but God's steadfast love energizes us for the work God is still doing in the world through this church.

In Christ,

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton
Presiding Bishop
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

“Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God”

(Hebrews 13:16).

Grace happens

2022 Annual Report of Grace Lutheran Church

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***We are a community
of believers in Christ
called to be servants to all people.***

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Dear Members & Friends of Grace Lutheran Church,

Our tradition for New Years is to reflect on the year as the ball drops and of course to set resolutions for the future. As with every year, we feel that the year just went by too quickly.

In this seemingly quick year the church has accomplished quite a lot through your generous gifts. With your support our inclusive bathroom came to fruition. The conference room was converted into the Youth room, and through your time and talent we prepared the office to accommodate the conference table.

With your charitable assistance we were able to satisfy our mortgage loan sooner and have a joint celebration with Rally Day to mark this special occasion. Not to mention your gracious time, talent and treasures for the Food Pantry, Book Ministry, Threaders, Card Ministry, Fellowship, Stewardship, Coat Drive, Toys for Tots collection, Sock Drive, Six Weeks on Money, and Grace Preschool.

We give thanks for all these blessing from God. The Holy Spirit works through each and every one of us in different ways and it shows boldly throughout the community an everlasting impression of His love.

May the peace of Christ be with you always.

La Quita Opperman
2022 Council President

2022 Congregational Council



La Quita Opperman
President



Bob Masters
Vice President



Mike Olson
Secretary



Walt Anderson



David Cooper



Faith Longworth



Jen Scherman



Fred Schleede

Membership

Membership (as of 12/31/2022)

Baptized 195
Confirmed 160
Voting Members 127



1 Member
Died

6 New
Members
Welcomed

4 Children
Baptized



6 people
transferred or
resigned their
membership.

Pastor Leslie's Report

Virginia Synod & Tidewater Conference Events

- * Monthly VA Synod Rostered Ministers Worship & Check-in
 - * Monthly Tidewater Conference Meetings
- * Served on VA Synod Council
- * Served as chair of the Bishop Election Committee
- * VA Synod Confirmation Camp at Caroline Furnace
- * Power in the Spirit & VA Synod Celebration of Service
 - * Boundaries & Inclusion Education for Gender Justice
 - * Gathering of the Ministerium

Pastoral Care

- * Lots of calls, texts, emails, cards, and letters.
 - * Many in-person Communion & Hospital visits

Continuing Education

- * "Executive Certificate in Religious Fundraising" coursework
- * ELCA Re-boot Camp
- * VA Synod Digital Greeter Training
- * VA Synod Social Media Platforms for Ministry Training
- * VA Synod "Planning, Pruning, Planting for Growth" Webinar
- * VA Synod "Websites 101" Webinar
- * United Lutheran Seminary Fall Alumni Convocation

Community Involvement

- * Volunteered at two local Pride events
 - * Volunteered at a Chesapeake Public Schools event

No Funerals

8 Weeks of fulltime Parental Leave
October 23-December 17

8 Weeks of halftime Parental Leave
December 18-February 11



Worship & Music

Average Sunday Worship Attendance

Onsite: 42
On Zoom: 25

Christmas Eve Worship (Hybrid)

Family Worship @ 5pm—43
Candlelight Worship @ 7pm—26

Many hands
made light work
for the **Hanging
& Unhanging
of the Greens.**

Ash Wednesday
Noon (hybrid)—12
7pm (hybrid)—29

Maundy Thursday
Noon (hybrid)—9
7pm (hybrid)—26

Good Friday
Noon (hybrid)—9
7pm (hybrid)—27

Easter Vigil was held
at First Lutheran
(Norfolk).

Guest Preachers

The Rev. Dr. Phyllis Milton
The Rev. Cheryl Griffin
The Rev. Harry Griffith
The Rev. Judith Cobb
The Rev. Kelly Bayer Derrick
The Rev. John Wertz Jr.

Countless
volunteers
helped to make
worship happen
on site and
online.



The **Bell Choir**
played in
worship 6 times
during the year.



Christian Education

Spring 2022 Sunday School

When we resumed two worship services (April 10), we started holding Intergenerational Sunday School between the worship services. This continued until we started Summer worship hours (June 5).

Monday Bible Study

We gather on Zoom each week to study the books of Song of Solomon, Isaiah, & Jeremiah until Pastor Leslie went on parental leave.

There was no Vacation Bible School in 2022.

Fall 2022 Sunday School

With the start of the new school year, we resumed age based Sunday School classes (Elementary, Middle/High, and Adults). The Adult class included participants both online and onsite.



Confirmation

We continued our Confirmation Cohort in partnership with Emmanuel (VB). There are 5 students from Grace. Students will gather together monthly for two years.

Pastor and 1 youth attended Confirmation Camp at Caroline Furnace Lutheran Camp.

Wednesday Night Bible Study

We continued to gather on Zoom each week until after Easter. Then we resumed Potluck and held study hybrid (onsite and online).

Topics included: 1 & 2 Samuel, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Galatians

Fellowship



Ladies Lunch Out

January—Olive Garden
 February—Black Pelican
 March—Rancho Grande
 April—Vino
 May—Outback
 June—Wickers
 July—Carrabas
 August—Red Robin
 September—Ynot Italian
 November—Metro Diner
 December—Cracker Barrel

Gretchen Stoll used a Thrivent Action Team grant to host a **Volunteer Appreciation Lunch**. Everyone who had volunteered/served in any way at/with Grace was encouraged to attend.



A **potluck lunch** was held on "God's Work. Our Hands." Sunday (Sep 11th).



A **Bagged Easter Breakfast & Egg Hunt** was hosted on Easter Sunday between the two worship services.

We hosted a **Fat Tuesday Trivia Night** on Zoom in March.



A group attended a **Tides Game** in August.



We hosted **Wrap Your Crap Bingo** in October.



Gretchen Stoll & Debbie Dougherty hosted a **Baby Shower** for "Pumpkin" Weber.



The Mutual Ministry Committee hosted "**Cake & Conversation**" after the Annual Meeting (Nov 6).



A **Fellowship Coffee Hour** was held on Sunday, Nov 27th between the worship services.



19 women attended the **Ladies Christmas Lunch** on Saturday, December 3rd.

A group attended an **Admirals Game** in December.



Outreach

The Threaders made and distributed 98 walker bags.

The Book Ministry distributed books each week to Food Pantry clients.

In April, we collected 605 pairs of socks for the Urban Renewal Center.

Mission Support
(offerings passed on to VA Synod and ELCA)

\$24,385.39
(~10% of our income)

We packed Blessing Bags on Ash Wednesday and God's Work. Our Hands. Sunday.

We hosted 3 American Red Cross blood drives in 2022 resulting in 52 blood units being collected which have the potential to save over 150 lives with their distribution.



2 Flea Markets were held. Proceeds benefited:

- Lutheran World Relief's work in Ukraine
- Grace Preschool's Lisa Marie Justice Scholarship Fund
- The Chesapeake We Care Resource Center

Building Use Groups

- * Alcoholics Anonymous
- * American Sewing Guild
- * Good Mourning Support Group
- * Girl Scout Troop 490

with the help of Thrivent Action Teams

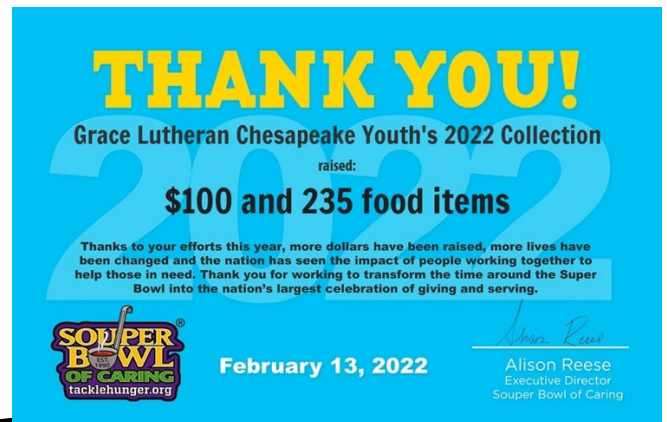
- ◆ **Adult Depends**—The Food Pantry distributed the items to several pantry clients. Many clients needed the items due to medical conditions or recovering from surgery.
- ◆ **Black History Month Books**—The Book Ministry distributed books in honor of Black History Month.
- ◆ **Dental Health**—The Food Pantry distributed toothbrushes and toothpaste to the food pantry clients. The items helped the clients on a path to maintaining their teeth, reducing dental bills, and allowed them to use their limited funds to support other needs.
- ◆ **Easter Books**—The Book Ministry distributed books in honor of Easter
- ◆ **Soap Bars and Wash Cloths**—The Food Pantry distributed bars of soap and wash clothes to clients. The items helped the clients maintain personal hygiene, preparation for job interviews and to use their limited funds to support other needs.
- ◆ **Grace Lutheran Food Pantry (four different action teams)**—The Food Pantry purchased food that was not available through the Food Bank or donations to supplement items for clients.
- ◆ **Thanksgiving Baskets**—The Food Pantry purchased food for and handed out 7 Thanksgiving Baskets.
- ◆ **Turkeys for Indian River Middle School**—A \$250 Thrivent Action Team Grant was used to buy 15 turkeys for the Indian River Middle Schools Thanksgiving Baskets.

In January, we collected over \$1000 in gift cards, \$250 worth of household items, games, and art supplies (bought with Thrivent Action Team grant), and a handful of clothing items for two families who were referred to us by Chesapeake Public Schools.

In August, we collected school supplies for two local primary schools.

In October, we collected 60+ coats for local kids.

In November, we collected toys for Toys for Tots.



Food Pantry

The Food Pantry distributed **109,435 lbs. of food to 3,977 individuals.**

Beginning Balance: \$13,645.53
Amount of Donations: \$6,740.69
Expenses: \$8,976.04
Ending Balance: \$11,410.18

Average # of Monday volunteers : 11
Average # of Friday volunteers: 8
Pounds of food distributed in 2022: 109,435 lbs.
Number of people served: 3,977

The need for food is great and we are averaging 28 families receiving food each Monday. Everyone visiting our Food Pantry gets food. NO ONE leaves without food. The food we distribute is made possible by the generous donations of money and food from our congregation, area churches, and organizations. In addition, we receive United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) food from the Food Bank of Southeastern Virginia and Eastern Shore. The 3-4,000 lbs of food each week is manually handled three times—loaded onto trucks, offloaded at church and put on shelves and freezers. In order to distribute and have the food, we have a dedicated group of volunteers. Without these volunteers each week, we would be closed and the hungry people in our community would not receive the food.

The pantry saw many new people coming due to increased food, gas, and rent prices. Many have a limited income, recently lost a job, or have family members who have moved back into the house, so they did not have enough to purchase the food that they needed. The recipients were very appreciative of the food. **Thank you for your prayers and support of the Food Pantry Ministry.**

- Donors (food and money):**
- Georgetown Primary School
 - Grace Preschool
 - Souper of Bowl of Caring
 - Woodland Heights Baptist Church
 - Girl Scout Troop #490
 - Brownie Girl Scout Troop #602
 - Vibrant Smile Dentistry
 - Miller Global Partners
 - Residence Inn
 - Springhill Suites
 - Mayflower Marathon Food Drive
 - Thrivent Action Teams grants
 - Grace Lutheran Church members and people in our community

Property



Men's group met monthly for a potluck breakfast and work around the church.

The **Inclusive Bathroom** was completed and dedicated on April 3rd.

With the help of the **"Pathway to Payoff"** fundraising effort, we were able pay off the mortgage early! A **Mortgage Payoff Celebration** was held on September 11th.



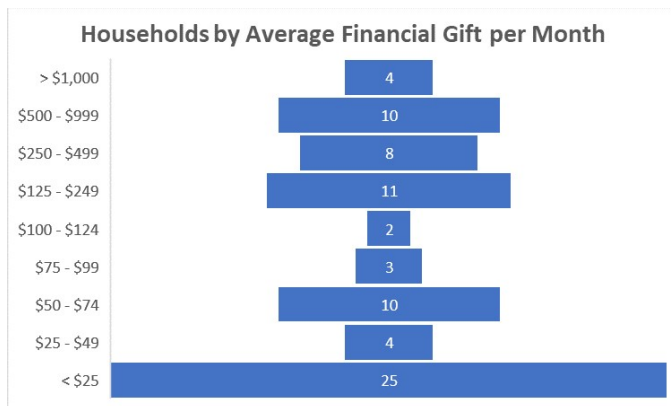
Stewardship

"Building a Culture of Generosity" is the Virginia ELCA synodical stewardship program that will be forthcoming at Grace. The program is directed at congregations seeking to stabilize financial giving, teach biblical stewardship principles and help members to discover generosity in time, treasures and talents. Stay tuned for more information on this program. The Stewardship committee is seeking additional members of the congregation to serve with the current team. Please contact new Council liaison Beth Woodward if interested in joining.

Financial Report

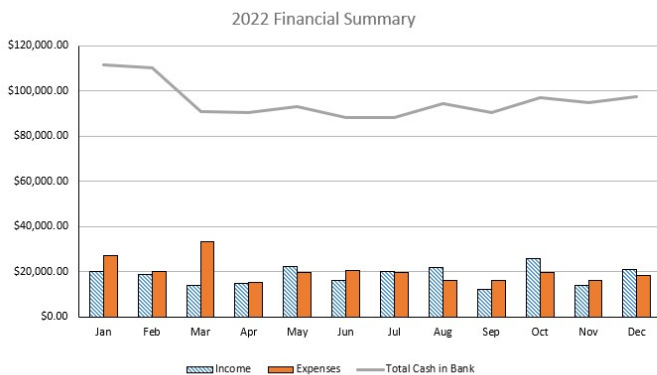
	2022 Giving	2021 Giving	2020 Giving
General Fund	\$207,385	\$185,011	\$208,931
Food Pantry	\$3,661	\$5,346	\$9,859
Growing in Grace	\$6,796	\$10,801	\$4,892
Endowment	\$0	\$400	\$0
Total	\$221,580	\$201,558	\$223,682

For 2022, there were 77 contributing households, down from 85 in 2021. The distribution, by the size of the average monthly financial contribution, is provided below.



Of note, of the 77 households,

- 13 provided a single gift for the year
- 6 provided quarterly gifts
- 39 provided monthly gifts
- 19 provided weekly gifts
- 45 percent use electronic giving (tithe.ly)
- 55 percent provide “physical” gifts (in the offering plate or via mail)



NOTE: The balance for Inclusive Bathroom Project (~\$14,000) was paid from the Growing in Grace (Building) Fund in March.

Mortgage

Beginning Balance: \$12,242.42
Ending Balance: \$0

Restricted Fund Balances

This money is included in the “total cash in bank” numbers in the graph above

Hubert Memorial: \$10,340
Growing in Grace: \$17,802
Memorial Fund: \$371
Sabbatical Fund: \$5,030

Endowment Fund

Beginning Balance: \$150,468.21
Ending Balance: \$129,222.23

Grants distributed:

- \$1,500 to All Places Together
- \$1,500 to Caroline Furnace Lutheran Camp
- \$1,500 to VA Synod's “Faith, Finances, & Freedom” program
 - \$1,000 to ForKids
- \$500 to Healthy Chesapeake



Grace Preschool

Parents decorated their cars for our **Trunk-or-Treat** event in October.

Summer Camp was run throughout the Summer.



The students shared lunch in celebration of **Thanksgiving**.

Parents came in to eat lunch with their students on **Valentine's Day** the students exchanged valentine cards and we had a small party.

Pastor Leslie led **weekly Chapel** to help the students learn about God's love.



The students put on the play "A Simple Christmas". They also did a gift exchange in the classes.



Our **hours of operation** were extended to 9am-2:30pm for the 2022-23 School Year.

Through your generosity, God is at work across the ELCA. A portion of your offering, called Mission Support, advances the ministry of our church, helping the ELCA nurture Christian community, raise up leaders, serve our neighbors and strive for justice. Read stories and learn more at [ELCA.org/SOFIA](https://elca.org/SOFIA).



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