

GraceFull Visions

JUNE 2017

Dear Family and Friends of Grace Lutheran Church,

One of the most common questions I get as a Lutheran pastor is: "Why can't our congregation have as many members as *(insert name of large, usually non-denominational church)?*" The full answer is complicated, but it raises a core question about congregations that want to grow numerically, but struggle to do so. What is holding them back?

Very often, the answer is a simple one: they don't make room to grow. This "room to grow" takes many forms, however. One obvious form is physical space. Some congregations want to grow, but their facilities are too small to allow for additional members to be added to their worship space, or classroom space, or fellowship space. This can be deceptive, since it can appear that a sanctuary might have plenty of extra seating, but if that extra seating is in less desirable places, like right up front, new

people probably aren't going to feel like there actually is room for them. Also, a sanctuary that has too much room can also be a barrier to growth, since they might feel like the place is devoid of life even with a significant number of people.

But "room to grow" is not just physical. Some of the most overlooked ways in which congregations struggle to make room to grow are within the culture and the mission of the congregation. In other words, some congregations simply are happy with who they already have within the life of their congregation, and new people are seen as threats to the cozy feel the tight-knit congregation has with each other. A visitor quickly picks up on the message that they really aren't welcome. Fortunately, this is pretty rare (though I have seen in it in person over my years of pastoring).

But more common is the lack of room to grow within the "prestigious" ministries of each congrega-

tion. Often the only ministries that new people are openly welcomed into are those that are the hardest to find volunteers for, and usually lack the needed resources to give them the best chance for success.

So, just based on these two facets of "room to grow" (there are even more), what would a congregation that has "room to grow" look like? Physically, the sanctuary would be about 2/3 full, and there would be specific spaces for people with particular needs or interests like wheelchair space, nursery/children's space, music space, etc. There would also be enough parking space, fellowship space, learning space, serving space, etc., to allow for spiritual and ministerial growth as well. But beyond physical space, the congregation would make room for new people through intentional mentoring within the established "prestigious" ministries, and new ministries would be started on a regular basis

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since it's a lot easier for a new person to connect to a new ministry than it is to connect with an old one. The culture of the congregation would openly embrace new people, seeking to find personal connections to established members, and being obviously interested in them just as people, rather than as potential volunteers or sources of income.

So where is Grace is all this? While we are certainly not openly hostile to growth, we have room to grow in our "room to grow." We will be talking about our physical room to grow at our congregational meeting. But we can also be intentional to examining our cultural and ministerial room to grow.

-Pastor Jeff

Faith Based Champions for Children



Trinity

DFL-11264193

Born on 5/28/2003

For additional information

Contact: Directions for Living

Edina Gudric

727-456-0600 x 2032

dfladopt@eckerd-eca.org

**Eckerd
Kids**

Eckerd.org

Trinity is all about keeping busy – whether it be playing with the latest LEGO set, taking walks in the park, or going to church. If snow crabs are on the menu, she’s there, but will pass on the pasta. Trinity is hopeful for the opportunity to have a room of her own and the space for a hamster or fish. While Trinity says she has twenty-one talents, you’ll have to get to know her to learn about them! Her perfect forever family would help her engage her creative side while maintaining a sense of humor.

For inquiries on Trinity and other children that are available for adoption or for information on becoming a foster parent or adoptive parent, call 1-866-233-0790 or visit www.eckerd.org or www.heartgallerykids.org

Eckerd Community Alternatives in partnership with the Pinellas Pasco Heart Gallery, Lutheran Services Florida, Directions for Living, Youth & Family Alternatives, 4Kids, & Safe at Home, JWB, One Church One Child and Faith Based Partners.

Trinity is but one of thousands of children who need support and encouragement.

Through Lutheran Services Florida and other organizations, we can make a difference in their lives. For instance, the Men of Grace group is currently considering ways to support a local foster family with ties to Grace.

If you know of anyone who might be able to provide a good home for a foster child, or to adopt a child, please feel free to pass along this information. Thanks!

Prayer List

Linda Almond, Eloisa Villanueva, Marion Voltz, Stephanie Adamitis, Pastor Lou and Barbara Haseley, Kyle Metzger, Taryn Zimmerman, Duke Tieman, Galen & Betty Biddle, Cathi Adams, Michael Morales, Wade Buehler, Gloria Holtzclaw, Betty Daege, Karen Bacher, Betsy Kitzman, DiAnne William, Wayne Hauschild, Rosemarie Smith, Gary Neal, Christa, Suzanne Norman, Shirley Saitta, and Kathleen Wacker.

Young @ Heart

There will not be a Young @ Heart meeting in June. We will resume in September in our Fellowship Hall for a lunch and the Prevention Task Force Presentation. Have a happy & healthy summer everyone. Florence B.

Kudos

Kuddos to Sophia Falco (Tony & Pat Falco's granddaughter) for being recognized as the Bay News 9 "Athlete of the Week" on May 18th following 2017 Track and Field State Championships.

Birthdays

6/4 Iris Valentin
 6/6 Vicki Eis
 6/7 Dale Davis
 6/9 Nicholas DeTrano
 6/10 Galen Biddle
 6/18 Kaitlyn Magee
 Pastor Jeff
 6/20 Notty Kennon
 6/25 Joe Adamitis
 John Johnson
 6/26 Connie Puls
 6/30 Ty Hauschild
 Barbara Leibrecht

Thank you!

"Hello all of you wonderful people at Grace Lutheran Church,
 I would like to THANK YOU all so much for being in our students lives. They have been so blessed by your generosity. I am hoping we can be partners next year as well. Thank you so much."
 - Pamela Evans
 Clerk/Liaison
 SANDY LANE
 ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Anniversaries

6/8 Steve and Dale Davis
 6/20 Jim & Maureen Bjorgo
 6/26 Tony & Pat Falco

Military Personnel w/Grace connections...

-Heather Burson, granddaughter of Anne and Ralph Burson is stationed in Norfolk, NC for further training as a Lance Corporal.

-Kyle Wassen, grandson of

Connie Puls, is stationed in San Diego, CA as a quarter-master on a destroyer.

-Marc Calhoun, nephew of Wayne and Yvonne

Hauschild in the Air Force in Albuquerque, NM.

-Aldo Granados, 19 year old son of Pastor Lydia and member of Grace, completed Army Reserve Boot Camp.

Elizabeth Circle

The next gathering will be on Thursday, June 8 at 1pm in the Garden Room. No meetings in July or August. Elizabeth Circle will resume on September 28th.

Men of Grace

The Men of Grace meet on the 3rd Tuesday of the month. This month's meeting will be at 9am at the Sunset Grill in Clearwater on Tuesday, June 20th.

A Big "Thank You"

Lydia's Closet would like to give a big thank you to the Retired Ministers who recently gave a very nice donation. We would also like to give thanks to Pastor Lou and Barbara for a most generous donation to the closet. These donations mean a lot to us to keep our closet well stocked for us to serve those who come for clothing and toiletries (as well as a good meal).

Community Breakfast and Lydia's Closet

Our June Community Breakfast and Lydia's Closet will be on Saturday the 24th from 9:00 am to 10:30 am.

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Clearwater FL 33755



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Email: graceclw@tampabay.rr.com

Rev. Jefferson Cox, Pastor

**Semi- Annual Congre-
gational Meeting
Sunday, June 25th
11:30 am**

All voting members of the congregation are highly encouraged to attend. Agenda items will include election of new members to the Congregation Council and consideration of the recommendations from the Building Consultant, including a possible Capital Campaign.