

## OREGON CIRCUIT

### **Grace, Portland – Thad Bitter**

Grace in Portland continues to stand in awe at God's goodness as he blesses us and as we rely on his strength to meet our challenges. We are continually blessed with opportunities to share the gospel with new people every day around our church and school. However, it has been challenging as the economy has taken many longtime and active members from Grace back to the Midwest. We are continually blessed with new gifts and new ministries for our members to serve together in. However, it has been challenging to support those ministries as members who moved away in the past year accounted for over \$85,000 of our budget. We have been continually blessed for many years with a staff of called pastors and teachers who have faithfully serve the Lord. However, we are currently vacant of one teacher and have retirements of 2 more of God's servants coming soon. Yes, we are blessed and we are challenged but we trust that our loving God will always provide for His Church.

### **Trinity, Eugene – Ben Zuberbier**

Trinity Lutheran Church of Eugene continues to serve the south side of Eugene with the gospel of Jesus Christ. We are currently revamping our Evangelism program, including the implementation of a regularly maintained website, at least one scheduled community festival per year, and the goal of one face-to-face contact with each of our prospects. With our location near two colleges--Lane Community College and University of Oregon--we have been able to serve a handful of students, but haven't yet formally organized a campus ministry yet.

### **Beautiful Savior, Corvallis – Luke Tembreull**

Blessings:

People are eager for opportunities to share the gospel and supportive of what the ministry.

Challenges:

One of our greatest challenges is that we are spread out throughout the mid-valley. With only 5 members in town it can be a challenge to organize activities.

### **Peace, Vancouver – Gary Kraklow**

During our Lenten season we offered two services each week, one at 3:00 and one a 7:00. The 3:00 people were thankful, the 7:00 people had to get used to some people "missing." Overall attendance was up 30%. Our Wednesday morning Bible Class just finished up Matthew and our Sunday morning class went through all of the epistles of Paul in chronological order in 2016-2017. We are looking to do something in the confessions and the history of Luther when we start up in the fall. Any suggestions? We are also trying to do some group activities to help with the bonding of members outside of "church" stuff. We have gone on theatre outings – musicals like "Church Basement Ladies" and "Beehive" – and Dragon Boat racing on Vancouver Lake, supporting breast cancer and local veterans groups (the comradery comes at the practices and the need for hydration afterwards). In the area of challenges we are trying to figure out how to get the millennials to get married and start popping out babies.

### **Gethsemane, Tigard – Dan Moll**

As you may remember a year and a half ago our congregation took a pretty severe hit when a significant group left our congregation over the doctrine of objective justification. They took with them not only a noticeable portion of our attendance but also a very significant part of our financial support. The Lord rescued this congregation with a significant and unexpected gift. We have determined to reach out to our community during the time that God has given us but the clock is ticking and our funding is not unlimited. Besides the ticking clock the biggest challenge is our aging facility. It has always been in need of some TLC but things are coming to a critical stage. We are in the tough position of having to decide how to best use the funds we have at our disposal. Enough of the negative stuff, there are also reasons to give thanks and rejoice. On the positive side we have some new faces in worship, and our attendance is up 2 per Sunday. Our giving is up also. We are +14% through the first quarter of the year compared to last year. The Lord continues to bless us and the work we are doing for him in southwest Portland.

### **Immanuel, Salem – Craig Wasser**

Immanuel Lutheran in Salem recognizes the many blessings that God has granted to us this past year. 20 new people have joined us as members through Adult Confirmations and profession of faith. The Lord has blessed the hearts of our people to support our ministry and has allowed us to not borrow from directed gifts. He has blessed our school with back to back enrollments that have set new highs, just barely, for us. He has blessed us with an extremely active core, strong called workers, and Spirit that desires to look forward. We are blessed with many outreach events. God has blessed our contacts with members and communities through 7 outreach events each year with multiple volunteers supporting these ministries. This year we are celebrating as a congregation our 50th year of serving Salem with the gospel. Our service will be September 24. We are very thankful for all these blessings.

Our challenges are in transition. Our 3-5 grade teacher has chosen to pursue work outside of the classroom. We are blessed to have Micah Wendt assigned to fill that position. We have several leaders who are looking to serve in supportive roles instead of headship ones. We have Sunday School teachers that have stepped out of the classroom. We have church attendance decline since many families are scheduling their family events over entire weekends. We really need another teacher in the classroom, but our finances just do not allow us to do this. We are looking to add a steeple to our church building and maybe expand the entire Narthex that was designed to serve a mission congregation. Our current debt and our day to day finances may keep this need on the back-burner.

We recognize God's hand in leading us and lean on him. May he bless us more and more as he strengthens us through any challenges we will face.

**No reports from:** Amazing Grace, Milwaukie and Beautiful Savior, Hillsboro