



# HOPE

EMBRACED  
BY HOPE

## A LETTER FROM THE CONGREGATION'S PRESIDENT

2022 was a challenging year for our leadership. In the face of these challenges we continued our efforts to find ways in which we are called to “build the church and love the world.” We listened to each other, revisited our history and considered how our community and the world around us is changing. Using our values to guide us, we came up with a new way to describe our vision. You’ll find the fruit of all this effort within this printed report and woven throughout the fuller version available on our website [PoPRoseville.org](http://PoPRoseville.org).

Our mission, vision and values help us connect with each other by building a common understanding of what Prince of Peace is all about. To paraphrase Hebrews 11:1, I have confidence in what we hope for (our future) and assurance about what we do not see (the Spirit moving among and through us). I encourage you to read the full annual report to learn more about how, with God’s active presence, we have found new avenues for discipleship and new ways to imagine the future with renewed confidence.

– Michael Stetzler  
*Congregation President*

### MISSION

We are claimed, gathered, and sent to build the Church and love the World.

### VISION

Our vision is for a vibrant community that seeks a transformational relationship with God, our neighbors, and one another, while responding authentically, creatively, and justly to the most compelling needs of our community.

Find a complete annual report, including more ministry stories and audited financials at [poproseville.org/2022-annual-report/](http://poproseville.org/2022-annual-report/)

# HOPEFUL AGAIN

It may seem as if a sense of community is an inherent and assumed part of being part of a church congregation. But in the years after COVID lockdowns kept us at home and physically apart, connections are even more important for some.

For Lea Thornton, parent and congregation council member, church community in a post-lockdown world has taken several shapes, from the Tanzanian fundraising dinner, to Women on Wednesdays, to informal meet ups with other parents.

“COVID just made us all realize how much we miss that interaction, even if we’re not very social people,” Thornton said. “Now having the opportunity to connect with people and it’s huge. It’s just nice.”

Like many things, the church’s commitment to supporting a congregation in Tanzania had to adapt to fit the constraints of the pandemic. But now, the partnership is back and stronger than ever, Thornton said.

“Prince of Peace has done a really nice job of staying connected to the congregations there,” Thornton said. “Almost every other year there was a group traveling over there. COVID obviously made a mess of that. But it also gave us the opportunity to figure out different ways to stay connected.” Every few months leaders from the parishes in Bomalang’ombe and Vikongwa travel to the city of Iringa in order to have a stronger internet connection. Then people from Prince of Peace have the opportunity to video chat with them — something that wasn’t common before the pandemic.

"It's nice that technology, in the midst of everything else going on, allowed for that partnership to continue in a different way and I think be stronger as a result," Thornton said.

This year also saw the return of an in-person Tanzanian dinner & auction, supported by members across the congregation, including teenagers making samosas and children helping with the traditional hand washing stations.

congregation's renewed commitment to the church is evident in the return of classic events like the dinner, but also in how the congregation is finding new ways to connect. For example, this year is the inaugural run of a group called Women on Wednesdays, which Thornton is participating in. It is sort of an addition or alternative to the traditional prayer circles, Thornton said.

"I'm excited to do it. It wasn't really something that was on my radar — my mother-in-law is a member of the church too and she and a couple of her friends decided to start it," Thornton said. "It is a way of getting back to just socializing and being in community."

The group members spend part of the meetings socializing and then part discussing books they chose at the start. The group Thornton is in is reading "Religion Around the World" is co-written by Sonja Hagander who grew up at Prince of Peace, giving the book a tie closer to home.

"It's kind of going through that book and just talking about differences and similarities in world religions, to some extent our own personal experience of religion," Thornton said. "Also because it's a children's book, how do you talk about this with your kids? My kids really liked the book. I brought it home and they were going through it the first day."

Prince of Peace was not alone in the challenges it has faced in the last few years, and Thornton said she is thankful for the continued dedication of the community and church leaders to the church's missions.

"I just think it makes our lives richer to have that community, to have that network of people and also for it to be tied to our faith and tied to just kind of that broader sense of, 'here's our place in the world and a huge part of that is helping everybody get to a better place in the world,'" Thornton said.

She appreciates the church's commitment to serving beyond its walls, whether that be working with the city of Roseville to learn more about homelessness in the area, the partnership with Tanzania or partnering with Settled, the NGO that provided the tiny homes now on the church's property.



"Much of Prince of Peace's message is that we are a part of this broader world," Thornton said. "I think it's really important for my kids to have that and to have that perspective of like, 'yeah, there are people in the world who may not look like you, may not have the resources you have. People in the world that are going to be better off than you are to some extent, and we can all coexist. We can all do things to help each other and not tear each other down.'"

**Through the challenges facing the world in recent years, Prince of Peace has remained strong, Thornton said, and she is excited for the future.**

"I feel hopeful again about Prince of Peace, which isn't necessarily something that I felt in 2020 and 2021, to be honest," Thornton said. "We've had some families express dissatisfaction with children and family ministry and to see that turn around so quickly and so well, ... it just feels great."

# A VALUED PART

For one tenth grader at Prince of Peace, the renewed investment in Children, Youth & Family programming has made her feel more like a part of the church.

“During the pandemic the only way you were connected with the church was through a video of the church service and it’s just so hard to relate and feel like you’re actually there,” Sofie Sethi said. “When you actually go in person, you get to see other people, you get to be a part of a community and not isolated.”

In years past, it was a sure bet to find the youth group, also known as PoP Rocks, gathered in the youth room on Sunday mornings. However, now the high schoolers meet at a nearby coffee shop.

“What we do every Sunday is we check in to get used to things and talk as a group and get comfortable with each other,” Sethi said. “Then sometimes after that we’ll talk about important topics” The group has explored topics like environmental challenges and LGBTQiA inclusion.

Early in 2023 the group talked about their New Year’s resolutions as a way of getting to know each other better and setting themselves up for the year. For Sethi, who is in tenth grade, meeting at the coffee shop has been a nice change from tradition.

“It just feels, how do I put it, a little more comfortable,” Sethi said. “It’s just good to have those separate moments and then to connect with the church.”

Programming for high schoolers isn’t the only programming that has seen some changes this year. Taking inspiration from the name for the high schooler’s group, pre-K and elementary aged kids have the option of going to Faith Rocks with Pastor Melanie during the sermon every Sunday. As an added bonus, they leave with a rock with a sticker for the story of the week.

Children can also be spotted helping out during the church service — as readers and serving communion, to name a few. The Spark Story Bible is also being

used in services as a way to keep even the youngest worshippers engaged.

“I feel like we’re getting some momentum. We’re getting our groove back, we’re going somewhere with children’s ministry,” parent Lea Thornton said. “It’s been really great to see the kids excited about Sunday school.”

Thornton has two kids, one in the middle school group and one in elementary school. The middle school youth group, named God Rocks, gets together to talk about the highs and lows of their weeks and does an activity or two.

“Because the middle school group has their twice monthly Wednesday evening get-togethers, Pastor Peter started a thing for any parents who are free to go and just hang out. It has been really fun to do that,” Thornton said.

The congregation as a whole may not be majority kids and high schoolers, but the congregation is an integral part of their experiences.

Last summer, ten high schoolers went to Chicago for a week, a trip that wouldn’t have been possible without the generosity and support of the congregation.

“It was my first trip doing something like that so that was really fun,” Sethi said. One highlight was a visit to the Lutheran School of Theology, Sofie reflected, “We did some praying, sang songs, played get to know you games and then we helped [in the pollinator] garden, which was really interesting.”

The youth also helped sort clothes for a thrift shop that supports a teen center while they were in Chicago, amid trips to iconic landmarks.

These trips are more than just a chance for the high school aged members of Prince of Peace to visit a new city, for some, like Sethi, they are a chance to contribute to the mission of the church.

“I think one big reason is it makes us feel like we’re doing something for the church,” Sethi said. “We go on these trips to speak good of our church in a way, but also to do projects and stuff.”

This summer, the youth group is planning a trip to Denver on a similar service learning trip.

"I am looking forward to being in a new place. I've never been to Colorado. And any projects that we plan on doing because those are also very important to me," Sethi said. "That's one reason why I love our church. We try our best to find projects that help other people."

Coming hand in hand with some of the other changes, have been intergenerational programs like Advent wreath making and Reformation Bingo. "I think the intergenerational activities we do every now and then are important because it's giving us an opportunity to be with all ages," Sethi said. "That's another big thing that the church has done to sew us together a little more."

The energy church leadership has put into programming and ministry for children, youth and families has not gone unnoticed.

"I just feel this year it's been more directed," Sethi said. "It has just felt different than other years. It has felt a little more like we're welcome. I feel like there was one point where it felt like we were a little disconnected from the church. But I do appreciate how much more time people are putting into us. We wouldn't be able to do much without all of this help."

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*All stories included in this report were compiled and written by Marta Hill, a journalism student at Northeastern University and Pastor Melanie's daughter.*





# JUST THE BEGINNING

For almost 25 years, Prince of Peace has owned the lot next door to the church – but what to do with the space? The congregation explored several ideas, long-time member Gus Haugan said, including creating an outdoor worship area overlooking the pond, creating gardens for refugees from Burma, or deepening the church's commitment to community-first housing.

The gardens got planted, but no other plans came to fruition. Until this year, that is.

Now, the lot next door is temporarily home to two tiny homes, and four people living in them.

Valerie Roy came to Prince of Peace last summer, at the time living in an old school bus that was parked on the property. She also introduced the church to the founders of Settled, an organization taking on chronic homelessness in our community. The tiny home provided by Settled that Valerie lives in now is much better suited to Minnesota winters.

"I have to get my bearings again. You don't just wake up in four walls and think you're not homeless anymore," Roy said. "I see a trauma doctor once a week to help me with that process. Four walls does not change homelessness, it takes a lot more than that."

Since moving into the tiny home in December, Roy said the willingness the Prince of Peace community has shown to accept her has been "quite the miracle."

"It's very comfortable and everybody's been super welcoming," Roy said. "Everybody has done a fantastic

job becoming community and that's what it takes to not be alone anymore. Homelessness is a prison of its own, very isolating."

The other tiny home is inhabited by the Beary family — Mischa, James and Avia — as well as their dog Bella. The Beary family is a resource family that intentionally left their apartment behind to join Valerie in this new way of building a community alongside the church.

Inside the church is a "common house," also outfitted by Settled. The room, vacated by the recent closure of the day care, now houses things like hot plates, a microwave, a fridge and freezer and dishes. Settled's philosophy focuses on bringing people together for shared meals and conversations, and this communal space is an important part of that.

The tiny homes were funded and built by two other churches who, together with Settled, have formed a unique partnership to create an interim "Sacred Settlement" on the Prince of Peace campus. This isn't the first time the church has explored creating community-first housing.

"A few years ago we had somebody come to our church for an adult class, ... and she mentioned that there was a problem in the Roseville schools with a high number of families that didn't have stable housing," Haugan said.

From there, the church formed a committee for affordable housing, focused on learning more about homelessness in Roseville and trying to discern where the church could make itself useful.

For Roy, the community-first model using tiny homes is a better approach than homeless shelters.



"A homeless shelter is not helpful," Roy said. "It's just [that] nobody there is qualified as far as services go, conflict resolution, there's no economic development, it is just a void. And [the community-first housing model] has all of the resources attached to it and then some."

The tiny homes are not yet a permanent feature of the church campus, but they are a key stepping stone in the church's interest in affordable housing and its dedication to supporting the community.

"I think it fits into our mission in that we think everybody should have a roof over their heads and they should have stable housing, something they can come back to every day," Haugan said. "I think the whole thing fits in the idea that 'well, what is God calling us to do as a congregation? What should we do about homelessness?'"

The affordable housing committee has been "spinning [its] wheels" for a few years, but they have learned a lot and are ready to go ahead and do something, Haugan said.

Any future projects will require significant buy-in from the congregation, Haugan said.

"I think it's gonna take quite a bit of education for members of our church to understand this problem of homelessness and what's the role of our church in all of this," Haugan said.

"Rather than starting with this grand project we are starting with the tiny homes," Haugan said. "It's the beginning, more than anything. I don't know how this is all going to pan out in the long run, but it's a start anyways."

## VALUES

### THIS IS WHAT WE VALUE...

We welcome all of God's children through open doors to be in **RELATIONSHIP** with one another and with God in ever deepening ways.

We respond with **GENEROSITY** to the world, reflecting the abundance of God's love present in our lives and made available to all.

**CARING** for each other, our neighbors and all of God's creation as we are inspired to offer genuine compassion and love.

We nurture the **FAITH** given to each of us, listening for how God's story informs our own and practicing our response.

We are always **LEARNING**, remaining curious about God's ever-changing world and our place within it.



**PRINCE**  
**of PEACE**  
Lutheran Church

## STAFF

Pastor Peter Christ	Lead Pastor
Debbie Jorgens	Director of Visitation & Congregational Care
Julene Hannesh	Youth Director
Melanie Hill	Interim Director of Children & Family Ministry
Kristin Bloxham	Office Administrator
Milt Warkentien	Worship & Music Coordinator
Kathy Donlan Tunseth	Chancel Choir & Bells of Peace Director
Daniel Ritter	Organist & Accompanist
Steve Andert	Custodian

## STAFF WHO LEFT IN 2022

Pastor Betsy Hoium	Associate Pastor for Faith Formation
Abe Hunter	Organist & Accompanist

## 2022 CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL

Michael Stetzler	President
Esther Tatley	Interim Vice President
Karen Carr	Secretary
Rick Rothausen	Treasurer
Deborah Cordes	
James Ericksen	
Ryan Miller	
Deb Mosby	
Teruni Sandanayake	
Lea Thornton	
Pastor Peter Christ	



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