

AI Summary from DIG Group Responses 10.2025(AI Paragraph Format)

Community Needs and Grace Lutheran's Strengths

Community Needs Surrounding Grace Lutheran

Housing and Shelter

Within the community surrounding Grace Lutheran, there is a critical need for acceptance and safe places to live. Affordable housing remains a major concern, particularly after the closure of the Lighthouse, which has led to increased homelessness and hunger, especially among school children. Many resources that previously supported unhoused individuals are no longer available, resulting in a growing deficit for people with basic needs. Victims of domestic violence face challenges in finding both safe and affordable housing. Additionally, students, including those attending college, encounter high costs for residence hall rooms, further highlighting the need for accessible housing. Efforts by Grace Lutheran to provide housing have faced obstacles, including negative perceptions and logistical difficulties.

Food Insecurity

Hunger is a pressing issue in the area, particularly for children. The closure of local support facilities has exacerbated food insecurity. Initiatives such as Packing Friendship have been instrumental in providing food, and community gardens are valued for their contribution to feeding those in need. There is optimism about restoring the food pantry and forming partnerships with organizations that deliver food and essential items to the community.

Mental Health and Social Support

Mental health challenges, particularly among children, are prominent due to limited resources in the community. There is a need for increased mental health care and greater awareness of these issues. Additional concerns include the fear experienced by migrant families, citizenship challenges, and difficulties associated with ICE, all of which compound the need for mental health and social support services.

Educational Institutions

Grace is blessed in its location with proximity to educational institutions- Wenatchee School District including Washington Elementary and Orchard Middle School. Wenatchee Valley College is within a half mile of our location. Several needs have been identified for students of WVC. Our proximity and our excess land provide opportunities to help serve the needs of students in our proximity. Food insecurity and housing needs are identified elsewhere in the report.

Community

An identified need within our members and our neighborhood is an individual need for community. We need to find more ways to promote community within our neighborhood and our membership. Several of our members identified a need for community as their motivation for joining Grace Lutheran. In addition, the need for community for grandparents raising their grandkids was identified as well. They may be raising them on a day to day basis or providing their church/spiritual connection.

Inclusivity and Community Cohesion

The community is ethnically diverse, with a significant Hispanic population. Outreach efforts are needed to better serve this group, including language support such as Spanish classes. There is a general lack of trust and security, and a strong desire exists for a place where everyone feels welcomed and valued. Many neighbors have never met each other, indicating a need for stronger connections and a shared identity within the community.

Care for Vulnerable Groups

There is a shortage of adult and elderly respite care, with resources becoming increasingly scarce. Day care and after-school care for children at Washington Elementary School are in high demand. The congregation is concerned about providing opportunities and activities for children and youth. Support for the homebound, including visits that offer fellowship and assistance, is also needed.

Neighborhood and Ecumenical Outreach

Socio-economic divisions exist in the neighborhood around Grace Lutheran. Efforts are necessary to unite neighbors and foster a sense of belonging. Collaborative activities with other churches and ecumenical outreach are considered important for building a stronger community.

Recovery and Reconnection Post-Covid

The pandemic has disrupted community connections, creating a need to reestablish engagement through regular in-person activities. A strong, non-judgmental faith community is seen as essential for recovery and reconnection.

Programs for Youth and Young Adults

Building relationships among youth and guiding them productively is a significant need. Programs targeting young adults are also important as youth transition into adulthood. There is a need for a youth program with effective leadership to attract and support young people in their development.

Grace Lutheran's Gifts and Strengths in Meeting Community Needs

Music Ministry

Grace Lutheran boasts a strong tradition of music outreach, which benefits both the congregation and the broader community. The music ministry includes choirs and Taize worship, offering peace and calm, providing scholarships for youth, and fostering unity. The music program is recognized for its richness and its ability to attract people, including in fundraising efforts for causes such as support for Ukrainians. Piano and organ scholarships have also encouraged interfaith collaboration and outreach.

Leadership and Active Ministry

Leadership is a notable strength at Grace Lutheran, with Deacon Ruth bringing vital connections, energy, and direction to the church and community. Intern Laura and other leaders contribute to an active mission and social concerns group. The generosity and openness of Grace are seen as gifts that foster inclusion and diversity, and the ministry of love and unity remains a central theme for further development.

Physical Space and Location

The church's facilities and grounds are valuable assets, providing space for community gatherings, counseling, and various services. Its location across from Washington Elementary School offers opportunities for partnership and outreach. Shared spaces such as community gardens benefit both congregation members and the wider community, and collaboration with organizations like the Food Bank at First Methodist Church enhances support efforts.

Mission and Social Concerns

Grace Lutheran has a strong mission and social concerns team, actively participating in assistance both within the church and in the broader Wenatchee Valley. The Building Better Tomorrow Foundation supports students and mental health awareness, while programs like Befrienders provide companionship and support to those in need. The church's openness and inclusivity are recognized strengths in addressing diversity and welcoming all individuals.

Education and Support

Education forms the backbone of Grace Lutheran's approach, supporting adult respite care, child care, and scholarships. Lay leadership is encouraged, and programs are offered for both youth and young adults. The recent facility remodel will further enhance Grace's ability to provide services and support to the community.

Ministry Areas with Energy and Focus

Outreach and Generosity

Grace Lutheran emphasizes gentleness, love, and kindness, striving to serve as a model of justice and support for those in need. The Social Concerns Committee and outreach programs are central to the church's ministry, involving children and adults in worship and fellowship through intergenerational service opportunities.

Faith Formation and Discipleship

Discipleship and spiritual formation are prioritized, with a focus on engaging those not present in the congregation. Educational opportunities include Bible studies, confirmation classes, Vacation Bible School, and other programs. The involvement of children and youth is highly valued, and the intern program is highlighted as a significant asset for training future clergy.

Community Activities and Worship

Events such as Wednesday night fellowship, annual special gatherings, and partnerships with local schools and organizations provide meaningful community engagement. The music ministry, led by

Deacon Ruth, serves as a focal point, attracting people to the church. Programs providing meals support individuals during times of illness or difficulty.

Inclusivity and Unity

Grace Lutheran is recognized for its inclusive and welcoming atmosphere, embracing both diversity and unity. Opportunities for lay leadership in worship, intergenerational ministry, and ecumenical collaboration are areas of strength and focus.

Meaning of Mission and Ministry at Grace Lutheran

Grace Lutheran's mission and ministry are deeply rooted in love, community, and inclusivity. Members take pride in belonging to a church that "loves like Jesus," offering comfort, stability, and emotional support. The congregation values tradition, history, and hope for the future, drawing strength from its heritage and leadership. Worship at Grace Lutheran is intentional, thoughtful, and inclusive, providing a foundation for spiritual growth and community connection. Education, fellowship, and service are central to the church's identity, reflecting a commitment to helping others, fostering unity, and embracing the gifts of diversity and the Holy Spirit.

AI Summary LIST from DIG Group Responses 2025 (AI SORT/LIST FORMAT)

Community Needs Surrounding Grace Lutheran

Identified Needs in the Community

- **Acceptance and Safe Shelter:** There is a pronounced need for acceptance and places to live, particularly affordable housing options. Homelessness is a growing issue, exacerbated by the closure of the Lighthouse shelter. Many in the community, including school children, experience hunger, and there is a desire to restore initiatives such as the community garden and pantry to address food insecurity.
- **Safe Havens and Domestic Violence Support:** Unhoused individuals and victims of domestic violence require secure locations and affordable housing. The community seeks more resources and safe places for those in crisis.
- **Housing Crisis:** The lack of affordable housing affects various groups, including college students paying high fees for residence halls. The term "homeless" has become stigmatized, and the closure of the Lighthouse will intensify housing and hunger challenges.
- **Disappearing Resources:** Multiple support services have shut down, creating a deficit for people with basic needs, including the unemployed and college students.
- **Community Location and Outreach:** Grace's location is strategic for engaging with young people, college students, and supporting initiatives like community gardens and laundry services.
- **Support for Children and Families:** Hunger and mental health are pressing concerns for children. The community lacks resources for children with mental illness and faces shortages

in coats, food, and other essentials. Mental health awareness and support are limited, with few specialists available.

- Migrant and Hispanic Population Support: Migrant families face fear and separation due to deportation, and there is a need for greater outreach and trust-building with the Hispanic community. Language barriers and citizenship concerns compound these issues.
- Community Cohesion and Trust: Social divisions and alienation persist among neighbors, and there is a need to foster a welcoming environment where everyone feels valued.
- Elder and Adult Care: There is an increasing need for adult respite and day care, especially for the elderly. Previous resources are no longer available, and community outreach to retirement villages is considered.
- Opportunities for Children: The lack of programs and opportunities for children continues to be a concern for the congregation.
- Food Insecurity: Programs like Packing Friendship help address hunger, but greater efforts and collaboration with local businesses and organizations are needed.
- Mental Health and Citizenship: Mental health needs intersect with concerns about immigration and citizenship, affecting families' stability and well-being.
- Child Care Shortages: Affordable child care is scarce, and after-school care for students at Washington Elementary is highlighted as a need.
- Social Disconnection: Alienation, both social and ethnic, is a challenge. Improved communication about available programs and services is necessary.
- Arts, Spirituality, and Community Engagement: The need for more opportunities in art, spirituality, and music is expressed, alongside desires for a peaceful and inclusive community environment.
- Youth and Young Adult Programs: There is a call for effective youth programs and support for young adults transitioning from youth programs.
- Covid Recovery: The pandemic disrupted social connections, and there is a need to rebuild a strong, judgment-free faith community.
- Neighborhood Cohesion: Socio-economic divisions exist within the area surrounding Grace, and there is a need to unite neighbors and invite all to participate in the community.
- Ecumenical Outreach: Collaborative activities with other churches in the neighborhood are encouraged.
- Care for Grace Members: Outreach to homebound members and periodic check-ins to identify needs within the congregation are recommended.

Gifts and Strengths of Grace Lutheran

- Music Ministry: Grace's music tradition is a significant strength, fostering outreach and community engagement through activities like fundraising and participation in choirs. The music ministry brings peace and connection to participants and the broader community.
- Leadership and Staff: Deacon Ruth's connections and dedication are recognized as vital gifts, alongside contributions from Intern Laura and the leadership team.
- Physical Space: Grace offers substantial physical facilities, including space for 250 people, a remodeled basement, and proximity to the elementary school. These resources support community activities, food programs, and gatherings.

- **Community Outreach and Inclusiveness:** Grace is known for openness, inclusivity, and a welcoming spirit, embracing diversity and unity within the congregation and the community.
- **Mission and Social Concerns:** An active social concerns group works locally and globally, with a commitment to assist others, even when participation is limited by physical constraints.
- **Education and Youth Engagement:** Grace has a history of supporting educational programs, youth ministries, and intergenerational activities. The internship program and youth choir are highlighted as assets.
- **Generosity and Openness:** The congregation demonstrates generous support for missions, outreach, and community needs.
- **Facility Improvements:** Ongoing renovations enhance Grace's ability to serve the community.
- **Spiritual Resources:** The labyrinth provides opportunities for contemplation and renewal. Lay leadership and opportunities for spiritual growth are valued.
- **Partnerships:** Collaboration with local schools and other organizations extends the church's reach and impact.

Ministry Areas with Energy and Focus

- **Gentleness and Love:** The ministry at Grace centers on gentleness, love, and kindness, modeling these values as a counter to broader societal challenges.
- **Youth and Intergenerational Programs:** Although there are concerns about the strength of youth programs, Grace seeks to nurture and involve children and youth in worship and community life. Opportunities exist for intergenerational service and ministry.
- **Social Concerns and Outreach:** The Social Concerns Committee plays a vital role in outreach and service, with energetic participation in activities such as cleaning and meal programs.
- **Worship and Spiritual Formation:** Discipleship, spiritual formation, and intentional worship practices are areas of active focus. Bible studies, confirmation, and special services support spiritual growth.
- **Music Ministry:** Led by Deacon Ruth, the music ministry is a focal point, with potential for expansion to include more children and youth-focused events.
- **Fellowship and Community Building:** Wednesday night fellowship and annual special events create opportunities for connection and engagement across ages and backgrounds.
- **Lay Leadership and Training:** Pastor James's support for lay leaders in worship services encourages broader participation and leadership development.
- **Internship Program:** Training and supporting clergy through the internship program is recognized as a significant asset.
- **Partnerships and Ecumenical Activities:** Grace is involved in partnerships with other churches and local organizations, fostering collaborative ministry.
- **Recovery and Renewal:** Efforts are underway to recover energy and momentum following disruptions from the pandemic and construction projects.

Meaning of Mission and Ministry at Grace Lutheran

- **Love and Community:** Members express pride in belonging to a church that "loves like Jesus," finding Grace to be an anchor, a family, and a source of comfort and stability.

- Heritage and Tradition: The church's history, traditions, and Lutheran identity are important to many, providing hope for the future.
- Support and Acceptance: Emotional support during times of loss and need is a hallmark of Grace's community. Acceptance and a sense of belonging are highly valued.
- Personal Growth: Participation at Grace encourages individuals to broaden their perspectives, serve others, and find peace in worship and service.
- Inclusivity and Openness: The church is recognized for its inclusive nature, welcoming diversity in gender, culture, and background.
- Spiritual Engagement: Worship, liturgy, and intentional practice nurture spiritual growth and connection among members.
- Educational Opportunities: Teaching, learning, and opportunities for lay preaching are important aspects of Grace's mission.
- Reaching Out: There is an ongoing desire to reconnect with former members and extend a welcoming hand to all.
- Community Service: Helping others and supporting the broader community are integral to the mission and ministry of Grace.
- Fellowship and Belonging: Grace provides a home, a sense of community, and opportunities for worship, blessing, and spiritual connection.
- Other Concerns: The congregation is focused on sustaining ministry with children and youth, encouraging their participation, and exploring opportunities for lay involvement and leadership in worship services.