



## We Are God's People, Moving Toward *Shalom*

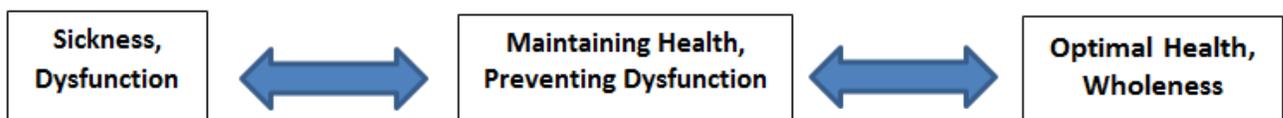
By Pastor Julie Wright

We are creatures of habit. Our days and weeks are marked by routine. We awaken and greet each new day, nourish our bodies, work, learn, and then rest again at the end of the day. We refresh our souls through rest, play, prayer and connection. We are creatures of habit. This time of year, advertisers encourage us to get on the New Year bandwagon, touting “new & improved” methods for replacing “bad” habits with “good” habits. I prefer to think of things not in polarizing terms (bad vs. good), but instead to see things on a continuum. In each moment, and with each choice, we can ask ourselves:

Are we moving in the direction of *God's vision\** for *shalom*?

(*Shalom = wholeness*)

What about our neighbors?



*\*Think holistically, in terms of physical, social, spiritual, financial and emotional health.*

There is so much in this life that we cannot control. For instance, as individuals we cannot always control how our bodies react to the aging process or to illness. We often do not have influence in parts of the world where God's people are in pain. The recovery community's *Serenity Prayer*, by Reinhold Neibuhr, helps us gain perspective:

*God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change;  
Courage to change the things I can;  
And wisdom to know the difference.*

There are ways in which we, as a faith community, can continue to move in *healthy* directions – in directions that seek to live life abundantly through Jesus Christ – and not just for ourselves but for our neighbors as well.

As a church, we are experiencing a season of transition, especially staff transitions. It's important during this season of change that we would attend to the **health** of this congregation. Just like returning to healthy eating or abstaining from staying up too late, it's not about finding the perfect new-fangled “magic” solution. Often, it's about returning to the basics – keeping it simple. As people who follow in the way of Jesus, our lives are marked by the rhythms of our Christian faith: **prayer, the giving of our time and resources, fasting, feasting on the sacred meal of Holy Commun-**

**ion, worship, and Sabbath rest.** Recommitting ourselves to these practices helps to ground us, in this season of change, in the One who has called each of us by name.

What will it feel like to re-commit ourselves to these soul-honoring, life-giving practices? I imagine it will feel pretty good. The trouble is that change takes us out of our comfort zone into new, unfamiliar territory.

And that's just plain uncomfortable. To get where God would have us go, and to be people who are intentionally *joining God at work in the world*, day-in and day-out, we ought to get comfortable with the idea of being stretched in new directions.

**“We can do anything we want, the trick is, it’s usually waiting for us just beyond our comfort zone.” - Julia Pimsleur**

I’m in this with you. With God at the helm to steer us forward, and to breathe the Holy Spirit’s breath into this new and emerging reality, it’s an exciting time to be the church. And remember that we (the people of God) are the church. And we’re in this together.

In deep gratitude, +  
Pastor Julie Wright

P.S. My resolution is a return to healthy eating. What’s God whispering in your ear? How will you move in healthy directions this year? (Let’s talk! preferably over a cup of coffee – because I’m *not* giving up coffee! That would be *ridiculous!*)

## Worship and Music Ministry Notes

by Louise Lentz  
Worship and Music Ministry Team Chair

### It’s a New Year

January is all about new beginnings; the beginning of a New Year, the beginning of establishing healthier eating habits, more consistent exercise, etc. We as Christians are blessed to have new beginnings every day with Jesus.

**“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.”**

**2 Corinthians 5:17.**

The Worship & Music Ministry Team is looking forward to celebrating those new beginnings every Sunday by offering services that are meaningful, relevant, Spirit-filled, and grounded in God’s word. We are committed to continuing with a variety of music, liturgies, and worship experiences that encourage us to “be the light” as we are reminded in 1 John 1:7, “if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another. . .” At our December meeting, we reviewed the many worship experiences we have had over the past years and were amazed at the variety offered. We generated ideas for 2017 and would love to hear your ideas on new worship experiences – for example, music, hands-on experiences, visual presentations, etc.

**Annual Meeting, January 29, 2017**

The New Year is also an opportunity to get involved in our worship services in a new way. There are many ways that you can serve. Join us! New participants are always welcome. We especially need:

- altar care
- sound system
- ushers
- nursery attendants
- worship assistants
- join the Worship & Music Ministry Team

If you are interested in any of these opportunities, please connect with any of the team members: Louise Lentz, chair; Trish Ebensteiner, Pastor Chris Kinney, Laurel Oseth, Brad Pipal, Nancy Pollock, Angy Thelemann, and Susan Young.



## Jonathan Rundman is coming back Sunday, January 8, 10:30 am Worship Service

Submitted by Louise Lentz, Worship & Music Team Chair

Jonathan Rundman led our music last April and we have invited him to lead us again at Amazing Grace at the 10:30 service on January 8. His music is inspirational and uplifting. This is a service you don't want to miss. Mark the date on your calendar now.



## January Worship

Sunday	Theme	Lessons	Worship Services
January 1	We are NEW!	Numbers 6:22-27 Gal. 4:4-7 Luke 2:15-21	<b>ONE SERVICE ONLY</b> 10:30 am Worship with Holy Communion
January 8 <i>Installation of Tim Marburger</i>	Holy Spirit on the Loose	Isaiah 42:1-9 Psalm 29 Matthew 3:13-17	8:00 am Worship with Holy Communion 10:30 am Worship with Holy Communion
January 15	What Are You Seeking?	Isaiah 49:1-7 Psalm 40:1-11 John 1:29-42	8:00 am Worship with Holy Communion 10:30 am Worship with Holy Communion
January 22	Whose Empire Is This Anyway?	Isaiah 9:1-4 Psalm 27:1, 4-9 Matthew 4:12-23	8:00 am Worship with Holy Communion 10:30 am Worship with Holy Communion
January 29 <i>Annual Meeting</i>	Blessed Are Who?	Micah 6:1-8 Psalm 15 Matthew 5:1-12	<b>ONE SERVICE ONLY</b> 10:30 am Worship with Holy Communion



# From the Christian Education Ministry Team

**QUESTION:** What does a Sunday School Coordinator look like?

(Page down or go to next page to find the answer)



## Save the Dates!

Submitted by Amanda Vesta

VBS 2017, Glow in the Dark, will be held June 19-22, 2017 for children 4 years old thru those entering 6th grade. Youth who have completed 6th grade and older are welcome to join us as youth leaders! Registration materials will be available in February.

We are always seeking volunteers! Please consider donating your time (even a small amount) to educate our youth and have some fun.

Please contact Amanda Vesta ([avesta@aglcigh.org](mailto:avesta@aglcigh.org)) or Dre Noble ([dnoble@aglcigh.org](mailto:dnable@aglcigh.org)) with questions. "Save the Date" information will be mailed to families in January.



## ANSWER: You!!

The Sunday School program is looking for a coordinator. If you thought the SS Coordinator needs to be female, a teacher, or have school-aged children, I would ask you to re-think that image. Picture YOUR-SELF in this vital role within our Christian education ministry.

Please contact Kent Rhein-Medina for more information.

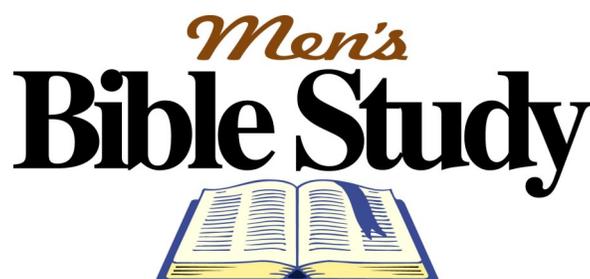
## Men's Bible Study – Pilot Program

Submitted by Mark Morgan

Start your year off right with our new Men's Bible Study. This group will use online resources accessible through your computer, tablet or smartphone. Then join the group for discussion. Topics available in this resource are seemingly endless and are based on the Phoenix

Affirmations, with a spotlight on loving God, loving our neighbors and loving ourselves. The first series is called **The Faith of Jesus In a Pluralistic World**. Join us Sundays from 7:00-8:00pm on January 8, 15, 22, and 29 at a location TBD. Based on your feedback and participation, this group may continue beyond January. Contact: Mark Morgan.

If you wish to preview the study materials, you can do so at: <http://darkwoodbrew.org/store/>



### How Can I Keep from Singing?

The peace of Christ makes fresh my heart,  
A fountain ever springing,  
All things are mine since I am His-  
How can I keep from singing?

These words from one of my favorite hymns help to express how I feel about 40+ years of serving as a church musician. It has been one of the greatest blessings of my life to direct the Sanctuary Choir, and I thank this congregation for that opportunity. But most of all, I want to thank all of the choir members, past and present, for their commitment, their hard work, their sometimes humorous but always faith-filled devotions, their support and encouragement and their prayers. And a huge thanks to all of you for the generous monetary gift!

With love and gratitude,  
Susan Young



# From the Children, Youth and Family Ministry Team

Submitted by Tim Marburger

As I write this, 2016 is careening quickly to its end. Now it's time to learn how to write 2017. I would like to say a HUGE thank you to Pastors Julie and Chris as they have been so welcoming in my first month of being the new Children and Youth Minister. In addition, I have met many wonderful young people and families throughout this time and look forward to meeting and working with even more. I continue to learn names, so please forgive me should I lose your name.

I'm Tim Marburger, a Texan by birth, who came to Minnesota to attend Luther Seminary. I graduated and have been working with young people for 35 years doing programming in various settings – churches, youth centers, alternative schools and so much more. AND, I still love it!

My work with children and youth is very much about building relationships with each one and their families. I want to bring our congregation and God into their daily lives via their athletics, concerts, programs and other extracurricular activities. I like to get out and visit at their homes or sit down at the local coffee shop (I prefer ice cream).

I will be looking at programs that have been done here at Amazing Grace and melding old with new ideas. I always believe that children and youth should be actively involved and growing in their faith through each step. I prefer a mix of fun and service throughout a given year. This allows us to enjoy each other while also being a light in the world. Throw in a yearly mission trip or ELCA Youth Gathering to round things out.

## Meet and Greet

In December, we held a Meet & Greet with Middle/Senior High students and the parents. I am planning on doing the same for Elementary age children and their parents on **Sunday, January 22, 11:45 – 12:45** here at the church. I will provide pizza and conversation.

## Advisory Group to Form

I am starting a Children/Youth Advisory Group sometime in February. This group of youth/parents and interested adults will help guide our ministry over the next years. If this is of interest to you, please contact me at [tmarburger@aglcigh.org](mailto:tmarburger@aglcigh.org).

Let's go into 2017 working together to help our children and youth grow in their commitment to God.

– **Camp Wapo registration opens January 15, 2017**

– **look for new age appropriate children's bulletins coming in the new year. Let me know your thoughts on them.**



## **Step-by-Step Instructions: *How to Install a Children & Youth Minister***

Step 1. Join us for worship on January 8<sup>th</sup> (8:00 or 10:30 am services)

Step 2.

- Jump for joy as we officially welcome Tim Marburger to Amazing Grace.
- Pray for him.
- When you see Tim, say, "Howdy!" (he's originally from Texas)

Step 3. Eat cake! (Yes, there will be cake to celebrate!)

**January 8, 2017 - Both Services**

## Fellowship Events



### Attention Theater Goers - Save the Date

Submitted by Barb Malamen

"You've met the ladies, now meet the men!" The Plymouth Playhouse presents "The Church Basement Ladies in Rise Up O Men". There are 36 seats reserved for the Sunday, March 26, 2017, 2pm matinee performance of this show. Tickets are \$31 apiece. Mark your calendar to save the date and watch for the sign up sheet on the community events bulletin board. Contact person is Barb Malamen.

## Save the date...

### Wine Tasting Social Event

Submitted by Craig Yotter



When? January 28th at 7:00 pm

Where? Look for more information coming in January!

Enjoy an informal wine tasting event. with your AGLC friends and meet some new ones! Light hors d'oeuvres will be served. A free will offering will be taken to defray the costs.

Questions? Contact Craig Yotter at [cyotter@aglcigh.org](mailto:cyotter@aglcigh.org)

## From Evangelism/Stewardship Team

### Missions Updates

#### Neighbors, Inc.

Submitted by Lisa Barnhart

A very special "thank you" to everyone who contributed to the Neighbors giving tree. Because of your generosity, other families in our community will have a Merry Christmas.

Looking ahead: Plans are underway for the March food drive. Stay tuned for details.



# JUSTICE TEAM RE-LAUNCH

Submitted by Annie Morgan

The justice team for Amazing Grace is regrouping and re-launching itself in 2017! Fueled by our love and passion for the work that Cam Kruse led previously, we will gather and organize to ensure work for justice is central to the work of Amazing Grace going forward.

**What does re-launch include?** Three planning sessions are scheduled for members to draft a charter document including writing a mission statement, articulating our vision, and setting short and long-term goals for the group. The team will partner with the church council to understand whether there is a need for expanding ministry teams to include a justice focused team (potentially relieving the stewardship or evangelism teams' workload). Check out January bulletin inserts to offer ideas and feedback. All are welcome to participate and offer ideas!

<b>AGLC Justice Team Re-launch and planning sessions</b>	January 19 – 7 p.m. @ AGLC
	February 16 – 7 p.m. @ AGLC
	March 16 – 7 p.m. @ AGLC

The justice team is also expanding its scope to include researching and understanding what it could mean to be a “Sanctuary Church” or a “Sanctuary Supporting Church” as well as what it would mean for us to become a “Reconciling in Christ Church.” All of these titles are essentially public statements about what we as a congregation stand for and stand up for. At a time in our world when we know there are individuals and families who feel threatened, abandoned, and exploited, we have to ask ourselves where God is asking us to be. Through support of ISAIAMN and ReconcilingWorks, we will explore faith-based relational organizing for intentionally welcoming people of all gender identities, sexual orientations, race, religions, and citizen statuses.

<b>Training Sessions and Learning Opportunities</b>	<p><b>ReconcilingWorks: Building an Inclusive Church</b>                  January 13 &amp; 14, 6-9 p.m. &amp; 9 a.m.-5 p.m.,                  Luther Seminary, 2481 Como Avenue, St. Paul                  Register: <a href="http://www.reconcilingworks.org/bic/">http://www.reconcilingworks.org/bic/</a>                  Contact: Susan Young</p>
	<p><b>For Such a Time as This: Building Our Prophetic Resistance</b>                  January 28, 1-4 pm, Shiloh Temple International Ministries, 1201 W. Broadway Ave, Minneapolis                  Register: <a href="http://www.tinyurl.com/propheticresistance">www.tinyurl.com/propheticresistance</a>                  Contact: Judy Rhein</p>



*Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an everflowing stream.*

-Amos 5:24

## No Time for Poverty

Submitted by Sue Grundhoffer

First, please let me say thank you for the outpouring of support you all shared with me regarding the devastating hurricane that hit Port Salut, Haiti – home of Klinik Timoun Nou Yo (Haitian Kreyol for “Our Children’s Clinic.” I am happy to report that the clinic continues to run well. KTNY staff are slowly working to rebuild their homes and find some stability again. For the town of Port Salut, Klinik Timoun Nou Yo is a sign of this stability and a pillar of strength for the community – knowing that they still have a place to bring their children when they are sick, injured, or malnourished.

I also would like to thank the endowment committee that so quickly was able to approve my grant requests! Approved was not only a grant for Ceftriaxone, a medication to treat Typhoid, but also a grant to replace a very important computer that was destroyed in the hurricane.

To the community of Amazing Grace Lutheran Church, I want to say thank you for generously sharing the monies collected for Global Missions! We received \$750.00 from the money raised. This money will be used to purchase formula for those babies in our malnutrition clinic who are not able to receive breast milk from their mothers. We see orphan babies who have lost their mothers. We see babies whose mothers are not able to produce enough milk, and for those, we supplement formula while working with the mother to increase her milk production. Lastly, we see sets of twins and even triplets, who need additional milk supplementation. While we strongly encourage and teach the importance of breastfeeding at KTNY, we do see children who do not have access to breastmilk, and it is for these children that this formula is necessary.

All of us at No Time For Poverty and Klinik Timoun Nou Yo are honored to have your support and so grateful for the prayers and well wishes!

Wishing everyone a very Blessed and Happy New Year!

## AGLC Treasury Update

### AGLC Financial Summary through November 2016

Prepared by Tim Sanborn, Treasurer

#### 2016 Year-to-Date Actual numbers:

INCOME	\$351,788	91.8% of budgeted	\$31,362 under budget
EXPENSES	\$360,963	92.7% of budgeted	\$28,362 under budget (favorable)
NET INCOME	<b>-\$9,175</b>		

((we were expecting to have a Net Income of -\$6,175 at this point in our budget, a variance of only 3,000))

**2016 projected:** Income \$390,106      Expense \$394,128      Net Income **-\$4,022**

Wow! The financial generosity and outpouring of support by the Amazing Grace family over the last couple months is nothing short of amazing. The call went out at the October Congregational meeting and you answered. There is still a little bit of “work” to do to achieve our desired break-even for the year, but our Ministry Teams and Council are doing all that they can to minimize our expenses. And December giving is not yet realized as this article is being written.

By the time we meet again at the annual January Congregational meeting we will know the final numbers for 2016. The Operating Net Income (General Offering less Expenses) will hopefully be near \$0, and the overall health of the Church, as detailed in the Balance Sheet (Assets and Liabilities), will be greatly improved over 2015.

## Council Corner

# Official Notice of the Annual Meeting Sunday, January 29, 2017

## NEW FORMAT THIS YEAR!!

Notice is hereby given of the Annual Meeting of Amazing Grace Lutheran Church on Sunday, January 29, 2017. Every year we gather to focus on the major issues of our community of faith. We make decisions about the new year together and recommit ourselves to the work of Jesus in the world. The meeting will include the approval of the 2017 budget, the election and installation of the new Council members, and other essentials to the functioning of the church. This meeting is a vital part of what it means to live and work together.

We will begin the morning with a brunch beginning at 9:00 am. Worship will begin at 10:30 am and then we will go right into the meeting following worship. Childcare will be available during the meeting. Please watch the bulletin announcements and email for additional information of what you can bring for the brunch.

**9:00 am Brunch**  
**10:30 am Worship**  
**11:30 am Annual Meeting with Childcare**

If you wish to have an annual report mailed to you, please call the church office, otherwise you may pick one up in the entryway when they are complete.

### Pastoral Care

Submitted by Pastor Julie Wright

#### **Who does what?**

In this time of transition at Amazing Grace, you may be wondering who is doing what. We will endeavor to communicate clearly to minimize confusion. Here's the easiest way to find what you need:

- #1. When in doubt, call the church office at 651-455-0093
- #2. Contact Pastor Julie for any pastoral care needs. (see below)
- #3. The church calendar is in this newsletter and on the website.

#### **Pastoral Care**

Please call or text Pastor Julie Wright or call the church office when you are in need of care. Contact us when you or a loved one is:

- Sick or injured
- In the hospital
- Having surgery
- In crisis
- Having trouble with marriage, family or other relationships
- In need of prayer

Remember that due to HIPAA privacy rules, hospitals do not inform us when you're in the hospital.

Church office                      651-455-0093



# Message from the Council

*Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland*

Dear Friends in Christ, Greetings!

As we get ready for the New Year, I am excited about brand new possibilities and new leadership for this faith community.

The Church Council is recommending Pastor Julie Wright to be our Lead Pastor and will be presented for a vote during a special meeting scheduled for January 15 at 9:15 AM. We believe Pastor Julie Wright has proven herself for the past two years at AGLC and has unique gifts and strengths to lead us to join God at Work in the World.

I want to thank the call committee chair Helen Yotter and the members Elizabeth Anderson, Lisa Barnhart, Hailee W., Robyn Noble, Pete Malamen, Pete Steinke and Kent Rhein-Medina for their contributions and dedication during the discernment process.

We are in the process of interviewing candidates for an interim pastor for the duration of 3-4 months to help us through this transition. The incoming leadership & council will work on the future staffing needs based on our strength and strategic vision starting in 2017.

It has been very emotional time for me and for all us we thank Pastor Chris Becker & Linda for their leadership and service to this congregation. They have been true blessing to all of us. We pray for Chris and Linda as they embark on a new chapter in their faith journey.

The moment of opportunity to expand God's work with growing community is upon us. It is very exciting time for us as we get ready to welcome our new lead pastor Julie Wright and new leadership. We need your continued support and prayers as we go through this transition.

I want thank the congregation for the opportunity to serve, Pastor Chris Becker, Pastor Julie Wright, Angy Thelemann, Trudy Johnson, the council and the executive team for their support. It has been honor, privilege and a blessing to serve this congregation.

Thank You!  
In Christ  
James Jeyachandran



# REMINDER

## Special Congregational Meeting January 15, 2017 9:15 am In the Sanctuary

The Council will present their recommendation to call Pastor Julie Wright as lead pastor and the congregation will vote. This vote requires 2/3 majority of those in attendance.

NO Sunday School or Adult Ed or Sunday Splash. There will be a Children's activity in the Lower Level.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Linda and I have been privileged to serve alongside you for over 19 years. Your generosity and love for Jesus continues to be a source of great joy for us. Over these years you have honored us in your willingness to share your stories with us. You have, in turn, invited us to share ours with you. In our journey together we have been part of God's story and have been embraced by God's Grace.

We want to thank you for the celebration you gave us on our 40<sup>th</sup> year in ministry. Your planning, creative spirits, and sense of humor and honor were great blessings to us. The "Creation" print, which you gave us from the St. John's Bible, hangs proudly in our home. We will use this to remember forever our life together. The gift of money was also generous and extremely kind. We thank you!!

People have wished us well in retirement, but ministry for Linda and I has never been just a job from which you retire. Our ministry has been a blessed calling to be among God's people – to love and to be loved, to bear witness to God's love which surpasses all understanding. So it is with mixed emotions that we enter this time of "retirement." As we wait for and are opened to what God has in store for us in the next phase of our journey of life, we will keep you in our prayers and ask that you keep us in your prayers as well.

Again, thank you. May you always be in God's hands, and may God continually show us all ways to live out our baptismal promise so that all may experience God's grace and love.

In Christ,  
Pastor Chris and Linda Becker



**“We saw his star in the east  
and have come to worship him.”**  
**Matthew 2:2**

# Prayer Chain



Prayer Concerns can be called in to Mary Garfield.

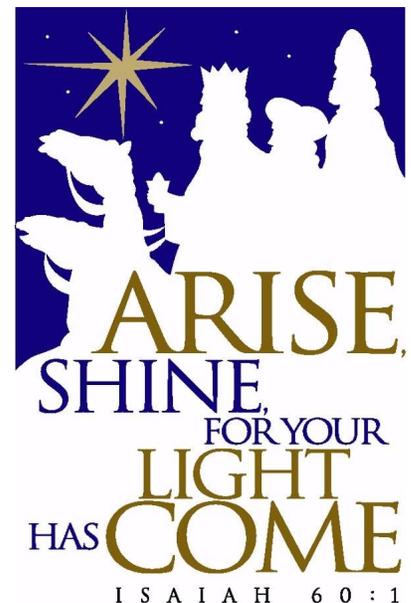


**Pastoral Care—Focused Outreach**  
Servant Ministry Coordinator: Pastor Julie Wright

- Meal Coordinator: Lynda Bartlette
- Ride Coordinator: Norm Beckman
- Respite Care Coordinator: Judy Thompson
- Funeral Support Coordinator: Barb Malamen
- Personal Prayer Coordinator for Worship:  
Judy Thompson

**Hands and Feet Ministry—  
Evangelism/Stewardship Team**  
Coordinator: Pastor Julie Wright

God of new beginnings, thank you for this past year—the joyful moments and the growing moments, the celebrations and the defeats. Give to all the strength to entrust this new year to you, knowing that with you there is a future filled with hope. May this new year be filled with blessings and with grace, and may we always have hope for tomorrow. Amen.



# AMAZING GRACE

LUTHERAN CHURCH

7160 South Robert Trail  
Inver Grove Heights, MN 55077

[www.aglcigh.org](http://www.aglcigh.org)



Amazing Grace Lutheran Church  
Joining God at Work in the World!  
All are welcome!!



## **Website:**

[www.aglcigh.org](http://www.aglcigh.org)

## **Staff:**

Associate Pastor—Pastor Julie Wright:  
[jwright@aglcigh.org](mailto:jwright@aglcigh.org)

Administrator—Angy Thelemann:  
[athelemann@aglcigh.org](mailto:athelemann@aglcigh.org)

Children & Youth Minister—  
Tim Marburger: [tmarburger@aglcigh.org](mailto:tmarburger@aglcigh.org)

Finance/Office Assistant—  
Trudy Johnson: [tjohnson@aglcigh.org](mailto:tjohnson@aglcigh.org)

Building Supervisor—  
Norm Goetzke: [ngoetzke@aglcigh.org](mailto:ngoetzke@aglcigh.org)

Worship Musician: Brad Pipal  
Sanctuary Choir Director: in transition

Joyful Noise Choir Director: Angy Thelemann

Sunday School Coordinator—  
In transition

Vacation Bible School Co-Coordinators—  
Amanda Vesta: [avesta@aglcigh.org](mailto:avesta@aglcigh.org)  
Dre Noble: [dnoble@aglcigh.org](mailto:dnoble@aglcigh.org)

## **Main Office Hours:**

(Typically)

Monday: Working Offsite

Tuesday—Friday: 9:00 a.m.—4:30 p.m.

## **Deadlines:**

The newsletter article deadline  
is always on the 15th of the month. Bulletin  
announcements or additions are due on  
Wednesdays.