

Southwood  
Lutheran Church

# 2017 Annual Report

## God is at work at Southwood Lutheran Church.

This snapshot of the past year gives us a glimpse of how God is working in and through our church. Our church is made up of followers of Christ who give of themselves through worship, service, care and generosity. This is what equips us to be about the vision God has called us to live:

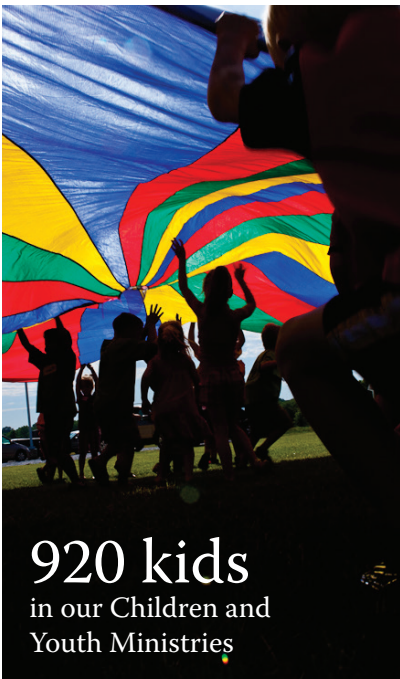
*Growing in our love for God and others.*

I give thanks to God for this church. I also feel like God is calling us to do even more of his work to make his kingdom and will a reality in the world. In the words of St. Paul, we can do the things God calls us to do through Christ who leads and strengthens us.



Pastor Greg Olson, Senior Pastor

*Pastor Olson*



920 kids  
in our Children and  
Youth Ministries



49 Care Team Members



140,000 Meals Served in 2017

# Ministries

Southwood is called to help people of all ages grow in their love for God. This faith growth is the seed that blossoms into a life of serving and caring for others.

## Children & Families

- ▶ **Live Christ** was the 2017 Fall Sunday School theme. Students have been living Christ by helping others through their offerings. People in Lincoln have furnished homes and schools in Honduras and Tanzania have new technology!
- ▶ **Summer programs** took place while Sunday School was out of session. The puppets moved upstairs to provide the Children's Sermon during worship. Over 600 kids in Vacation Bible School learned that they were uniquely made in God's image.

- ▶ **Family Ministry** supported families of children from birth through confirmation as they grew in their faith. Faith Stepping Stone Classes were held throughout the year where parents and children learned about



Kids and families made Christmas crafts together at the Advent Festival.

faith together. In early December we held the Advent Festival where families came to celebrate Christ's birth by creating crafts together.

## Youth

- ▶ **DELVE program growth** resulted in a third hour of classes being offered. We also brought in more volunteer faith mentors to walk alongside students in their faith journey and to help this big group feel small.



Youth serving at Camp Carol Joy Holling during Southwood Serves.

- ▶ **Mission Trips** took place in the summer. Middle school students learned about ecology and theology while doing trail restoration and food distribution in Denver. High school students partnered with local ELCA congregations in Chicago.
- ▶ **Youth Leadership Development** resulted in a culture of empowerment, creating new ideas for the future. Our goal going forward is to open a pathway for youth to serve and lead in the church.

**4,000+**  
snacks served  
in Sunday  
School!

**600+**  
kids registered  
for Sunday  
School.

**500+**  
volunteers  
make  
Children's  
Ministry  
possible.

**250**  
DELVE  
6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade  
students

**65**  
Youth Group  
members

**100**  
Middle School  
and High  
School Youth  
on Mission  
Trips

**3,200**  
hours students  
invested  
serving others

**64%**  
Percentage of new members who have been connected into our various programs—double the rate from 2016!

**1,000+**  
Volunteers who made Southwood a welcoming place—62 new volunteers, compared to 30 in 2016!

## Adults

▶ **600 people gathered together to grow their faith** in Small Groups and other studies. 800 people subscribed to Daily Devotionals written by 40 writers. Over 400 people attended both Fall Festival and Reformation events.



Small Groups gathered several times in 2017—both at church and in homes.

- ▶ **A new Southwood Communications Strategy** was developed, with the help of a national consultant. We created numerous videos and leveraged social media to meet people where they're at.
- ▶ **New five-year Strategic Action Plans for both Children & Family Ministry and Youth Ministry** were developed with the help of parent focus groups.

**1,400**  
Average number of people attending worship services every Sunday morning.

**76**  
Special worship experiences at Southwood, including weddings, funerals, Lenten and Healing Prayer services.

## Worship & Music



86 children and adults were baptized at Southwood in 2017.

At Southwood, we believe that worship is central to our life as a Christ follower. In worship we center our praise on God and this reminds us that God is at the center of our whole life!

- ▶ **Worshippers encountered a wide variety of musical and teaching styles.** We sang songs that were old, new, global, familiar, unfamiliar and intergenerational. Michael Hawn, guest clinician, taught us songs from around the world as we celebrated our sister churches in Tanzania and Honduras.
- ▶ **We were blessed with many musically talented people!** From choirs, small groups, soloists, handbells and instrumentalists, each of these people give their talents for the praise and honor of God.
- ▶ **The Choir not only sang in worship, they served in the community.** They studied the biblical meaning of the lyrics. They prayed for and supported one another. They went beyond the music to make a difference.

# Care

**145+**

Prayer Shawls, created and blessed, were given to those ill, hospitalized or going through difficult times.

**80+**

people attended each of the quarterly Healing Prayer Services providing a meaningful way to offer up concerns and feel the healing power of prayer.

**180+**

people were impacted by **Thrive in Your Relationships**, the June series, which helped people discuss and polish important life skills.

**37**

people were trained in **QPR** in 2017, helping equip them with these suicide prevention skills to potentially save a life.

**Cultivating a Culture of Care** throughout Southwood was our goal in 2017. We carried this out by making visits, offering classes, providing Care Tips, sending cards and notes, offering Spiritual Support and building intentional, faith-filled relationships.



Care Team Worship volunteers greeting residents at a long-term care facility following a worship service.

► **Care Teams with 49 members provided 328 visits** to those ill, aging or unable to attend worship regularly throughout the year, which are in addition to pastoral and staff visits. We provided 46 worship services throughout the year at five different care facilities. Additionally, visits were made to parents of newborns and those hospitalized. Care Team members also facilitate Renewed Hope and Divorce Care.

► **Good Samaritan Fund requests more than doubled in 2017**, with \$11,964 given to support those in need. Additionally, Southwood distributed 46 food boxes with food gathered by our Youth and Stock the Shelves contributions. A process of financial coaching is being piloted, offering individual budgeting assistance.

► **Grief Support was an emphasis in 2017.** We had 37 funerals, which is an increase from 16 the previous year. Along with coordination of the funeral service and luncheon, follow-up contacts, grief letters, grief groups, an overnight grief retreat, and individual visits, are all ways we provide care as families heal. We also offered support to over 89 other Southwood families who experienced the death of someone significant to them this year in addition to others in the community who seek grief support.



The Prayer Room and Prayer Chain provide daily opportunities to go to God in prayer.

# Mission

Volunteers strive to be the connecting body of Christ, creating healthier communities locally and in Honduras/Tanzania by providing **hope, healing, education and empowerment.**



Clinic with a Heart depends on committed medical providers and laypeople donating their time to serve the uninsured/underinsured in the Lincoln area.

## Local

- ▶ **Clinic with a Heart** is expanding their dental services to include exams, x-rays and extractions (high demand). Southwood gave a gift of \$20,000 to help with this expansion.
- ▶ **Southwood Serves** volunteers went to 20 non-profits. Over 350+ volunteers participated by doing fall cleaning, packing/sorting food, sharing music, gardening and yard work.

## Honduras

- ▶ **Four teams visited Honduras!** Volunteers built five homes, taught Vacation Bible School, hosted a movie night, conducted a teacher training, and hosted dental/medical clinics.



Teaching Honduran students about daily dental care.

- ▶ **Connected to Bless** is a new ministry! This new emphasis has given our brothers and sisters in La Ceibita a new vision: to be a blessing to those they are connected with ... to God, to Southwood, to each other, to all people.
- ▶ **The Library**, containing books and school materials, is now open. The Library is used to teach English classes, a microbusiness program, and health classes. Soon, they will be offering a computer-based high school degree program.
- ▶ **The area is still in need of a medical clinic.** With the establishment of the ministry, Connected to Bless, we plan to move forward with the medical clinic in 2018.

**25%**  
of ALL giving  
went to Mission

**\$28,306**  
Hurricane  
Relief Gift  
to Lutheran  
Disaster  
Response

**140,000**  
Meals served  
in Lincoln and  
surrounding  
area

**600**  
people received  
healthcare at  
Clinic with a  
Heart

**26**  
students  
mentored  
through  
Teammates

80

Volunteers traveled to Honduras/Tanzania

5

Christ Homes built for families in Honduras

605

Dental/Medical/Vision patients served in Honduras

108

Tanzania Scholarship Students in high school and college

480

Quilts for Lutheran World Relief, Honduras, Tanzania and Community Partners



The garden cleaning crew during Southwood Serves. It takes many hands to plant, weed, harvest and clean up a garden that produced 5.75 tons of food.

## Tanzania

▶ **A team visited this summer.** Activities included visiting scholarship students, delivering quilts to local homes, teaching Sunday School, a tablet program at Uroki High School, and building relationships! Four volunteers extended their stay for five weeks (three volunteers taught at Uroki High School and Dr. Kay Anderson taught a “Babies Breath” class at the local hospital, Machame).



Sponsors visiting their student, Johnson, while in Tanzania.

- ▶ **The Medical Dispensary** served 2,273 patients in 2017. Expansion plans are underway to provide home health care.
- ▶ **The Chicken Project** has grown to two locations (Uroki School and Nkiraawanga Church). Expansion includes a grinder and mixer to sell/store feed!
- ▶ **Opportunity Education** is a new partnership to provide tablets to Uroki High School. The tablets have a curriculum written by Tanzanian educators and follows the Tanzanian government syllabus.



Students in Tanzania using new technology in the classroom.



**Southwood**  
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402.423.5511 • [southwoodlutheran.org](http://southwoodlutheran.org)

Address: 4301 Wilderness Hills Blvd., Lincoln, NE 68516

Sunday Worship: 8:30, 9:45 and 11 AM