



Southwood
Lutheran Church

2019 Annual Report

Reigniting Our Purpose



Pastor Greg Olson, Senior Pastor

The Church is by definition God's people doing God's work. Through **OUR** faith, love, time, talent, generosity, service, care and support, God blesses the kingdom work we do. As a result, God is using Southwood in many and various ways to bring grace and hope into our world.

As we look forward with hope to the year of 2020, we take a moment to reflect with gratitude how God has worked in and through Southwood Lutheran Church.

These pages give a snapshot of the faith, hope and love of God being lived out through our church—the 4,300 people that make up Southwood Lutheran Church. Together in faith, we make God's love real.

Thanks be to God!

Pastor Olson

Growing
IN OUR
Love
FOR
God AND
Others

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

- ▶ **Sunday School Theme** was *Rise and Shine and Give God the Glory*.

- ▶ **We shine for God by serving others!** Last spring, our Sunday School offerings allowed the F Street Rec Center to provide meals to children during the weekends.

In the fall we purchased

two homes for families in Tanzania and Honduras. And with over 600 children attending VBS, our special offering supplied new desks in Tanzania and Honduras.

- ▶ **Family ministry** is carried out through puppet sermons, Communion classes and activities that focus on Christ's birth at the Advent Festival. These opportunities allow families to grow in their faith together.



Students gather for music and puppets at the beginning of each Sunday School hour.

Youth

- ▶ **New High School Small Groups** participated in *Love Does*, increasing the number of students engaged in faith growth, community and service.
- ▶ **Three Youth Mission Trips, including the first international trip to Tanzania**, were deeply formative to the faith and worldview of students. Middle school students did environmental and ecology work in Galveston, Texas. High school students did flood relief work in Nebraska with adults joining in on the last day.



High School students, Kal Knorr and Jordan Boysen, enjoying a Youth Group activity.

\$10,000

were received in Sunday School offerings, of which 100% was donated to local and global missions.

500

volunteers supported the programming for Children and Family Ministry, including Vacation Bible School and Advent Festival.

65

adult volunteers walk alongside the 325 students in the youth program (17% increase).

120

Youth went on Mission Trips, including 15 on the first international trip to Tanzania (15% increase).

4,500

hours spent serving others (22% increase).

1,226

volunteer positions help make Southwood a welcoming community.

680

households set up new accounts with RightNow Media.

Adults

- ▶ **50+ Small Groups (20% increase)** shared God's love in community, and hundreds more dove into the book, *Love Does*, authored by Bob Goff as 600 books flew off the shelves.
- ▶ **Fall Festival moved to Sunday morning**, touching hundreds more people.
- ▶ **Rebranding and reigniting our Purpose Statement** was energized by *Love Does*, leading us into our stewardship focus of *Love Gives*.
- ▶ **Southwood invested in RightNow Media** to encourage faith growth for our congregation beyond the church walls.



Jeremy Elder and usher team collecting paper hearts written by the congregation about how they've shown God's love during the *Love Does* study.

Worship & Music

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. Our guest musicians helped us incorporate new ways to sing our praise to God. In January, Brian Hehn explored having the congregation make up a new song in response to the sermon. Paul Vasile explored singing without music on paper in November.
- ▶ **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.
- ▶ **Serving through music is an important part of our choir ministry.** The fall season began with "Sing and Serve," singing songs about feeding the hungry and then packing food for Chapter 25 to help provide meals for those in need.



John Coburn hanging hearts in the sanctuary during the *Love Does* book study.

74

children and adults were baptized at Southwood in 2019.

1,413

people attended worship services on average during Sunday mornings (3% increase). **

**Over the last decade, the share of Americans who say they attend religious services at least once or twice a month dropped by 7%.
Source: Pew Research Center, October 2019.

Care

Our Care Ministry feels privileged to support our members and their families through the joys and challenges that life brings. We embrace and build a culture of care as we make visits, offer classes, send cards and notes, and offer spiritual support.



180+

Prayer Shawls, created and blessed.

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.

110+

people were trained in QPR in 2019, helping equip them with these suicide prevention skills to potentially save a life.

These prayer shawls are being blessed by the volunteers that knitted or crocheted them. Prayer shawls are then distributed by Care Team members or Pastors to those battling an illness, on hospice, or experiencing a difficult time.

- **Our Care Teams** (63 members) provided 314 visits to those ill, aging or unable to attend worship regularly, which are in addition to pastoral visits. We provided 73 worship services throughout the year at seven different care facilities.

Additionally, visits were made to parents of newborns and those hospitalized or rehabbing after a hospital stay. Care Team members also facilitate Renewed Hope and Divorce Care.



Maris McCarville and Trudy Kouma leading worship for the residents at Southlake Village.

- The Giving Trees provided the opportunity for our members to support other Southwood families who experienced difficult financial situations. 112 gifts were provided to help these families and 8 families also received Thanksgiving meals in a joint project with MOPs and seed money from Thrivent.
- Grief Support continues to be an important part of Care Ministry. Along with the coordination of 26 funerals and luncheons, there were follow up contacts, grief letters, support groups, and individual visits as we support people as they heal. We also offered support to over 70 families who experienced the death of someone significant to them this year.

Mission

Southwood worked with many Mission Partners to provide opportunities to serve others in our community, our state and our world.



125

Volunteers for Serve Strong!

On July 20, 2019 volunteers worked with construction, yard work, debris removal and various clean-up projects during Serve Strong at King Lake, Nebraska.

Community Missions

- **Nebraska Flood Relief and Recovery**—Southwood responded to the devastating flooding in Nebraska with financial donations to ELCA-Nebraska Synod Disaster Relief and supply donations to Christ Lincoln.

- **Serve Strong**—Flooding ravaged the community of King Lake making most homes in the area inhabitable. 125 Southwood volunteers spent a day working to help residents with projects to help them get closer to being back in their homes.



Madalyn Flanders installing drywall at a home in King Lake.

- **Feeding the Hungry**
 - Southwood volunteers are serving meals with the Gathering Place, Matt Talbot Kitchen & Outreach, and F Street—We can do this.
 - The Rural Food Distribution and LNE Food Market connect people in need of food with a variety of food, produce and bakery items each month.
 - The Eastridge Pantry received and distributed 2,026 pounds of food from Southwood.



Students at Northeast High School receiving food during the Food Market.

2,962

volunteer hours
with our community
partners.

26,622

pounds of food
distributed at the Rural
Food Distribution.

8,320

pounds of produce
was donated to the
Lincoln Food Bank
from the Southwood
Garden.

550

people participated in
Southwood Serves.

100

backpacks distributed
at Saratoga
Elementary
(25% increase).

Global Missions: Honduras



372 dental and medical patients served in Honduras.

Haley Janssen and Dave Wegener reassuring a Honduran boy after having dental work completed.

- Our partnership with Conectados para Bendecir and the LaCeibita church and community was strengthened with visits by 3 teams from Southwood.
- Grayson Wegener and Brady Pauling spent 5 weeks using their English, Spanish and musical skills to connect with children at the local school and youth in the high school program.

44

people visited sister churches in Honduras and Tanzania.

5

Christ Homes built for families in Honduras.

100

education scholarships provided to students in Tanzania.

361

quilts made by Piecemakers.

- Haley Janssen continues her work in Honduras as director of Pronino. Each Southwood team spent a day at Pronino and fell in love with the children as they played games, made craft projects and provided dental care for the children and staff.



In June, a high school group of 18 traveled to Tanzania. The team experienced camping, hiking and sharing faith with youth in the community of Uswaa.

Global Missions: Tanzania

- Hannah Loos and Anne Fuelberth spent five weeks teaching at Uroki Secondary School.
- The Kukoo Project improved their facilities, hosted community education programs and began hatching chicks.
- The Education Scholarship program continues to bless students with opportunities to attend secondary school and college. Since 2012, 78 students have graduated college programs with the support of a scholarship provided by Southwood.



Southwood
Lutheran Church

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southwoodlutheran.org

4301 Wilderness Hills Blvd., Lincoln, NE 68516
Sunday Worship: 8:30, 9:45 and 11 AM