

Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church
1326 South 26 Street
Omaha, NE 68105-2380

Return Service Requested
Dated Material

Email: graceluth@graceluth.com
Web Site: www.graceluth.com

REGULAR SUNDAY EVENTS
9:00 A.M. Christian Education
10:30 A.M. Worship Service

Pastor - Rev. Dr. Damon D. Laaker
Editor/Church Secretary – Pam Reents
Youth Ministries - Brenda Spahr
Organist - Cody Talarico
Sexton - Ambros Lado/Brian Sutej
Interfaith Health Ministries - Virginia McGill
Faith in Action - Julie Chytil

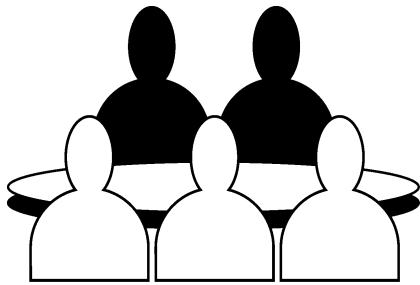
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*Inspired By Christ, it is our mission
to share God's Word and Love in
care and in service to all.*



APRIL

THE GRACE MESSENGER



COUNCIL MEETING

2008 Council Members

Ron Adrian	Sarah Emery	June Hilmer
Greg Hula (V.P.)	David Hufford	Regina Ivo
David Nange	Brenda Spahr (Sec)	Grace Traynor
	Pastor Laaker **	

Officers Serving the Congregation but not on Council:

Financial Secretary: Janet Hula Treasurer: Margie Sutej

The regular meeting of the Council was held March 11th. The Council members shared their prayer concerns: Care for those in need of healing – Pastor Liz Conner and her daughter, Wendy, Bobby Heesacker, Brenda Anzalone, John Spahr, care for those within the Grace family that they continue to heal; we pray for the family of Lola Harsin; we pray for Ambrose who is continuing to gain strength; we pray for Ivo’s safety especially during his upcoming travels; we pray for an end to all of the unrest and conflict in the world; we pray in praise for David Hufford that he remains cancer free. Pastor led devotions from Isaiah 48:10 and John 5:5 - 8; Isaiah speaks of all the adversity of the returning Exiles. John tells us of a man who lay for 38 years, unable to walk. Jesus told him to rise and walk. John speaks in a time when people were regarded as such if they were healthy they were blessed; if they were not well they were looked upon as being cursed.

Visions for Ministry: The Council is reading Effective Small Churches in the Twenty-first Century by Carl S. Dudley. Please read Part 1 and work on the exercises in the book by the next meeting.

Reports were received from the Financial Secretary and the Treasurer. Please continue to give generously.

Christian Education: A few people met to brainstorm on Thursday, March 6, 2008 to plan our new mid-week Education class. The next meeting is scheduled on April 2nd at 7:00 p.m.; please plan to attend if interested.

Evangelism/Outreach: No new report.

Finance: No new report.

Property: Bob Moss and Jerry Van Ormer have repaired miscellaneous items around the church.

Service/Social Ministry: Pastor shared a “One Omaha Community-wide Response to Violence” sheet. Additional meetings are scheduled in April. Recently several Clergy met with the Mayor; he was impressed that everyone talked about Omaha as one city and not North Omaha, South Omaha or West Omaha. The Mayor was pretty occupied with the new stadium issues so future attempts to meet with the Mayor will be made.

Lutheran Men in Mission from around the United States will be arriving in Omaha for weekend stays from mid-April through July to build a Habitat House located at 3020 W Street.

Support/Stewardship: No new report.

Worship: Rejoice Lutheran Choir sang their Easter Cantata during the March 9th Worship Service; during this service the new Processional Cross was dedicated in Myra Watson’s memory. Pastor continues to investigate costs for either new communion ware or refinishing our existing communion ware.

Unfinished Business: Pastor gave copies of the Annual ELCA congregational report to the council with detailed explanations.

New Business: No new report.

Announcements: Greg will bring treats for our April meeting.



I love gardening. I am hopeful that Spring will soon allow me to get out into my garden space and till the ground. Then I am hopeful that the plants I put in the garden this year will produce nicely.

I have learned a lot about gardening over the last thirty years. Now, I helped with our garden on the farm as a boy growing up but one thing we didn't do on the farm was mulch. In fact the first few years I attempted to garden here in Omaha, I didn't mulch. Then someone introduced me to the value of mulch.

I had been saving all my grass and leaves and putting them in a compost pile. Then each spring I would spread this "compost" on my garden and till it in. That seemed like the thing to do. Then someone said to me, "Why don't you just take the grass clippings and use them to mulch the rows in your garden?" I wondered, will that work? It did make some sense but I was skeptical until I tried it.

I had spent many summers fighting a losing battle against weeds in my mulch-deprived garden. I soon learned that mulch largely prevents weeds from growing. Furthermore, the ones that do manage to grow are isolated, immediately noticeable and easy to pull out. Lesson: Mulching is well worth the time, effort and in my case minimal expense. In addition, mulching prevents moisture loss. My plants didn't need as much watering once I started using mulch.

Interesting as that may be, it also has spiritual significance. In the parable of the sower Jesus explains that the seed that grows among thorns and is choked is the person "who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke it, making it unfruitful" (Matthew 13:22b. NIV). This person is so busy dealing with the cares of this world that he/she is unable to flourish, to become the person God planned for them to be. What can be done if this is you? Mulch. Cover your life with prayer, Christian fellowship, Bible study and worship. These disciplines require a good bit of time and effort, but they will prevent the weeds of life from crowding in on you. They will tramp down temptation and free you to focus on what God wants you to do and be. And when a worry or sin pops its ugly head up, it will be immediately noticeable and much easier to uproot. In addition, you will stay more adequately hydrated as these disciplines nourish you.

So mulch, mulch, mulch!
Pastor Laaker

Free "Mulch"

- ◆ Pick up your copy of "The Word in Season." These little devotional booklets are located in the pew racks and are free for the taking. Each daily devotion has a short scripture passage listed at the top of the page followed by a reflection and a brief prayer. Extra Scripture reading suggestions at the bottom of the page come from the revised daily lectionary.
- ◆ A fun devotional booklet called "Davey and Goliath's Devotions For Families on the Go" is available on the table at the back of the Sanctuary. The booklet is free and is filled with short stories, fast Bible activities, short prayers and songs.
- ◆ There is lots of "mulch" in the Church Library! Stop by and check out something out!

SEW FUN!

The quilters are making beautiful quilts for Lutheran World Relief and little lap robes for some of the patients at local nursing homes.



Want to help?

They meet most Mondays
from 9:00 a.m. to noon.
(No Quilters on April 7)

No special skills required.
(except the desire to laugh and chat
with some awesome ladies!)



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Want to connect with women of faith?
How about studying God's Word together?
**Come to the
W/ELCA Circle and Board
Meeting**

**April 15, 2008
1:00 p.m.**

Hostess and Bible Study Leader
Barb Nelson



*Women of the Evangelical
Lutheran Church in America*



Lutheran Women of Omaha Luncheon

Bethel Lutheran Church
1312 S 45 Street, Omaha, NE.

April 8 at Noon

**Program
Project**

**Speaker: Deb Keaney on "Justice for our Neighbors"
Monetary and Pantry items for Iglesia Cristo Rey Church**

Reservation Required by April 6
Call Lorraine Palma at 455-4342 or
Mardelle Gocek at 292-1328

Trust your instincts and listen to your friends,
because they may be right when you don't want them to be.

Kids At Work 2008



Kids At Work Youth Work Program

Sunday, June 8 through August 10, 2008

Sunday Worship Attendance Required

Tuesdays and Wednesdays - Work Days

10:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon

Brenda Spahr, Director

551-4347

The Lent Dinner on March 12th went very well. A very big THANK YOU to all who helped serve the dinner, pour drinks and serve the desert.

Kids, watch your mailboxes; invitation letters and contracts will be mailed out soon!

I'm asking that same old question again; would you like to volunteer to be a team leader for Kids At Work? It's really a great experience for everyone involved!

Brenda Spahr

C.E. Planning Meeting

April 2, 2008

Upper Fellowship Hall

Everyone who is interested in helping organize a mid-week education program is welcome to attend.



**JOIN US
AFTER
SCHOOL**

4:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.

Monday thru Thursday

**Games, Crafts, Snacks, and Fun
Geared for Elementary Kids!**

Free!

Director, Brenda Spahr

Omaha Public School Spring Break!

NO After School Program April 7 - 10.



Camp Carol Joy Holling

This Land is Your Land

Saturday, April 26

Grades 1-3

Spend the day at Camp Carol Joy Holling celebrating God's creation and exploring the wonders of spring with nature games and activities, hiking, songs and a closing devotion. The cost is \$6.00 per child. Register by Monday, April 21st by calling the camp office toll free at 1-888-656-6254 or going on line to www.nlom.org

Omaha Public Library's Third Annual Teen Job Fair

(ages 16-19)

April 7, 2008

12:00 noon to 5 p.m.

Omaha Public Library's W. Clarke Swanson Branch, 9101 W. Dodge Rd.

No advance registration is required.

The Swanson Branch is normally closed on Mondays but will be open just to host the Teen Job Fair.



Numerous Omaha employers will accept applications and discuss job opportunities, including: Omaha Scheel's All Sports, Omaha & Papillion Hy-Vee Stores, Culver's, Shopko, UPS, YWCA Omaha, AIM Institute/Careerlink, Christ Child Society of Omaha, Carlson Hospitality Worldwide, Gallup, Omaha Steaks, Timberline Total Solutions, Hyatt Reservation Center, West Corporation, Great Escape Theatres Omaha 16, Job Corps, U.S. Navy, The Employment Guide, Village Inn and Omaha Public Library. Additional employers may sign up before the March 20 deadline.

Teens should dress to meet employers and bring a black pen; their Social Security number; the names, addresses and phone numbers of their school, previous employers, and three references; and a resume if they have one.



**BILL STECKIS 9TH ANNUAL BLUEJAYS
FREE BASEBALL CLINIC!!**

Great opportunity for youth (Boys and Girls) ages 7 - 15 years.

CLINICS INCLUDE:

Pitching, hitting, infield, outfield, base running, catching, pick-offs, defensive drills and mental preparation.

CREIGHTON UNIVERSITY SPORTS COMPLEX

(23rd and Burt, Omaha)

SUNDAY, APRIL 27, 2008

Participants will receive a FREE T-Shirt, free instruction, a ticket to the Creighton/Evansville game and take part in an autograph session after the clinic. The CU/Evansville game starts at 1:00 p.m. The clinic will start approximately 20 minutes after the game ends.

The clinic will last approximately two (2) hours.

NO Youth may attend the clinic without a parent or guardian's signature on the application.

Participants are required to bring a baseball glove to the clinic.

If you have used gloves that you would like to donate to the less fortunate youth of the area, you are welcome to do so at the clinic.

APPLICATION DEADLINE IS APRIL 15, 2008

Applications are available at any NO FRILLS SUPERMARKET

Or contact Bill Steckis at freebaseball08@yahoo.com

Mail application by April 15, 2008 to:
Bill Steckis Free Baseball Clinic
5457 S. 49th Avenue
Omaha, NE 68117



Prayer Concerns from Family and Friends

- ◆ Ambros Lado - **Praise Item!** Ambros has recently gotten some handicap modifications to his van so that he may be able to drive soon. Continue to pray for Ambros as he is also looking into going back to school to improve his English skills to become a translator. Ambros knows several languages! (Member)
- ◆ Megan Sperling - Pray for emotional and physical healing. (Friend of Member, Lori Vasquez)
- ◆ Kathryn Reichert - Cancer treatments are not as successful as hoped. New tumors keep showing up. (Granddaughter of Don and Norma Olson)
- ◆ Elna Burns - Suffered a stroke. (Sister of Don Olson, member)
- ◆ Andrew Edwards - Doing dialysis a couple times a week until a kidney can be found. (member)
- ◆ Rex Olson - For healing as he deals with cancer. (relative of members, Don and Norma Olson)
- ◆ Ernie Olson - On-going therapy after his stroke. Pray for help as he is trying to find another job that will enable him to continue gaining strength. (member)
- ◆ Betty Coniglio - Continued recovery from heart issues. (member)
- ◆ Teri Briley - **Praise item!** Teri's cancer treatments are going well. She anticipates finding out more about her condition very soon. An MRI is scheduled after her last cancer treatment in a few months. (daughter of Gloria and Richard Moore)
- ◆ The Schoenwald family - The family was involved in a fatal crash in Colorado. Three of the family members are dead, the father and 2 children. Please pray emotional and physical healing for the survivors, Janelle, and her twin 15- year old daughters. The funeral is over and now the real grieving begins. **Praise item:** The girls and Janelle are back in their hometown, Wichita. Janelle has been released from the hospital. The girls face some long and difficult time in rehab. (Relatives of Pam Reents)
- ◆ The family of Lola Harsin - Lola went to be with the Lord on March 5th. Pray for the family as they grieve the loss of their loved one. (Lola, member of Grace Church)
- ◆ Brett Johnson - **Praise item!** Grace Lutheran has been praying for Brett who is 7 years old and fighting leukemia . Several weeks ago, he fell into a coma after getting a system-wide infection in his body. He was rushed to Children's Hospital. After about 2 weeks, Brett woke up and is now doing very well. Almost as soon as he got home, he was begging his grandpa for a grilled steak! (relative of family friends of Pam Reents, Secretary.)

Pray for our Shut - ins and Nursing Home residents:

Harlan Morter
Richard Moore

Mae Lane
Thelma Harrahill - (In Kansas with her children)

Pray for wisdom for your Church Council here at Grace Church.

Pray for the new Council Members. Ask God to bless their new ministry among us.

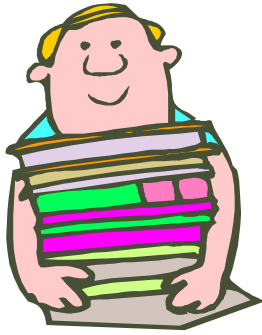
Pray for strength and spiritual wisdom for the leaders in the local church and the Nebraska Synod:

Pastor Laaker

Bishop David deFreese, Nebraska Synod

Bishop Mark Hanson, ELCA Bishop, United States

- ◆ Pray for the Sudanese community in general. Titus Duli, David Nange and Silas Tuw are the elders for the Sudanese Worshiping Community.



Happening in the Library!

- ◆ Thanks to all the people who donated books and purchased books to make our Lent book sale successful. Special thanks to Eva Martin for all her organizing, pricing and display during the book sale.
- ◆ Several new books have been added to the library. Stop by and check out a book. Take a short “book” vacation!



Ever been asked, “This tastes great! Can I have the recipe?”

The Library Board is collecting recipes for a Grace Lutheran Church cookbook. Please go through your recipe repertoire and submit recipes that your mama made or your family raves about or just good old fashioned comfort food. We’d love to hear from people who moved away, former members and all the friends of Grace Church.

A box has been provided for your submissions. The box, decorated to look like a stove, is located on the library book sale table in the upper fellowship hall. Submit as many recipes as you wish.

The project will take several months to complete. Be sure to include your name as well as the source, i.e. your mom’s name, your friend’s name, your spouse’s name, etc.

“On Being Lutheran” Study

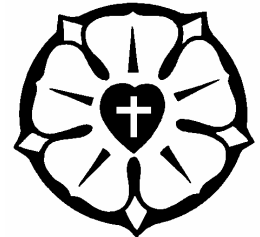
“Reflections on Church, Theology, and Faith”

Understanding the words of Martin Luther and applying them today.

Selected Tuesday Evenings 7:00 p.m.

In the Upper Fellowship Hall

Come to one session or all of them! **Drop-in’s Welcome!**



Session Topics:

April 1 - God’s Radical Work - Justification Because of God’s Undeserved Favor toward Us.

April 15 - Luther’s Great Discovery

May 6 - Holy Extravaganza



Hanscom Park United Methodist Church

4444 Frances Street

Omaha, NE

April 26, 2008

9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Craft Show, Garage Sale, Used Book Sale, Gift Baskets, Bake Sale, and Lunch



"Helping Hands"

Hope for the hungry, hopeless and homeless.

Project Hope

The Theme for April is Macaroni and Cheese

How about donating a can of peas and a can of tuna? Instant tuna casserole!



Old Mother Hubbard's
Cupboard is getting bare !

Not really...

but our food donations
aren't keeping up with demand!

Help us!

Would you please consider donating some canned food for Project Hope during April? Many people are calling looking for help. All of our food and moneys raised go to pantries in the Lutheran Pantry system.

28th National Veterans
Wheel Chair Games Fund Raiser
Sunday, April 6, 2008
4:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

Admission: \$8.00 for Adults
\$4:00 for Children
Under Age 3: Free



Great Plains Paralyzed Veterans of America Building
7612 Maple
Omaha, NE 68134

Join in on the fun!

There will be a fun bounce for the kids and a raffle basket auction with many great goodies.

All proceeds from this event will be donated to support the
2008 National Veterans Wheelchair Games in Omaha in July.

For more information, contact Amanda Vazquez.

Free Trash Dump!

Columbus Neighborhood Clean Up

April 12, 2008 Only

9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

NO EARLY DROP OFFS!!



Drop Off Site for Columbus Park

St Vincent dePaul Thrift Store Parking Lot

2101 Leavenworth - Omaha, NE

No Chemicals No Batteries No Concrete

(Appliances, Tires and Yard Waste drop off sites listed below)

Paint cans accepted if the lid is off and paint is dry in the can.

Trash pick up service is available for seniors and physically challenged. Call Stephen Stout at 344-4738 to be placed on the list.

If you have a pick up truck and/or can volunteer to help either at the drop off site or in the trucks, please call Stephen as soon as possible.

Pop, Hot Dogs and Chips
will be sold at the drop off site!

Volunteers are needed to help run the concession stand and to donate cookies and cupcakes.

Proceeds go to benefit the Neighborhood Association.

Recycling Is Great!

A special dumpster will be provided at our site for scrap metal.

Taking iron, steel, brass, aluminum & car parts.

Appliances must be taken to: **South High School - 4519 South 24th St.**

Free Tire Dump - Columbus Park will accept tires at our dumpsite .

Yard Waste must be taken to: **River City Recycling - 6030 South 60th.**

A small number of passes will be available at our drop off site.

Please consider donating your usable items to St Vincent dePaul!

Tubs will be available for your donations.

Community News

Join the Neighborhood Association!
Membership dues
\$5.00 a year per household!

Send your money to
CPNA care of Grace Lutheran Church
1326 S 26 Street
Omaha, NE 68105
Call 341-7730 for more information.

*Columbus Park
Neighborhood
Association*

Next Meeting - May 15
Grace Lutheran Church -
1326 S 26 St.



Nebraska Synod Prison Ministry presents
Anita Gutschick
"Women of the Bible"
Saturday, May 3, 2008
10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.
St Timothy's Lutheran Church
510 N 93rd Street
Omaha, NE

You are invited to come and watch the Bible come alive with a presentation of Women of the Bible by Anita Gutschick. Nationally known, Anita's portrayals of Biblical women is based on detailed study and research.

Rev. Dr. William Barth, Pastor of Followers of Christ, writes about Anita:

"Women of the Bible as presented by Anita Gutschick is a gripping, dramatic and spell binding performance that will feed your faith and your soul."

You are welcome to come for coffee at 10:00 a.m. The program will start at 10:30. This is a program for men, women, children, youth groups, confirmation and Sunday school classes, Bible Study Groups and families. There will be a freewill offering to help with expenses. Please come and bring your friends and family. You won't be sorry!

Need Some Help with Your Life?

**Free Counseling is available
through the Community Counseling Program**



Allyson Campbell, CMSW, LMHP is available to offer confidential counseling to anyone regardless of their ability to pay. Her office is at St. Luke's Lutheran Church, 2315 I Street. Her hours at St. Luke are Tuesdays and Thursdays for 8:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Call 733-0172 to set up an appointment.

The goal of Community Counseling Program is to bring professional counseling services closer to people's homes and ensure these services are available to everyone regardless of ability to pay. The service is made available to members of the community through support from the Nebraska Methodist Hospital Foundation, St. Luke's Lutheran Church, and Omaha Public Schools.

News from the Families of Grace Lutheran Church

- ◆ Special Thanks to the Rejoice! Lutheran Choir for sharing their Easter cantata with us at Grace Lutheran Church on March 9th. Over 100 people attended worship that morning. The 30 member choir presented scripture readings and music. A cookie reception followed the worship service. Thanks to all in our congregation who provided cookies and helped with serving and clean up.
- ◆ Thanks to Eva Martin and Barb Nelson for their help in getting the Holy Week bulletins ready for services.
- ◆ Thanks to Jack Williams for his tender care of the plants in the front foyer.
- ◆ Thanks to Brenda Spahr and Donna and Ron Adrian for their commitment to prepare the altar for communion.
- ◆ Thanks to Mary Laaker, Vicki Cox and Amanda Vazquez for their work in teaching ESL to our Spanish neighbors.



The family of Ferne Matson invites you to stay after church on Sunday, April 27, 2008 to celebrate Fern's 85th birthday at a cake reception. Best Wishes, Ferne!

"Tanzania Talk" April 13, 2008

Potluck Dinner - 11:45 a.m.
after morning worship

Bring your favorite dish to share.

David Hufford will share his experiences
from his mission trip to Tanzania.



"Belle Musique" An Evening of Beautiful Music *Free Concert*

Saturday, April 19, 2008 7:00 PM
Grace Lutheran Church
1326 South 26th Street, Omaha, NE

Join Nebraska Children's Chorus Ragazzi Youth, directed by Cody Talarico, and singers from the Heartland Youth Choir from Des Moines, IA, for an evening of beautiful music. Both choirs will present a variety of great choral music sure to entice any music lover. Receiving regional accolades for their quality choral and singing technique, as well as their ability to blend children's voices Ragazzi Youth will be the hosts of a collaboration concert with the Heartland Youth Choir, who is on tour during this weekend.

Heartland Youth Choir of Des
Moines
at Grace Lutheran
Sunday, April 20 at 10:30 a.m.

The Heartland Youth Choir will be joining the congregation at Grace Lutheran to present special music during our morning worship.

The choir, consisting of twenty-three 4th-6th graders, will present several musical numbers through out the morning worship service.

Invite your friends and family to join us for this special time of worship.



Virginia McGill
Director, (402) 660-6689

Assistants:
Gabriella Ortiz, 660-1035
Gema Wolde
Douglas County Health Department

As a Coordinator of Interfaith Health Service and our Latinas in Action program, I continue to be amazed at the words of our program participants. Again this month, I am sharing a letter from one of our very first participants. I have mentioned Mariela before in the newsletter. She and her sisters, mom and dad are a wonderful family and one of the blessings of my work is talking with such families about their hopes and dreams.

A highlight of these past few weeks for me was giving Mariela and the President of her university a copy of the Latinas in Action National Award DVD in which Mariela was featured. Mariela's words close out the DVD in speaking of Interfaith's impact on the next generation of Latinas. Mariela says it better than I can. Please read her words and accept Interfaith's thanks as you continue to support our ministry in your prayers and in your churches.

*Wishing you Easter peace and Resurrection joy.
Virginia McGill, Interfaith*

Dear Community Members,

I am writing this letter of support on behalf of Interfaith Health Service and the Latinas in Accion program. My family and I have been part of the program since it began four years ago. The program is so important for Latina women and their families, that it is hard to summarize. I hope my letter explains how it has helped my family.

I am the oldest of three children. I was born in Los Angeles, California. My parents were both born in Mexico. My mom and dad moved to the United States when they were teenagers so that they could obtain a better life for the family. More than anything else, my parents want my sisters and me to receive a good education.

I am the first generation in my family to attend college and am now a junior nursing student at the College of Saint Mary's. I try to be a role model for my sister, Erika, who is fifteen years old, and for my sister, Lorena, who is eleven. I know that they will follow in my footsteps in pursuing higher education because I encourage them to study and get good grades.

My mom and I began going to the Latinas in Action program because it was a program that was designed specifically for Latina women. It offered free exercise classes and educational sessions and all were welcome. When we started attending the program, only a handful of women took part in it. Word spread all around the community about how good the program was and how child care was offered right in the churches for women who had small children. In a few months, the program grew to double, then triple its size. Now it is even bigger and so many women attend the program that new classes have been added in the evenings to keep up with the demand.

My mom is part of the program because she says it helps her reduce her stress. She also likes talking to the other participants and making friends. She works as a paraprofessional at Liberty school and refers many of the school mom's to the program.

Continued

I joined the program because it is a group that welcomes Latinas and there are no other groups like it that I have seen. I love to dance and the exercise incorporates my culture's appreciation for dance in to regular routines. I am able to volunteer with the program to help out with childcare in the summers and to help my mom on program planning. All of the women who take part in it work as teachers and childcare coordinators and volunteers. It is not about someone else telling us what to do, we decide what we want and then work for our goals. The program has great guest speakers, resource guides and a place for Latinas to grow and talk about family, education, work and the community.

The program helped me personally by helping me get to college. Since I am the first person in my family to attend college, my mom needed help learning how to guide me so she asked Interfaith for help. For many long months Interfaith worked with me on my college applications and essays and even went with me to admissions interviews at my top college choices. Interfaith talked to my family about scholarship options and living on campus. Because of being so involved in Latinas in Action, this helped me decide on my major. I learned from the women in the group that health is so important and that prevention and education are the keys to a happy life and family.

The Latinas in Action program has made a big difference in my life. I am proud to be part of it and honored to write this letter about my experiences.

Sincerely,
Mariela M. of Omaha



Faith in Action of Interfaith Health Service has been busy the past several weeks on a new project in collaboration with the Latina Resource Center. The program is bringing together a group of seniors all of whom are Latina women. There are currently 12 women in the group which is meeting every Friday morning from 10:00 am till noon at the Latina Center (located off 31st and "Q"). *Faith in Action* of Interfaith Health Service is assisting in some of the program planning and also providing transportation for some of the seniors to the weekly meetings. The ladies are enjoying getting to know one another better as well as learning from the different speakers and activities each week. There really is no other program specifically dedicated to Latina seniors and we are proud to play a part. We are also very thankful to the many volunteers who are helping to provide transportation. This group includes a Board member from Interfaith Health Service and several Creighton University students.

Remember, A neighbor's independence depends on you!!

Julie Chytil

Phone: 660-2652

e-mail: faithinaction2005@hotmail.com

www.fiavolunteers.org or www.faithia.org



From the Editor

Freedom

Jesus replied, “I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed”

John 8:34-36

Freedom is one of the most sought after circumstance in the human experience. I have been watching a miniseries on the life of John Adams, one of the framers of the Constitution. The story shows how desperately the idea of freedom and following the law of Britain became conflicted. John Adams, a lawyer, truly wanted to uphold the law but as the story unfolds, found himself at odds with the requirements of England. He felt the yoke of “slavery” to the law with no representative speaking for him and the rest of the colonists. What happened after John’s push to gain freedom, ultimately through the Revolutionary war, changed history for all of us! In the case of the colonies and England, the law's requirements became unbearable. Unfortunately, blood has to be spilled to gain the civil freedoms we all enjoy.

Easter has just passed as I write this. As I contemplated and then celebrated the Crucifixion and the Resurrection of Christ, I become aware again of the desperate struggle that took place to bring my soul freedom. In my normal state, I cannot fulfill the law on my own. My nature is not to do good. Temptation is always there to lead me away from what I know I should be doing. Even the apostle Paul had trouble with sin and the law. He writes in Romans 7:17-20, “For if I know the law but still can't keep it, and if the power of sin within me keeps sabotaging my best intentions, I obviously need help! I realize that I don't have what it takes. I can will it, but I can't do it. I decide to do good, but I don't really do it; I decide not to do bad, but then I do it anyway. My decisions, such as they are, don't result in actions. Something has gone wrong deep within me and gets the better of me every time.” (The Message)

God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to overcome sin. No more penalty needs to be paid because He was perfect and willing to pay the price for my sin account to be cleared. There is no need to wallow in shame about anything I have done because if I confess it and turn from doing it, I am forgiven. The story of Easter is about being reconciled with God.

I thought on all the things about my actions I wished were different, the things that I know displease Him. I displease Him when I try to earn my way to His approval because all the good things I do are as filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6) But because of Christ’s sacrifice on the cross and resurrection, I can come to God freely.

In some ways, I have allowed sins in my life to enslave me and keep me from knowing the freedom God has already given me. The story of His death and rising on Easter Sunday reminded me again that bad habits, immorality, rage, anger, laziness, denial, pride...all the things that plague us as humans are wiped away because of Christ’s sacrifice. Our only responsibility is to grab hold of that forgiveness.

So reach out and grab it! He is holding out His hand to welcome you into freedom from sin. A simple prayer is all it takes. “*Lord, I'm sorry. Take control of my life this day. Amen.*”

Pam Reents, Editor

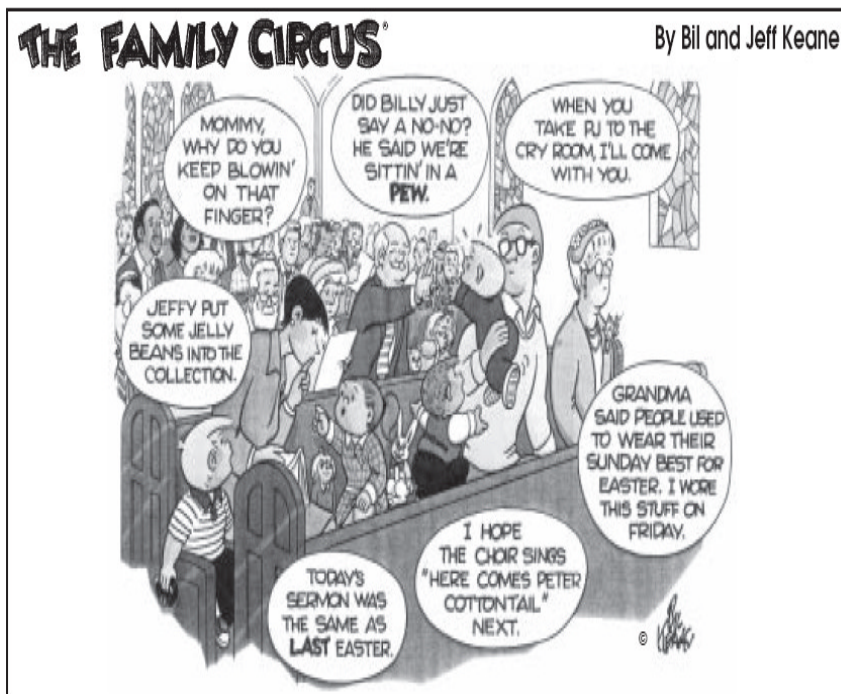


April

- ◆ Meaning - It originally derives from Latin aperire "to open", referring to the opening of flowers in that month.
- ◆ 30 Days
- ◆ Flower - daisy. associated with innocence. An alternate birth flower for April is the sweet pea.
- ◆ Birthstone - Diamond. Many stories surround the gift of a diamond as a token of affection. The ancient Greeks believed that the fire of a diamond reflected the flame of everlasting love



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Special Days in April at Grace Church

- ◆ April 1 - Beware of pranksters!
- ◆ April 1 & 15-
On Being Lutheran Study
- ◆ April 7 - UFH Closed for floor cleaning.
- ◆ April 8 - LFH Closed for floor cleaning.
- ◆ April 9 - Prayer Service.
- ◆ April 11 & 12 - Confirmation Classes at Cristo Rey.
- ◆ April 12 - Columbus Park Cleanup at St Vincent DePaul's. Volunteers Needed!
- ◆ April 13 - Tanzania Talk and Potluck.
- ◆ April 19 - Ragazzi Youth and Heartland Youth Choir of Des Moines perform a free concert at Grace Lutheran.
- ◆ April 20 - Heartland Youth minister during worship service.
- ◆ April 27 - Cake Reception in celebration of Ferne Matson's 85th birthday.

Death & taxes

Tell the old bloke
that taxes aren't a joke
They tax his oil,
tax his gas,
Tax his notes,
tax his cash;
Tax him good
and let him know –
After taxes
he has no dough.
If he hollers,
tax him more;
Tax him 'til
he's good and sore.
Tax his coffin,
tax his grave,
Tax the sod
in which he lays.
Put these words
upon his tomb:
"Taxes drove me
to my doom."
And after he's gone
he can't relax;
They'll still be after Inheritance Tax!
—Author unknown

Easter

WORD LIST

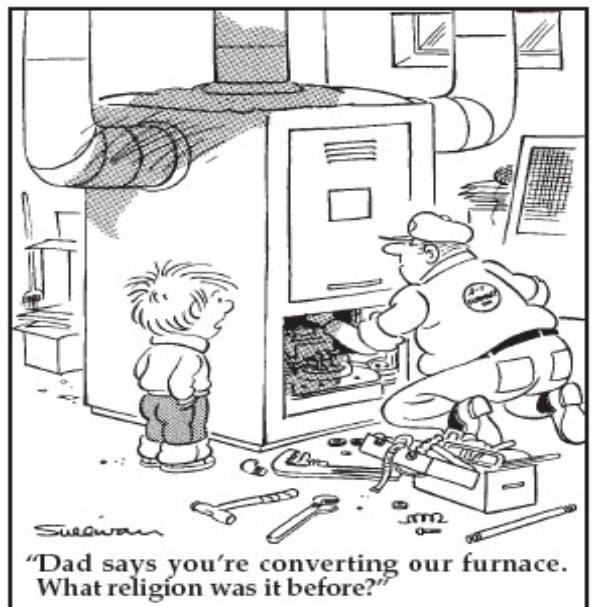
angel	mina
authority	mock
betray	murderer
bread	parable
Caesar	paradise
capstone	Passover
Cleopas	peace
colt	persecute
covenant	Peter
crucifixion	power
darkness	prisoner
denarius	redemption
desolation	resurrection
dispute	robe
Emmaus	rooster
fish	scripture
friends	Simon
ghost	spices
Golgotha	sword
Jerusalem	tomb
kingdom	two
linen	widow
living	
Magdalene	

w w p c n m b
r o r i o s r o m
s d i i i v n a o d o
w i s h t r e t e p o g t
o w o d a r k n e s s o s n w
r e n e l a d g a m u l d e t i r
d e e e o l i v i n g g n y e l e k w
y r s s d i c p p t o e z t w s c r n
r e e i w e x n e t i g u i u c o o w
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p m s a i a p n d i c r c t h t g r q
a o p s u s t e t u u e u r u n c
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