

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.*



THE GRACE MESSENGER



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 April 8th. The Council members shared their prayer concerns: Care for those in need of healing – Greg Hula’s nephew, Brian Hula, for Sarah’s Grandmother, Olive Laaker, for Grace’s brother Ted Olson; care for those within the Grace family that they continue to heal; we pray for Ambrose who is continuing to gain strength; we pray for Ivo’s safety; we pray for all who have lost loved ones and that they remain both hopeful and faithful; we pray for an end to all of the unrest and conflict in the world; we pray for Tom Vondra with praise and rejoice in his recovery; we pray with praise for the births of both Madeleine Leann Anzalone and Abigail Josephine Hegarty. Pastor led devotions from Micah 7:7 and 2 Corinthians 6:4. In Micah, we learn of a prophet predicating bleakness in the world but for the faithful to look toward God for salvation. In 2 Corinthians, Paul says commended means that we have proven ourselves faithful through all the endurances and hardships in life. Looking back at life there is “no scorekeeping”; that the hardships are badges of life and we can still be faithful through all our endurances.

Visions for Ministry: The Council is reading Effective Small Churches in the Twenty-first Century by Carl S. Dudley. Please read Chapter 3 “Growth by Adoption” 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 April 2, 2008 to plan our new mid-week Education effort. The next meeting is scheduled on May 7th at 7:00 p.m.; please plan to attend if interested. Vacation Bible School is scheduled during the week of June 23rd.

Evangelism/Outreach: The Kids At Work welcome dinner will be held on Wednesday, June 4th at 6:30 p.m.

Finance: The Endowment Board will meet on Sunday, April 13th.

Property: Don and Ron Rosenbaum with Perfection Cleaning cleaned and waxed the Upper Fellowship Hall, Sanctuary, both kitchens, all bathrooms and the Lower Fellowship Hall.

Service/Social Ministry: The Task Force for ELCA Studies on Sexuality has released the “Draft Social Statement on Human Sexuality.” It is now available for study. If anyone would like to read it prior to a study event, please contact Pastor Laaker. Neighbors’ South Coalition of Habitat for Humanity will be building a house for a family from Northern Africa. The family is Malyun Fathal and her five sons, the house is located at 3020 W Street.

Support/Stewardship: No new report.

Continued

Worship: Ragazzi Choir and Heartland Choir from Des Moines will be holding a concert here at Grace on Saturday, April 19th at 7:00 p.m. The Choir will then participate in our Sunday morning worship service on April 20th. Grace will provide a sack lunch for all the choir members after the worship service.

Unfinished Business: No new report.

New Business: There is the potential for an intern to participate here at Grace. Pastor will be in Chicago for a SCUPE Conference and will conduct an interview with the intern. Lutheran School of Theology has put out a request for a placement of an Intern in the Inner-city. This placement would help further the education of the Intern.

Announcements: A Letter from the Synod informing the congregation of Pastor Henry Gittler's 50th anniversary of his ordination was received.

Sarah will bring treats for our May meeting.



Ice Cream Is Good For the Soul

“Last week I took my children to a restaurant. My six-year-old son had asked if he could say grace. As we bowed our heads, he said, "God is good. God is great. Thank you for the food, and I would even thank you more if Mom gets us ice cream for dessert. And liberty and justice for all. Amen.”

Along with the laughter from the other customers nearby, I heard a woman remark, "That's what's wrong with this country. Kids today don't even know how to pray. Asking God for ice-cream. Why, I never."

Hearing this, my son burst into tears and asked me, "Did I do it wrong? Is God mad at me?" As I held him and assured him that he had done a terrific job and God was certainly not mad at him,

an elderly gentleman approached the table. He winked at my son and said, "I happen to know that God thought that was a great prayer."

"Really?" my son asked.

"Cross my heart." Then, in a theatrical whisper, he added (indicating the woman whose remark had started this whole thing), "Too bad she never asks God for ice cream. A little ice cream is good for the soul sometimes."

Naturally, I bought my kids ice cream at the end of the meal. My son stared at his ice cream for a moment and then did something I will remember the rest of my life. He picked up his sundae and, without a word, walked over and placed it in front of the woman. With a big smile he told her, "Here, this is for you. Ice cream is good for the soul sometimes, and my soul is good already."



Pray about a New Opportunity Here at Grace Church

God moves in mysterious ways his wonders to perform. I am consistently surprised by God. You may recall that following my first Sabbatical in 1997 I returned to work bringing two new ideas that God had laid on my heart. Those ideas are now ministries that serve others, Kids at Work and Interfaith Health Service.

Last year, I returned from Sabbatical thankful for the time away. God has tugged at my heart to try something new but the opportunity didn't seem right. Either I was reluctant to step out and see if it was something we might try or it wasn't God's time. Well, God's time seems to have presented itself once again.

Three weeks ago, my Synod Staff colleagues put in my hand a request from the Lutheran School of Theology for a special consideration of an Intern site in Omaha. Now, I have thought about Grace being a wonderful place where an Intern might learn a lot about pastoral leadership. I just never could figure out how or even if this was a real possibility.

Two weeks ago, I shared this idea with the Congregation Council. Since none of us had given it much thought, our best thinking that evening was "it sounds like an intriguing idea. How will it affect you, Pastor?" Each person expressed their thoughts and then as a group encouraged me to learn more about the Internship program and interview the young woman for whom the request was made.

This past week, I was in Chicago attending the SCUPE (Seminary Consortium on Urban Pastoral Education) Congress. This was a marvelously wonderful educational experience. While there, I had the opportunity to interview Angela Khabeb. We had a delightful conversation. Our shared desire was to try and make this work. God must be in this.

I believe Grace would be a wonderful place for Angela to learn and practice her skills in pastoral ministry. The description in the material from Lutheran School of Theology says, "An internship is designed so that the intern can gain experience in all aspects of parish life. This offers an opportunity to test out more comprehensively the strengths and weaknesses of the student's preparation for pastoral ministry."

There are a number of things that must be figured out. Things like, how do we pay for this ministry, where might she and her family live, etc. However, trusting that this is a God motivated possibility, I ask you to include this in your prayers. Ask God to help us work out the details. Ask God to bless this, if it is to be. Ask God to help us be the best place for an Intern to serve.

In a recent Sunday morning message, I said that God has not called us to play it safe. God has called us to live our faith in a trusting relationship with God. I trust God is calling us in this direction. Will you join me in praying, planning, and acting on this call from God?

Pastor Damon D. Laaker



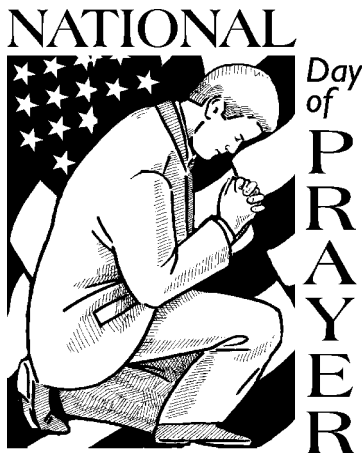
May 11, 2008

Pentecost is a time of **red** -- a color of fire and zeal and passion and heat. The Spirit is incendiary within us.

In celebration of the Holy Spirit coming at Pentecost, wear something red or orange to church on Sunday, May 11th!

C.E. Planning Meeting
May 7, 2008
Upper Fellowship Hall
7:00 p.m.

A new mid-week program for youth and adults continues to be discussed. The start-up for this program is still a few months away. Anyone who is interested in sharing their ideas or in helping in big ways or in small ways is encouraged to come.



National Day of Prayer
Thursday, May 1, 2008

Theme: "Prayer! America's Strength & Shield"

The National Day of Prayer is an opportunity for Americans of all faiths to join in united prayer to acknowledge our dependence on God, to give thanks for blessings received, to request healing for wounds endured and to ask God to guide our leaders and bring wholeness to the United States and her citizens.

"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

2 Chronicles 7:14

Prayer Service for the National Day of Prayer

On Thursday May 1, a citywide National Day of Prayer "Concert of Prayer" will be hosted by Salem Baptist Church from 7:00 p.m. - 8:30pm. Salem Baptist is located at 3131 Lake Street. Grace Lutheran Church and other churches from across the city are invited to participate in joint prayer with fellow followers of Jesus across the country, for our nation and city. Pastors and leaders from our community will lead different topics of prayer in several small groups.

For more information on specific prayer requests and events in our city, visit <http://www.prayheartland.com>.



*Women of the Evangelical
Lutheran Church in America*

W/ELCA Board and Circle Meeting

**May 20, 2008
1:00 p.m.**

**Bible Study Leader
To Be Announced**

**Hostess
Gertrude Hufford**



Lutheran Women of Omaha Luncheon

Rejoice Lutheran Church
2550 South 138 Street

May 13 at Noon

60th Anniversary Observance

**Program
Project**

**Mission Belles of Divine Shepherd Church
Angel Tree/Monetary**

Reservation Required by May 11

Call Lorraine Palma at 455-4342 or

Mardelle Gocsek at 292-1328

Cost is \$6.00 per person



The Library Board is still 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. Easy, fast recipes are always popular! 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 a table in the upper fellowship hall. Submit as many recipes as you wish.

**4:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.
Monday thru Thursday**

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

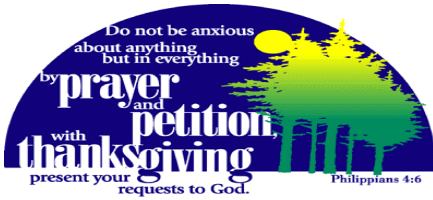
Free!

Director, Brenda Spahr



**JOIN US
AFTER
SCHOOL**

The After School Program ends Thursday, May 22, 2008.
Have a great Summer! See you in the Fall!



Prayer Concerns Family and Friends

- ◆ Ambros Lado - 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)
- ◆ The family of Katherine Riechert - Katherine died on April 2nd after a long struggle with cancer. Katherine is the grand daughter of Don and Norma Olson. Katherine leaves her family including 3 children ages 5 years old to 13 years old.
- ◆ 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)
- ◆ Norma Olson - Pray for healing for her injured leg. (member)
- ◆ Teri Briley - Cancer treatments. (daughter of Gloria and Richard Moore)
- John Williams - Suffering from a disabling illness. Many decisions about his care are being made. Pray for wisdom for the Doctors and the family. (Son of Jack Williams)
- Regier/Schoenwald Family - After losing three family members in an accident in February, the Schoenwald girls are still struggling with spine and pelvis issues. Their mother is healing physically but the grief of dealing with the loss of her husband and two children is overwhelming at times. Janelle and the girls are being emotionally supported by her mother and step dad, Mr. and Mrs. Regier. (Relatives of Pam Reents, Church Sec.)
- Gloria Wipperling - Health Concerns. (Member and daughter of Eva Martin and sister, Brenda Spahr)
- London Colstan - tiny infant struggling with liver problems. (Friend of Morlan/Olson family)
- David Nange - Healing for regulation of blood pressure and headaches. (Council Member)

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 ministry among us.

Pray for guidance as the church investigates hiring a pastoral intern.

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 Charles Tuw are the elders for the Sudanese Worshipping Community.
- ◆ Remember John Ivo Mouto. John is working several very dangerous locations in Africa.

Let's encourage each other as we see
God's hand in answering our prayers.

Kids At Work 2008



Kids At Work Youth Work Program

June 8 is Kick Off Sunday!

Sunday Worship Attendance Required
Tuesdays and Wednesdays - Work Days

10:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon
Brenda Spahr, Director
341-7730

The Kids At Work Program, a program that links elementary and middle school aged youth to faithful worship, learning responsibility and saving their earnings, needs people to volunteer to be team leaders on Tuesday or Wednesday mornings from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon during June and July.

The Kids At Work Kick-Off is on Sunday, June 8th with the first workday being Tuesday, June 10th. Even if you can only work once or twice during the summer or weekly, your help would be welcomed. If you have a project idea that you think the Kids At Work could do for the church or for someone in the area, give me a call at church, 341-7730 or at home, 551-4347.

The Annual Welcome Dinner for Kids At Work will be held on June 4th at 6:30 p.m. All the Kids At Work Families are invited as well as Grace Lutheran Church Council Members. Invitations will be arriving shortly.

Please remember to open your bank accounts and return your contracts! Time is just flying by and soon the program will be starting.

*Brenda Spahr,
Kids At Work (KAW) Director*

Happening in the Library!

Thanks a Bunch!

Thank you to all the folks who donated and purchased used books during the Lenten Book Sale. Thanks to Eva Martin for maintaining the sale table.

Gear up for the Grace Library Summer Reading Contest!

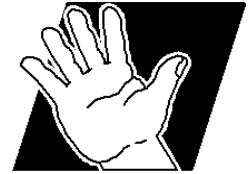
In mid to late June, we will kick off our annual summer reading contest. Many new books have been added over the past several months so there are new adventures to take with your favorite characters. Several of the popular Christian fiction series have sequels so check the shelves to see if there is more of the saga to read.





"Helping Hands"

Hope for the hungry, hopeless
and homeless.



Project Hope
The Theme for May is Soap.

Laundry Soap, Dish soap, Hand soap



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 special skills required.

Volunteers Needed

28th National
Veterans
Wheelchair
Games
Qwest Center



July 25 - 29
Omaha, NE

This is a multi-event sports and rehabilitation program for military service veterans who use wheelchairs for sports competition due to spinal cord injuries, amputations, or certain neurological problems. Attracting more than 500 athletes each year, the National Veterans Wheelchair Games is the largest annual wheelchair sports event in the world.

Omaha was selected based on availability of sports venues, accessibility of city and local interests and excellent accommodations.

Volunteers will be needed to help at the various games such as swimming, table tennis, weightlifting, archery, air guns, basketball, nine-ball, softball, quad rugby, bowling, hand-cycling, wheelchair slalom, power soccer, a motorized wheelchair rally, track and field. Exhibition events are also being planned. Athletes compete in all events against others with similar athletic ability, competitive experience or age.

If you would like more information, contact Mike Wittrock at 402-995-3283 or talk to Amanda Vazquez. A brochure has been posted on the bulletin board.

Camp Carol Joy Holling Work Day



May 17, 2008

Arrive 8:00 a.m. Wrap up 1:30 p.m.
Free Lunch for All Workers
Reservations requested by May 15th
to help with planning lunch.

Call Toll Free at 1-888-656-6254
for reservations or information.

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 17
Grace Lutheran Church - 1326 S 26 St.

For more info about CPNA,
contact Stephen Stout, President at 341-7020.

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 everyone 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 the Community Counseling Program is to bring professional councils offices 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.

Screaming Eagles Football
Volunteers Needed in assisting with
organized Full contact and Flag Football



The Omaha Screaming Eagles Athletic Program is a Christ-Centered ministry to children, boys ages 6-14 years old. This organization provides free athletics as a vehicle to teach children Christian values, teamwork, sportsmanship, family values, academic accountability and community service.

The football season runs from June to November. The practices are held at fields in South Omaha.

Volunteer Positions Open:

- Coaches (Head & Assistants)
- Snack Bar attendants
- Game day/Field attendants
- Academic Tutors
- Equipment Managers
- Photographers/video
- Team Moms.

If you are interested or
need more information
please contact

Calvin Jones
Screaming Eagles Office
402-734-1815

**New Lunch
Therapy Group
Forming!**

Have you heard about
the new group therapy
luncheons?



They are called
"Whining and Dining!"

"Humor is tremendous"
by Tremendous Jones
Tyndale Publishers 1988

News from the Families of Grace Lutheran Church



- Congrats to Bobbi Jo Anderson and Arun Pankaj on the occasion of their wedding this month. Bobbi Jo is the daughter of members, Ronald and Mickey Anderson and the granddaughter of members, Richard and Gloria Moore. Bobbi Jo is a Financial Management Consultant for Grant Thornton located in Alexandria, VA. Arun is Business Management Consultant for P.A. Consulting located in Arlington, VA. The couple will live in Alexandria after their honeymoon in Alaska.
- Thanks to Eva Martin and Pam Reents for their efforts in mopping up the basement after the recent rains. Special thanks to Jerry Van Ormer, Bob Moss and Ken Hilmer for their work in making the church more water-tight by filling cracks by the foundation of the church to prevent the problem of minor leaking in the basement.
- Thanks to David Hufford for his presentation on his trip to Tanzania. David's presentation came after a wonderful time of fellowship on Sunday, April 13 at a church potluck.
- Thanks to Cody and Jennifer Talarico for organizing the concert of the Nebraska Choral Arts Ragazzi choir and the Heartland Youth Choir of Des Moines, IA Cantilena choir on Saturday evening, April 19th here at Grace Church. The sanctuary was filled with well over 175 guests and musicians. If you didn't come, you missed hearing talented children sing!
- Thanks to the folks who donated food and helped with the sack lunch line for the Cantilena Choir after their ministry here at Grace Church on Sunday, April 20th. Each young person got a sandwich, carrot sticks, fresh fruit, cookies and a children's bulletin to feed and keep them occupied on the trip home to Des Moines.

Lutheran Nebraska Prison Ministry presents

Women of the Bible

Stories filled with Passion, Power and Purpose

A dramatic Presentation by Anita Gutschick

Saturday, May 3

St Timothy's Lutheran Church

510 N 93 Street

Omaha, NE

Coffee at 10:00 a.m. - Performance at 10:30 a.m.



If you are a Lutheran, I am your pastor in prison ministry in Nebraska. I am called by the Nebraska Synod on your behalf to serve in all 10 Correctional Facilities. We are in partnership.

Now having said that, please get excited with me about Women of the Bible, a one woman performance put on by Anita Gutschick, a professional actor and devout Christian from Maryland. I have witnessed Anita's gifts personally and know the impact on faith she brings. That is why I prevailed upon her to come to Nebraska, bring her gifts to the inmates, and share with the congregations of Omaha and Lincoln.

Catch her website: www.womenofthebible.com. Bring the whole family, friends and neighbors. Anita makes the women of the Bible come alive as I have never seen before.

Pastor William Barth, Pastor of Followers of Christ. NSP



Virginia McGill
Director, (402) 660-6689

Douglas County Health Department
Gabiella Ortiz, Se habla español. (660-1035)
Gema Wolde, Bilingual (660-1035 Leave Message)

Interfaith Health Service and Latinas in Action Celebrate Family Day.

This month, thanks to a new partnership with the Junior League, initiated by Faith in Action Director, Julie Chytil, Faith in Action, Interfaith, Douglas County and the Junior League hosted a family day at Columbus Park. Julie is to be commended for sharing her enthusiasm for our Latinas in Action program with the Junior League and for making it possible to incorporate a day of celebration for Latinas in Action participants.

All of Interfaith's staff, (Gema, me, Julie, Blanca,) along with Gaby, Patty, and a core committee of Latinas in Action participants were responsible for planning the day in some way and ensuring its success. It was also a way for all of us to honor our participants for their commitment to health and education in winning a National Award for their program.

Junior League members showed up in full force for the day, as well. Over a dozen members helped provide assistance, financial support and door prizes. It was wonderful to meet Phyllis from the League who speaks excellent Spanish, Kareen, who works with my friend, Jewel, at the Food Bank, Leslie, who will be chairing all children's events next year, as well as many other talented and generous member of the Junior League.

Our Latinas in Action Participants organized in various teams to lead events like the sack race, abdominal crunch challenge, tunnel travel and various other physical activities designed for the entire family. Many of the spouses of our participants took part in the day. While we had hoped to hold the majority of activities outside, the weather did not cooperate, so we made ourselves at home inside the large gym and accompanying space.

The day included an abbreviated aerobics class taught by our lead instructors, Ilda and Aurora for the entire family. Food and festivities and a potluck for the children and adults capped off the day with small prizes for many participants. Gema and Gaby did an amazing job of being everywhere to take photos, talk on the microphone/speaker system, help keep folks to a schedule and answer all the questions of participants.

We were proud to come together as a team to make the day possible and to intentionally set apart a celebratory day where families could be together and socialize.

I look forward to the Summer, our Super Kids Club program, and additional times for families from Interfaith's outreach ministry programs to be together in celebrating Interfaith's wonderful programs in the community.

Virginia McGill, Interfaith Health Service

2008 Women's & Men's Health Month

Spring Into Action ~ Become a Healthier You!

The Nebraska Office of Women's & Men's Health, Every Woman Matters Program is pleased to offer no-cost or low-cost annual health exams to eligible women in Nebraska, between the ages of 40 and 64.

An annual health exam may include a clinical breast exam, teaching of breast self-exam, Pap test with a pelvic exam, mammogram, and screening tests for heart disease and diabetes. Call your healthcare provider to schedule your annual health exam!

Have you heard about the Nebraska Colon Cancer Screening Program? This program is available to both women AND men. Colon cancer screening tests may be available to women AND men who are 50 years of age and older and who meet income guidelines.

Please pass this on to someone you care about! To see if you are eligible for program services, call the Every Woman Matters Program at 1-800-532-2227.



**FAITH
IN ACTION**

Julie Chytil - Director - (402) 660-2652

e-mail: Local - faithinaction2005@hotmail.com

National Website - www.fiavolunteers.org

or www.faithia.org

This month, I'd like to share a story about a special care receiver. "Ruth" has been a part of the *Faith in Action* program for just over a year. She lives alone except for her dogs. When I talk with Ruth I learn so many interesting things about her life. She is always willing to share cooking tips and her thoughts on current events in the world. I feel like I know her family because she speaks of them often. "Ruth" has some family helping her with getting groceries and other necessities and the *Faith in Action* program also helps out when needed. The story of "Ruth" is not uncommon. Many people right here in our community are just like "Ruth". They are living alone, feeling lonely and just looking for some companionship. I know like most of you, I'm busy with my own family and their needs and sometimes I find the thought of helping someone else impossible. However, when I actually do it, when I actually pick up her groceries and visit with her for a few minutes, I think, how do I not have time for this?

The *Faith in Action* program is active right here in your church! We are always looking for volunteers and people that need help.

Julie Chytil

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



The news these past few weeks has been frightening and confusing. Gas prices rising and the general fear about how we will continue to support ourselves through these difficult financial times, politicians campaigning with passion but continually called upon to defend and clarify their stances and beliefs...in short, not much good news. I struggle with the desire to live in a world where there is only smooth sailing and wanting to shy away from the things that God may ask me to do that would upset my secluded world.

This morning I found myself reading in the book of Hebrews. Chapter 11 is filled with examples of people who found themselves having to make a choice between cowering or taking hold of the faith that they had and moving ahead in obedience to God—Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Joshua and the Jericho experience, Rahab the prostitute who hid the spies sent out to scope out the promised land. The writer, Paul, has to stop himself from expounding on more people of the Bible because there are so many more examples in the Old Testament of folks whose faith was tested. In verses 32-38, he just starts listing all of the different ways these Bible characters were tested and how they overcame their trials through acts of faith with God's help.

Over and over this past week, the phrase, “Looking to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith” has run through my head. (Hebrew 12:2a) It is easy for me to see how Jesus is the *author* of my faith but I don't think it's as simple for me to look at Him as the *finisher* of my faith. I know that my redemption, the freedom from the punishment of sin, came only because Jesus Christ came as a man, still retaining his deity, to wipe out the penalty of sin (death) on the cross so that I can come before God boldly. However, when it comes to working through how my faith will be put in practice, I tend to take that upon myself. I push myself ahead spiritually or hang my head in shame if I feel that I have fallen short of the mark that I think God has set for me. I suffer from the “I want to do it myself” attitude. Frankly, there is a lot of stress in that. No wonder if I feel like I've been put through the wringer. When my own child had that attitude, I let her find out the consequences, knowing there was a better way. How often God must have to stand back and let the circumstance of my folly play out, waiting patiently for me to turn to Him and yell for help!

I must confess that lately there are some circumstances that I have tried to overcome on my own. As my friend, Brenda, would say, You're living in “Eygpt...in denial.” (de Nile) . Excuse the pun! If God is indeed the finisher of my faith, I need to change my attitude about those things. Running this race is a waste of time if I'm not on the track God has set for me because even if I am making good time, I'm going nowhere.

Here is the plan God has for me...and for you. Let's step up to it!

“Strip down, start running—and never quit! No extra spiritual fat, no parasitic sins. Keep your eyes on Jesus, who both began and finished this race we're in. Study how he did it. Because he never lost sight of where he was headed—that exhilarating finish in and with God—he could put up with anything along the way: Cross, shame, whatever. And now he's there, in the place of honor, right alongside God. When you find yourselves flagging in your faith, go over that story again, item by item, that long litany of hostility he plowed through. That will shoot adrenaline into your souls!” (Hebrews 12:1-3, The Message)

Pam Reents, Editor

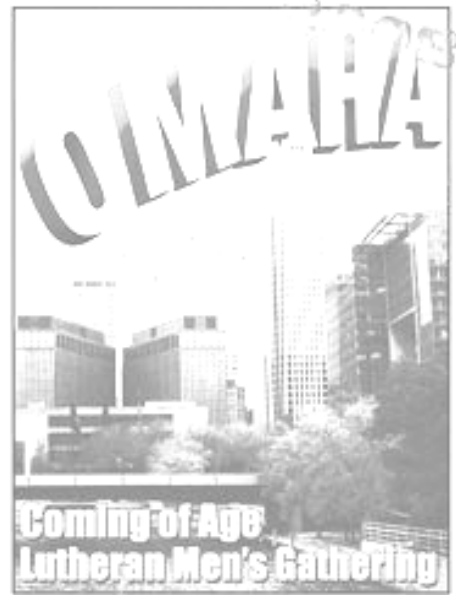
*On August 1-3, 2008,
Lutheran men of all ages will gather in Omaha, Nebraska to
celebrate 20 years of ministry and launch the next great step.*

Coming of Age!

It's A Book...

It's A Conference...

It's a Movement in the church to "come of age" and reach out to and connect with younger men August 1-3, 2008, men of all ages will gather in Omaha, NE, under the same theme verse as the founders, "...your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions." (Acts 2:17).



Featured speakers include Tom Osborne, athletic director, University of Nebraska, Lincoln. Osborne was head football coach of the Cornhuskers for 25 years, helping the school claim three national titles before he was inducted in 1999 to the College Football Hall of Fame. Nebraska's 3rd Congressional District elected him to three terms during 2001-2007 in the U.S. House of Representatives.

The "Coming of Age" theme has a twofold meaning. LMM is marking its 20th anniversary by becoming a financially self-reliant, separately-incorporated ministry of the ELCA.

The theme also refers to a spirituality project LMM undertook to understand what churches can do to engage young men between the ages of 18 and 34. As part of the project, 88 young men from across the United States participated in extensive interviews. Sixteen of those interviewed organized the LMM Young Men's Ministry Council. The results of the project were presented in the book, "Coming of Age: Exploring the Identity and Spirituality of Younger Men." The gathering's purpose is to bring men of all ages into a deeper relationship with God and assist younger and older men in building intergenerational relationships.

"We will serve, we will play, we will learn, we will worship, we will encounter God — and each other – and we will grow" said Doug Haugen, Director, Lutheran Men in Mission, ELCA offices.

A 48,000-square-foot interactive center will include room for building Habitat for Humanity sheds, high-ropes courses and other games.

The gathering will be preceded by the 2008 LMM Assembly July 31- Aug. 1. The organization's triennial business session will elect a president to succeed Heber Rast, Cameron, S.C., and other officers and board members. Rast will complete his second three-year term. The assembly will adopt a budget for LMM and celebrate the organization becoming an incorporated, self-funded ministry of the ELCA with a full-time staff.

Registration information is available on the church bulletin board



May

- Meaning - The third month of the Roman calendar. The name probably comes from Maiesta, the Roman goddess of honor and reverence.
- 31 Days
- Flower - Lily of the Valley
- Birthstone - Emerald or Green Beryl.

MAY

May 26th Memorial Day



Memorial Day

"Let no vandalism of avarice or neglect, no ravages of time, testify to the present or to the

coming generations, that we have forgotten, as a people, the cost of a free and undivided Republic."

~John A. Logan

Special Days at Grace Lutheran Church in May

- 6 & 20 - "On Being Lutheran" Study.
 - 7 - Christian Ed Planning Meeting.
 - 11 - Mother's Day.
 - 11 - Pentecost.
 - **Wear Red to Church!**
 - 14- Prayer Service at Grace.
 - 22 - Hymn Selection Meeting.
 - 26 - Memorial Day.
- Celebrate Safely - Church Office Closed.

Check the church calendar or
the bulletin board for more details.

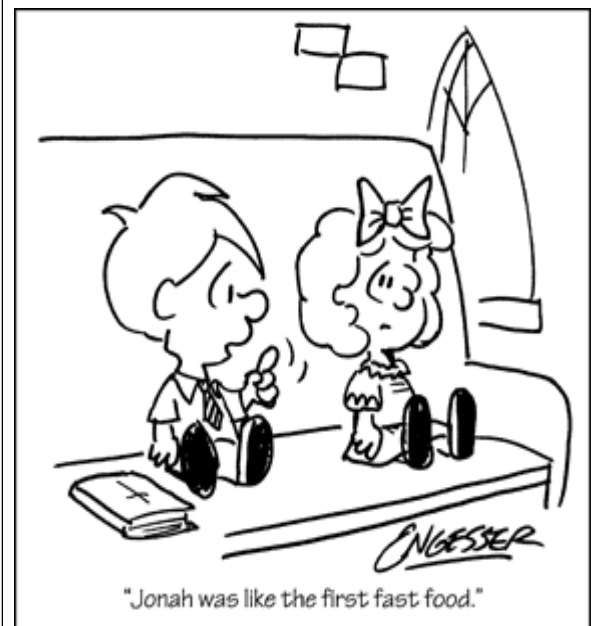


Happy Mother's Day

May 11, 2008



"The serpent sent over a lovely fruit basket."



"Jonah was like the first fast food."

Bible Wordsearch

Creation3

Fit the words in the list into the diagram below reading forward, backward, up, down, diagonally, always in a straight line.

Puzzle #151

Genesis 1:27 to 2:7



- ACCOUNT
- AIR
- APPEARED
- BEASTS
- BIRDS
- BLESSED
- BREATHED
- CREATED
- DAY
- DUST
- EARTH
- EVENING
- FACE
- FEMALE
- FIELD
- FILL
- FINISHED
- FISH
- FOOD
- FORMED
- FRUITFUL
- GIVE
- GOD
- GREEN
- GROUND
- HEAVENS
- IMAGE
- INCREASE
- LIFE
- MADE
- MAN
- MORNING
- NOSTRILS
- NUMBER
- PLANT
- RAIN
- RESTED
- SEA
- SEED
- SEVENTH
- SHRUB
- SIXTH
- SPRUNG
- STREAMS
- SUBDUE
- SURFACE
- TREE
- VAST
- WATERED

After you find all the hidden words the left over letters spell out a Bible verse reading from the top left to the bottom right

Eccl. 5

MORE PUZZLES AT:

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A pediatrician in town always plays a game with some of his young patients to put them at ease and test their knowledge of body parts.

One day, while pointing to a little boy's ear, the doctor asked him, "Is this your nose?"



Immediately the little boy turned to his mother and said, "Mom, I think we'd better find a new doctor!" www.gcf.com

"Oh Lord, help me to keep my big mouth shut until I know what I am talking about."

"The right word at the right time—beautiful!"
 Proverbs 15:23 (The Message)

