

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

**Return Service Requested**  
**Dated Material**

**Email:** [graceluth@graceluth.com](mailto:graceluth@graceluth.com)  
**Web Site:** [www.graceluth.com](http://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 - Brian Sutej Ambros Lado**  
**Interfaith Health Ministries - Virginia McGill**

**Non-Profit Org.**  
**U.S. Postage**  
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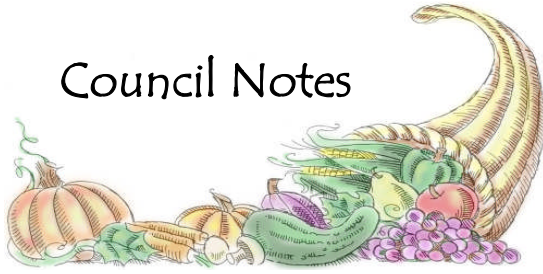
*Inspired By Christ, it is our mission  
to share God's Word and Love in  
care and in service to all.*

**November**  
**December 2008**



# **THE GRACE MESSENGER**

## Council Notes



## 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 **	
Financial Secretary: Janet Hula		Treasurer: Margie Sutej

The regular meeting of the Council was held November 11<sup>th</sup>. The Council members shared their prayer concerns: Care for those in need of healing; Bobby Heesacker, Julie Hovey, Susan Goodrich, Herbert Fitle; care for those within the Grace family that they continue to heal; we pray for Ron Andersen Jr., Teri Briley, Sandy Fitzgerald that they stay strong during their battle with cancer; we pray for Richard Moore and his recovery from pneumonia; we pray for all who have lost loved ones and that they remain steadfast in hope; we pray for an end to all of the unrest and conflict in the world; we pray for Veterans and their families on Veterans Day; we pray in praise to the families of the military and all who have come home safely; we pray for wisdom for the newly elected leaders and officials; we pray for wisdom in the agencies that have changes upcoming due to recent voting outcomes. Pastor led devotions from Psalm 2:12 and John 6:68 both verses take comfort in knowing the one we seek refuge with, our King and Savior.

Visions for Ministry: The Council is reading “*Effective Small Churches in the Twenty-first Century*” by Carl S. Dudley. Please read Chapter 10 “Resources for Expanding Ministry” 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: Council received copies of Vicar Angela Khabeb’s Internship Project Proposal. Wednesday Faith Quest will begin a new rotation learning about the Birth of Jesus for the next session. The December 17<sup>th</sup> class will include the Posada; which is an interaction story within the Latina tradition.

Evangelism/Outreach: No new report. Finance: A Budget Committee will be needed for the 2009 Budget. Ron and Donna Adrian will help with the Committee.

Property: David Nange and Titus Dulli have requested a Building Use Policy Form for gatherings within the building to share with the Sudanese ministry. Roof repairs did not solve the water damage mystery in the basement. Additional analysis will be done shortly. Endowment Board will be looking at bids to improve the sound and media system in the sanctuary.

Service/Social Ministry: The Halloween Party very successful and fun for all.

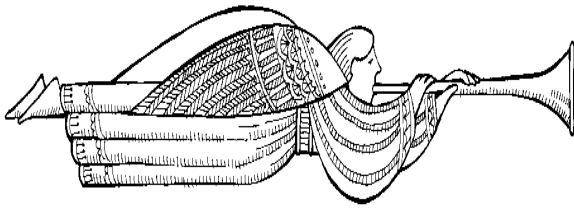
Support/Stewardship: The Fall Stewardship effort needs readers for the next two Sundays. David Hufford will read for the November 16<sup>th</sup> worship service. “God’s Work. Our Hands!” handout from the Fall Stewardship meeting at Trinity Lutheran in Papillion; please read the handout and bring ideas to the December meeting.

Worship: Rejoice Lutheran Choir will perform the Cantata during our December 14<sup>th</sup> worship service.

Unfinished Business: Before Ivo Mounto’s departure to Sudan he left a video to share with the council. The video showed how valuable Ivo’s work is to the Mabaan people. Initial plans for Ivo to return for a three month visit sometime in May. Khor and his extended family have organized a non-profit organization to raise funds for the Sudanese Water Project. They need to raise \$50,000 before December 12<sup>th</sup> and then US Aid will contribute additional funds.

New Business: No new report.

Announcements: June will bring treats for our December meeting.



Life is a series of endings and beginnings. We also experience those same endings and beginnings in the rhythm of church life. In a few short days, we will end our church year with the celebration of Christ the King. Then on the following week, we will begin once again with the Season of Advent. Advent is a time of beginnings, a time of promise and hope.

Herbert Brokering wrote some stories that he and his wife Lois shared together over their 58 years of marriage. The first story that he shared was titled: Angels.

“Once upon a time God created the beginning of everything to be fruitful and multiply, to keep living, to be bloom and be seed, to reproduce. Figuring out how to live keeps people very busy thinking, talking, sharing, exploring, and researching. When something new is discovered people are in awe. Sometimes they pray, or are silent, or run and tell what they saw, sing, laugh, and take a picture.

“Once upon a time I saw Jack-Frost on my window that looked like an angel. It was a Saturday morning when I was eight. I watched it until it slowly was erased by sunlight. I pretended that it came from far away and visited me in this winter night. My prayers at night always had angels in them so the angel on the window belonged there.

“Once upon a time I had a dream. An angel met me in my barn, up in the hay loft, and told me something that was comforting. It is a long story I have remembered for seventy years.

“Once upon a time a man was in a burning car. He said an angel in white reached through the open window and pulled him out, laid him on the road, then drove off in a white truck. An ambulance came in three minutes. It was an angel of Hope.

“Once upon a time an angel came in the night and told a man in my childhood parish that he would soon hold a young man who was dying. He told his family at breakfast. It happened the next afternoon. He held my dying brother after the accident.

“What is your ‘Once upon a time’ angel story?”

“Angels visit people of God throughout the Bible and through the whole world. Some are in white with wings. Some are hosts in the sky over Bethlehem. Some wear nursing caps, some dress like fire fighters, some swim, some fly, some are like mothers. Some say, ‘Lo and blessed are you.’ Some say: ‘Hold on! Don’t give up! You can be sure! Help is coming! You will not be forgotten! God loves you!’ These are angels of God full of hope and reminding us of promises.

“Angels know the truth. They are God’s messengers. All of life is their work. The world is full of angel stories, in the Bible and in books, and inside people we know. Look, listen, be still: and angel of God is visiting us.

“What is your angel story?”

As we begin the new season of Advent, let us look for places of hope and promise.



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

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

**Free!**

Director, Brenda Spahr

**Happy Thanksgiving!**

No Afterschool program on Wednesday and Thursday,  
November 26 - 27th

**Looking Ahead**

The last day in December will be Thursday, December 18th.  
The program will resume on January 6th, 2009.

Have You Purchased Your 2009 Scripture Calendar Yet?

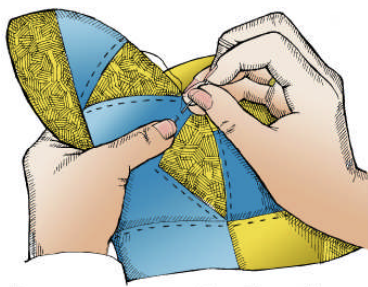
This is a beautiful, high quality calendar  
with scripture verses and wonderful scenes.

Similar calendars at the mall and stationary shops sell for up to \$12.00!

Buy Them for Gifts or for Yourself.

Only \$5.00 each

Hurry! Quantities are Limited!



**Quilters Needed**

Get involved!

Come on Mondays at 9:00 a.m. and help!  
People needed to cut out squares or tie quilts.

**No Experience Necessary!**

POINSETTIAS

Cost:

\$8.00 each

A Sign Up sheet

has been posted on the Bulletin Board

Be sure to designate whether you would like to take your  
flowers home after the holiday or donate them to the church  
for shut-ins or staff.

Deadline: December 7, 2008





# "Helping Hands"

Working Together in God's service

## Project Hope

The Theme for December is Canned Soup or Stew and items to make a holiday meal.

Place your Gifts on the shelves in the Upper Fellowship Hall.



### Book Bank

Project Hope has a book bank where people can take and keep a book or two for themselves or their children. Many of us have books that we've read or our children have outgrown that could be donated to Project Hope. Items of interest are children's books of all levels. Please label donations "Project Hope Book Bank. These books are also used as gifts for clients during the Christmas season.



### Grace Quilters Send Quilts Around the World

The women of the Grace Quilters completed many beautiful quilts and lap robes to be distributed around the globe as part of the Lutheran World Relief Ingathering in November. 35 full size quilts recycled from polyester clothing were sent to LWR. 19 lap robes were also sent to various nursing homes around the city to provide warmth to the elderly.

In addition to the quilts donated to World Relief, the ladies of Grace Lutheran also provided four quilts for the silent auction fund raiser for Jadin Kora, a little Sudanese boy who needs medical treatment for a birth-related injury to his arm.

The shipment from Grace Lutheran also included over 30 quilts created by a group of faithful quilters still gathering from Salem Lutheran Church which closed its doors several years ago.

In the coming year, the ladies of Grace Lutheran will be completing quilt tops created by the volunteers from Project Hope and utilizing materials donated by Rejoice Lutheran Church. Thank you to these organizations for their generous gifts.

## Lutheran Pantry in Omaha

The Lutheran Pantry is supported by congregations, individuals, and grants. It is used to provide food for needy families throughout the Omaha area and is the largest denominational system in the city.

In addition we also work to provide support to Together Emergency Relief Services, the ecumenical pantry system.

As you plan your gift-giving budget for this year, prayerfully consider a gift to alleviate hunger, either by buying extra canned foods or by donating money to World Hunger or to a local pantry or shelter.

# Grace Lutheran Church December Happenings



## C H R I S T M A S CANTATA

The 40 member Senior Choir of Rejoice! Lutheran Church will present an Advent Cantata at Grace Lutheran on Sunday, December 14th during morning worship. The choir, under the direction of Ray Swartz will sing a variety of traditional and contemporary selections by various composers that reflect the sounds of the season.

A cookie and coffee reception is planned following the service. If you can provide cookies, please sign up on the bulletin board.

*Use this music-filled event to invite your neighbors to experience God's wonderful gift - His Son, Jesus Christ.*

## Grace Women's Christmas Luncheon

December 16, 2008

Piccolo Pete's Restaurant

2202 South 20 Street

1:00 p.m.

This year, instead of a gift exchange, an offering will be taken for the Lutheran Food Pantry.

Invite your girlfriends to come.

The food's great but the fellowship's the best part!



## The Mitten Tree is going up!

Each year, people from Grace Lutheran Church bring donations of mittens, gloves, scarves, and other warm items and place them on the tree. These gifts of warmth are donated to area shelters.

Winter items are needed in all sizes. Bring your donations and place them on or under the tree.

What is the purpose of reindeer?

It makes the grass grow, sweetie.





"Blessed by God to be a Blessing!"

Stewardship Harvest Celebration Sunday  
is November 23rd.

**Blessed by God to be a Blessing**  
Theme Verse

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual  
blessing in the heavenly places" (Eph. 1:3).

Everything we have comes from God's bountiful hand and is a blessing to us from Him. Our response to His provision should be one of contentment and thanksgiving, realizing that God is indeed our Source.

But our response should be much more than that. Because of God's love for us, and because He has demonstrated that love in so many ways, we should seek to cultivate a stewardship lifestyle. A stewardship lifestyle is one which realizes that our role is that of a manager, a steward, who is accountable to God for the use of the resources — time, talents and treasure — which He has given to us.

Stewardship, in fact, has been compared to a three-legged stool. Remove one of the legs, and the stool cannot stand. But when all three legs are present, then the stool is able to do that for which it was designed. Similarly, a stewardship lifestyle consists of time, talents and treasure, all of which are gifts from God and all of which are to be used for God's glory.

God's servant, Moses, gave us tremendous insight concerning the "treasure" aspect of stewardship when he wrote in Deuteronomy chapter 8: ". . . remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth." For that reason, there is no such thing as a self-made man or woman.

That's why our role is not one of ownership, but that of a manager, a steward, of what God has given to us. What's the difference between an owner and a manager? An owner has rights; a manager has responsibilities. That's why we hold our possessions with an open hand — not a clenched fist — realizing that everything is a gift from God. And as we do so, we seek to put first things first.

In describing exactly how we are to do that, Jesus said, ". . . store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matt. 6:20-21).

How do we lay up treasures in heaven? How do we seek first God's kingdom when it comes to financial matters? How can we who have been blessed by God in turn be a blessing? One of the primary ways is by giving to the ministry here at Grace Lutheran Church. Our giving to God is thus a

*Continued*

*"Blessed by God to be a Blessing" Continued*

response to His blessings in our life and to His love for us. We do not give to prove anything or to earn anything. Rather, we give out of joyful hearts that have been redeemed by God's grace and in response to all He has done for us.

Total stewardship consists of giving to God our time, our talents and our treasure. But even as we emphasize those three important elements, let's remember that the "treasure" aspect is very important. In some ways, it is the culmination of a stewardship lifestyle. As one person expressed it so vividly before the offering was received in his church, "Lord, in spite of all we say or do, this is what we think of you."

Thank you for giving of yourself, of your time, of your talents and of your treasure to the work of the Lord here at Grace Lutheran Church. Thank you for following the pattern of Abraham who realized he had been blessed by God to be a blessing to others. Thank you for seeking God's direction concerning your financial support of this ministry as part of this year's stewardship emphasis. And thank you for being faithful to the Lord as you covenant with Him concerning your giving in the future. Remember, we have been "blessed by God to be a blessing."

*2009 Stewardship Campaign material by Ken Williams  
KLW Enterprises*

Please Remember to Bring your pledges on Sunday, November 23rd.

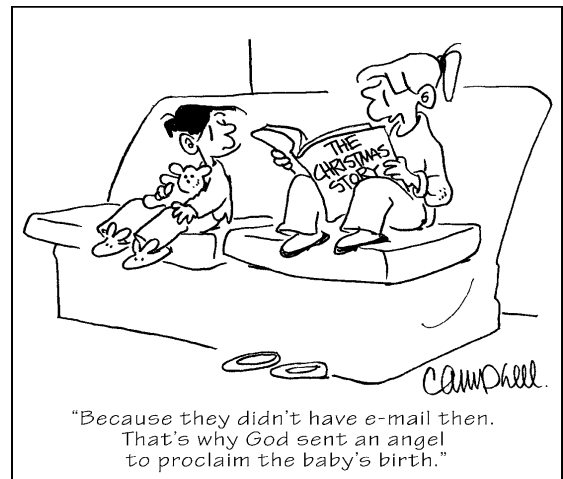
Extra Time and Talent Sheets and Pledge Cards  
are available at the table in the back of the Sanctuary.



**The 2008-09 Church Directory is Ready!**

Copies of the directory are available at the table  
in the back of the sanctuary.

Take an extra one to put by your  
second phone or to take to work.







Christmas Eve Service  
You are cordially Invited!

December 24, 2008  
4:30 p.m.  
&  
Candle Light Service  
11:00 p.m.

Candles  
Carols  
Readings  
Scripture



Prayer Service  
Monday, December 15, 2008  
7:00 p.m.

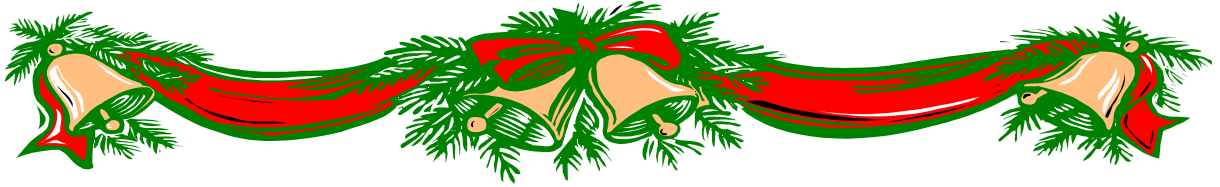
Grace Lutheran Church  
1326 S 26 St.  
*People of all Faiths Welcome!*

Come for a quiet time of Meditation,  
Soft lighting, Gentle Music  
Prayer and Anointing for Healing.

*Leave your holiday hustle and bustle behind.  
Take the chance to sit quietly and listen to God speak  
as you prepare for the celebration of His birth!*

Note: Our Prayer Service has been changed to the third Monday Night of each month.

# Prayer Concerns from Family and Friends



- ♥ 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)
- ♥ Ernie Olson - On-going therapy after his stroke. (member)
- ♥ Teri Briley - Cancer treatments. (daughter of Gloria and Richard Moore)
- ♥ Ron Anderson Jr.—Cancer treatment. (son of Ron Sr. & Mickey Anderson) Info on Ron can be accessed at <http://www.caringbridge.org/visit/ronandersen>
- ♥ Sandy Fitzgerald - Cancer diagnosis - wisdom for the Drs. (member)
- ♥ 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)
- ♥ Fern Matson - Ongoing Health issues. (member)
- ♥ Allisia Fredrickson -Had surgery to repair shattered ankle & torn ligaments. (KAW Alumni)
- ♥ Friends and family of Herbert Fitle at his death. (Brother of Attendee Ralph Fitle)
- ♥ Ambros Lado - Ongoing Health issues as a result of his stroke. (member)

## **Pray for our Shut - ins and Nursing Home residents:**

Mae Lane

Richard Moore

Thelma Harrahill - (In Kansas with her children)

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

Pray for our Vicar, Angela and her family, husband, Benhi and son, Konami.

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. Titus Duli, David Nange and Charles Tuw are the elders for the Sudanese Worshiping Community.
- ♥ Pray for travel safety for several hundred Sudanese planning to attend their Christmas celebration here at Grace Lutheran Church on Christmas Day. Guests from 5 states are expected to travel to Omaha to attend.
- ♥ Pray for Jadin Kora. Jadin Kora was born with a disabling birth injury to his arm and shoulder. In the last year and a half, several local doctors and specialists have tried to help Jadin gain use of his arm.
- ♥ John Ivo Mouto - As commissioner of Mabaan, Ivo has many responsibilities both to his province and to Southern Sudan as he does representative and ambassador work in various refugee camps to raise support for important elections in 2009. His work makes him a target. Pray for his safety! Pray also for his family here in Omaha - wife, Regina and daughter, Telly.

“Pray often; for prayer is  
a shield to the soul,  
a sacrifice to God,  
and a scourge for Satan”

John Bunyan (1628 - 1688)

Whate'er I do, things great or small  
Whate'er I speak or frame.  
Thy glory may I seek in all,  
Do all in Jesus' name.

# News from the Families of Grace Lutheran Church

To our dear friends at Grace Lutheran Church,

We would like to express our deepest thanks to the people who made Gertrude Hufford's 100th birthday so memorable. Well over 200 people attended the party!

The outpouring of cards, best wishes and gifts was astonishing. God has been gracious to provide so many good friends!

May God bless you all as much as your love has blessed us.

Gertrude Hufford, David Hufford, Mary Vondra and extended family.

Thank You,

I want to thank everyone who prayed for my recovery while I was at the nursing home. Your prayers made the difference. I have improved enough to be able to return to my home.

Your brother in Christ,  
Don Olson



Thank you Friends,

We would like to thank our friends for joining us to celebrate our 50th wedding anniversary.

Your love and support over the years has been a great blessing.

Ken and June Hilmer



## Great Gift Idea!

**2009 God's Creation Calendar**  
*Fundraiser for the  
Grace Lutheran Church Library*

**Only \$5.00**

High Quality, Comparable to  
Calendars at the mall selling for  
\$12.00!

**Hurry!**

When they're gone...  
They're GONE!

December 7, 2008

11:45 a.m. After Morning Worship

Please join the family of Bob and LaVonne Moss  
In Celebration  
Bob and LaVonne's 60th Wedding Anniversary  
*Cards only - No gifts please*

December 21, 2008

11:45 a.m. After Morning Worship

You are Invited to the Celebration  
Of  
Barb Nelson's 80th Birthday

Barb's family has planned a light lunch and cake  
*Cards only - No gifts please*



## From the Editor

*“Everything that goes into a life of pleasing God has been miraculously given to us by getting to know, personally and intimately, the One who invited us to God.*

### ***The best invitation we ever received!***

*2 Peter 1:3-4 (The Message)*

My husband’s family is a little more formal than mine. Each Thanksgiving season, my husband’s sister and brother-in-law, Deb and Bob, send out formal invitations to each of the family members, inviting us to celebrate Thanksgiving at their home. They thoughtfully prepare the sumptuous Turkey with all the fixing’s, supplemented by specialties each of us is known for...Orange Tapioca Salad from me, Dan’s special three layer cake filled with cream and cherry or blueberry pie filling, Kay’s Baked Beans, Mom Reents Rice Pudding, and other goodies that cause me to salivate as I write. My family is less formal, preferring to pass the word around as to the “where, when and what to bring” details. Our meal is also filled with traditional foods, time together and thanks to God for His bounty.

As I was reading in 2 Peter, chapter 1 this evening, I found another invitation in verses 3 and 4. God has given me an invitation to have a personal and intimate life with Him. Not only that but the beginning of the passage says that “*Everything that goes into a life of pleasing God has been miraculously given to us...by the One who invited us to God.*” This invitation does not require me to bring a “dish to share!” It’s all been provided through Jesus Christ.

So what will happen if I accept His invitation ? The passage goes on.

*“...building on what you've been given,  
(that is “Getting to know Him personally and intimately.” Verse 3)  
complementing your basic faith with*

- *good character,*
- *spiritual understanding,*
- *alert discipline,*
- *passionate patience,*
- *reverent wonder,*
- *warm friendliness,*
- *and generous love,*

*each dimension fitting into and developing the others.”*

*2 Peter 1:5-9 (Bullets and Parenthesis, mine)*

Every invitation deserves a response. Verses 10 and 11 put it this way;

*“So, friends, confirm God's invitation to you, his choice of you. Don't put it off; do it now. Do this, and you'll have your life on a firm footing, the streets paved and the way wide open into the eternal kingdom of our Master and Savior, Jesus Christ.”*

Do you know God “personally and intimately?” The invitation is there as well as the provisions to make it possible. All you have to do is respond to the invitation by saying,

*“Yes, Lord. I want to live a life pleasing to You.  
I accept your invitation to know you personally.”*

That IS the best invitation you’ll ever receive.

*Pam Reents, Editor*



## Building Communication and Relationships through Ministry

When I began working with Interfaith Health Service several years ago, I remember distinctly that Pastor Laaker talked to me about the importance of "building relationships" with others in ministry. He asked me what kind of relationships I considered myself forming with others. My response was that I believed wholeheartedly in the "ministry of presence" in any relationship. I believed in listening to the stories of others, of showing up and demonstrating though consistently following through on presence and commitments that I cared. This, I reasoned, would help others develop trust in me, while consistent dialogue and actively seeking to get to know each other would help deepen the relationship both ways.

A story of building relationships was re-affirmed for me this month when one of our Interfaith Latinas in Action participants stopped by my house late one weekend to ask for help in filling out some college scholarship materials. I have known this particular participant, "Elizabeth", for as long as Interfaith's ministry has been in place in South Omaha. I am amazed at Elizabeth and the person she is--assured, intelligent, caring, articulate, funny. Elizabeth and I spent time on her scholarship materials for several days. I also wrote some letters of recommendation for her, writing from my heart about her many gifts.

I was more than thrilled to hear from Elizabeth last week that she won the Nebraska Heartland Scholarship she applied to receive. I was honored to be asked to accompany her to the presentation of her scholarship. I was also struck by how blessed I am to know people like Elizabeth and her family. Just hearing from Elizabeth via email or phone calls each week can brighten my day and guarantees a smile. It helps me remember that a relationship is a two way street. Sure, I was able to help Elizabeth formulate her scholarship responses and help her tell her story to the scholarship committee, but that was a very easy task given the wonderful person she is. Elizabeth, in turn, was able to do much more for me in helping me connect with her as she shared the gift of her presence and her deepening life story with me.

*Virginia McGill,  
Interfaith Health, 660-6689*



Yesterday I was buying a large bag of Purina dog chow for Toot, the wonder dog, at Wal-Mart and was about to check out. A woman behind me asked if I had a dog. On impulse on this stupid question, I told her that No, I didn't have a dog, but I was starting the Purina Diet again.

Although I probably shouldn't, because I'd ended up in the hospital last time, but that I'd lost 50 pounds before I awakened in an intensive care ward with tubes coming out of most of my orifices and IVs in both arms.

I told her that it was essentially a perfect diet and that the way that it works is to load your pants pockets with Purina nuggets and simply eat one or two every time you feel hungry and that the food is nutritionally complete so I was going to try it again. (I have to mention here that practically everyone in the line was by now enthralled with my story.)

Horrified, she asked if I ended up in intensive care because the dog food poisoned me.

I told her No, I stepped off a curb to sniff noses with an Irish Setter and a car hit us both.

I thought the guy behind her was going to have a heart attack, he was laughing so hard!

Wal-Mart won't let me shop there anymore!

*From the internet*



# Community News

**Wednesday Night Faith Quest**  
**Come Explore God's Word**  
**Free Activities for All Ages!**



Grace Lutheran Church  
1326 South 26 Street  
341-7730

Each Wednesday Night  
5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

(Free Light Supper at 5:30 p.m.)  
**No Wednesday Faith Quest on November 23!**

Coming in December during Wednesday Faith Quest

### **December 17 - Posada Celebration**

In Spanish, "Posada" means inn, lodging or shelter.

Posada is a re-enactment of the difficult journey of Mary and Joseph from Nazareth to Bethlehem and their search for shelter at an inn before the birth of Jesus.



*Columbus Park  
Neighborhood  
Association*

Next Meeting:  
December 18 at  
Grace Lutheran Church.

### **Sights and Sounds of Christmas** **December 7, 2008**



Join Dana College in Blair Ne., for its annual celebration of the holiday season, the Sights and Sounds of Christmas on December 7. Crafts, concerts and food will be a part of the festivities.

Make your reservation now for the authentic Scandinavian smorgasbord. A list of activities is posted on the bulletin board.

For further information,  
call 402-426-7385  
or visit [www.dana.edu/sightsandsounds](http://www.dana.edu/sightsandsounds).

### **Thanksgiving Eve**

**Wednesday, November 26, 2008**

Cristo Rey Iglesia Luterana  
4440 South 25 Street

Cristo Rey Iglesia is hosting a Community Thanksgiving Eve Service on November 26 at 7:00 p.m. Many churches have been invited to join in a service of Thanksgiving and Fellowship. The friends and family of Grace Lutheran Church are encouraged to attend this service.

Mark your calendar and join in this wonderful opportunity to praise God for His bountiful blessings!

### **Free Basic Spanish Classes**



You are invited to come to  
**Basic Spanish** for the Church,  
Wednesdays from 3:00-4:00 pm

First Lutheran Church,  
542 South 31st Street

All are welcome.

For more information call 345-7506  
and ask for Vicar Aaron.



nebraska  
synod

### **The Economy and our Faith**

“Not that I am referring to being in need; for I have learned to be content with whatever I have. I know what it is to have little, and I know what it is to have plenty. In any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of being well-fed and of going hungry, of having plenty and of being in need. I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.” Philip-  
pians 4:11-13

The economic upheaval of the past month has been very difficult. The market turmoil and uncertainty has left many shaken, riddled with anxiety and fear. Feeling out of control has replaced a sense of safety for some, and worry has escalated for others. In the midst of times such as this, we must ask **are we any different than others because of our faith?** Does our faith shape our response to these challenges?

Please allow me to make some straightforward faith statements in the face of such fears:

**Our security has never been tied to this world.** We are a people of God’s kingdom who trust in the power of the cross, the amazing grace of our Creator, and the encouragement of God’s ever-present Spirit. We do not place our confidence in things of this world. Jesus spoke clearly: “Store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal.” (Matthew 6:20)

**All of life is a gift received.** Daily we recognize our vulnerability and our fragile nature. “From dust we came, to dust we return.” Therefore we cherish the goodness of living in the midst of all circumstances. We also recognize God’s profound care over all of life: “If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord’s.” (Romans 14:8) Life is not a problem to be solved, but a mystery to be embraced and affirmed.

**Christian insight gives perspective.** These are tough financial times, but as followers of Jesus we see the over-all picture. When a Tanzanian exchange pastor arrived in Kimball, she heard of the severe seven-year drought in that part of the state and of its devastation. She responded with empathy: “Tsk. Tsk. Pole. (I am so sorry.) Tell me, how far do you have to walk for water?” Without meaning to, she offered perspective which gave rise to a new reality and a genuine gratitude.

**Hard times have the ability to sensitize us to our shared humanity.** Sometimes we become insulated to the vulnerability and challenges others live with day after day. This may be a time of unique possibility because so many are desperately hurting and need the response of others. Will they become the face of God for us to serve and to care for? It is during such times, that the poorest of the poor hurt ever more. Will we respond to Jesus’ challenge to care beyond ourselves?

**Faithful stewardship is always an expression of our response to the Grace of God.** We recognize with clarity that we own nothing, but only hold as managers all of God’s gifts. What will we do with what we have been entrusted? While it may be that surplus sharing will not be possible, will sacrificial sharing be given? Rather than giving from “leftovers” for God’s purposes, we need to make choices that express what is genuinely important to us. Will we live love with the grace and courage of Jesus? “Together, we live love with the grace and courage of Jesus.”

**Because priorities are re-awakened, the Church has been strong through the hardest of times.**

In times of challenge, questions of what is genuinely important inform our lives. Peripheral matters become just that as we strive to live faithfully. God’s kind care will not abandon us. Nor is our calling to be about mission and ministry lessened. We are a servant people striving to shine the light of Christ’s love in a hurting and darkened world. Here is our opportunity to truly be a different people ... God’s people!

May God bless you and use you as you respond to God’s goodness and God’s calling.  
Blessings!

# Thanksgiving...Overdone?

You spilled more food on you than the local soup kitchen dispenses.

You set off 3 earthquake seismographs on your morning jog Friday.

Paramedics bring in the Jaws of Life to pry you out of the EZ-Boy.

Pricking your finger for cholesterol screening only yielded gravy.

The "Gravy Boat" your wife set out was a real 14' boat!

You have 5 TV sets side-by-side to catch all the football games

The potatoes you used set off another famine in Ireland.

That rash on your stomach turns out to be steering wheel burn.

You get grass stains on your butt after a walk, but never sat down.

Your wife wears a life jacket at night in your water bed.

Your "Big Elvis Super-Belt" won't even go around your waist.

Representatives from the Butterball Hall of Fame called twice.

You receive a Sumo Wrestler application in your e-mail.

It looks like the left-overs are going last until Christmas.

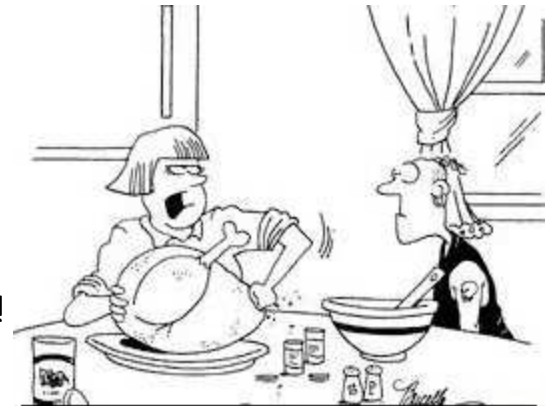
<http://www.allfunpix.com/thanksgiving>

## Thanksgiving Groaners!



What are unhappy cranberries called?  
Blueberries!

Why do Turkeys gobble, gobble?  
They never learned good table manners!



"For once we're going to have a happy family get-together. This Year I'm stuffing the turkey with Prozac."

"If the only prayer you said in your whole life was, "thank you," that would suffice."

*~Meister Eckhart*

## Special Days at Grace

November 23 - Dedication of Pledges for 2009.

November 26 - Community Thanksgiving Service at Cristo Rey Lutheran Church.

November 30 - Women's Outing to Cracker Barrel and Play at Metro Tech.

December 7 - Celebration of Bob and LaVonne Moss's 60th Wedding Anniversary after worship.

December 14 - Rejoice Lutheran Choir Cantata with Cookie Reception following worship.

December 15 - Prayer Service. (Note change of day)

December 16 - Women's Christmas Party at Piccolo's.

December 17 - Special Wednesday Faith Quest & Posada Celebration.



# Be Thankful

Find each word from Colossians 3:15 in the word search puzzle.

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.

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

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## Things to Do to Liven Up Thanksgiving Dinner

1. Load your plate up high, then take it to the kitchen, toss it all in the blender, and take your "shake" back to the table. Announce that it's the new Thanksgiving Weight Loss Shake.
2. When everyone goes around to say what they are Thankful for, say, "I'm thankful I didn't get caught" and refuse to say anything more.
3. Bring along old recorded football games, pop them in the VCR when Dad's not looking. Make sure it is set to the last two minutes of the game. When he comes into the room, turn off the VCR and turn on the regular TV.
4. Bring a date that only talks about the tragic and abusive conditions known to exist at turkey farms.
5. During mid-meal turn to mom and say, "See mom, I told you they wouldn't notice that the Turkey was past expiration date. You were worried for nothing."