

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 – Benhi Khabebe
Youth Ministries - Brenda Spahr
Organist - Lynda Laird
Sexton - Brian Sutej
Interfaith Health Ministries - Virginia McGill

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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.**

January 2010



*Ye shall find the babe
wrapped in swaddling
clothes, lying in a manger.*

Luke 2:12

THE GRACE MESSENGER



2010 Council Members

Ron Adrian	June Hilmer	Gloria Moore
Andrew Edwards	David Nange	Ernest Olson
Arlone Farber	Vicky Cox	Sarah Emery
	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 December 14th. The Council members shared their prayer concerns: We pray for the family of Gloria Moore as they continue to struggle with illness. We pray for Angela and her Uncle Palmer as he grieves the passing of his wife; we pray for Ken Catlett as he continues his fight with cancer; for Ken Hilmer as he continues to battle health episodes. We pray for peace and normality to surround the Laird family after their recent scare with a fire in their home. We pray for joy surrounding Vicki Cox's son and daughter in law as they wait the final days before the birth of a grandson. We pray for safe travels for all traveling over the Christmas season, as well as for continued strength and protection for our service people.

Devotions were led by Pastor reading the selected verses in the "Daily Texts" from 1 Chronicles 28.20 and Philippians 2.13. In the first reading, we are reminded that there is plenty of work to do. In the second, we are reminded that we should feel joy as God works in and through us...we are not just completing tasks.

Visions for Ministry: The Council continues reading "Radical Welcome" by Stephanie Spellers. We discussed making a timeline of changes in our own congregation. Change is difficult, but needs to be deliberate. Please read pages 135-150 in the book by the next meeting.

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

Christian Education: No new report.

Evangelism/Outreach: Mission Interpreter to be found.

Finance: There are 15 individuals statewide, being trained as Spiritual Directors. Motion made to ratify Disney Endowment Fund distributions.

Property: Motion to reaffirm housing allowance for Pastor.

Service/Social Ministry: No new report.

Support/Stewardship: We will set up a budget meeting soon.

Worship: Angela will be preaching at both the 4:30 & the 11:00 Christmas Eve services.

Unfinished Business: Continued discussion regarding handicapped parking.

New Business: Annual meeting scheduled for January 31st. Ron, June, and Sarah will be leaving council. Three (3)-year terms will need to be filled.

Announcements: Pastor will be out January 1-3 for a nephew's wedding. Ron will bring treats and lead prayer for our January meeting.



C. S. Lewis wrote “Just a hurried line...to tell a story which puts the contrast between our feast of the Nativity and all this ghastly ‘Xmas’ racket at its lowest. My brother heard a woman on a bus say, as the bus passed a church with a Crib outside it, ‘O Lor’! They bring religion into everything. Look – they’re dragging it even into Christmas now!” (From Letters to an American Lady, Dec 29, 1958, p 80.)

It is the official Christmas season now as I write this. It seems odd that someone might say these things about dragging religion into everything. Yet, we struggle with this same concept today.

As people of faith, one might clearly say, “Religion is in everything.” Recognizing that God created us, we are spiritual beings connected to the creator. In that matter, then, “religion” in its purest form is a part of everything. The Psalmist (Ps 148) invites all created beings and things to praise God, angels, sun and moon, fire and hail, snow and fog, tempestuous wind, wild beasts, cattle, creeping things and all peoples.

As St. Paul addressed the early Christian community of Colossae, he invited us to do whatever we do for the Glory of God. In order to do that, we have to bring religion into everything. To bring the Christian religion into everything, we have to bring Christ into everything. So Paul wrote, “As God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourself with love...and whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”

These are marvelous words to meditate upon as we close out one year and enter another. Clearly St. Paul believed that everything was held in relationship to the Creator and Christ who lived among us. We, too, as persons claimed by Christ in our baptisms, are held in relationship to the Creator and Christ who redeemed us.

I wonder, not upon a star, but upon these words. I wonder whether I can live my life, in every way, fully in Christ. I long for my life to show the love of God in all that I do. I recognize that I fail in that effort many times throughout the day. But, I pray that the forgiveness that Christ offers is sufficient and I can try, try again.

May your celebration of Christmas and the beginning of the New Year be fully in Christ. And as the hymn writer said it so eloquently, “O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray; cast out our sin, and enter in, be born in us today” and everyday.

On a personal note, I want to express my sincere thanks for the kindnesses, gifts, and cards that many of you have shared with my family and me. I am deeply thankful.

Pastor Laaker

Community News

2010 Census Jobs Available Hiring For The Spring

Work Near Your Home
Pay:\$14.00/hour and up
Mileage:\$0.55

Testing at Grace Evangelical Lutheran

1326 S. 26th Street

For more info, contact

Toll free 1-866-861-2010

Omaha Census Office Recruiting:402-682-3820
or John at 402-345-4276 between 9:00a.m.-5:00p.m

Saturdays at 11am

Jan.9, 2010

Jan.16, 2010

Jan.23, 2010

Jan.30, 2010

W/ELCA Circle Meeting

January 19

1:00 p.m.

Hostess:

Marilyn Van Omer

W/ELCA Board Meeting

January 19th

1:00 p.m.

Hostess: Gertrude Hufford

Our Mitten tree is filling up thanks to the generosity of our church family. Many hand made items have been donated as well as lovely store-bought items. The tree will continue to stand until at least the end of December/early January when the items will be divided among several organizations. Look for more details in the February Newsletter.

If you see a great buy on warm winter accessories after the mitten tree program is over, don't forget our Sudanese friends. Drop off any winter items at the church office and we will see that a needy family gets them. We have been able to give many of them gloves and hats but there is always a need for more.



Urgent Requests from Project Hope Items Needed:

Plastic Bags
Canned Soup
Canned Fruit

Paper Bags
Canned meat
Pork & Beans

Bring your donations to the church and place them on the Pantry shelf in the Upper Hall.



Grace Church Member, Family and Friend Requests

- ◆ Andrew Edwards - Doing dialysis a couple times a week until a kidney can be found. (member)
- ◆ Mae Lane - Ongoing health issues. (member)
- ◆ Grace Traynor - Ongoing health issues. (daughter of Norma Olson)
- ◆ Ken Hilmer - As he struggles with heart issues. (member)
- ◆ La Vonne Moss -Ongoing health issues. (member)
- ◆ Fern Matson - Ongoing health issues. (member)
- ◆ Elna Burns - Suffered a stroke sister of Don Olson. (member)
- ◆ Kristine (Nelson) Mauler- Treatment for her cancer. (daughter of Barbara Nelson))
- ◆ Wendy Henexson- Ongoing health issues related to transplant. (daughter of Pastor Liz Conner)
- ◆ Sandra Fitzgerald - Treatment of cancer. (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 the Council Members. Ask God to bless their ministry among us.

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

Pastor Laaker

Vicar Angela and family

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 Worshiping Community.

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



Grace Lutheran Church has two ways for you to uphold each other in prayer. If you did not get our prayer requests this past month and would like to be included, please contact the church office. Our phone number is 341-7730 or email us at graceluth@graceluth.com.



JOIN US AFTER SCHOOL

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

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

Free!

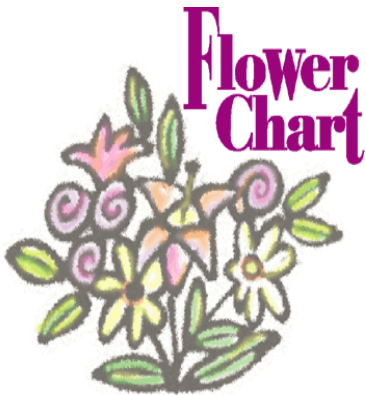
Director, Brenda Spahr
Assistant, Samantha Trejo

There will be no After School Program during winter break.
The program will resume on January 5



Quilting on Mondays! at 9:00 a.m.

If you have the morning free, drop by and help cut squares and tie quilt tops on to the backs. Coffee break is at 10:00 a.m. The quilts go to Lutheran World Relief.



Flower Chart

**The 2010 Flower Chart has been posted on
the bulletin board outside the church office.**

The Flower Chart sign-up is your opportunity to sponsor flowers for a special Sunday in honor of an important event in your family's life or in memory of someone dear to you. The cost to sponsor flowers for a Sunday is \$12.00.

Annual Report Time!

All chairpersons from each committee and organization should have their annual report summary in by the first week of January. The treasurer's reports will be due the second week of January. Please try to meet these deadlines so that our report can be put together for distribution on Sunday, January 24.

The Annual Meeting and Potluck is scheduled for January 31.

Please turn your reports in on time!

"Helping Hands"

Working Together in God's service



Project Hope
4205 Boyd St
Omaha, NE 68111

Project Hope
The Theme for January is
Baking Supplies

Flour, Sugar, Brown Sugar,
Cooking Oil, Baking Powder,
Baking Soda, Shortening, Bisquick



Project Hope always needs boxes of zip lock bags in quart or gallon size, soup, peanut butter, macaroni, pasta, rice, diapers, bathroom tissue and Toiletries, feminine hygiene items, soap and paper products.



Your Pre-Game Plan
Sunday, February 7, 2010
Bring canned goods and/
or \$\$
For donation to the
Lutheran Pantry.



Our youth will hold soup pots at church doors on Souper Bowl Sunday, February 7th. They will join young people in churches all across the country to collect money for those who are hungry and hurting.

In 2009, youth groups in all 50 states and outside the United States participated in the Souper Bowl of Caring generating \$5,010,510.66. All of the money collected is donated to a charity selected by the participant. None of the money is sent to Souper Bowl headquarters.

Organizers only ask that each participant report their collection so national totals can be determined and announced. Our church will donate the Souper Bowl collection to the Lutheran Pantry. Since the Souper Bowl of Caring became a national grassroots event in 1993, more than \$29 million has gone to help those in need. Please support the youth of our church in this effort to "love our neighbors" by dropping your dollar in the soup pot on February 7, 2010.

Happenin' in the Grace Lutheran Church Library

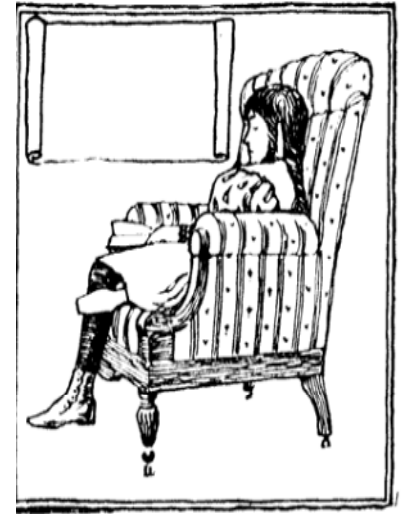
Picture This!

Feet up with a warm blanket around your shoulders, a cup of tea or cocoa and a good book on a cold winter evening.

Your church library is a great place to find something good to read.

More new books have been added to complete several series.

Check it Out!!



LENT 2010

Our theme for our Lenten Journey will be 'Center on the Cross!' lent begins with Ash Wednesday, February 17. Our mid-week services will feature guest speakers and use Holden Evening Prayer as our worship format.

The Cross of Christ stands at the center of our Christian faith. It is the reminding symbol that our Savior died to save us. It reminds us that we needed a Savior, we need the power of the Spirit to guide us, we need the comforting words of forgiveness and we need the encouragement to rely upon the power of God for daily living.

Each mid-week Lenten service will be preceded by a simple meal. A sign up sheet will be posted on the bulletin board. Find a friend, volunteer to prepare and serve a simple meal. Come, help us Center on the Cross!



Back By Popular Demand! 3rd Annual Used book Sale

Book Shelves at Home Too Full?
Donate a few for the Used Book Sale!

In mid-January, the Library Board will set out a box and will be collecting your book donations in preparation for the book sale beginning on Ash Wednesday.

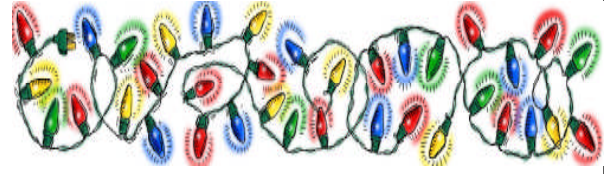
On February 21st, a table displaying the books for sale will be set up in the Upper Fellowship Hall. Most books are priced inexpensively so be sure to stop by and take a look.

All types of books, fiction and non-fiction, adult and children's are welcome as long as they promote good moral values and are in fair condition.

All the money raised go for Library books and Library Projects.

News from the Families of Grace Lutheran Church

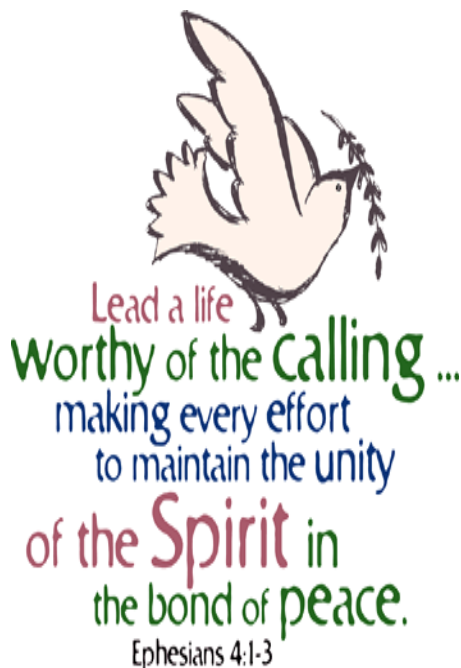
Free Holiday Lights Festival Lighting Display
Through Sunday, January 6, 2008
5:00 p.m. - 1:00 a.m. every night.
Gene Leahy Mall
10th to 14th Streets between Farnam and Douglas



What a Joy!

Thank you very for all the Volunteers at Grace, because of your time and talents we have realize our ministry here at Grace. What a blessing to follow the example of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to be a servant. Thank you very much!!!

Grace Staff



Thank you for supporting Faith Quest, the Kids at Work program as well as the After School program. Brenda Spahr, Director

The Khabeb Family would like to express their appreciation to the Council Members and to the Grace family for their generosity during the Christmas season.

.Thank you and Gods Blessings

There are only two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other is as though everything is a miracle.

—Albert Einstein



Virginia McGill,
Director (402) 660-6689
Gema Wolde, Assistant
(402) 616-4721
Se habla español .

Interfaith Health Service's Latinas In Action Program Celebrates Christmas

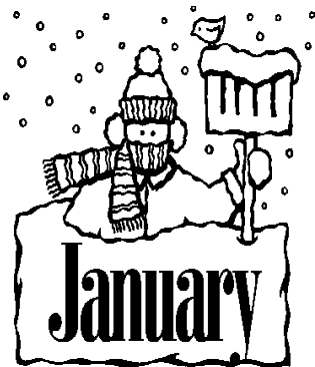
Our Interfaith Latinas in Action Program shared in a wonderful celebration of Christmas last week at Grace Lutheran Church. Our women, their children and all of our program staff attended a lovely pot-luck dinner, followed by games, a great deal of laughter and great conversations.

Much of the evening's success was due to Gema's desire to have an elegant celebration to honor our families. Her creativity and enthusiasm were evident throughout our time together. She planned out the decorating ideas and the games in great detail, while her daughter, Tsehaynesh, and I helped with the evening's activities. Our childcare staff and instructors were honored for their service to the program, and we honored participants who had not missed a single day of the program for one full year! We took portrait photos of each family near the fireplace with lights, stocking and ornaments providing the background before taking a break to share a meal together.

We had an abundance of food, cooked with pride by participants. Elizabeth, one of our long-term participants, made some delicious posole (a type of stew with chicken or beef) with the help of her daughters. We also had a magnificent supply of desserts this year, included homemade cakes and cookies. One of my favorites was compliments of Jasminka, a native of Yugoslavia, who provided a baklava torte that can be found throughout her home country during the winter months.

At Interfaith, during this time of waiting to rejoice in the Good News of Jesus' birth, we give thanks for the gift of each other and the time to celebrate our successes together as families and friends. We look forward to God's continued blessings for Interfaith participants, staff, Board members, partnering organizations and supporters in 2010.

Virginia McGill, Interfaith



- ◆ January is named after Janus, the Roman god of doorways and of beginnings and endings. He is represented with a two sided head, one looking ahead and the other always looking behind
- ◆ January has 31 days.
- ◆ January's birthstone is garnet.
- ◆ January's flower is the carnation or snowdrop.
- ◆ January is National Soup Month in the United States.

Special Days in January

- ◆ 1 - Happy New Year
- ◆ 12 - Church Council Meets.
- ◆ 18 - Prayer Service of Quiet Meditation.
- ◆ 24 - ALL Annual Report Submissions MUST be in.
- ◆ 31 - Annual Meeting & Potluck Dinner

The seasons according to a French Revolutionary calendar:

Autumn - wheezy, sneezy, freezy
Winter - slippy, drippy, nippy
Spring - showery, flowery, bowery
Summer - hoppy, croppy, poppy

**TRUE Questions
as heard at the
information kiosks manned by
Parks Canada staff:**

Tourist: "How do you get your lakes so blue?"

Park staff: "We take the water out in the winter and paint the bottom."

Tourist: "Oh!"

How do the elk know they're supposed to cross at the "Elk Crossing" signs?

Where can I get my husband really, REALLY, lost??



OH.....
We purchased an old home in Northern New York State from two elderly sisters. Winter was fast approaching and I was concerned about the house's lack of insulation. "If they could live here all those years, so can we!" my husband confidently declared.

One November night the temperature plunged to below zero, and we woke up to find interior walls covered with frost. My husband called the sisters to ask how they had kept the house warm. After a rather brief conversation, he hung up. "For the past 30 years," he muttered, "they've gone to Florida for the winter."



An elderly couple was watching television one evening. "I am going to get a dish of ice cream now," the wife said.

Kindly, the husband offered to get the ice cream for his wife. "I'll write it down so you don't forget," she said. "I won't forget," the old gent said. "But, I want chocolate syrup and nuts on it. So, I'll write it down," she replied. "I will get you the ice cream. Don't you worry," replied the husband.

A few minutes later, the old man returned with bacon and eggs. His wife said, "See, I should have written it down because you forgot the toast."



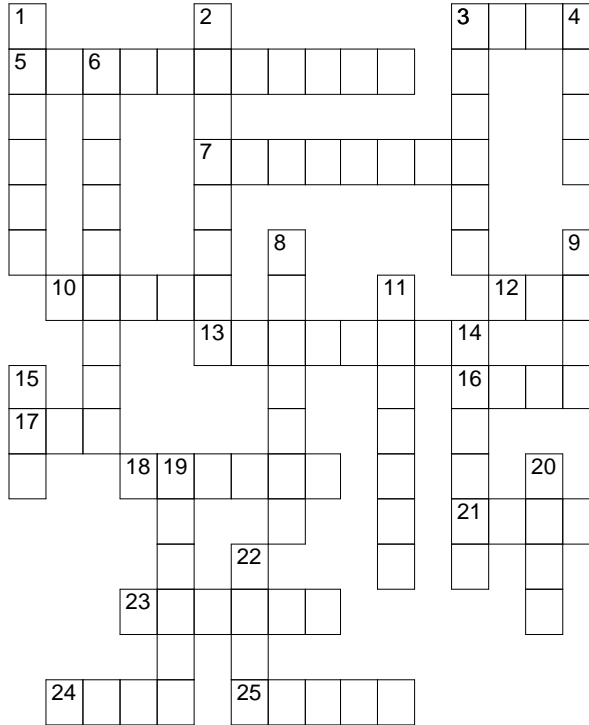
Laughter is a smile with the volume turned up.

What does an atheist do when he drives up behind a car with a "Honk if you love Jesus" bumper sticker and that car doesn't move when the traffic light turns green?

Matthew, Chapter 11, Puzzle 1

Across

3. hearing impaired
5. training, educating
7. speak against
10. high-pitched
woodwind instrument
12. misery resulting from
affliction
13. one who drinks too
much
16. used for hearing
17. residue from burning
18. jail
21. listen intently
23. give account
24. state of inaction
25. rhythmical steps in
time to music



Down

1. kept from view
2. weighed down, troubled
3. a dry place
4. superior to the average
6. coarse garment worn to
show remorse
8. one who eats too much
9. information, report
11. loud utterance
14. deepest and most
remote part
15. take in solid food
19. turn from wicked ways
20. unable to walk
22. pleasant, enjoyable

WORD LIST

ash	deaf	drunkard	flute	hidden	prison	sackcloth
burdened	denounce	ears	glutton	instructing	repent	woe
calling	depths	eat	good	lame	report	
dance	desert	fine	hear	news	rest	

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All I Need to Know About Life I Learned from a Snowman

- ◆ It's okay if you're a little bottom heavy.
- ◆ Hold your ground, even when the heat is on.
- ◆ Wearing white is always appropriate.
- ◆ Winter is the best of the four seasons.
- ◆ It takes a few extra rolls to make a good midsection.
- ◆ There's nothing better than a foul weather friend.
- ◆ The key to life is to be a jolly, happy soul.
- ◆ We're all made up of mostly water.
- ◆ You know you've made it when they write a song about you.
- ◆ Accessorize! Accessorize! Accessorize!
- ◆ Avoid yellow snow.
- ◆ Don't get too much sun.
- ◆ It's embarrassing when you can't look down and see your feet.
- ◆ It's fun to hang out in your front yard.
- ◆ Always put your best foot forward.
- ◆ There's no stopping you once you're on a roll.

