

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

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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 Khabeab
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.*



THE GRACE MESSENGER

2010



2010 Council Members

Greg Hula Gloria Moore Vicky Cox
Andrew Edwards David Nange Ernest Olson
Arlone Farber Vicky Cox Samantha Trejo
 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 on February 9th. The Council members shared their prayer concerns: We pray for the family of Gloria Moore as they continue to struggle with health concerns: Sandy with brain cancer, Rick and Amy in their ongoing illnesses. We pray for Kent Cattlett as he continues his treatments for lung cancer; Chuck Rodgers as he is dealing with heart problems; for some of our Sudanese community who may be facing changes in their employment; and we pray for the Nation of Haiti, as the earthquake devastation affects so many. We pray for the local community as so many people are hungry, homeless, and unemployed. We pray that the students in our local schools will be safe and that there will be peaceful resolution to violence that has taken place.

Devotions were led by Pastor Laaker reading the selected verses of Numbers 14:20 and John 14:13 from the “*Daily Texts*.” These readings remind us to ask for forgiveness of our sins. We learn that prayer glorifies God and forgiveness, restoration, and renewal cleanses our relationships.

Visions for Ministry: The Council is reviewing a book titled, “*Radical Welcome*” by Stephanie Spellers. This book presents spiritual challenges that make us think of ways to fulfill God’s dream and purpose for Grace congregation.

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

Christian Education: Faith Qwest will not meet during the Lenten Season.

Evangelism/Outreach: David Hufford has agreed to be the Mission Interpreter, which involves sharing information and stories about ministry in our church as a whole.

Finance: The Endowment Board authorized funds to repair the stain glass windows this spring. Ratification will take place at the next Council meeting.

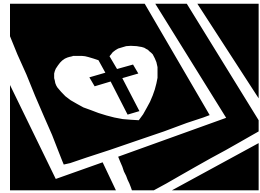
Property: Give Larry Foreman a big thank-you for painting the basement.

Service/Social Ministry: No new report.

Support/Stewardship: No new report.

Unfinished Business: The handicap parking issue will resume when warmer weather is here. Pastor Laaker has not heard any more information at this time from Antonio Zaniga on using the sanctuary for a worship group.

Announcements: Andrew Edwards, Greg Hula, and Joe Narducci will be attending the annual Lutheran men in Mission meeting in Lincoln on Saturday, February 13. Greg Hula will bring treats and lead prayer for our March meeting.



FROM THE PASTOR

The Congregational Council and I have been reading the book, “Radical Welcome.” I don’t know what words come to mind when you hear these two words coupled together. I know that for me the word, “radical,” does not elicit very many positive feelings or thoughts. In fact, I have the tendency to move away from anything radical because the connotation is that this is something that is too far right or left of the center. Now the word, “welcome,” however creates a very warm and positive reaction within me. So, I wonder why did the author couple these two seemingly opposite words together?

“What is Radical Welcome? Radical welcome is first and foremost a spiritual practice. It combines the Christian ministry of welcome and hospitality with a faithful commitment to doing the theological, spiritual and systemic work to eliminate historic, systemic barriers that limit the genuine embrace of groups generally marginalized in mainline churches (young adults, the poor, LGBT people, people of color, people with disabilities).” This is the definition that is included in the study material for the book.

Our Lenten theme is Cross Ways. I can’t help but connect this reading and study to our theme. The Cross was clearly a radical means whereby God reconnected humanity to God’s self. This was not a centrist action. As we know, the cross was a brutal means to control radicals and those who would challenge the established method of government or religious institutional order. Yet, God uses this means to reshape the relationship between God and humanity. This is a puzzling cross way.

The Cross also became a symbol of welcome. Those who followed the “Way” marked themselves with the cross in baptism. Later it appeared on clothing, jewelry, buildings, etc. Today, the cross atop a church building is considered a sign of welcome.

Yet, if we take seriously the definition, earlier mentioned, it would appear that there is much work that needs to be done in order for the Cross and the Church to be seen as a place of radical welcome. Time, apparently, has helped individuals and churches foster a sense of “un-welcome” to a whole bunch of people. Whether intentional or unintentional, it seems that we have come to a cross way that puts welcome in a very limited box.

The study material asks the following question: What makes a church Radically Welcoming? The answer is as follows: Radically welcoming churches understand that each group brings gifts and perspectives that help the whole congregation fulfill God’s dream and purpose. These churches seek to embrace everyone’s voices, presence and power, with a special commitment to embracing groups who have been defined as The Other.

Now as I reflect on the definitions of these two questions, I find my heart being tugged toward spiritual practice and fulfillment of God’s dream and purpose. I wonder how best to implement the practice of Radical Welcome and I wonder how best to articulate God’s dream and purpose. What does God dream about Grace Lutheran, it’s people and it’s pastor? What is our purpose at this time? Can we be created in this cross way as a place that combines Christian ministry of welcome and hospitality to all?

Stay tuned. Together let us see where God leads us.

Pastor Laaker



Stations of Hope

Interfaith Health Services, a South Omaha coalition, is pleased to sponsor “Stations of Hope.” This unique gathering will be the fourth in a series intended to promote healing and hope in our community.

You are invited to hear Gema Wolde, a resident of Tekamah, Nebraska, and Interfaith’s Promotora/Health Coordinator, share stories from her recent outreach trip to Mexico. Gema joined 120 volunteers from Arkansas, Louisiana, and Texas as part of a church-based week-long outreach to families living in material poverty in Reynosa. Gema will be returning to Mexico at the end of March to help set up a mini-medical clinic for Reynosa residents. Clinic supplies and materials have been donated by Interfaith’s Latinas in Action participants.

Date: Wednesday, March 3, 2010

Time: 10 – 11am

Place: Grace Lutheran Church, 1326 South 26th Street.

Phone: 660-6689

Light refreshments will be served.



Prayer Concerns from Family and Friends

*"The prayer of a person living right with God
is something powerful to be reckoned with."*

James 5:16b

- ◆ 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 health issues. (member)
- ◆ La Vonne Moss - Ongoing health issues. (member)
- ◆ Fern Matson - Ongoing health issues. (member)
- ◆ Kristine (Nelson) Mauler- Treatment for her cancer. (daughter of Barbara Nelson))
- ◆ Wendy Henexson- Ongoing recovery from receiving a transplant (daughter of Pastor Liz Conner)
- ◆ Lado family - as they grieve the past of their father and husband.
- ◆ Dennis Olson - as he recovers from surgery. (brother of Don Olson)

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

The value of consistent prayer is not that He will hear us,
but that we will hear Him.

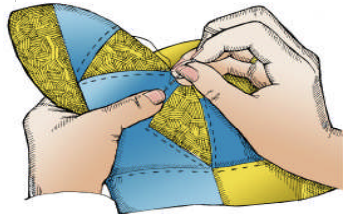
~William McGill

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

Games, Crafts, and Fun Geared for Elementary Kids!

Free!

Director, Brenda Spahr



QUILTING GROUP

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.

· F L O W E R C H A R T ·



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

We **still** need volunteers to sign up each month to pick up the flowers for the altar. Sign up on the Flower Chart if you are willing to help with this task. The flowers need to be picked up before 9:00

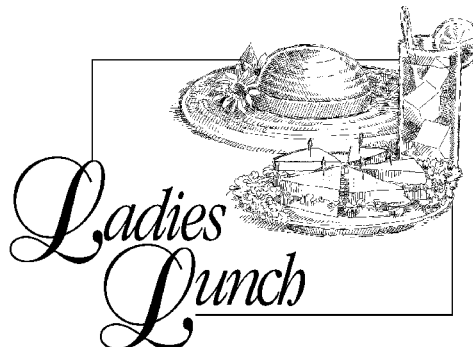
W/ELCA Board Meeting & W/ELCA Circle Meeting

March 16th 1:00 p.m.

Hostess and Bible Study Leader: Marilyn Van Ormer



*Women of the Evangelical
Lutheran Church in America*



Lutheran Women of Omaha Luncheon

Program Hospice Volunteering - Gary George
Project Monetary/Cristo Rey Pantry

Reservation Required by March 7
Contact Mardell Gorcek -292 1312

Cost is \$6.00 per person



"Helping Hands"

Working Together in God's service

Project Hope

The Theme for March is Can Openers/Soup or Stew.

These are things our clients can not purchase with their food stamps.

Diapers	Dish soap	Bar soap
Deodorant	Toothbrush and toothpaste	
Mouthwash (without alcohol)	Feminine hygiene products	
Hair products (combs, brushes, picks)	Shaving Cream	
Razors	Dry Laundry Soap	Bathroom tissue
Kleenex		

We always need paper or plastic bags.

Kids At Work 2010

It's time to start thinking about Kids At Work!



Kids At Work is sponsoring the Lent Dinner for March 24 and all the proceeds will go toward the program.

I'm looking for some of the kids to help serve the dinner. If you are interested in helping, please contact me at the church office at 341-7730.

Library Groaners!

What did one book say to the other one?

I just wanted to see if we are on the same page.

Librarian: Knock knock.

Student: Who's there?

Librarian: Winnie.

Student: Winnie who?

Librarian: Winnie you going to bring back that overdue book, hm?



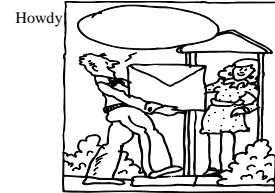
Why does an elephant use his trunk as a bookmark?
That way he always nose where he stopped reading.

<http://www.multcolib.org/kids/jokes.html>



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Community News



Lutheran Marriage Encounter

Sioux Falls, SD March 5-7 Vern &
Karen Harrington (712) 533-6221
170th Street LeMars IA
giblem@frontiernet.com

Dubuque, IA March 19-21 Bob & Mary
Bobsford (262) 547-6439 2751 Sandra
Lane, Waukesha, WI 53188
rmbots@earthlink.net

For further info please call 1-800-265-
1010 www.GodlovesMarriage.org



Donate your used books

The Library Board is collecting used books, videos, CD's and cassettes in good condition as a fund-raiser for the Library during Lent.

A sale table will be set up in the Upper Fellowship Hall began on Ash Wednesday. Stop by the table and browse any time. This is a self-serve sale. A container for the proceeds will be placed on the table along with the merchandise for sale.

Why not use this opportunity to pass on materials collecting dust on your shelves at home to help provide money to buy new books for the library or stop by and pick up a good used book at a GREAT value!

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

March 6

March 13

March 20

March 27

Columbus Park Neighborhood Association

Next Meeting - March 18th at 7 pm
Grace Lutheran Church.

Do You have News?

We are looking for any item about the families of our church and special moments in their lives.
If you have an item for these pages, please call the church office at 341-7730

News from the Families of Grace Lutheran Church

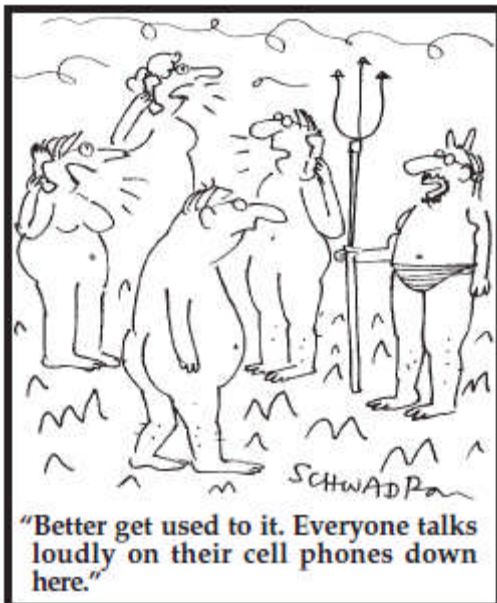


Join Us On
Sunday, March 21
10:30 a.m.

The Rejoice Lutheran Choir of Omaha, NE, under the direction of Ray Swartz, will present an Easter Musical Program during our worship hour.

A cookie reception is planned after the service. Volunteers are needed to sign up and bring baked treats for the event. A sign up sheet has been posted on the bulletin board.

Stay close to God's Word as;
*It will not return empty, but will
accomplish what He desires.*
(Isa 55:11)



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LENTEN CALENDAR

Wednesday Nights

6:00 p.m. Lenten Supper

7:00 p.m. Lenten Service

Forty Days of Lent

Lent begins in Ash Wednesday and ends on Holy Saturday. The number 40 is significant because at the start of his ministry, Jesus spent 40 days fasting, praying and resisting temptation, as we are called to do during Lent.

March 3
Dinner Hostesses
Emery Family

Speaker
Samantha Trejo
Grace Lutheran
Church

March 10
Dinner Hosts
David Hufford and James
Osborn

Speaker
Pastor Houfek
"Way of Power"

March 17
Dinner Hostess
Volunteer Needed??

Speaker
Mikaela Hagen
Lutheran Service
Corps Volunteer

March 24
Dinner Hostess
Brenda Spahr for
KAW

Speaker
Kelly Houfek BSN
Bethel Lutheran



Easter
Cantata

Sunday, March 21

9:00 a.m. Adult Sunday School

10:30 a.m. Worship Service

Choral Presentation by the Rejoice Lutheran Choir



Palm
Sunday

Palm Sunday, March 28

9:00 a.m. Adult Sunday School.

10:30 Palm Sunday Worship Service.

Easter, April 4

6:30 a.m. Easter Sunrise Service

7:30 a.m. Breakfast served by the Moyer family.

9:00 a.m. Adult Sunday School Class.

10:30 a.m. Worship with Communion.



"HE HAS
RISEN!"
Luke 24:6



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

The past few months have been a time filled with planning, visioning and possibly my least favorite activity next to fixing my computer--grant writing! Since grants are taking up a lot of my time these days, I wanted to share an excerpt of the narrative summary I am working on for the McAuley Foundation here in Omaha. It is a rough draft at this point, but I think it shares some new information about our ministry.

I hope you can join me in remembering our Latinas in Action Program and participants and our grant submissions in your prayers during this Lenten season.

INTERFAITH HEALTH SERVICE: A Programmatic Overview

The primary ministry of Interfaith Health Service's Latinas in Action Program is to provide bi-lingual health and wellness services to at-risk Latina women and their families. To meet this goal, Latinas in Action is participant-inspired, led and organized. Programming includes outreach, educational programming and exercise activities based on the needs and desires of the Latina women participants and their families. Latina women serve as instructors, program planners and guest speakers. Trained Latina Community Health Workers/Promotoras are on site for each class to assist in referring participants seeking additional resources and information

Our key activities are our on-going culturally based exercise and educational classes for Latina women and their families. Thanks to funding from grants and participants, we were able to host our first ever Strategic Planning meetings for our all our Latina staff members, program director and volunteers. All staff, volunteers and participants have a voice within Latinas in Action and all are responsible for its success.

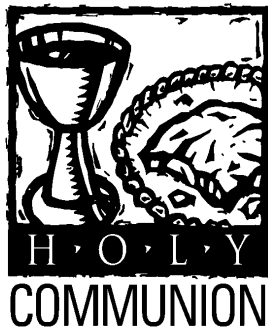
In addition, Rev. Dr. Damon Laaker, President of Interfaith's Board, continued to donate his time and talents in supervising program staff. Grace Lutheran Church has been our most faithful partner and continues to provide office space for Latina Promotoras and spaces for educational and exercise classes, as well as nursery space for children and Art space for teenage participants. Dr. Beth Furlong, RN, PhD, JD, serves on our Board of Directors and was instrumental in providing in-kind oversight and programming ideas, as well as nursing student volunteers from local universities. Our lead educational and exercise instructor, Ilda and our Health Promotora Coordinator, Gema, were instrumental in training three additional instructors to keep up with the need for program expansion. Mariela Munoz, a former Latinas in Action participant and first generation University nursing student, assisted Latinas in Action in program outreach to Latinas and their family members interested in attending college. Juana Marcos, President of the Pisan Guatemalan Literacy Project, joined Latinas in Action as a participant and volunteer early this year.

Interfaith also began hosting "Stations of Hope" Community Forums every other month in the South Omaha community. Stations of Hope provides a way for local non-profits, community organizations, churches, colleges and universities to gather together and learn about community activities. Some Stations of Hope for this year included: Arts and Bi-Cultural Traditions, Community Outreach by InCommon, St. Martin's and the Omaha Public School System's Teen Parenting Program, and Health Outreach in Mexico made possible in part by donations from Latinas in Action participants and Gema's

Interfaith began a partnership with Arts for All, a non-profit making arts affordable for families of limited financial means. Arts for All joined with Interfaith staff in providing art classes drawing on Latina culture at all Latinas in Action sites. Interfaith also began working with the Pixan group and over 200 Mayan/Guatemalan families who speak Canjobal, to provide health education, GED classes and literacy classes at Latinas in Action sites. It is hoped this partnership will expand to additional classes in the future.

Interfaith is grateful for the support of our grant partners, participants, leaders and community partners as we continue to reach out to all in hope and in health.

Virginia McGill, Interfaith



Early Communion Classes

Pastor Laaker will be teaching Early Communion Classes starting on March 7th in the afternoon. The classes will continue on Sunday, March 28.

If you have a child that wants to participate in Communion, please contact Pastor Laaker or the church office for details.



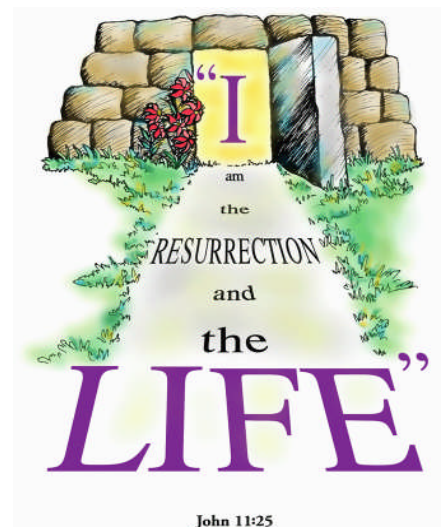
On Sunday, February 7th, Super Bowl Sunday, we collected \$286.00 for the Lutheran Pantry during our Souper Bowl of Caring drive!

Earth's saddest day and gladdest day
were just three days apart!

--Susan Coolidge

The resurrection gives my life meaning and direction and the opportunity to start over no matter what my circumstances.

Robert Flatt

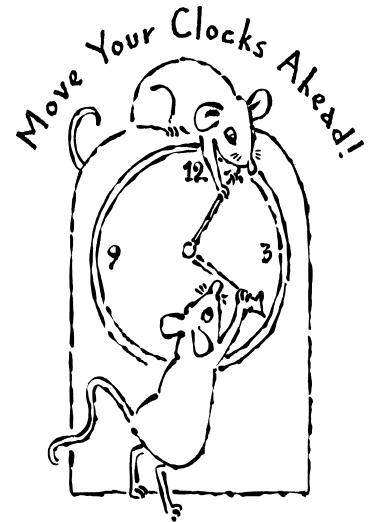




- ◆ Named from the Latin - *Martius* or "of Mars"
- ◆ Mars was the Roman god of war.
- ◆ March was the original beginning of the year, and the time for the resumption of war.
- ◆ has 31 days.
- ◆ Birthstone - Aquamarine
- ◆ Flower - Jonquil, Daffodil or Chrysanthemum which stands for beauty, honesty, loyalty

Special Days at Grace Lutheran Church

- March 3, 10, 17 & 24 - Mid-Week Service & Supper
- March 9 - Church Council Meeting.
- March 16 - W/ELCA Board Meeting Ruth Dorcas Circle Meeting.
- March 14 - Daylight Savings begins! Spring Ahead!
- March 18 - Columbus Park Neighborhood Association Meeting.
- March 19 & 20 - Joint Confirmation Class at Bethel Lutheran.
- March 27 - Kolasa Wedding
- March 28 - Palm Sunday.



Irish Wit

God is good, but never dance in a small boat.

An old broom knows the dirty corners best!

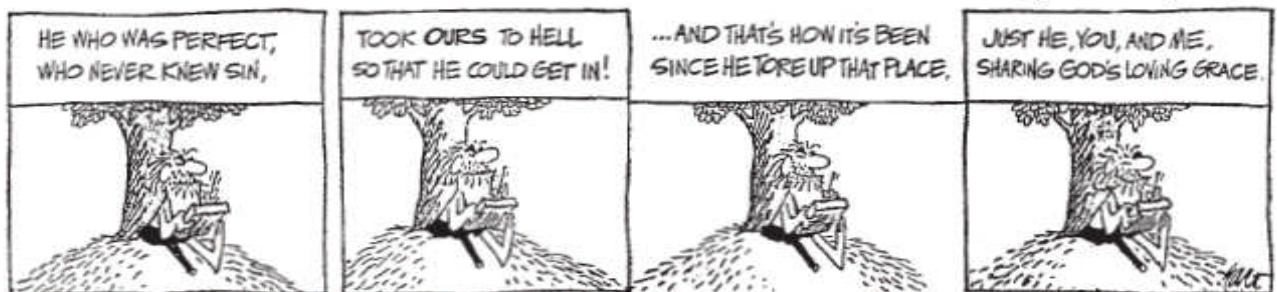
A friend's eye is a good mirror.

A silent mouth is melodious.

That's a fine doorful of a woman.
(On the Topic of a tall, large woman)

B.C.

by Johnny Hart

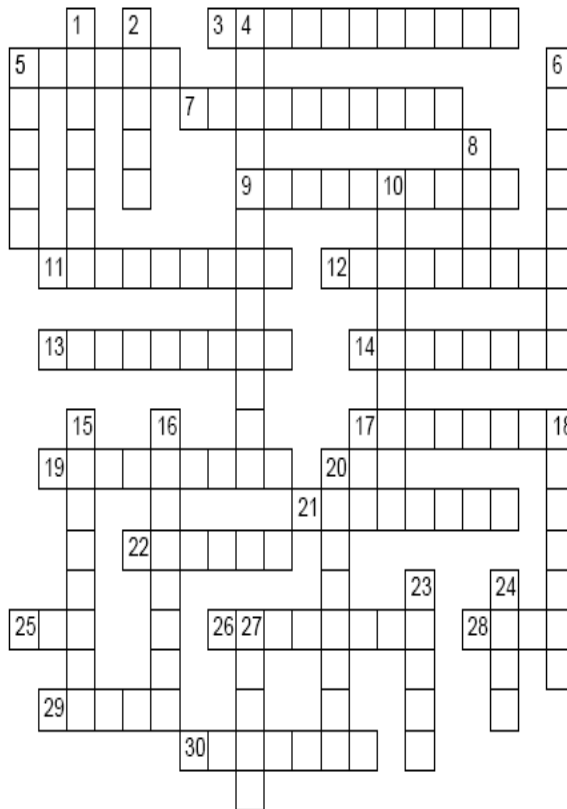


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Easter

Across

3. Roman form of punishment
5. what the women brought
7. despair; destruction
9. deliverance from bondage
11. the "holy city"
12. Sacred Writ
13. power to command
14. small silver coin of ancient Rome
17. Barrabus
19. Mary -----
21. an agreement
22. to whom Roman taxes were due
25. # of apostles walking to Emmaus
26. Feast of Unleavened Bread
28. what Jesus was dressed in
29. 1st word of Jesus' greeting to his disciples
30. he walked with Jesus



Down

1. argument
2. heard the rooster crow three times
4. rising again
5. resurrected Christ first appeared to him
6. absence of light
8. a young horse
10. to pursue with the intent to injure
15. stone at the top of a wall
16. place of happiness and rest
18. animal that crowed three times
20. "place of the skull"
23. what Jesus broke
24. last resting place
27. ministering spirit

WORD LIST

- | | | | | | | |
|-----------|-------------|------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|-----|
| angel | Cleopas | denarius | Magdalene | persecute | rooster | two |
| authority | colt | desolation | murderer | Peter | scripture | |
| bread | covenant | dispute | paradise | redemption | Simon | |
| Caesar | crucifixion | Golgotha | Passover | resurrection | spices | |
| capstone | darkness | Jerusalem | peace | robe | tomb | |

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