

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

THE GRACE MESSENGER



APRIL

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 !Khabeb

Youth Ministries - Brenda Spahr

Organist - Lynda Laird

Sexton - Brian Sutej

Interfaith Health Ministries - Virginia McGill

April 2010

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
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Omaha NE
Permit No. 39

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 March 9. 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 and for Richard's death. We pray for Kent Cattlett as he continues his treatments for lung cancer; joyful praises for Chuck Rodgers as he received a good report on his heart tests; we pray for Barbara Nelson, as she recovers from her stroke; we pray for Samantha Trejo's cousin, Michael; we pray for the safety of all in Nigeria, praying that the violence will end; we pray for the Nations of Haiti and Chile as they recover from deadly earthquakes; we pray for Madeline as she battles depression; we pray for Paul Madsen, as he continues his health struggles; we pray for the Allen family, as they mourn for their daughter who died in a swimming pool accident; we pray for Katrina as she struggles with seizures and we pray for Dennis Grabbe as he continues healing after heart surgery. Devotions were led by Pastor Laaker reading the selected verses of Isaiah 40:5 and Ephesians 1:18 from the "Daily Texts." These verses tell us that the Lord has come and spoken, that the word of God is glorified. Paul is sensing compassion that resides in our hearts, which is the center of our soul.

Visions for Ministry: The Council explored ways to develop lasting relationships with different cultures, as well as sharing ideas that might be useful in our own struggles because of the shifting of patterns over time.

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

Christian Education: Janet Hula will be directing Vacation Bible School this year, with the theme being, "The Bao Bab Tree."

Evangelism/Outreach: The Kids at Work program will hold their annual dinner on Monday, May 17th. Pastors, lay leaders, and community leaders will be participating in conversation with OTOC on family and community issues in South Omaha.

Finance: No new report.

Property: Thank you notes were sent to Larry and James for their respective work done for the church. Loren Moyer will be doing some work in the basement as well.

Service/Social Ministry: No new report.

Support/Stewardship: There will be two services on Easter Sunday.

Unfinished Business: Anyone interested in attending the Synod Assembly in Grand Island on June 4-5, let Pastor Laaker know.

Announcements: Gloria Moore will bring treats and lead prayer for our April meeting.



I receive a simple four page Stewardship paper each month from Parish Publishing. The opening story a couple months ago went like this: “Once there was a little village nestled securely in a valley between two mountains. Its people were very advanced compared with those who live in the neighboring villages. They had learned how to build bridges, how to farm the slopes of the mountains, how to make laws to govern themselves, and how to write poetry about the beauty that surrounded them. They were indeed a very clever people.

“The villagers had a special treasure. a chest filled with beautiful jewels. No one could remember just how or when the village had first come to possess the chest, except that I had been given to them as a gift from someone who had loved them very much. The villagers were very proud of their treasure. They took good care of it and even built a special room for it.

“Life was good for the people who lived in the village, but one thing disturbed them. They longed desperately to share the beauty of the jewels with their children; to let them see the sparkling colors with their own eyes. But they could not. They had forgotten how to open the chest.

“This was a very distressing situation, but the people rarely had a chance to address themselves to it. Their bridge-building, farming, law-making, and writing kept them very busy. However, one day they did hold a meeting to discuss the problem. Everyone agreed how important it was the children to be able to see the jewels with their own eyes and they drafted a strong resolution to that effect. But when they got around to discussing how the chest might be opened, no one felt qualified to open it or had the time to try. Each year they pass a resolution about how important it was for their children to see the jewels with their own eyes. And yet each year no one felt qualified to open the chest or had the time to try.

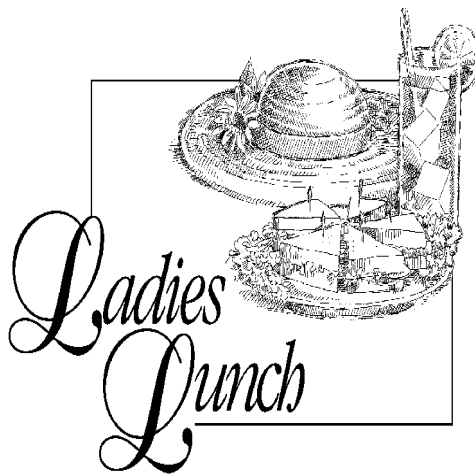
“The moral of this story is if you don’t take time, it will take you. The trail of broken promises and commitments in our lives is paved with the excuse of not having time.

“Stewardship is the experience of turning intentions into actions. Share your time with others and don’t forget committing some of both to your church.”

I couldn’t help but think of time as a gift from God, to be used wisely. Spring has arrived and there are many options that present themselves for us to be involved in. I would hope that as we respond to our mission to share God’s Word and Love in care and service to all, we might find opportunities to use our time wisely.

Pastor Laaker

What if you are just a spark?
All fires are the same size at the start.



Lutheran Women of Omaha Luncheon

St Paul's Lutheran Church

13271 Millard Ave

April 13, 2010 at Noon

**Program
Project**

**Westside High School Chorus
Monetary - VNA Hospice**

Reservation Required by April 8, 2007

Call Mardelle Goeck at 292-1328

Cost is \$6.00 per person



Holy Week at Grace Lutheran



Maundy Thursday Service

Thursday, April 1
6:00 p.m. Lenten Supper.
7:00 p.m. Maundy Thursday Service.

Good Friday, April 2
No Supper.
7:00 p.m. Good Friday Service.

April 4
6:30 a.m. Sunday School.
7:30 a.m. Breakfast
10:30 Worship Service.



**GOOD
FRIDAY
SERVICE**





**Sunday, April 4
Come and Rejoice With Us!**

6:30 a.m.
Sunrise Service of Celebration.

7:30 a.m.
Breakfast

10:30 a.m.
Worship and Rejoicing.
Music, Meditations.

Join us for a time of joyful proclamation of the
Resurrection of Jesus Christ!

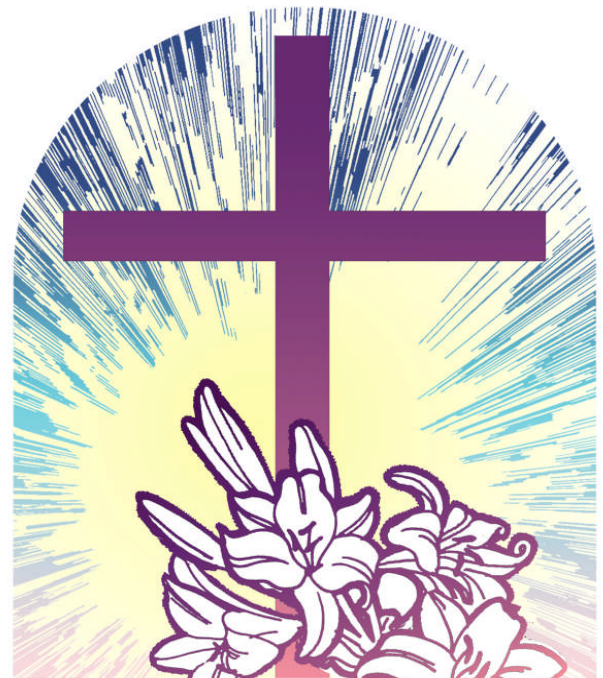
Visitors Welcome!

Lord you have given
Each of your children
A hope and a destiny

You gave us life
The day you died
And set our spirit's free

With each new day
That comes along
We live to honour Thee

© By M.S.Lowndes



**"HE HAS
RISEN!"**
Luke 24:6



Prayer Concerns from Family and Friends

- ◆ 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)
- ◆ Barbara Nelson - as she recovers from a stroke. (member)

Pray for our Shut - ins and Nursing Home residents:

Mae Lane

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.

Kids At Work 2010



Above is a picture from the Kids At Work final workday on August 5, 2009. Following the last workday youth enjoy a lunch and follow with the traditional water balloon toss, the best game on a sweltering August afternoon.

Reviewing pictures from 2009 brings memories and ideas for the upcoming summer program. One idea remains the same; think about being a Kids At Work Team Leader.

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 9:45 a.m. to 12:00 noon during June, July and August.

You do not need to commit the whole summer to helping out; there are options available; you can work once or twice during the summer, a week, or a month. However you choose to help, your help would be welcomed. Accordingly, I will not turn away anyone who insists on helping everyday with the program.

Team Leaders make a difference; leaders are there to encourage the youth to complete job tasks correctly. Youth may discover job skills they enjoy completing or job skills they know will not be in their future. This program brings an increasing awareness in different activities in the workplace in the surrounding neighborhood for the youth.

Being a team leader is not the only way to help with Kids At Work. When the youth return to church after completing their daily job tasks at various work sites, they are hungry and thirsty. Please consider providing a simple snack or beverage.

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.

*Brenda Spahr
Kids At Work, Director*

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 - April 15
Grace Lutheran Church - 1326 S 26 St.
Upper Fellowship Hall@ 7:00 P.M.

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 Mon-
days
from 9:00 a.m. to noon.

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

Want to connect with women of faith?
How about studying God's Word together?

**Come to the
W/ELCA Circle Meeting**

**April 20, 2010
1:00 p.m.**

Bible Study Leader
LaVonne Moss

Hostess
Barb Narducci



Need Some Help with Your Life?

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

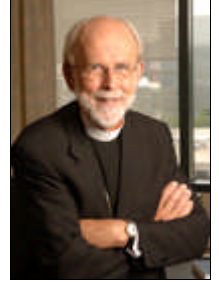
Allyson Campbell, CMSW, LMHP is available to offer confidential counseling to anyone regardless of their ability to pay. Her office is at St Luke's Lutheran Church, 2315 I Street. Her hours at St. Luke are Tuesdays and Thursdays for 8:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Call 733-0172 to set up an appointment.

The goal of 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.

An Easter Message from Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson

The last enemy to be destroyed is death. (1 Corinthians 15:26)

For a brief time, while the crucified Jesus lay in a borrowed tomb, it seemed as if death had triumphed once again. Threatened by a messenger of God's expansive, steadfast love, yet another human mob succumbed to death's seduction. They chose its brutal, silencing power and trusted its empty finality. Death's murderous rebellion against the Creator of life seemed unstoppable.



Until that Sunday morning dawned. Mary, Joanna, Mary and the other women arrived at Jesus' tomb prepared for a body emptied of life. Instead they discovered the grave emptied of its power and death itself buried in resurrection life. Jesus Christ, the first fruits from the dead, lives (1 Corinthians 15:20)!

Now Jesus Christ, the embodiment of God's compassionate love, is preparing your body for a resurrection life. In that life death can no longer imprison you in a grave nor hold you captive to its violent imagination and destructive power. Joined to Christ by baptism, your body is being brought into his resurrected life, into Christ's new creation, and into the ministry of reconciliation and peace. In this new day your resurrected service of God's steadfast love endures forever.

This is the Lord's doing;

it is marvelous in our eyes.

This is the day that the Lord has made;

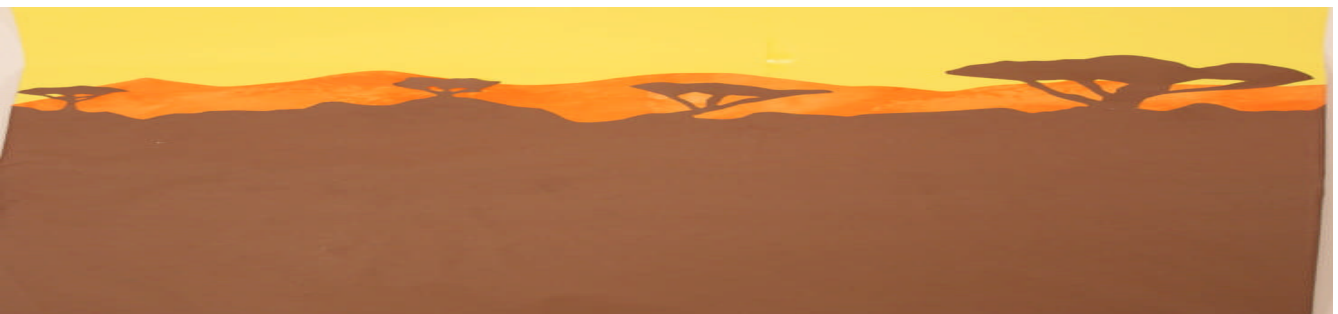
let us rejoice and be glad in it. (Psalm 118:23-24)

Save these dates for Vacation Bible School 2010

BAOBAB BLAST!

June 21st – 25th

Keep an eye out for more details.



News from the Families of Grace Lutheran Church



.A special thanks to the Volunteers - who assembled our monthly Newsletter. What a joy it is to serve, to continue our ministry here at Grace. Gods Blessings.

Thank you very much your constant prayers, cards and support as the Moore family grief the loss of Richard Moore. What a blessing it is to have a church family that one can rely on at times like this. Thank you Grace. Moore Family.

- ◆ Special Thanks to the Rejoice! Lutheran Choir for sharing their Easter cantata with us at Grace Lutheran Church on March 21st. Over 88 people attended worship that morning. The 30 member choir presented scripture readings and music. A cookie reception followed the worship service. Thanks to all in our congregation who provided cookies and helped with serving and clean up.
- ◆ Thanks to Eva Martin and Brenda Spahr for their help in getting the Holy Week bulletins ready for services.
- ◆ Thanks to Jack Williams for his tender care of the plants in the front foyer.
- ◆ Thanks to Brenda Spahr and Donna and Ron Adrian for their commitment to prepare the altar for communion.
- ◆ Thanks to Mary Laaker, Vicki Cox and Amanda Vazquez for their work in teaching ESL to our Spanish neighbors.

Thanks, Rejoice! Lutheran Church



Special Thanks to the Rejoice! Lutheran Choir for sharing their Easter cantata with us at Grace Lutheran Church on March 21st. Over 88 people attended worship that morning. The 30 member choir presented scripture readings and music. A cookie reception followed the worship service. Thanks to all in our congregation who provided cookies and helped with serving and clean up.



Virginia McGill
Director, (402) 660-6689

Assistants:
Gema Wolde
(402) 616 4721
Se habla español.

Interfaith Health Service Seeking Scholarships

Not only is it “grant mania” time here at Interfaith Health Service, it is also college scholarship mania time. I was blessed to assist Martha, one of our Latinas in Action Participants, in completing several applications. She graciously allowed me to feature part of her story in the newsletter this month. Please lift Martha and all over our participants and students up in your prayers as they strive to balance work, school, study and volunteerism.

Martha and her family came to the United States to gain a better education than would have been available to them abroad. As the oldest in her family and a role model to her younger brother and sister, Martha’s perseverance in becoming the first member of her family to graduate from high school taught her and her family that nothing is impossible. There have been many barriers in obtaining an education for Martha, both financially and practically, but when she encounters a barrier she always learns something from it. When Martha began her education in the United States, it was hard. She did not know any English and it was difficult to understand the teachers and even harder to understand assignments. She thought she would never be able to understand simple commands, unlike the rest of her classmates who had been speaking English from birth. She needed to put in extra time studying, and at the same time, find a job to help with family expenses in home. She began working part-time as a sophomore in high school and added additional hours of work each remaining year of high school, utilizing her money to help her family. Studying diligently and working responsibly in her job, she demonstrated maturity and dedication to rising above challenges well beyond her years.

Martha, like many young, intelligent and charismatic teenagers, has many goals. Martha stands out from her peer group, however, in that she puts service to others, faith in God and commitment to her educational values in the forefront. She has set the very attainable goal of graduating from college with honors and obtaining a bachelor’s degree in the medical field. She desires to work in health care because she wants to help others and believes that health education and prevention is important for everyone. In obtaining a college degree, she would be the first person in her family to graduate from college in the United States. Martha’s achievements include being the first in her family to graduate and volunteering extensively in her church and other community-based organizations like Latinas in Action. Martha expresses enthusiasm for life by taking an active role in leading others. She is involved in her church youth group and volunteers as a Bible teacher for young children. She also participates in church dramas and dances and regularly organizes events and meetings with youth.

She is described by the families with whom she works as “mature”, “caring”, “humble in her accomplishments” and “intelligent.” One student, Vanessa, whom Martha has mentored over the last two year shares “There were times I wanted to quit high school. Martha would encourage me to stay in school and helped me with my homework. Just having someone my age to talk to openly was very good for me.” Martha has presented on her experience of finishing high school, learning English and excelling in school to all Latinas in Action participants. Her work touches numerous families in South Omaha each month. Martha does not seek out praise for her tremendous work and because of this she is truly an unsung hero who does so much for so many. For Martha, helping others is its own reward and she is truly happy to serve others by leading and by example.

Virginia McGill
INTERFAITH



Faith Quest

Seek ye first the kingdom of God

Grace will resume its Faith Quest outreach program that equips the saints with the Word of God, on April 7. It will start at 6:00 PM with a snack, provided by volunteers, please feel free to sign up. Helpers make the work light and easy.
Gods Blessings and Peace!



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

Remember!

If OPS is not in session, there is no Afterschool Program



April is

International Guitar Month
 Keep America Beautiful Month
 National Anxiety Month
 National Humor Month
 National Welding Month
 National Garden Month,
 Uh-Huh Month

Special Days in April at Grace Church

- ◆ April - Maundy Thursday
Dinner at 6:00 p.m.
Service at 7:00 p.m.
- ◆ April 2 - Good Friday
Service at 7:00 p.m.
- ◆ April 4 - Easter
Sunrise Service 6:30 a.m.
Breakfast - 7:30 a.m.
Late Service - 10:30 a.m.
- ◆ April 16 & 17 -
Joint Confirmation Class
at First Lutheran.

You know you are addicted to coffee if ...

- You grind your coffee beans in your mouth.
- You sleep with your eyes open.
- You have to watch videos in fast-forward.
- You can take a picture of yourself from ten feet away...
without using the timer.
- Your eyes stay open when you sneeze.
- You don't sweat, you percolate.
- You walk twenty miles on your treadmill before you realize
it's not plugged in.
- Instant coffee takes too long.
- You channel surf faster without a remote.
- You have a picture of your coffee mug on your coffee mug.
- You can outlast the Energizer bunny.
- You short out motion detectors.
- You don't even wait for the water to boil anymore.
- You help your dog chase its tail.
- You soak your dentures in coffee overnight.
- Your first-aid kit contains two pints of coffee...
with an I.V. hookup.
- You haven't blinked since the last lunar eclipse.



Thanks, IRS!

A fine is a tax for doing wrong.
 A tax is a fine for doing well.

Once Upon a Time...

A little girl asked her father,
 "Daddy? Do all Fairy Tales begin
 with Once Upon A Time?"

He replied, "No, there is a whole
 series of Fairy Tales that begin
 with 'If elected I promise...'"

Bad April Fool's Joke



Hidden Message Wordsearch



J E S U S I S Y R I R S C S S
 N S O U L E N A A E M B R U A
 Z O H C R U H C T D S Y O S V
 J K I H O L Y S W L N C S E I
 G M F T D C A C M H R U S J O
 O L B G C E E Y Y W O U S Y U
 D U O T N E L L F R I D A Y R
 M O G Y Q I R N E M L A P L T
 D J A B L U D R N B J Q I Z I
 F P J Q V J R L U B R Q I R A
 M M N T Q E F M D S M A O L R
 A I D Q U H U I Y B E A T U I
 N O I X I F I C U R C R L E S
 U T R F R T U R H Z C D W O E
 P B C H P U Y Y G F V E F Q N

CELEBRATE
 CHURCH
 CROSS
 CRUCIFIXION
 EASTER
 FRIDAY
 GOD
 GOOD
 HOLY

JESUS
 LAMB
 LENT
 LILY
 PALM
 RESURRECTION
 RISEN
 SAVIOUR
 SOUL
 SUNDAY



Courtesy of Songs 4 Teachers© www.songs4teachers.com

Sign, Sign, Everywhere a Sign!

At a Towing Company:

We don't charge an arm and a leg. We want tows.

Door of a plastic surgeon's office:

Hello. May we pick your nose?

In a farmer's field:

The farmer allows walkers to cross the field for free,
 but be aware that the bull charges.

Outside a farm:

Horse manure, pre-packed bags, \$10. Or, do-it-yourself, \$1.

In a veterinarian's waiting room:

Be back in 5 minutes. Sit! Stay!

On a church door:

This is the gate of Heaven. Enter ye all by this door.

((This door is kept locked because of the draft. Please use side entrance))

On a desk in a reception room:

We shoot every 3rd salesman, and the 2nd one just left.

