

Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church

1326 South 26th Street
Omaha, NE 68105-2380

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REGULAR SUNDAY EVENTS

9:00 A.M. Christian Education

10:30 A.M. Worship Service

Pastor - Rev. Dr. Damon D. Laaker

Kids At Work - Brenda Spahr

Organist - Lynda Laird

Sexton - Brian Sutej

Interfaith Health Ministries - Virginia McGill

Lutheran Volunteer - Anna Ernst



Back to School

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

THE GRACE MESSENGER

September 2010



2010 Council Members

Greg Hula Gloria Moore Vicky Cox
Andrew Edwards David Nange Ernest Olson
Arlone Farber Carolyn Matson 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 August 10. The Council members shared their prayer concerns: we pray for Grace and Council member, Carolyn Matson, as she is struggling with health problems; we pray for Sandy Fitzgerald, who is battling brain cancer; we pray for Mickey Andersen, who is struggling with health concerns; we pray for the family of Amy Johnson, as she passed away from her struggle with cancer; we pray for Rick Moore as he is struggling with health concerns; we pray for Kent Cattlett, as he continues his treatments for lung cancer; we pray for Kevin Courtney, as he is receiving treatments for colon cancer; we pray for Gwen Grady as she is having surgery for pancreatic cancer; we pray for Susan Whitehead and Wanda Black, as they are both having problems with diabetes; we pray for Nick Fotopols, who started out having foot problems that turned into an infection, that has affected his entire body; we pray that the cap on the gulf oil well will hold and the cleanup will continue as scheduled; we pray for the safety of all our Armed Services personnel as they continue to protect and fight for our freedom; we pray for the understanding on the issue of immigration, hoping that there will be unity and compassion; we pray for the people of all countries that are faced with disasters: the people of Russia with terrible forest fires; the people in China that have endured devastating mudslides; and to the people of Pakistan that have struggled with flooding. Our hearts go out to the victims in all circumstances, and we pray that they will not give up hope in trying to rebuild their lives. We pray for Chad, a police officer; we pray for the safety of all students returning to school; and we pray for our own Samantha Trejo, as she starts a new chapter in her life by going to college in Lincoln.

Devotions were led by Pastor Laaker reading the selected verses of Deuteronomy 2:7 and Luke 5:5 from the “*Daily Texts*.” These verses remind us that we have a great deal of trust in our Lord, Jesus Christ. We have been blessed in so many ways. We must remember that there is a reason for everything and not to ever give up.

Visions for Ministry: The Council continued their conversation on “Radical Welcome.” The Council had a discussion on facing fears and not being afraid of changes. Growth in all areas, start with each one of us accepting the changes that happen. Change stimulates our way of thinking and even if we are in an “unsure” direction, we must face the questions and thoughts that we encounter.

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

Christian Education: No new report.

Evangelism/Outreach: We would like to thank Brenda Spahr for her dedication and hard work to make the “Kids at Work Program” a success. A picnic was held on August 8th, recognizing the kids for their achievements. The picnic was a success, with approximately 130 people in attendance, which included the Sudanese Fellowship and members from Cristo Rey. The Council is “tossing” an idea around to support Cristo Rey as they start an added service, which will be in English, to their weekly schedule. To show our support, we would like to have Grace Lutheran attend Cristo Rey’s service in October sometime. The Council will keep Pastor and the congregation updated.

Finance: We are excited to have Ms. Anna Ernst start her “Lutheran Volunteer” position with costs being shared by us and St. Luke’s on Tuesday, August 24th. The Council will host a reception for Ms. Ernst on September 19th after our regular Church service. Next volunteer year, there will be a total of six “Lutheran Volunteer’s” that will be in other Omaha Churches and non-profits, engaged in a variety of settings.

Property: The Church is obtaining some bids for exterior painting as well as “blocking” in the rest of the alley windows.

Service/Social Ministry: Pastor Laaker informed the Council that Brenda Spahr is not interested in doing the “After School Program” this year. Pastor will check with Virginia McGill and Anna Ernst to see what possibilities exist for a replacement for Brenda.

Support/Stewardship: All stewardship materials for the next two years are now in the Church’s possession. Pastor Laaker, Vicki Cox, Samantha Trejo, and Titus met with Elyse Johnson from OTOC on Wednesday, August 4th to discuss ways to get know our “neighbors.” Ideas were shared and the “leaders” will discuss trying to institute something in our own congregation in September. Elyse Johnson plans to meet again with the “leaders” at the end of August.

Worship: Pastor Neal Von Seggern will be conducting the worship service on August 22nd, while Pastor Laaker is out of town. Ernie Olson has volunteered to help Pastor Von Seggern with projection.

Unfinished Business: No unfinished business.

New Business: This fall, Lutheran Metro, Project Hope and Fontenelle Community Church will be a “worksite” area. Pastor Laaker will keep the Council and the congregation up-to-date as this project moves forward.

Announcements: Arlone Farber will bring treats and lead prayer for our September Council meeting.



You may recall that at the end of June, we gathered after worship for an internal “house meeting.” We welcomed the leadership of Elyse Johnson, an organizer with Omaha Together One Community. We had 25+ people participate in our house meeting. After twenty to thirty minutes of conversation in small groups, we shared what we had heard in those small group conversations.

The three things that seemed to resonate in each group were concerns about knowing our neighbors, health care costs and coverage, and adequate employment. We heard summaries from each group leader and from those desiring to share further details.

The group leaders have since met with Elyse Johnson and have talked about “what next.” This was something that was asked at the end of the house meeting time. Well, here is what is proposed for “what next.”

We recognize that the issues of health care and employment are outside of immediate reach. So, we have decided to focus our efforts on getting to know our neighbor better. The leaders thought that this was something that could be approached with some measured success.

Beginning in September, we would like to suggest that, as part of our fellowship time following worship, we would ask one another to share “their most favorite childhood memory.” This means that we will have to move a bit outside of our individual comfort zones. We will have to engage in conversation with others that we might not know so well. Now, obviously, you can ask your usual conversation partners to share their story and even share your story but once you have done that, who else can you talk with in order to hear their story?

There are lots of ways to enter this conversation. We could be so bold as to walk up to someone we don’t know all that well and introduce ourselves and say, “We are seeking to get to know one another better. Our leaders have asked us to ask one another to share their most favorite childhood memory. Would you be willing to share yours with me? I’d be happy to share mine with you.”

One of the repeated remarks that was expressed was that we don’t know how to get to know one another, friend or neighbor, very well. This is one effort to help us engage in personal conversation so that we might bridge that gap between one another.

We will be welcoming Anna Ernst as our Lutheran Volunteer within the next week. She will be working on helping us connect to our immediate community. What better way to practice intentional conversation than to share special memories with one another. This, we believe, will help us be better “neighbors to our neighbors.”

Someone asked, “Will there be a prize for the person who listens to the most stories?” That is still under consideration. If you have some ideas about how we might evaluate that, please speak to me. So, give some thought to your favorite childhood memory. Be willing to share it with others when asked. Be bold and begin asking others to share their story.

Pastor Laaker



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 Don & Norma Olson)
- ◆ Ken Hilmer - As he struggles with health issues. (member)
- ◆ La Vonne Moss - Ongoing health issues. (member)
- ◆ Ferne Matson - Ongoing health issues. (member)
- ◆ Wendy Henexson- Ongoing recovery from receiving a transplant. (daughter of Pastor Liz Conner)
- ◆ Dennis Olson - as he recovers from surgery. (brother of Don Olson)
- ◆ Barbara Nelson - as she recovers from a stroke. (member)
- ◆ Barbara Narducci - as she continues her physical therapy. (member)
- ◆ Martina Botho - As she recovers from burns and skin grafting surgery.(member)
- ◆ Carolyn Matson - as she recovers from surgery. (member)

Pray for our Shut - ins and Nursing Home residents:

Mae Lane - St Joe Villa.

Barbara Nelson - Life Care Center, Elkhorn.

Thelma Harrahill - (In Kansas with her children)

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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

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.*



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

Latinas in Action Micro Business Begins!

Interfaith Health Services, through Latinas in Action, launched a hands-on micro-business and sewing program. It is rare that a project of this nature succeeds from the beginning, and I believe our demonstrated success speaks to the trust we have built up in the community over the years. Our track record at Interfaith demonstrates commitment to the community at large and to forging new and innovative partnerships while serving a record number of families each month.

Our micro-business initiative started with the initial donation of twelve high-end wedding dresses from a Vice-President at Wells Fargo Bank who contacted me last fall seeking a way to distribute the dresses in the community. Our participants worked together to re-bead and sell the dresses to women in the South Omaha and surrounding areas seeking affordable wedding dresses.

One of our participants, Ramona, offered to teach sewing classes to participants and women in the community interested in learning more about machine sewing, craft design and small business structuring. Many of our Latinas in Action participants have a knowledge of hand sewing but have never had the opportunity to sew using machines. Classes began with nine students signed up and attending, along with 7 children. Within a week that number doubled with over a dozen women attending (word of mouth spread and participants brought friends). There is a great deal of excitement as the women learn more about sewing and business plans. Our waiting list for future classes is full, as well. Several business leaders in the community will be speaking with future classes about their own perspectives on business.

Ramona is a highly skilled instructor and she shared with me that she studied sewing in high school and that in the decades since then, she has developed her natural gift for creating dresses and clothing. Ramona opened her own business in South Omaha making formal dresses for quinceaneras and is well-respected throughout the community. Her skills are evident in her teaching and class preparations. She is professional, patient and able to demonstrate correct sewing methods to each student at some point during each two hour class. Her hands-on approach makes the subject matter easier to digest and “easier to learn“, according to participants.

It has been inspiring to see women in the community so enthused about joining together and learning together. One participant, Martha, walks several miles while pushing her year old daughter in a stroller to get to class each week. Martha invited me to her house, to get to know her and her family a bit more and talk with her about the class. At nineteen years of age, Martha has a dream of owning her own business some day. She shared with me that she is enjoying learning and being with other women. She is also grateful that childcare is provided on site since her husband works construction and she has no other family to help her take care of their son.

Over 50% of our women involved in the micro-business program are survivors of domestic violence. Classes provide a way for women to support one another, as well as continue their own journey toward self-sufficiency. The lead domestic violence advocate for the YWCA has conducted several site visits to classes and has stated that the program is “needed in the community“ and recommends it highly to her clients.

This latest program is helping participants learn more while provide concrete ideas regarding small business start-up and providing the tools for economic growth. At Interfaith, we rely on the support and hard work of so many collaborators, funders and participants. Without your support, our work would not be possible.

Virginia McGill, IHS

Kids At Work 2010



KAW 2010
Wrapping Up.
Thanks for a Great Summer!



Great Dedication!!

Pictured left Danaka and Andrea received special recognition for their perfect attendance during the 2010 Summer Program! Additional recognition for perfect workday attendance went to: Parsila Dike, Daniel and Mesha Dole, Joshua and Sunday Faya, Nowa Keita, Tenyan Kora, Sherif and Sonia Lado, Telly Mounto, Esahia Nyiwe and Rebecca Yalle.



Last Day Worship Awards Recognition!

Pictured from left to right back row: Ernie Olson, Eva Martin, Regina Ivo, Nick Fredrickson and Brenda Spahr; Middle row from left to right: Joshua Faya, Daniel Dole, Victor Granillo, Esahia Nyiwe, Julie Fredrickson, Bianca Fredrickson and Samantha Trejo; Front row: Ken Hilmer, Rebecca Yalle, Sonia Lado, Nowa Keita, Sherif Lado, Tenyan Kora, Telly Mounto, Parsila Dike, Allisia Fredrickson, Brisa Granillo, Andrea Spahr, Mathew Yalle, Bradley Collett, Solomon Lewa, Pastor Laaker and Danaka Yale. .

Have a Safe and Fun School Year!



"Helping Hands"

Working Together in God's service

Project Hope
4205 Boyd St
Omaha, NE 68111

Project Hope
The Theme for August is
Personal Care Items

Pantry Needs

Shampoo, Deodorant, Tooth Paste, Toothbrushes, Hand Soap and Body Wash, Brushes, Combs, Nail Clippers, Hand Lotion, etc.

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

Place your donations on the pantry shelf in the Upper Fellowship Hall at the church.

"Make us worthy, Lord, to serve those throughout the world who live and die in poverty and hunger. Give them, through our hands, this day their daily bread; and by our understanding love, give peace and joy. Amen."

Mother Teresa of Calcutta



28th Annual Crop Walk 2010

October 10, 2010

Starting from First Christian Church
6630 Dodge Street
Omaha, NE

As a walker - The CROP walk is for the entire family from baby to grandparents. There are routes of 1, 2, and 5 miles. You choose how far to walk. Parents can push strollers or pull wagons. There are rest and water stops along the way and transportation back to the start if you need it.

As a Sponsor - Even if you cannot walk you can participate by sponsoring someone who can. Offer to sponsor a walker with a pledge per mile of a donation and make a real difference in meeting hunger needs at home and abroad. Crop Walk Sponsor Sheets will be available in the church office and at the back table in the sanctuary the week of September 8th.

Pastor Laaker is Grace Lutheran Church's Crop Walk Coordinator. If you would like to help or walk, please contact him.

News from the Families of Grace Lutheran Church

Got an item to share?

Let the church office know about it!

- Congratulations to Dustin Anderson for getting married to Stephanie Renfrow and also to Leigh Ann Monico who got married to John Wiskus.
- Good luck to Julia Traynor ,Samantha Trejo, Nick Fredrickson and Jenny McPeck as they head for college, they are KAW Alum and members of Grace, Godspeed!
- A special thanks to Pastor Neal Von Seggern who lead worship at Grace while Pastor was gone.
- Thanks to Gertrude Hufford for her ministry of sending greeting cards in connection with the W/ELCA. Her ministry reaches out to our shut-ins and the folks who are hospitalized or in need of encouragement. If you have a loved one who needs cheering, please contact the church office so that Gertrude and the Grace women can send them a note.

Do you have an announcement or a special item to share with the church family? Leave a note at the church office call, or email us at graceluth@graceluth.com We love to share happy news!

Cards are nice and cards are sweet,

But don't you think this would be neat?

To get his library off to a good start,
Please bring a book that is close to your heart.

Baby Vazquez so grateful will be,
when instead of a card, he'll have a book to read!



Confirmation Orientation

Pastor Laaker would like to meet with young people and their parents, who are interested in participating in our Confirmation Program. He will meet with interested persons on Sunday, September 12, 9 am in the Library.

****BABY SHOWER** TO THE LADIES OF GRACE CHURCH**

You probably know by now that Amanda and Juan Vazquez are expecting a BABY BOY on November 1st! You are cordially invited to attend a BABY SHOWER for Amanda, hosted by Lucia Vazquez, Araceli Vazquez, and Sarah Emery.

Date: Sunday, September 19, 2010
Time: 3:00 – 5:00 pm
Place: Grace Lutheran Church

We hope you will be able to attend!
Please RSVP by September 10 if attending:

Sarah Emery – 346-7301 or
Mary Laaker – 342-2610

*Amanda and Juan Vazquez are registered at Target and Babies R Us

Community News



Columbus Park Neighborhood Association

September 16
7:00 p.m.
Grace Lutheran Church
1326 S 26 St.

Community Block Party.

*Please plan to attend
Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran
Church are inviting everyone
to come and join them at their
annual block party.*

*When: Sunday, September 12
Time: 3p.m - 7p.m.*

*Where: Norwick Park, North-
west of 50th & Fort*



Grace Did It Again.

*Wow, what a day with great fun .
Thanks to the members of Cristo Rey under the
leadership of Pastor Liz Connor, The Sudanese
Fellowship and members of the neighborhood. We
had approximately 130 attendance. Thanks once
again for the food and helping in many ways to
make this possible.*

Welcome Back!



Quilting will resume
on Monday,
September 13th
9:00 a.m.
*Coffee and Jokes at
10:00 a.m.*



*Women of the Evangelical
Lutheran Church in America*

Welcome Back

Fall Start-Up
W/ELCA Board/Circle
Meeting
September 21, 2010

1:00 p.m.

**“If you think you're too small to make a difference,
you haven't been in bed with a mosquito.”**

Anita Roddick



September Trivia

- ☼ has 30 days.
- ☼ 9th month of the year.
- ☼ named after the Latin word “Septi” or “Septem” which means “seven” because originally the calendar year started in March making September the 7th month. This was changed in the Roman calendar in 153 BC.
- ☼ Flower - Aster or Morning Glory.
- ☼ Birthstone - sapphire.

From the pulpit the pastor declared, “Lord, without you, we are but dust.”

A four-year-old girl leaned over and asked her mother in a loud voice, “Mommy, what is butt dust?”

Joyful Noise Newsletter October 2007



from JoyfulNoiseletter.com
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A duck walks into a bar and asks, "Got any grapes?"

The bartender, confused, tells the ducks that no, his bar doesn't serve grapes. The duck thanks him and leaves.

The next day, the duck returns and says, "Got any grapes?"

Again, the bartender tells him that, “no, the bar does not serve grapes, has never served grapes, and, furthermore, will never serve grapes.” The duck, a little ruffled, thanks him and leaves.

The next day, the duck returns, but before he can say anything, the bartender begins to yell: "Listen, duck! This is a bar! We do not serve grapes and if you ever ask for grapes again, I will nail your little duck beak to the bar!"

What's Up, Doc?

Doctor: "Take the green pill with a glass of water when you get up. Take the blue pill with a glass of water after lunch. Then just before going to bed, take the red pill with another glass of water."

Man: "Exactly what's my problem, doc?"

Doctor: "You're not drinking enough water."

<http://www.oneliners-and-proverbs.com/>

The duck is silent for a moment, and then asks, "Got any nails?"

Confused, the bartender says “no”!

"Good!" says the duck. "Got any grapes?"



Luke, Chapter 12, Puzzle 1

WORD LIST

adversary	many
allowance	moth
banquet	parable
baptism	penny
barn	punishment
crop	rain
dark	ravens
demanded	ready
distressed	reap
ear	reconcile
eat	rich
entrusted	roof
fear	say
food	servant
grass	sow
head	spin
hell	unbeliever
hour	wear
interpret	word
kill	
kindled	
lilies	
magistrate	
manager	

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r n i p s b i c q m a n y k w
h w t r e g a n a m d y d i p
t o p k i l l p t r v n e n s
o s u d l k a a t e e n t d e
m u n r i c h e p i r e s l r
a d b r l s v r t b s p u e v
y l e t a r t s i g a m r d a
h e l l q v t r v r r r t e n
b r i o r a e w e a y h n d t
k e e u w p u n i s h m e n t
o f v t p a q n s s s k r a d
g o e l i c n o c e r e e m d
p o r c s c a c u a a z d e r
t r p a r a b l e d o o f d o
x k y d t j x f y b q x e c w
  
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A computer beat me at chess once.
But, it was no match for me at kick boxing.

3 friends die in a car accident and they go to an orientation in heaven. They are all asked, "When you are in your casket and friends and family are talking about you, what would you like them to say?"

The first guy says, "I would like to hear them say that I was a great doctor of my time, and a great family man."

The second guy says, "I would like to hear that I was a wonderful husband and school teacher which made a huge difference in our children of tomorrow."

The last guy replies, "I would like to hear them say ... Look, He's Moving!
<http://www.cleanjoke.com>

