Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church 1326 South 26 Street Omaha, NE 68105-2380 402-341-7730

Return Service Requested

<u>Dated Material</u>

<u>Delivered to the Post Office October 31</u>

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 – Brenda Spahr Organist - Colleen Jeffrey Sexton - Nenchi Ilka Families In Action - Virginia McGill Lutheran Volunteer - Matt Kong Non-Profit Org. U.S. Postage PAID Omaha NE Permit No. 39

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



THE
GRACE
MESSENGER

2012

2012 Council Members



John Boato Vicki Cox Sarah Emery

Ralph Fitle June Hilmer David Hufford Greg Hula Carolyn Matson Samantha Trejo Pastor Laaker

Officers Serving the Congregation:

Financial Secretary: Janet Hula Treasurer: Ralph Fitle

The regular meeting of the Council was held on October 9th. The Council members shared their prayer concerns: We pray for the continued recovery of those close to us; David's sister, Mary, as she faces surgery to rebuild her jaw as well as his niece with her back pain. We pray for Greg's mother as she struggles with some diabetic symptoms and Vicki's friend Gwen Grady as she moves to hospice. We keep Vicki's friends Mike & Sharon Maly in our thoughts as they intend to adopt from the UK. We pray for the healing of Ken Hilmer and his ongoing health issues, for David Nange as he faces difficult times. His friend in Des Moines is dealing with a heart attack and a daughter, Pibe, with a broken leg. We continue to pray for Fern Matson as she continues with her rehab, and our own police officer, Thomas Loftus whose wife just passed. We pray for peace & stabilization in areas of unrest; as well as in our own country.

Pastor led devotions from Exodus 15:1 and Ephesians 1:5-6. They speak to us about God's wonder & grace. We are chosen to be a part of God's family from the beginning. What an amazing realization!

<u>Visions for Ministry</u>: The Council continued reading Missional Renaissance. We focused on the idea of fear. Fear is only as scary as we allow it to be in our life. Do your best to go out and touch others' lives, participate in others' lives, be involved with other folks...before you feel confident. Jesus sent his disciples out before they were done learning, or ready to teach...sort of an on-the-job training. Let us follow!! Please read Chapter eight & the conclusion for our next meeting. Also, please review Chapter 6 for more discussion.

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

<u>Christian Education:</u> Matthew Kong is working with the young Sudanese folks, in bible study. David's Sunday School class has a new Scriptural verses booklet.

<u>Evangelism/Outreach:</u> Halloween party meeting is this Sunday. The party is Friday, October 26th from 7-9 p.m..

<u>Finance:</u> Pastor is meeting with William Biggs, the attorney, with regard to the Church Mutual claim.

<u>Property:</u> The roof is nearing completion with only a few cosmetic final touches. Also, a new north parking lot light is being discussed.

<u>Service/Social Ministry:</u> Candidates Bob Kerrey and John Ewing came to the forum earlier this week. Lee Terry & Deb Fischer did not attend.

<u>Support/Stewardship:</u> Fall program begins in November, with Sunday Stewardship Moments.

Worship: Possible joint Thanksgiving service being discussed.

<u>Unfinished Business:</u> No new report.

<u>New Business:</u> Antonio Vargas of Prince of Peace has contacted Pastor to inquire about using our property for their services. No further discussions have taken place.

<u>Announcements:</u> Pastor will be at a Healthy Congregations Seminar from 15-17, and the Nebraska Synod Theological Conference from the 22-24. Augustana has called a new minister whom Pastor will install soon. Ralph will bring treats for our November meeting.



Lois H. Ward, a *JN* consulting editor and editor of the newsletter *Gleamings*, went to her Lord June 2 in Port Townsend, WA.

Lois was a remarkable and courageous woman who, even after a terrible accident years ago confined her to a wheelchair, continued her joyful, inspirational writings in the regular newsletter, *Gleamings*, that she produced from her home.

Lois was very well-read and shared the choice excerpts she read from numerous books and publications with the readers of *Gleamings* and *JN*. She loved nature and gardening, and her writings reflected a great love for life. Here is a sample from a recent issue of *Gleamings*:

After his doctor examined him, a very sick man said, "Doctor, I am afraid to die. Tell me what lies on the other side."

"I'm sorry, I don't know," the doctor replied quietly. "You're a Christian man and you don't know what's on the other side?" the patient exclaimed.

The doctor was holding the handle of the door of the examination room. On the other side came a sound of scratching and whining. As he opened the door, a large golden retriever sprang in and leaped on him, her tail wagging happily.

"Did you notice my dog?" the doctor told the patient. "She's never been in this room before. She didn't know what was inside. She knew nothing except that her master was here. When the door opened, she sprang in without fear.

"I know little of what is on the other side of death, but I do know one thing. My Master is there and that is enough."



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Some of you are aware of the announcement that I made to Council on Sunday, October 21, and then to the worshippers on Sunday, October 28. This announcement was the following: The Bishop of the Nebraska Synod has chosen to not retain me as an Assistant to the Bishop with responsibilities for Lutheran Metro Ministry. My service to the Nebraska Synod in these roles ends, as planned at this time, on December 31. This means that one half of my work and income also ends at that time. So, I am in a period of prayer and discernment.

The meaning of discernment, as offered by Wikipedia, is "the activity of determining the value and quality of a certain subject or event, particularly the activity

of going past the mere perception of something and making detailed judgments about that thing." I'm not motivated by this secular definition. I am much more in tune with the way the Christian Church has defined this word. "In <u>Christianity</u>, the word 'discernment' can be used to describe the process of determining <u>God</u>'s <u>desire</u> in a situation or for one's life. In large part, it describes the interior search for an answer to the question of one's <u>vocation</u>, namely, determining whether or not God is calling one to the <u>married life</u>, <u>single life</u>, <u>consecrated life</u>, <u>ordained ministry</u> or any other calling."

Much of that discernment has happened in a variety of ways and places in my life. It was clear to me that I was to ask Mary to marry me. Fortunately, she said yes and we have enjoyed married life for 38+ years. It was clear to me that God wanted me to be a pastor. My whole educational focus was oriented toward that becoming a reality. My ordination and call to serve as Associate Pastor in 1979 confirmed that discernment. In November of 1983, Grace extended to me a call to serve as pastor of this congregation. My discernment led me to accept that call and serve as Grace's pastor for these 28+ years.

Twelve years ago, I was asked to discern whether I felt a call to serve the Nebraska Synod as an Assistant to the Bishop in tandem with my call to serve Grace. I felt this was a clear call from God to use my passion and gifts for urban ministry. It has been a challenging and joyful call that has provided me with blessings beyond measure.

Now, I am, once again, in a period of discernment. What is it that God wants me to do? I have enjoyed the split responsibilities, struggled at times with the ability to balance all of the demands associated with two positions, and marveled at the blessings associated with the relationships created. Is this to end completely? Am I to return to service of a congregation apart from the other duties? Am I to consider something altogether new?

I don't have any answers at this time. I trust God will give me a clue in the days ahead. I hope and pray for clarity. In the meantime, I am looking and trusting that in conversations God will open the door to what feels like a very closed room at the moment.

I ask for your prayers, too. May we be gifted with discernment of God's will and desire for God's preferred future.

Pastor Laaker





Prayer Concerns from Family and Friends

"Give attention to your servant's prayer and his plea for mercy, LORD my God. Hear the cry and the prayer that your servant is praying in your presence this day."

1 Kings 8:28

Those we pray for named below are members unless otherwise specified:

- Louise Alsager Ongoing health issues.
- Andrew Edwards Doing dialysis a couple times a week until a kidney can be found.
- Jim Harrahill Ongoing health issues.
- Ken Hilmer Ongoing health issues.
- Ferne Matson Ongoing health issues.
- LaVonne Moss Ongoing health issues.
- Don Olson Ongoing health issues.
- Rex Olson Ongoing health issues. (Don Olson's brother.)
- Wanda Black Ongoing health issues. (Don Olson's sister.)
- Norma Courtney Ongoing health issues. (Arlone Farber's Mom.)
- The family of Mary Jane King as they go through this time of mourning. (Donna Adrian's Mom.)
- Jean Matson Ongoing health issues. (Andrea Spahr's Grandma.)
- Jeff Van Overen Praise God, Jeff's cancer is in remission. (Friend of many.)

Pray for our Shut - ins and Nursing Home residents:

Louise Alsager - NE Skilled Nursing.

Gertrude Hufford - Immanuel Village.

Barbara Narducci - Home

Barbara Nelson - Life Care Center, Elkhorn.

Jack Williams - Immanuel Village.

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 Brian Maas, Nebraska Synod

Bishop Mark Hanson, ELCA Bishop, United States

• Pray for the Sudanese community in general. David Nange, John Boato 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.





Quilting for Lutheran World Relief 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 and joke time is at 10:00 a.m.



The LWR Quilt Campaign 1 Year 500,000 Quilts

Tied in Faith. Sent in Hope. Wrapped in Love.



What is the 2013 LWR Quilt Campaign?

In 2013, LWR is challenging Lutherans across the U.S. to donate 500,000 Quilts to send around the world to people in need.

LWR Mission Quilts are valuable tools in Lutheran World Relief's work to end poverty, injustice and human suffering.

Making LWR Mission Quilts provides an opportunity for Lutherans in the U.S. to answer God's call to love and serve our neighbors in need. To those that receive them, they are a tangible symbol of God's love and compassion. And to our partners, they provide an opportunity to reach out to communities with important information and services.

For those and many more reasons, LWR Mission Quilts are our most requested items. LWR strives to provide as many Quilts as possible to our partners but our supply is limited.

That's why in 2013, we're challenging Lutherans to come together to send 500,000 LWR Mission Quilts - an increase of approximately 25 percent or 100,000 Quilts over previous years - around the world to people in need through the 2013 LWR Quilt Campaign.

And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.

Thanks for All You Do

2 Corinthians 9:8

- Thank you to Marilyn and Jerry Van Ormer for their dedication in tending to the plants in the entry way, they continue to look welcoming.
- Thank you to Mary Laaker, Tom and Sarah Emery, for their ongoing care in the nursery during Sunday morning worship service.
- Thank you to Bob Moss and Jerry Van Ormer for their continuing efforts to maintain the church with any projects that need to be completed.
- Thank you to Nenchi Ilka, you are doing such a great job cleaning the church building!
- Thank you to Jerry and Marilyn Van Ormer, Joe Narducci, Greg and Janet Hula, and Eva Martin who pick up altar flowers every Sunday morning.
- ♦ Thank you to Ron and Donna Adrian, and Brenda Spahr who take care of the altar, set up and take down communion.



POINSETTIAS
Cost: \$8.00 each

A Sign Up sheet has been posted on the Bulletin Board



The Deadline for Ordering is December 6th

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

Younkers Community Day Event

Friday, November 9th 9:00 a.m. - 10:00 p.m. & Saturday, November 10th 6:00 a.m. - 10:00 p.m.



Younkers is hosting a special Community Day Event in honor of our organization and other nonprofit organizations and schools. Lutheran Pantry has the opportunity to rise hundreds of dollars as part of this exciting fundraiser!

How Does It Work?

Our organization is selling \$5 booklets to the Younkers Community Day Event. Lutheran Pantry will keep 100% of the proceeds from the booklets we sell.

With your \$5 donation to our organization you will enjoy:

\$10.00 off each purchase per booklet
20% Savings Pass
One 30% early bird coupon to be used Saturday only
Online coupons exclusive offers
Enjoy the best prices of the season
Restaurant sampling
Discounts good at all Younkers, Carson's, Bergner's, Boston,
Bon Ton, and Herberger's Locations.

Cosmetics, fragrances and our low everyday price items are excluded.

Please see Pastor Laaker for your coupon booklet.

Buy Your 2013 God's Creation Calendar Today! Fundraiser for the Grace Lutheran Church Library

Each calendar contains beautiful scenic photography enhanced with inspiring Scriptures from the Holy Bible.

Some features of our popular 12-month, 28 page calendar include:

- 12"x9" pages
- high-quality, heavy-weight stock
- gloss-coated photo pages
- matte-finished calendar grid pages
- a superb writing surface
- ample space to write appointments
- a special page for important phone numbers
- 2012 2014 year-at-a-glance calendars

Back by Popular Demand!

Only \$5.00!





"Helping Hands"

Working Together in God's service

Special Pantry Needs for November: Baking Supplies and Bathroom Tissue



402-453-7649

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

Deodorant Dish soap

Can Openers Toothbrush and toothpaste
Shaving Cream Mouthwash (without alcohol)
Razors Feminine hygiene products

Kleenex Hair products (combs, brushes, picks)

Bar Soap Dry Laundry Soap

Bathroom tissue Shampoo Project Hope

Diaper wipes 4205 Boyd St

Diapers, especially sizes 4, 5, 6 and pullups Omaha, NE 68111

We always need paper or plastic bags.

Project Hope also has a Clothing Room and is in need of all sizes of clothing, Especially spring and summer clothing.



Community Thanksgiving Eve Worship Service Wednesday, November 21, at 7:00 p.m. Pella Lutheran Church 303 South 41st Street

The service will be jointly led by members of Holy Family Catholic, and Augustana, First, St. Luke's, Grace, and Pella Lutheran congregations. Monetary and nonperishable food donations will help feed hungry Omaha residents by supporting the Project Hope Food Pantry. Cookies and conversation will follow the service.

Parking is available in the two lots north of Pella, across Farnam Street.

Thankgiving Eve Worship

Hello all!

It's been a little over two months since I arrived in Omaha, and I'm happy to say that things are looking up! Recently I attended the Nebraska Synod's Theological Conference in Kearney, where I got to see the Hunger Workshop I'd helped out on really take off. There were many who attended to listen to what the director of ECLA World Hunger and Disaster Appeal, Pastor Dan Rift, had to say including our own Pastor Damon!



While I have acclimated quickly to my position with the Synod office, my outreach work with our Sudanese congregation was a bit hazy to me. After some initial setbacks, I've now made moves towards establishing a more concrete bible study for the youth. Having had no younger siblings of my own, it's vastly different from anything I've encountered before, but I'm adjusting to it. Many of the congregation's children assist me with taking care of their younger brethren, which I'm quite grateful for.

That said there is a lack of activities that needs to be filled. With the onset of colder weather, the time for outdoor sports and games is rapidly disappearing. If any members at Grace Lutheran have any old board games to spare, I would be more than grateful for something new for the youth to engage with.

While I haven't met you all, those I have had a chance to talk to have been most welcoming and I look forward to meeting you all in good time. In addition my house appreciates the recent Halloween treats that we received from Grace!

Cheers!		
Matt		

OTOC Training Session

Monday, November 12th 7:00 p.m. First United Methodist Church 7020 Cass Street

- * Learn more about how to prepare for a meeting with a public official.
- * Learn how to ask questions during the meeting and how to evaluate the meeting afterward.
- * Learn how to find out the facts you need to address problems that affect your communities.

The training session will begin at 7:00 p.m. OTOC leaders will then meet with Jan Kauk who is the Executive Director of Heartland Workforce Solutions beginning at 7:30 p.m. There will be a short evaluation of the meeting with Ms. Kauk beginning at 8:15 p.m. and concluding by 8:30 p.m.

Heartland Workforce Solutions receives over \$4 Million in federal funds each year to help dislocated workers and other job seekers find work and job training opportunities in this region. OTOC has worked for the last 18 months with HWS to improve their customer service and to provide advice as they choose a new location for their one stop center which recently opened at 58th and Ames.

ELCA Effort Toward Controlling Malaria Yielding Successful Results!

Ackson Chisaka, a Lutheran Pastor in Zambia, is witnessing first hand how education about malaria, prevention and treatment of the disease is making a life-saving impact.



Enoch Shidola, clinical officer at a health center in the same town where Chisaka serves, agrees and went so far as to report that, by a conservative estimate, malaria cases in Kashima, in Zambia's Mufumbwe northwestern region, have been reduced to half.

Chisaka and Shidola attribute this turnaround to the anti-malaria campaigns and programs of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zambia and the Lutheran Evangelical Church in Africa (Zambia Diocese). In partnership with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) - particularly through its ELCA Malaria campaign - these churches and others across Africa are contributing the prevention, treatment and control of malaria, as well as considering how poverty further complicates alleviation of the disease.

Lutheran churches in Africa have reached thousands of members and community residents with information about malaria. In early 2012, more than 4,670 people in Zambia took part in "awareness sessions" designed to stress the importance of malaria testing and understand clinical treatment options, particularly in the first 24 hours after the appearance of symptoms. Church and community leaders were trained to lead awareness sessions, and more than 1,160 rapid diagnostic tests were distributed. More than 2,030 people with malarial symptoms were tested in several open clinics in the northwestern part of Zambia.

Prior to these campaigns, malaria symptoms often went untreated, according to Chisaka, and many people were unaware of what dangerous effects the disease can have, especially on children. Pregnant women would seek care from "traditional healers" who administrated herbs that induced labor instead of seeking care from health clinics, he said.

Every 60 seconds a child dies of malaria, a treatable and preventable disease that kills more than 665,000 people a year, mostly children in Africa.

To help bring an end to malaria-related deaths, the ELCA has partnered with Lutheran churches, organizations and projects in 11 African countries through its ELCA Malaria Campaign.

Rolled out following an action of the 2011 ELCA Churchwide Assembly, the ELCA Malaria Campaign is uniquely positioned to provide mosquito nets, insecticides, medication, health care, education and more. A goal of the campaign is to raise \$15 million by 2015 to support the anti-malaria efforts of Lutheran churches and organizations in African countries.

From January to June 2012, 58 awareness sessions in Zimbabwe were carried out by "Malaria Focal Persons" about one every three days. More than 690 community members throughout Zimbabwe were trained in malaria treatment methods, including rapid diagnostic testing, intermittent preventive treatment and early treatment-seeking behaviors.

"Gifts to the ELCA Malaria Campaign have empowered our Lutheran sisters and brothers in Africa to provide necessary training and resources to their communities and to accomplish their malaria-control goals for 2012," said Nipp Hacker. "The continuing support of ELCA members will mean additional life-changing programs in years to come."



Halloween Highlights!

Plenty of Games, Prizes and of course candy!



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Thanks and appreciation goes to all who put in time to help decorate, participate in the party, and help clean up after. Thanks to all who donated any items like decorations, candy, pop, trinkets, popcorn, cookies and cakes for the cake walk! The Party was a blast!

Watch out for ghosts, goblins And the undead!?!



"Moving Forward by Faith"

The theme of our annual stewardship emphasis this year sounds good, doesn't it? "Moving Forward by Faith" has a nice "ring" to it. But what does it mean to move forward by faith? And what does that have to do with an annual stewardship emphasis?

Hebrews 11:6 says that without faith, it is not possible to please God. It stands to reason, then, if we are to please God, we need to have faith. Faith is simply taking God at God's Word. It is believing that God actually exists and that God will keep God's promises. It is realizing that God will do what God has committed to do.

That kind of confidence is only available to us through Jesus Christ. He is Alpha and Omega, the beginning and ending of everything, including our faith. Christ is both the source of our faith and the one in whom we place our faith.

How does that relate, though, to giving and to our annual stewardship emphasis? If faith is simply "taking God at God's Word" and if God owns everything, then as God's managers and stewards, we are to trust God to provide what we need and to give direction concerning our giving. Let's face it - the old spiritual is very accurate scripturally: "This world is not my home, I'm just a passin' through." But to fully realize that takes faith. It requires us to accept God's claim that we own nothing, that we are only here temporarily on our way to our eternal home.

The Scriptures are filled with examples of people like that, people like Abraham who looked for a city whose builder and maker was God. People like Noah, who trusted God in the face of seemingly insurmountable obstacles. People like Daniel who placed his full confidence in God even when he was to be the main course for the lion's dinner.

These and many others obeyed God, even when from a human perspective, it did not make sense to do so. They were aware of a principle that has endured for the ages: When God gives us direction, and we confirm that direction according to the Scriptures, we can obey, even when circumstances appear contrary. And we can be confident that God will provide a blessing because of our obedience.

One author put it this way:

The great battle of our spiritual lives is, "Will you believe?" It is *not*, "Will you try harder?" or, "Can you make yourself worthy?" It is squarely a matter of believing that God will do what only God can do. This is what God honors.

That kind of faith involves every area of our lives, including our giving. As you think about your giving and as you consider what commitment God would have you to make as part of this year's stewardship emphasis here at Grace Lutheran Church, will you do so by faith? Will you ask God to give you the ability to believe God promises and, as God provides, to give by faith?

Many years ago, the "Christian Herald" magazine provided this illustration:

A lady who was showing a large piece of family silver apologized as she took it from the cupboard, "Dreadfully tarnished," she said. "I can't keep it bright unless I use it." That is just as true of faith as it is of silver. Tucked away in the Sunday closet of the soul, and only brought out for show on special occasions, it needs an apology. You can't keep faith bright unless you use it.

As you think about using your faith, especially in terms of the commitment God would lead you to make concerning your giving next year, please think about what Chuck Swindoll wrote:

God honors faith and obedience. God will honor your faith if you will trust God in a walk of obedience.

Zumbathon

By



Where: Creighton University Campus

2400 California Plaza

Date: Friday, November 16, 2012

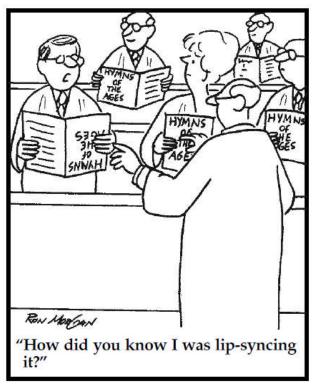
Time: 6:00 - 7:30 p.m.

Suggested donation: \$5.00

Please join our Creighton students and sponsors from Tri-Delta and our Families in Action participants as we celebrate fall with an evening of dance!

More information:

Gema 402-616-4721 or IHS 402-660-6689



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Thank You, God, for dirty dishes;
They have a tale to tell!
While others may go hungry,
We're eating very well!
With home, and health,
and happiness,
What right have we to fuss?
By the stack of evidence,
You've been so good to us!
—Author unknown
via Fr. James Connolly

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Virginia Beach, VÁ

Special Days in November at Grace Lutheran Church

November 4 - Daylight Savings Ends.

November 12 - OTOC Training Session.

November 14 - Photographers Club.

November 15 - Neighborhood Meeting.

November 20 - Grace Council Meeting.

November 21 - Thanksgiving Eve Service.

November 22 - Thanksgiving!

November 27 - Newsletter Assembly. November 28 - Photographers Club.

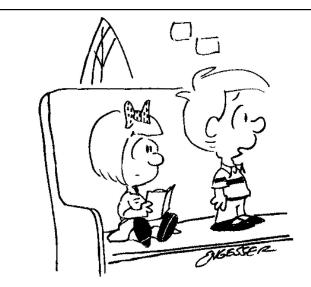
A fifty dollar bill and a one dollar bill met at the local bank, at the end of summer. Each bill asking the other the different places they had been to.

The fifty dollar bill answered excitedly, "Oh, I have been to Madrid, Paris and London!"

The one dollar bill answered, "I have been to the Catholic Church, the Baptist Church, the Lutheran Church and the Community Church."

The fifty dollar bill looked a little confused and asked "What is a church?"

Submitted by Eva Martin



"Dad's not diggir.' Pastor's Thanksgiving Day message on gluttony."

Bible Wordsearch 🤻

Wordsearch 206 M В S N 0 U U F 0 Н R W S E Н N 0

After you find all the hidden words the left over letters spell out a Bible verse reading from the top left to the bottom right

The Little Scroll

ANGEL COMING CLOUD CREATED DELAY HEAVEN EARTH HOLDING HEAD MYSTERY HEARD NATIONS HONEY PEOPLES KINGS PILLARS PLANTED LION LIVES RAINBOW ROAR RAISED ROBED SERVANTS SEAL STANDING SEVEN STOMACH SCROLL SHOUT SOUND **SWORE** SOUR TASTED SPOKE TRUMPET SWEET VOICES THUNDERS

MORE PUZZLES AT: http://biblewordgames.com

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THE FAMILY CIRCUS By Jeff and Bil Keane



"I was REALLY thankful yesterday. I didn't have to eat dinner at the card table."

from JoyfulNoiseletter.com Reprinted with permission of Bil Keane

Strange but true: The Pilgrims prepared cranberry sauce at the first Thanksgiving feast to keep the flies off the other foods – not for consumption.

