

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

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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 – Brenda Spahr
Organist - Colleen Jeffrey
Sexton - Nenchi Ilka
Families In Action - Virginia McGill
Lutheran Volunteer - Matt Kong



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



2013

THE
GRACE
MESSENGER



2013 Council Members

John Boato	Sarah Emery	David Hufford
Vicki Cox	Ralph Fitle	Janet Hula
Andrew Edwards	June Hilmer	Eva Martin
		Pastor Laaker

Officers Serving the Congregation:

Financial Secretary: Janet Hula Treasurer: Ralph Fitle

The regular meeting of the Council was held on March 12th. The Council members shared their prayer concerns: We pray for the continued recovery of those close to us; We pray for the healing of Ken Hilmer and his ongoing health issues, for Bob Moss with his recent diagnosis. We pray for Sarah's boss's wife Julie, as she continues to undergo treatments for breast cancer, and for her friend Natalie as she struggles through a divorce. We pray for Ralph's coworker, Ashley Bell, who recently lost her baby at the hands of her daycare provider. We give thanks that John Boato's mother is doing better.

Devotions were led by Pastor Laaker reading the selected verses in the "Daily Texts," from Psalm 32:1 and Colossians 1:14. The first reminds that we are happy when we are forgiven. The second reminds us HOW we are forgiven - through Christ. Happy=Blessed=Fulfilled

Visions for Ministry: We looked at and reflected on a map of the Omaha area and how the areas of town relate to household income. We spoke about the trends and the stereotypes with regard to the same issue. Pastor passed out "Can our Church Live?" a book by Alice Mann. Please read through chapter one for next meeting.

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

Christian Education: VBS will be here before we know it. Anyone willing to help coordinate? Damien has been participating in early communion classes.

Evangelism/Outreach: Matt Kong continues working on the KAW program and its opportunities.

Finance: The church's VISA card was hacked, but it has been canceled and reissued.

Property: Snow removal has been handled - thank you to all who helped. The parking lot is draining well under all of the added moisture.

Service/Social Ministry: Thursday will host the Neighbors South Habitat build meeting. April 13 will be the neighborhood cleanup from 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.. Pastor will be interviewing 2 folks for possible placement for the LVC position.

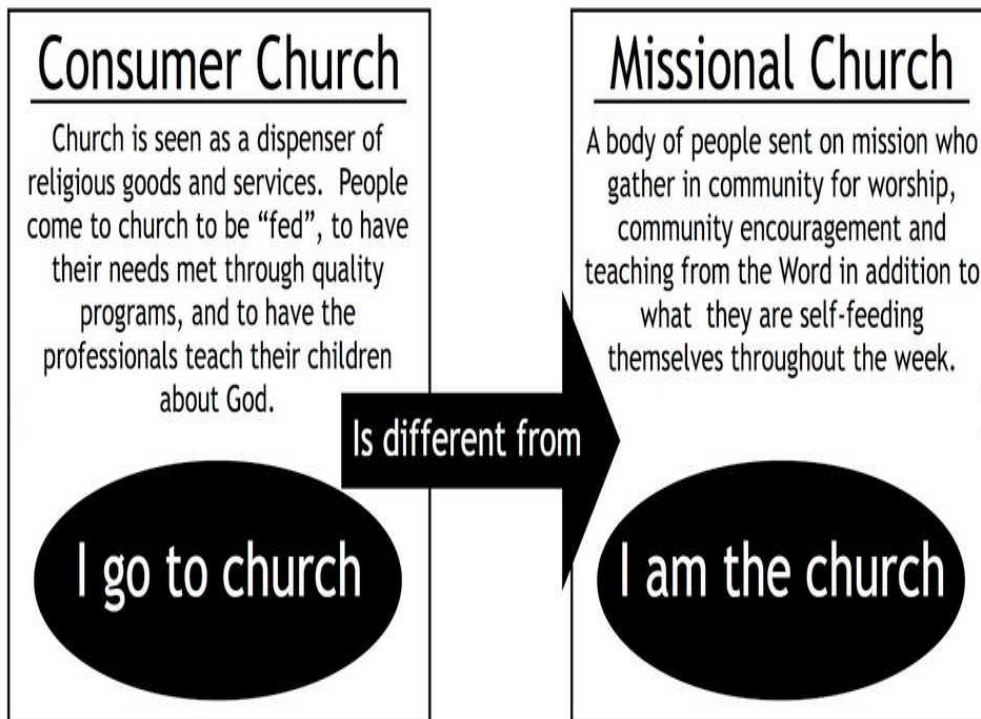
Support/Stewardship: Pastor reauthorized the envelope company to send out the same number as last year. Thrivent participants must redirect their Choice dollars each year. Must act by March 31 for the previous year. Call 800-847-4836.

Worship: Easter service will be held at 7:00 a.m., with the Sudanese service remaining at 12:30 p.m.

Unfinished Business: Nothing new on the talks with Bethel.

New Business: No new business.

Announcements: Vicki will bring treats for our April meeting.



I shared this image with the Council at our meeting in March. It generated a considerable amount of conversation. I wonder what your thoughts might be as you consider your interaction with its message.

I have to admit that much of my life was experienced in the first box. I grew up with this understanding of the church. I lived with this understanding of the church. I was trained to be a pastor for this kind of church.

Over the last fifteen or so years, God has been working on me. I have had to struggle with the clear sense that the first image is no longer working within our American culture. Oh, we long for it to work. We even try to tweak it so it might work but to be honest, it isn't working. What I have come to experience more and more is the second box.

I come to church to be surrounded with a community that sees itself as the church. I then am the church as I live out my life within the community. This means that I hope that people see the face of Christ in me, my actions, and my interactions. It means that I have to be bold enough to be ready to answer, “Why are you doing this?” It means that I must be willing to extend God's care in all moments of my life not just within the walls of church.

How do you see yourself in this picture? As we enter the Easter season, Christ arises to bring new life to each one of us. How will you live out this new life?



Talk to me, talk to one another, let's see where God leads us.



Pastor Laaker



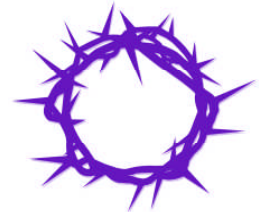
Prayer Concerns from Family and Friends

"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:

- ◆ 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.
- ◆ Robert Moss - Cancer treatments.
- ◆ Don Olson - Ongoing health issues.
- ◆ Lori Vasquez - Recovery from surgery.
- ◆ Urbano Vasquez - Ongoing health issues.
- ◆ Norma Courtney - Ongoing health issues. (Arlone Farber's Mom.)
- ◆ Bob Hargis - Ongoing health issues. (Jerry and Marilyn Van Ormer's son-in-law.)
- ◆ Kevin Jorgensen - Ongoing health issues. (Cody Jorgensen's Dad.)
- ◆ Jean Matson - Ongoing health issues. (Andrea Spahr's Grandma.)
- ◆ Poaya - Thanksgiving for her recovery. (John Boato's Mom.)



Pray for our Shut - ins and Nursing Home residents:

Gertrude Hufford - Immanuel Village.
Ferne Matson - Her son, Ron's house.
Barbara Narducci - Home.
Barbara Nelson - Life Care Center, Elkhorn.
Jack Williams - Brookstone Meadows, Elkhorn.



Pray for wisdom for your Church Council here at Grace Church.

Pray for the Council Members. Ask God to bless their ministry among us.

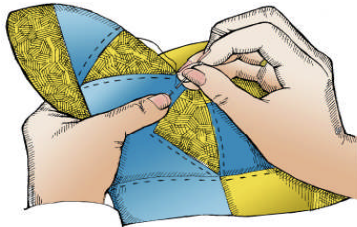
Pray for strength and spiritual wisdom for the leaders in the local church and the Nebraska Synod:

Pastor Damon Laaker, Grace Lutheran Church
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 GROUP

Coffee break and joke
time is 10:00 a.m.



Coffee Fellowship

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. No experience is necessary! Join in the great fellowship and conversation.



Meditations

Confessions

Healing

Wednesday Night

April 17, 2013

7:00 p.m.

Candle light Prayer Service
at Grace Lutheran Church.

People of all faiths are welcome!

BASKETS OF PROMISE



On Easter, we celebrate the joy and hope of Christ's resurrection. Yet around the world "the least of these" — those Christ calls us to serve — continue to suffer.

Through partnership with Lutheran World Relief, Grace reached out to our brothers and sisters in need by collecting items to fulfill the **Baskets of Promise** Lenten appeal.

Items collected to complete a Basket of Promise are:

- 68 Bars of Soap (4 to 5 oz., any brand, in original wrapping)
- 25 Bath Towels (light-weight, maximum 52" x 27", dark color recommended)
- 60 Toothbrushes (adult size, in original packaging)
- 64 Combs
- 25 Nail Clippers (metal, attached file optional)

In total Grace Lutheran surpassed items collected to complete 25 Personal Care Kits to faithfully bring a future of hope to families in need. You have been an instrumental part of this Lenten journey in achieving to brighten the hope, faith, and future of an individual or a family through Lutheran World Relief.

Items collected over the 25 Personal Care Kits have been donated to Project Hope.

Free Trash Dump!

Columbus Neighborhood Clean Up

April 13, 2013 Only

9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

NO EARLY DROP OFFS!!



Our Spring cleanup this year for the Columbus Park Neighborhood is April 13th from 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. It will be held again at the parking lot of the St. Vincent de Paul Thrift store at 22nd and Leavenworth. Helpers are needed for:

- **Delivering 1,000 flyers to all the neighbors letting them know of the cleanup.
- **Picking up bulky items for the elderly and those in need.
- **Working the concession stand on sight.
- **Working on sight unloading garbage, tires, and metal.

Any questions, please contact Stephen Stout at 402-341-7020.



Neighbors South Habitat Coalition begins its 15th house on April 19th. A special meet and greet of the family, David Mushwas and Miriam Yunis and their children, will be held Thursday, April 11th, 5:30 pm. This is a potluck dinner at Grace. You can sign up to volunteer for the build at:
<https://habitatomaha.volunteerconnect.com/NeighborsSouth/>

“Each day is a special gift from God, and while life may not always be fair, you must never allow the pains, hurdles, and handicaps of the moment to poison your attitude and plans for yourself and your future. You can never win when you wear the ugly cloak of self-pity, and the sour sound of whining will certainly heighten away any opportunity for success.”

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—Og Mandino, *Apple Seeds*



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.

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 the Newsletter Assembly Crew for their monthly dedication and time spent in assembling the newsletter and preparing the newsletter for mailing.
- ◆ 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 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.
- ◆ Thanks to everyone who donated books for the Annual Lenten Used Book & Movie sale.

Midwest Eye Care, P.C.

On Thursday, May 16, Midwest Eye Care, and Clarkson Family Practice will donate their services to provide cataract surgery at no charge to people in need as part of Mission Cataract USA.

Eligible candidates will be given a thorough eye exam and up to 25 people will be scheduled for free cataract surgery at Midwest Eye Surgery Center, at 4353 Dodge Street on May 16.

Due to the significant response received in prior years, this program is not open to people with insurance coverage through Medicare or any private insurance company.

Please call 402-552-2020 by March 18 to speak with Jennifer Anderson, Mission Cataract Coordinator with any questions or to set up an examination.

Learn How The Police Work Citizen Police Academy

This program provides an overview of the Omaha Police Department to help citizens gain a better understanding of police procedures and methods. Meet the new Police Chief; Participate in the scenario "Shoot Don't Shoot"; Ride with a police officer; and child abuse. Meet officers from: Graffiti Gangs, Narcotics and Meth, Selection and Training, and Crime Prevention.

These sessions will be on Mondays: April 8, 15, 22, 29, and May 6 from 6:00 - 8:00 p.m. Southeast Precinct is located at 25th and Vinton Streets.

You can complete an application at the Southeast Precinct. For more information, call 402-444-7743 or e-mail at orobles@ci.omaha.ne.us



"Helping Hands"

Working Together in God's service

Special Pantry Needs for April:
Canned Fruit/Macaroni & Cheese



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	
Diaper wipes	
Diapers, especially sizes 4, 5, 6 and pullups	

Project Hope
4205 Boyd St
Omaha, NE 68111
402-453-7649

We always need paper or plastic bags.

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

2013 Feinsein Challenge Continues 16th Annual \$1 Million Giveaway

Alan Shawn Feinsein has, for the past 15 years, provided one million dollars of his money to anti-hunger agencies throughout the country. Every year Mr. Feinsein challenges these agencies to raise funds and food from March 1st to April 30th. The more money and food collected, the more of Mr. Feinsein's one million dollars will be received.

At Project Hope we are grateful for all the donations congregations in Omaha have shared with us in the past. Once again, we have a unique opportunity to get supplemental funds for all contributions during March and April. We would use this money only for buying food. The Lutheran church and community response in 2012 was incredible with helping us meet and exceed our goal of \$54,000. We will get \$1.00 credit for each food item donated and \$1.00 credit for every dollar donated. This would be an ideal mission opportunity during the Lenten season. Would your congregation please consider joining us in this Challenge by collecting food items or receiving a special offering?

Hello all!

Things are looking up! Spring is here and that means more time outside! While we have been outside every now and then thanks to the sporadic weather, soccer has been sorely missed.



Kids At Work is around the corner and I'm in need of drivers. As many of you already know, these drivers will be chaperoning 4-5 of the children at different worksites from 10 am to 12 pm on Tuesdays and Wednesdays during the summer. This year may also see an expansion with additional worksites at Together, Inc. and Hospice House thanks to conversations I've had with my housemates! I'll be sure to put out a sign up sheet in the coming months, and would appreciate it if you'd consider giving your time to help out.

Lately I've been spending Saturday mornings helping one of our Sudanese congregation members learn about U.S. history and government in preparation for his citizenship exam. This is definitely a refresher on a lot of subjects that I really should know and yet don't. Example questions include: How many amendments does the Constitution have? The idea of self-government is in the first three words of the Constitution. What are these words? If anyone can answer these questions off the top of their head, maybe you should consider joining me to help out other members of the congregation that may be interested in attaining their citizenship!

Cheers!

Matt

Saturday, April 27: OTOC's 4th Annual Celebration of Community Fundraiser at the Hot Shops with live music, great food, art galleries and workshops, silent auction and many of the most engaged and interesting people in Omaha.
From 6:00 to 9:30 p.m.

See Pastor Laaker for advance tickets.



"Do not look back. And do not dream about the future, either. It will neither give you back the past, nor satisfy your other daydreams. Your duty, your reward – your destiny – are *here and now.*"

—Dag Hammarskjold

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Monday, May 6: Candidates' Accountability Session at St Pius X Catholic Church (6905 Blondo) at 7:00 p.m. Hear whether the final two candidates for Mayor and several City Council district will commit to work with OTOC on several issues which OTOC leaders are developing through individual meetings and small group meetings.

Let's have a half dozen folks attend!



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Signs and Wonders

Sign outside Pine Grove Baptist Church, Gainesville, FL:

"John 3:16. I'm Jesus Christ and I approve this message."

— via Bill Reynolds Palatka, FL

Bumper sticker seen on the back of a car:

"I'll bet Jesus would have used his turn signal."

— via Rev. Dr. Karl R. Kraft Dover, DE

Sign outside Covenant Moravian Church, York, PA:

"Feeling like an alien? We have space for you."

— via Pastor Dean Jurgen

Sign seen in an Iowa store:

"Unattended children will be given espresso and a free puppy."

— via Pastor Dale Schoening Bussey, IA

Sign outside First Baptist Church, Two Harbors, MN:

"It's hard to stumble when you are down on your knees."

— via Duane Zwiers No. St. Paul, MN

Sign outside Covenant Moravian Church, York, PA:

"Life's a puzzle? Look here for the missing peace."

— via Pastor Dean Jurgen

Special Days in April at Grace Lutheran Church

April 1 - April Fool's Day.

April 9 - Council Meeting.

April 10 - Photographer's Club.

April 11 - Habitat Meet and Greet.

April 13 - Columbus Neighborhood Clean-up.

April 17 - Prayer Service.

April 18 - Neighborhood Meeting.

April 23 - Newsletter Assembly.

April 23 - Hymn Selection.

April 24 - Photographer's Club.

April 27 - OTOC Hot Shops Fundraiser.

Sign outside King of Kings Lutheran Church, Altamonte Springs, FL:

"Weather Report: God reigns and the Son shines."

— via Bobbe Lyon Maitland, FL



Minnesota winter

Posted on JN's Facebook page by a Minnesota resident:

It's winter in Minnesota and the gentle breezes blow.

Seventy miles an hour at twenty-five below.

Oh, how I love Minnesota when the snow's up to your butt.

You take a breath of winter and your nose freezes shut.

Yes, the weather here is wonderful so I guess I'll hang around.

I could never leave Minnesota 'cause I'm frozen to the ground!

— via Darlene Clay

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Bible Wordsearch

Wordsearch 211

Rev.13:1-10

The Beast

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

BEAST
 BOOK
 FATAL
 GOD
 HEADS
 HEALED
 HEAVEN
 MOUTH
 LAMB
 NAMES
 NATION
 POWER
 PROUD
 SHORE
 SLAIN
 LION
 TRIBE
 UTTER
 WORLD
 CONQUER
 COMING
 CROWNS
 DRAGON
 CREATION
 CAPTIVITY
 DWELLING
 EXERCISE
 FOLLOWED
 LANGUAGE
 LEOPARD
 OPENED
 PEOPLE
 SAINTS
 SLANDER
 THRONE
 WORSHIP
 WOUND
 WRITTEN
 BLASPHEME

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

MORE PUZZLES AT:
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The Perfect Gift

A HUG!

Relieves Tension
 Improves Blood Flow
 Reduces Stress
 Non-Polluting
 Helps Self-Esteem
 Generates Good Will



NO BATTERIES REQUIRED
 ABSOLUTELY NO COST
 NON-TAXABLE
 SILENT PERFORMANCE
 EXTREMELY PERSONAL
 FULLY RETURNABLE

GET ONE TODAY!



RECOMMENDED FOR AGES 1 TO 100 AND UP!