

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

Email: [graceluth@graceluth.com](mailto:graceluth@graceluth.com)  
Web Site: [www.graceluth.com](http://www.graceluth.com)

**REGULAR SUNDAY EVENTS**  
9:00 a.m. Christian Education  
10:30 a.m. Worship Service

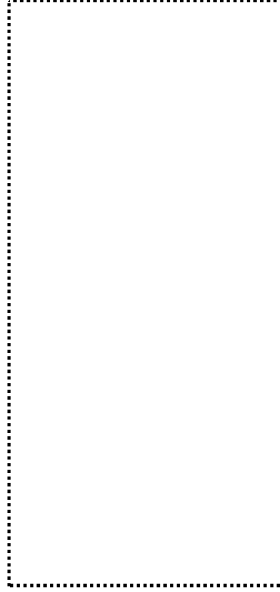
**Pastor - Rev. Dr. Damon D. Laaker**  
**Editor/Church Secretary - Brenda Spahr**  
**Organist - Colleen Jeffrey**  
**Sexton - Alma Lopez**  
**Families In Action - Virginia McGill**  
**Lutheran Volunteer Corp - Jessica Menary**

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# THE GRACE MESSENGER



2014

Grace Evangelical  
Lutheran Church



1889 ~ 2014

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



**2014 Council Members**

|                |               |
|----------------|---------------|
| Vicki Cox      | Janet Hula    |
| Andrew Edwards | Eva Martin    |
| Sarah Emery    | Loren Moyer   |
| Arlone Farber  | Charles Tuw   |
| June Hilmer    | Pastor Laaker |

\*\*\*\*\*

Officers Serving the Congregation:  
 Financial: Janet Hula      Treasurer: Ralph Fitle

The regular meeting of the Council was held on March 18th. The Council members shared their prayer concerns: We pray for the continued recovery of those close to us. We pray for Ken Hilmer as he continues to struggle with pain, for June’s brother Marion after his recent stroke and upcoming hernia surgery. We pray for John Nyange as he struggles to recover from surgery at UNMC, and for Vicki’s Aunt Doris Sanderson with her hospitalization. We praise God for Vicki’s grandson Shea as he recovers from his recent surgery.

Devotions were led by Pastor Laaker reading the selected verses in the “Daily Texts.” Devotions were from Psalm 5:1,2 and Hebrews 5:7. The first is uplifting, speaking about daily struggles and our support. The second reminds us that everyone experiences pain, but that acceptance, trust, and a sense of peace follows!

Visions for Ministry: We talked about the Newbigin philosophy; the idea that missionaries aren’t here to save the world...the idea that God’s already at work there. Let’s continue what God’s begun! Where is God active now? Are we pressing on, learning from others, continuing? We will read Chapter 1 of “The Future Starts Now” and answer the questions on pages 28-30.

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

**Bible Wordsearch**

**King of Kings**

Wordsearch 223

Rev.19:7-17

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

ALMIGHTY ANGEL  
 ARMIES BLOOD  
 BLAZING BRIGHT  
 BLESSED BRIDE  
 CROWNS EYES  
 DIPPED GLORY  
 DRESSED JESUS  
 FAITHFUL LAMB  
 FELLOW LINEN  
 GATHER LORD  
 HEAVEN MIDAIR  
 JUDGES MOUTH  
 JUSTICE RIDING  
 NATIONS SAINTS  
 REJOICE SHARP  
 SCEPTER SPIRIT  
 SERVANT STRIKE  
 WEDDING VOICE  
 WORSHIP WRATH

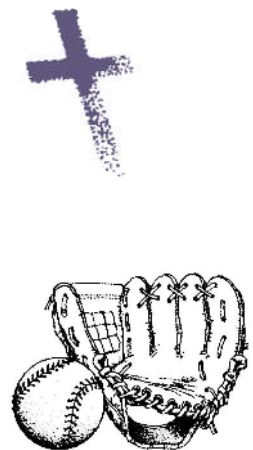
After you find all the hidden words the left over letters spell out a Bible verse reading from the top left to the bottom right

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\_\_\_\_\_

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MORE PUZZLES AT: <http://biblewordgames.com> COPYRIGHT 2014 ALL RIGHTS RESERVED



## Spring is Here

The first day of spring,  
Is coming our way,  
So why not get out,  
On this beautiful sunny day.

The flowers are in bloom.  
And the animals are frolicking about,  
They are all having fun,  
And that is sure no doubt.

So enjoy this time of year,  
Because it will make you sing,  
And you will have a smile on your face,  
Because it's the start of spring.

~ Debbie Bongoivanni ~  
Skywriting.net



Christian Education: Let's begin thinking about VBS for this summer.

Evangelism/Outreach: No new report.

Finance: Motion to ratify the distribution of funds from the Disney Fund.

Property: Church Mutual Lawsuit - deposing Pastor on April 9 & 10.

Service/Social Ministry: OTOC Issues Conference was a huge success. Three new additional task forces were created. Pastor shared about the focus on Immigration reform and the city's budget for the demolition of condemned homes.

Support/Stewardship: No new report.

Worship: Pastor has accepted a part-time interim position with St. Luke's. Council voted to change the worship service time from 10:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. beginning on Sunday, April 6. Easter Sunday Sunrise service will not be affected.

Unfinished Business: Brenda and Jessica will attend the Synod Assembly as voting members.

New Business: No new report.

Announcements: God's Work Our Hands - 1st Sunday in September...what can we do to improve our community? June will bring treats for our April meeting.

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"Laughter is the corrective force that prevents us from becoming cranks."

~ Henri Bergson

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A  
Message  
from Our  
Pastor

Our theme for the mid-week Lenten observance is Making Change. This couldn't be more appropriate as we enter the month of April.

Here is the summary offered in Sundays and Seasons: "Change is a constant in our lives. Some changes mark gradual transitions, as when daytime shifts toward twilight or winter turns to spring. Others happen in the blink of an eye, separating time into 'before' and 'after.' We choose to undergo some changes after carefully considering our options, while others are forced upon us.

"In the weeks, days, and hours before Jesus' crucifixion, the disciples also experienced change: a change of venues the gates of Jerusalem approached; a change of plans as their long-awaited Messiah was arrested and tried; a change of circumstance as the crowds shouted 'Crucify!'

"Change is hard. We long for the expected and familiar, but all too often find ourselves in the midst of the uncertainty and the unknown. We cannot predict how things will turn out. The hymnwriter Joachim Neander proclaimed God's steadfast love in the midst of life's inevitable changes: 'All my hope on God is founded who will all my trust renew, who through change and chance will guide me, only good and only true. God unknown, God alone, call my heart to be thine own.'"

Having shared that, the change that is coming with April is that, I have agreed to become the part-time Interim Pastor for St. Lukes Lutheran during their pastoral transition. This means that I will be splitting my time between Grace and St. Lukes. It also means that there is a necessary change in our worship schedule.



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

Special Pantry Needs for April:  
Cake Mixes and Frosting

**Items that clients cannot purchase with their food stamps are always appreciated:** Dish Soap, Kleenex, Bar Soap, Deodorant, Toothbrush and toothpaste, Shaving Cream, Razors, Mouthwash (without alcohol), Feminine hygiene products, Hair products (combs, brushes, picks), Bathroom tissue, Shampoo, Dry Laundry Soap, Can Openers, Diaper wipes, and Diapers, especially sizes 4, 5, 6 and pull-ups.

**We always need paper or plastic bags.**

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



Neighbors South Habitat Coalition will begin its 16th house on April 11th. Together, we can empower families and fight to end poverty housing in our community. This year's build will make a few dreams reach reality for Maria Lopez and her children. If you would like to volunteer part of your Fridays or Saturdays during this summer and help fulfill a dream of being homeowners for a family, you can sign up to volunteer for the build at: [neighborsouth.com/ns/volunteer](http://neighborsouth.com/ns/volunteer) or speak with Pastor Laker for additional information.

My husband, Dario, and I have been back in my hometown of Omaha for the past few years where we are raising our family. Our son, Emilio, is six; our daughter, Honora, is four; and Sabina just turned three! I have taken a "break" from my career in child welfare for the past few years to be home with our young children. I am so excited to be working with Families in Action part-time in order to accompany the amazing participants of IHS on their paths and to support such a wonderfully talented and compassionate team of people! Thank you, Interfaith and Families in Action, for welcoming me into this important and uplifting work! Kaela



**Carol Joy Holling Camp  
April 25-26  
Gathering Christian Men  
For a Rustic Adventure**

This retreat will gather men for time to worship, serve, and learn. You'll take part in a variety of camp activities like archery, boating, fishing and fly fishing lessons. Pastor Jeremy Fuerst from St. Timothy's Lutheran Church in Omaha will be leading devotion/Bible study this year.

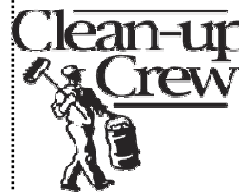
Cost is \$88 per person which includes lodging, meals, Bible study book, and all activities. Lodging will take place at the Holling House at Carol Joy Holling. You can register online at [caroljoyholling.com](http://caroljoyholling.com) or call Kelsey Rabel at 402-944-2544.

St. Lukes has moved their two service times into one at 9 am. Grace's Council has decided to move our worship time to 11 am. This small move will help make it possible for me to conduct worship at St. Lukes, greet the people and still make it to Grace in time to conduct worship without having to rush!!! I hope you will understand the need for this change.

In addition, Grace's Council and St. Luke's Council have agreed that for Holy Week, we will conduct Maundy Thursday Service at Grace and Good Friday Service at St. Lukes. Our Easter morning service time will be 6:30 am at Grace and 9 am at St. Lukes.

I trust God is in the midst of this change and we will be blessed by the Spirit as we navigate this new arrangement. Please utilize the practice of prayer to hold up our leaders as they try their best to discern what is best for both congregations.

Pr. Laaker



Columbus Park Neighborhood Clean up day this year is on April 12th 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. (Before Clean-Up Day)
- ⌘ Clean-Up Day! Always a lot of fun! This is our 20th plus year of doing this as a neighborhood association!
- ⌘ Picking up bulky items for the elderly and those in need.
- ⌘ Working on sight unloading garbage, tires, and metal.

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

Please  
Pray  
for...



Yet 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:

✠ **Individuals listed below have ongoing health issues**

- |  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| ✠ Andrew Edwards   | ✠ Jim Harrahill  |
| ✠ Ken Hilmer   | ✠ David Hufford  |
| ✠ Carolyn Matson   | ✠ Ferne Matson   |
| ✠ Gloria Moore   | ✠ LaVonne Moss   |
| ✠ Robert Moss  | ✠ Don Olson      |
| ✠ Lori Vasquez   | ✠ Urbano Vasquez |
| ✠ Scott Moore (Gloria Moore's son.)                                    |                  |
| ✠ Norma Courtney (Arlone Farber's Mom.)                                |                  |
| ✠ Bob Hargis (Jerry and Marilyn Van Ormer's son-in-law.)               |                  |
| ✠ Christian Barajas (Samantha Trejo, Angela & Alex Everitt's brother.) |                  |
| ✠ Sandy Fitzgerald (Gloria Moore's daughter.)                          |                  |

**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 Elizabeth Eaton, ELCA Bishop

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.*



Virginia McGill, MA  
Executive Director

Gema C. Wolde  
Community Health Worker  
Se habla español.

Hola! My name is Kaela Volkmer and I am delighted to be working with Interfaith Health Service and Families in Action. For many years, I have had a strong interest in walking with Latino families in their journeys toward ever increasing wellness--so this new position feels like "home" for me in many ways.

I received a Bachelor's degree in social work from Creighton University and spent a year in the Dominican Republic working for Creighton after graduating. I had the privilege and pleasure of working with various women's groups in the barrios of Santiago. From there, I spent 2 years as a Jesuit Volunteer in Arica, Chile, working at a home for girls and a wellness-based child care center that provided food, educational support, and recreation.

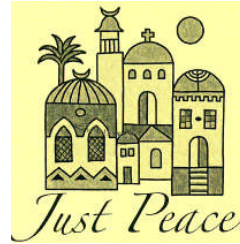
Upon returning to the US, I moved to Washington DC, where I worked with Jesuit Volunteers International and had many opportunities to learn about crossing culture as I visited volunteer communities all over the world, providing technical support and cross-cultural social work training.

In Washington DC, I received a masters in social work from the Catholic University of America. I then moved to Baltimore to work as the Family Reunification coordinator at Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services (LIRS) in the Children's Services department. My work there consisted of conducting intensive safety assessments for unaccompanied immigrant children in federal custody who were seeking family reunification in the US.

## “The Stones Cry Out”

Friday, April 4, 2014  
6:30 p.m.

Presbyterian Church of the Master  
10710 Corby Circle, Omaha



“The Stones Cry Out” examines the plight of the Palestinian, indigenous Christian Arab population - the direct descendants of the first followers of Jesus, often called “the forgotten faithful” in the current Middle East situation. Media coverage generally portrays Palestinians as Muslims when, in fact, they include both Muslims and Christians. Bethlehem, the birthplace of Jesus, is now hemmed in by the “wall,” cut off from Jerusalem and robbed of much of its agricultural land. This film is all the more important for understanding the issues currently being discussed in peace talks between Israelis and Palestinians.

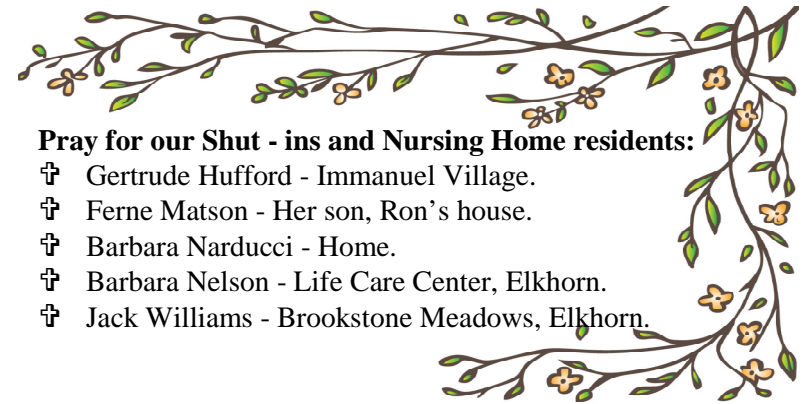
The film will be presented by Drs. Winifred and Lewis Pinch, members of Presbyterian Church of the Master in Omaha. Winnie and Lew are members of the PCUSA Israel/Palestine Mission Network (IPMN). Their personal interest in the Middle East began when they served as Presbyterian mission health care workers in Iran (1967-1970). They visited Iran again in October 2010 to update themselves on the current situation. In 2008 they visited the West Bank, Israel and Jordan and met with political, religious, and educational leaders as well as representative lay individuals in the Holy Land.

Sponsored by the Presbytery of the Missouri River Valley  
Social Justice & Peacemaking Committee

“We know more about war than we know about peace, more about killing than we know about living. We have grasped the mystery of the atom and rejected the Sermon on the Mount.”

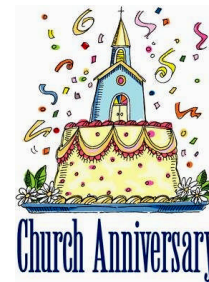
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~ US General Omar Bradley  
World War II Commander



### 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.



Mark your calendars! A dinner event is being planned for Saturday evening May 17th with a Meet and Greet at 4:00 p.m. and dinner served at 5:00 p.m. A guest speaker from the Synod Office will be joining Grace for this celebration. A special worship service is being planned for May 18th. Please watch next month's newsletter for additional information.

If you would like to join in on this planning process, or have any questions, please speak with Brenda at the church office, 402-341-7730. Enclosed in the newsletter, you will find an invitation postcard, please share an invitation!

In recognition of Grace Lutheran Church's 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary the planning committee is in the process of putting together some unique events in connection to this celebration. We need your help! If you missed the opportunity to share any photos for the booklet that was put together five years ago, or have new photos to share, now is your chance. Please submit your photos to Amanda Vazquez or e-mail your digital photos to her at [amandajvazquez@gmail.com](mailto:amandajvazquez@gmail.com), please submit your photos by April 21st.



## Holy Week Events



**Palm Sunday, April 13th**

9:30 a.m. Adult Sunday School.

11:00 Palm Sunday Worship Service.



**Maundy Thursday,  
April 17th**

6:00 p.m. Potluck Supper.

7:00 p.m. Maundy Service.



**Good Friday Service,  
April 18th, 7:00 p.m.**

at

St. Luke's Lutheran Church



**Easter, April 20th**

Easter Sunrise Service  
at 6:30 a.m.

**Easter Breakfast**

7:30 a.m.

Prepared and Served by  
Loren & Marsha Moyer

and friends.



## Lutheran Service Corp Lutheran Volunteer Corp

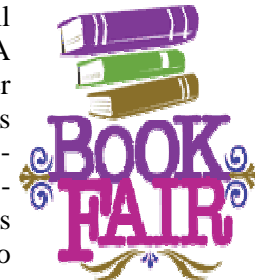
There are 10 Lutheran Service Corp Volunteers living in the Hillstrom House this year and as in years past a few items are showing up on a wish list. The top wish is knowledge of any notifications about FREE events in the Omaha Metro area. Some additional items are as follows:

- † Vacuum Cleaner
- † Zoo/Museum day passes
- † Bed linens (mostly twin)
- † Taper and tea candles
- † Laundry soap / Fabric softener
- † Dishwasher detergent, dish soap, and other "green" cleaners
- † Non-perishable food items
- † Paper products, such as toilet paper
- † Financial contributions
- † PRAYERS!

Your continued support toward this inspiring organization provides the opportunity of service for young people like Jessica Menary, our LVC volunteer.

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The Used Book Sale is now in full operation until Sunday, April 27th. A table has been set up in the Upper Fellowship Hall for your easy access to browse through the books, puzzles, videos, DVD's, CD's and cassettes. A container for the proceeds has been placed on the table next to the sale merchandise. All proceeds will go toward new books, projects, or library supplies.





Happy Spring!

Hi guys, I wanted to share a story with you all because it was inspiring to me. This month I helped John Boato create and order T-shirts for the youth choir. It was a great experience working with him, and I enjoyed helping him pick designs and search for a company that would offer what we were looking for at the lowest cost.

John wanted shirts that would bring everyone together and be fun and exciting for the kids, and so we chose artwork that represented their youth choir. On the backs of the shirts we put the bible verse Matthew 19:14 "Jesus said, 'Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.'"

The shirts turned out pretty cool! They are colorful, upbeat and give off the message of the joys of Christ and children.

When we were discussing the prices of the shirts, John was paying for them himself, I told John that we could get a cheaper price if we took out the color and made the shirts in black and white or took out the image of Christ surrounded by children or the image of happy children singing. John's response really touched me. He said that money was not what was most important, he said that getting kids excited and passionate about church and about God's spirit was more important than any money. I thought this was inspirational and wanted to share.

Jessica Menary,  
Lutheran Volunteer Community Outreach Associate,  
(641-990-5324 outreach@graceluth.com)



Maundy Thursday – Grace Lutheran has extended an open invitation to the people of St. Luke's to come and participate in this special day. Grace's observance

begins with a meal at 6:00 pm. It is planned to be a potluck meal, so bring something tried and true or brand new to share. After our meal, we will hold worship at 7 pm. Our worship will focus on Christ's commandment to love one another. It will include a foot washing ceremony and the meal our Lord instituted.

Good Friday – Grace Lutheran will join the St. Luke's worshipping community for service at 7 pm. Our worship will focus on the passion of Christ according to St. John.

We look forward in great anticipation to the celebration of our Lord's resurrection on Easter. Service times will be 6:30 am at Grace and 9 am at St. Luke's.



**Lutheran World Relief  
Quilting  
Mondays at 9:00 a.m.**



**Coffee Fellowship**

Do you have Monday mornings free?

**Coffee break and joke time at 10:00 a.m.**

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.

## 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.

Grace Lutheran can reach out to those in need by joining Lutheran World Relief's **Baskets of Promise** Lenten appeal. Throughout Lent, we will be collecting Personal Care Kits to send to families around the world.

Items that are needed to complete a Basket of Promise are:

- \* Bars of Soap (4 to 5 oz., any brand, in original wrapping) March 9th. (collected 37 bars!)
- \* Bath Towels (light-weight, maximum 52" x 27", dark color recommended) March 16th. (collected 20)
- \* Toothbrushes (adult size, in original packaging) March 23rd. (collected 53!)
- \* Combs. March 30th.
- \* Nail Clippers (metal, attached file optional) April 6th.
- \* A Second Bar of Soap. April 13th.

Grace Lutheran will be collecting the above mentioned items to assemble 30 Personal Care Kits to faithfully bring a future of hope to families in need. You can be a part of this Lenten journey and bring an item or two and brighten the hope, faith, and future of an individual or a family through Lutheran World Relief.

Following worship service on Palm Sunday, April 13th, everyone is encouraged to stay and help assemble the care kits that have been collected during the 2014 Lenten season.

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"You grow up the day you have the first real laugh - at yourself."  
~ Ethel Barrymore

"You can tell more about a person from the way he laughs than from almost any other mannerism." ~ Jim Reed

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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 ESL tutors; Vicki Cox, Arlone Farber, Mary Laaker, Jessica Menary, and Amanda Vazquez, for making that connection with the students willing to learn and form friendships.
- ◆ Thank you to the Quilters, Marilyn, LaVonne, Bob, June, and Eva. Your dedication to creating quilts for Lutheran World Relief is truly a reflection of God's love.
- ◆ 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, 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, prepare and take down communion.
- ◆ Thank you to the Newsletter Assembly crew; Marilyn, Jerry, LaVonne, Bob, June, Gloria, and Eva. The dedication and great conversations during assembly is greatly appreciated!
- ◆ Thank you Alma for taking over the responsibility of cleaning this busy building, it looks fantastic!



## April 2014



### Worship Assistants

#### Worship Assistants

6 – Mary Laaker  
13 – Arlone Farber  
17 – Greg Hula  
20 – Brenda Spahr  
27 – Lori Vasquez  
May 4 – Mary Laaker



#### April Ushers

Ron Adrian  
Vicki Cox  
Eva Martin  
Andrew Edwards

#### Greeters

6 – Greg and Janet Hula  
13 – June Hilmer and Vicki Cox  
20 – Ron and Donna Adrian  
27 – Ralph Fittle and Tom Emery  
May 4 – Loren and Marsha Moyer



#### Birthdays

1 – Sarah Emery  
Eva Martin  
5 – Emily Bauer  
7 – Linda Helm  
13 – Samuel Mantzaris  
14 – Thomas Emery  
15 – Patrick McPeck  
23 – Julia Traynor  
27 – Barbara Narducci  
28 – Ferne Matson

Did we miss your birthday?  
Please contact the church  
office and let us know!

### Ushers & Greeters



## Responsibility List

#### Altar Flowers

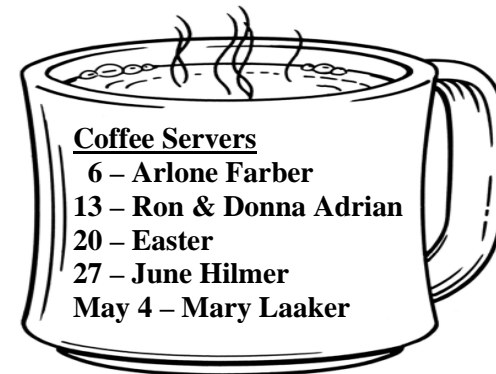
6 – Pastor and Mary Laaker, in honor of their grandchildren's birthday.  
13 – David Hufford, in honor of his granddaughter's confirmation and all confirmands.  
20 – Arlone Farber, Glory to God on this special Easter Morning and always.  
27 – Vicki Cox, in loving memory of her mother, Eileen Morter.  
May 4 – Andrew, Christi, Clay Edwards, and Tracy Petrini, in loving memory of their mother, Charlotte Edwards.

#### Flower Pick-Up for April - OPEN.



#### Backpack Program

6 – Vicki Cox, in honor of her grandson, Garrick's birthday.  
13 – Charlotte Palczynski, in honor of her grandchildren's birthday.  
20 – Arlone Farber, remember all who are hungry.  
27 – Jerry and Marilyn Van Ormer, in honor of their grandson, Nick's birthday.  
May 4 – OPEN.



#### Coffee Servers

6 – Arlone Farber  
13 – Ron & Donna Adrian  
20 – Easter  
27 – June Hilmer  
May 4 – Mary Laaker



