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

402-341-7730

Email: graceluth@graceluth.com Web Site: www.graceluth.com REGULAR SUNDAY EVENTS 9:30 a.m. Christian Education 11:00 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 - Malachi Black

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



#### 2014 Council Members

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

The regular meeting of the Council was held on August 12th. The Council members remembered the following in prayer: Ken Hilmer as he continues to struggle with his health and his recent stroke, for Sarah's Mother in Law, Roseanne Emery as she completes her chemotherapy, for Norma Courtney and for her children as they make decisions about her future, and for Teresa Courtney as she struggles with liver cancer. We remember Bobby Hesacker as he is moved into a new home for continuing rehabilitation, and Dottie Hula with her issues with her back. We continue to lift up Sharon Irwin, and Cheryl Powley for their ongoing recovery. We remember families, bus drivers, administrators, teachers, and others as children return to school!

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Devotions were shared from Jeremiah 31:34 and John 20:28. The first gives us a proclamation. God's Love is for all! Whoever you are, you will be blessed. The second said that we ought to remember that the Lord has full awareness in our life. Recognize God's involvement! Realize the sense of actual <u>relationship</u> with God.

<u>Visions for Ministry</u>: The Council continues reading "The Future Starts Now." We talked about how people may be looking for something to bring them together. Let's work on landing, connecting, developing, an deepening our relationships. See what could be starting / developing, not just what is already there. Where is the energy & how can we help? Where is our own connection? God accompanies us, let's be there and make Christ known! We will discuss Chapter six of our book at our next meeting.

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

<u>Christian Education</u>: Joint Confirmation class will begin in Sept on Wednesday evenings with Grace, St Matthew, Bethel, Shepherd of the Hills and Augustana.

<u>Evangelism/Outreach</u>: We received a note from Jessica's parents along with a donation to the church. Spaghetti Dinner for Lutheran Service Corp is coming in mid-Sept at Trinity Lutheran.

Continued...

<u>Finance</u>: We were named the beneficiary of Gertrude's Thrivent life insurance policy. The Endowment Board will meet to discuss the next steps of this generous gift.

<u>Property:</u> We have refused the counter offer from Church Mutual, and intend to take our case to court. Kitchen floor & front steps will be replaced soon.

<u>Service/Social Ministry</u>: LVC – our new volunteer, Malachai Black is with us! There will be an OTOC training on Monday evening and the Habitat Dedication on Sunday. See neighborssouth.org for more information. Sept 7<sup>th</sup> is the God's Work! Our Hands! Day. We will plan to walk the neighborhood, picking up trash and passing out fliers for a neighborhood picnic the following Sunday.

Support/Stewardship: No new report.

Worship: No new report.

Unfinished Business: No new report.

New Business: No new report.

<u>Announcements:</u> No report. Vicki will bring treats for our September meeting. Meeting was adjourned at 8:56 p.m.



**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America** God's work. Our hands.

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### Get ready to serve! Sunday, September 7, 2014

On Sunday, September 7, 2014, the nearly 10,000 congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) are invited to put their faith into action by serving their communities in ways that share the love of God with all of God's people.

The Grace Council Members have proposed that we walk our surrounding neighborhood, pick up trash and hand out fliers inviting neighbors to a picnic

the following Sunday, September 14th following worship. Let's work together sharing the love of God with all of God's people.

Drinks, meat and table service will be provided, please bring side dishes, smiles and light conversation to share.





The Council and I have been reading the book "The Future Starts Now." This month the chapter was titled "A New Way of Seeing." The opening story was about two grocery stores in a community. One store has an employee base that

rarely ever smiles and if you can find them to ask a question, they most likely will grumble about you. The second story has an employee base that greets everyone with a smile and when you have a question someone is readily available to answer it politely and willingly. The authors go on to talk about seeing what you have in a different light, which in turn will change the way you function in ministry and life.

On Sunday, August 17, I drove down to Lincoln to hear Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton speak. This was her first trip to Nebraska since her election as Presiding Bishop of the ELCA. I heard her say in effect we need to see things differently. She described a common phenomenon that occurs in many congregations. Remember when ...! Usually that blank is filled in by some remembrance of time when numbers were greater in worship, in youth activities, organizations, etc. She went on to say that she believes God has given us all that we need for mission and ministry right now.

Bishop Eaton is seeing things differently. Yes, there was a day when but God has not abandoned any of us. I believe I have heard a passage of Scripture that says, behold I am doing something new. God is always creating and sustaining his creation. This means to me that I can trust that, while things were different back then, God is here and I simply need to see things differently and join God in the work that God would have me do now.

The authors state it this way: "Leading the faith community or faith-based organization you care about in the emerging future will require an entrepreneurial spirit. You will need eyes that have been trained to focus on what is for the sake of what might be. Instead of exhausting yourself and others trying to fill in the blank, you need to be able to see what you have for the sake of doing what matters."

What I hear in those words is an encouragement to see God present in the world with new eyes. Eyes that see vibrancy in the people gathered around word and sacrament. Eyes that see people engaged in ministry through their workplace where they speak words of grace and welcome for those marginalized and demonized.

The authors suggest a new process called PAWN to help us focus on what God is already up to in our immediate world and equip us to find and discover the opportunities right in our midst. This process focuses our eyes on: God's purpose for you. The gifts, assets and passions God has given to you and to the people in your context. The miraculous things (wow!) God is already doing in your midst. The things in your context that are breaking God's heart and that God wants to see changed (needs).

Our gospel lessons over the last several weeks have clearly indicated that Jesus' ministry was not in a building. So, if Jesus has left the building, maybe we need to see with new eyes the ministry opportunities that exist outside the building.

The authors suggest the following purposeful questions: What is the point of our life together? Why are we here? What really matters to us? What is it that God wants to accomplish through us? I am fascinated by these questions and would invite you to join me in exploring them as we walk together into God's future.

#### Pastor Laaker



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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 and concerns:



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







Prayer Service Wednesday September 24, 2014 7:00 p.m.

An inspiring and quiet experience in meditation, light music, and a deeper connection within God's presence, peace, and love.

Grace Lutheran Church ESL (English as a Second Language) Classes Saturdays 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. 402-341-7730



Do you know anyone searching for the opportunity to learn the English language? Please direct them here at Grace. Every Saturday morning they would be greeted with a smile and very helpful tutors to start their education in one of the most difficult languages to learn as a second language.



Greetings! I'm pleased and excited to be a part of the congregation. I am the current Lutheran Volunteer Corps volunteer, Malachi Black, coming to serve Grace Lutheran in whatever capacity I am able. As a recent graduate of Xavier University with a Bachelor's in Theology, and a Minor in Business, I've been wrestling with the question, "What do I want to be when I grow up?" I hope my work here will help direct me on my path to being a better grownup.



Born and raised in Cincinnati, Ohio, I have grown to love traveling. I have lived in Arizona, Kentucky, and Virginia, and have traveled to many of the states. I also visited Italy on a veteran pilgrimage as a school endeavor. I am an Army veteran, serving stateside only and was blessed to not see overseas combat. I'm a chess player and specialize in computer needs.

People usually give me an awkward look or inquisitive notion when I mention my degree combination. Theology and Business together, that's weird, don't you think? What does this mean? Basically, I can speak a bit about the history of the relationship between God and man, and give a business spin to it in the same breath. Not your everyday mix, but we will roll with it. My life goal is to demonstrate how business and spirituality or religious experience benefit from each other and work best together, not separate. America is ingrained with the notion, "separation of church and state." We have created such a large division between the two that we perhaps miss the opportunity to better work as cooperatives toward similar goals. We can do better.

My hope is that we grow in community together, building a bond of trust and fostering an atmosphere of openness. The core values of intentional community, spirituality and sustainability that LVC embodies have inspired me to be a volunteer. Bring on the laughs, tears, and range of emotions that are wrapped up in the human experience. I am confident that when we share openly and selflessly of ourselves, God will manifest in a way so mysterious, yet beautiful that the whole world will take notice.

Questions? Comments? Wish to fellowship and connect? Feel free to contact me when you wish at (513) 206-0660 or email me at <u>outreach@graceluth.com</u>. I'm ecstatic to learn and grow with the congregation. I hope I can be a positive contributor to the church and be effective in my position as a Community Outreach Associate. Thank you for having me.

Lutheran Service Corps Spaghetti Dinner Fundraiser Sunday, September 14, 2014 5:00 - 7:00 p.m.



This year's Lutheran Service Corp Spaghetti Dinner Fundraiser will be held on Sunday, September 14th 5:00-7:00 pm at Trinity Lutheran Church, 6340 N. 30th Street. Tickets are \$8.00 for adults, \$5.00 for children ages 5-12, \$3.00 for children under 5, or \$25.00 for the entire family. Menu will include spaghetti, salad, garlic cheese bread, drinks and desserts. This year volunteers will be on hand to give tours of Hillstrom House, the LSC office and residence.



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 the plants in the entry way, they continue to thrive and look welcoming.
- Thank you to the ESL tutors; Vicki Cox, Arlone Farber, Mary Laaker, and Amanda Vazquez, for making connections with the students willing to learn and form friendships.
- Thank you to Jerry and Marilyn Van Ormer, Greg and Janet Hula; who pick up altar flowers every Sunday morning.
- Thank you to the crew from Prince of Peace who are taking on the role of lawncare this summer.
- Thank you to Ron and Donna Adrian and Brenda Spahr who take care of the altar, and prepare the communion table.
- Thank you Alma for taking over the responsibility of cleaning this busy building, it looks fantastic!



Virginia McGill, MA Executive Director Gema C. Wolde Community Health Worker Se habla espanol.

www.familiesinactionomaha.org

Zumbathon By:



Where: Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church 1326 S 26<sup>th</sup> Street, Omaha When: Friday, October 3, 2014 Time: 6 to 7:30pm

**Cost:** \$5.00 Suggested donation for adults, as always, children are free and welcome.

**Costo**: \$5.00 donación sugerida por adulto, y como siempre los niños son gratis y bienvenidos

Please join our Creighton students and sponsors from **Delta Delta Delta and** our **Interfaith Families in Action** participants as we celebrate Autumn with an evening of dance!

Por favor ven a celebrar en Otoño con los estudiantes de Creighton, **Delta Delta Delta y Familias en Acción** con una hermosa tarde de baile (Zumba).

Made possible through our partnership with Children's Hospital & Medical Center.

Hecho posible gracias a nuestra asociación con Children's Hospital & Medical Center.

More information:

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

Thank you Pastor Laaker for all that you and Grace Lutheran Church did in support of Jessica. She really enjoyed her experience through the Lutheran Volunteer Corp!

Enclosed is a check for Families in Action to use for their program. Also enclosed is an additional check for Grace Lutheran to use where you feel is best.

Have a great rest of the summer!

Love the Menarys - Jeff, Rene & Jessica

Lutheran South Pantry 4401 South 23rd Street 402-502-7070



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 wipers, and Diapers, especially sizes 4, 5, 6 and pull-ups.

We always need paper or plastic bags.

# Electronic Giving is a convenient, consistent way to help our church year round.



Consider scheduling a recurring electronic contribution today. It's easy! You will no longer need to write out checks and prepare envelopes

every week. Even when travel, illness or other circumstances prevent you from attending services, your electronic contributions will continue to be received on an uninterrupted basis.

Get started today! Ask for an authorization form in the church office.

September 2014



7 - Arlone Farber 14 - Lori Vasquez 21 - Malachi Black 28 - Brenda Spahr Oct. 5 - Mary Laaker



- 7 Ronald Andersen
- 13 Loren Moyer
- 23 Katelyn Bauer
- 28 Damien Rodriguez

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



<u>September Ushers</u> Joe Narducci Larry Foreman Vicki Cox Andrew Edwards



### **Greeters**

- 7 Greg and Janet Hula
- 14 Larry Foreman and Andrew Edwards
- 21 Davena Garcia and Lori Vasquez
- 28 Loren and Marsha Moyer
- Oct. 5 Mary Laaker and Sarah Emery

# Responsibility List

# **Altar Flowers**



- 7 Arlone Farber, Glory to God.
- 14 David Hufford, in honor of family birthdays (Jennifer, Aunt Fran, John, Lisa and Holly.)
- 21 Brenda Spahr, in honor of the Spahr Anniversary.
- 28 Greg and Janet Hula, in honor of their grandson, Damien's birthday.
- Oct. 5 Vicki Cox, in loving memory of her father, Harlan Morter.

Flower Pick-Up for September - Christi Edwards

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## **Backpack Program**

- 7 Arlone Farber, remember all who are hungry.
- 14 Joe and Barbara Narducci, in loving memory of their daughter, Kathy.
- 21 Brenda Spahr, in honor of the Spahr Anniversary.
- 28 OPEN.
- Oct. 5 Jerry and Marilyn Van Ormer, in honor of their great-granddaughter, Amelia's 1st birthday.





### OTOC - Omaha Together One Community Organizing for the Common Good

Summer 2014 Training Series

Monday, September 8th, St. Pius X Parish Center at 7:00 pm (70th & Blondo)

Public Conversation with Candidates to the OPPD Board: Putting what we are learning into action by sharing concerns for environmental sustainability with candidates, and hearing their responses.

To RSVP or for more information about the Training Series, call the OTOC office at 402-344-4401 or e-mail at omahatogether@otoc.org.

Issue Discussions at Urban Abbey (10th and Jackson in the Old Market) Thursday, September 4th at 6:00 p.m. Discussion topic will be:

~ Developing the Omaha Land Bank

Future topics include:

- ~ Getting to Immigration Reform in the U.S.
- ~ Refugee Stories in Omaha.
- ~ Expanding Health Insurance Coverage in Nebraska.
- ~ Improving the Mental Health System in Omaha & Nebraska.

Public Action

OTOC Accountability Session with Candidates for Governor and Unicameral on Monday, October 6th at 7:00 p.m. First United Methodist, location to be determined in September - please look in next months' Grace Messenger issue for confirmation of location.

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The collection plate was being passed in a Plaquemine, LA, church, and little Mary's father gave her \$2 "to give to Jesus."

As the usher approached their pew, a concerned Mary blurted out, "Daddy, that's not Jesus, it's Sophie's Daddy!"

-Columnist Smiley Anders, Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate Reprinted with permission from JoyfulNoiseletter.com

### What is a CROP Walk?



CROP Walks raise money for local hunger fighting agencies as well as the international relief and **CROP HUNGER WALL** development efforts of Church World Service.

Founded in 1946, Church World Service is the relief, development, and refugee assistance ministry of 35 Protestant, Orthodox, and Anglican denominations in the United States. Working in partnership with indigenous organizations in more than 80 countries, CWS works worldwide to meet human needs and foster self-reliance.

Hungry people in developing countries typically walk as much as six miles a day to get food, water and fuel, and to take their goods to market. We walk in solidarity with their struggle for existence. We walk because we want to end hunger – one step at a time.

This year marks the 32<sup>nd</sup> Omaha Crop Walk. You can help make a difference in the lives of people locally and worldwide by sponsoring a walker or walking and getting sponsors. Please see Malachi to secure a walker donation envelope and begin securing pledges for the Omaha Walk on Sunday, October 12. As a sponsor, look for the donation envelopes that are placed on the back table in the sanctuary.

The walk begins 1:00 p.m. at the new location – Luther Memorial Church, at the corner of  $61^{st}$  and Western. Walkers may choose from 1, 2.5 or 5 mile routes.

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God's kids say & do the funniest things

When she reached the age of five, a little girl began asking her Mom about heaven. Her first question was, "Mama, when we get to heaven will we have skin?"

"I don't know," her mother replied.

The girl asked several more questions about heaven over the next few days, and each time, her Mom said that she did not know.

Finally, the girl got very upset and blurted out, "Mama, why don't you just Google it?"

-Columnist Smiley Anders, Baton Rouge, LA, Advocate Reprinted with permission from JoyfulNoiseletter.com Bethel Lutheran Church is having a Church Garage Sale on September 11-12 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and also

on September 13<sup>th</sup> from 9:00 a.m. until noon. Lunch will be available on Thursday and Friday. Bethel is in need **GAR** of items to sell, if your closet or clutter

corner is getting a little to full, now is the time to select

a few items for the Bethel Church Garage Sale. If you have any questions, please call 402-551-1063. Bethel is located at 1312 South 45<sup>th</sup> Street.



Alegent Creighton Health, Visiting Nurse Association and Methodist Hospital are looking for interested individual in becoming Hospice volunteers. Hospice volunteers provide companionship and support for individuals living with terminal illnesses and their families.

Volunteers choose the hours they are able to serve and determine the geographical location in metro Omaha/Council Bluffs and surrounding areas. Volunteer education classes will begin in early October, please call Gina Binder at 402-930-4143 or Angela Wichita 402-354-3200 to

Saint Michael Lutheran Church is establishing a new support group for those who have lost a child at any stage of the child's life. Through dialogue and discussion we hope to share thoughts and ideas in supporting one another as we deal with the loss of a child. The first organizational meeting will be held on Monday. September



22<sup>nd</sup>, 7:00 pm at Saint Michael located at 132<sup>nd</sup> and Blondo. If you have any questions, please call Pastor Mark Grorud, 402-493-2871.



Grace Lutheran needs a Halloween Party Coordinator to chair the organizing of this year's celebration. Volunteers are also needed to help make this community connection a positive and fun experience for all! If you are interested in coordinating this event please speak with Pastor Laaker, or a council member. Look for additional Halloween announcements in next month's issue!

Carol Joy Holling Camp will be celebrating their Fall Festival on Sunday, October 5<sup>th</sup> from 2:00 – 6:00 p.m. Come and enjoy an afternoon at Carol Joy Holling Camp! They will be having free fun for the whole family including boating, hiking, hayrack rides, ziplining and more! Save the date! For any additional information, please visit their website at caroliovholling.org.





### Symphony Spooktacular

Sunday, October 26, 2014 @ 2 PM at the Holland Performing Arts Center. We've even added a bit of

wonder this year with local magician Keith West assisting the Omaha Symphony for this concert. You will hear music from Beetlejuice, The Nightmare Before Christmas, Jaws, Pirates of the Caribbean and much more. Before the concert we invite all the children out to our lobby Instrument Petting Zoo, where they can play trumpets, trombones, violins, etc.

Now, here is the best part... put together a group of 10 or more (children and adults), and I can get you tickets for just \$10 each (normally \$15 each)! This event is open seating, so you can sit in the box seats, front row, aisle seats ... where ever you wish.

If you are interested, please contact David M. Johnson, at 402-342-3836, ext. 121.



There will be Acolyte Training sessions on Sunday September 21st and 28th following worship service. Anyone interested in learning how to support the worship service on Sunday mornings, please plan to stay for one of the above mentioned Sundays for **tes** training. If you have any questions regarding all the

duties of an acolvte, feel free to ask Andrea Spahr.

Brenda Spahr or Pastor Laaker. Hope see a few folks for training!

Confirmation Classes will begin on September 3rd Confirmation Class and will be held every Wednesday in a partnership with St. Matthew's, Augustana, St. Luke's, Bethel, and Shepherd of the Hills. Classes from September 3rd through the 24th will be at St. Matthew's Lutheran Church, 1725 S. 60th Street, where Pastor Glen Thomas will lead classes. Topics will include; "Can it be proven that God exist?", "Is God Male?",



"How can God be 'three-in-one'?", and "Why Does God let Bad Things Happen?" October 1st through the 22nd classes will be held here at Grace, where Pastor Damon Laaker will lead classes. Topics will include; "Does God still create stuff today?", "Am I really supposed to believe Mary was a virgin?", "Why did Jesus go to Hell?", and "What does it mean to be 'born again'?"

Is your child entering the sixth grade? Your household did not receive an invitational letter into Confirmation Classes? They are ready for Confirmation Class! Please call the office and speak with Pastor Damon Laaker to enroll your child.



Buy Your 2015 God's Creation Calendar!

To help with sale of the calendars, please sign your name and indicate how many calendars you would like on the pre-register form located on the bulletin board. Calendars are open for everyone, if you would like to reserve a copy,

please call the church office at 402-341-7730. Calendars will be ordered by the end of September.

Calendars include beautiful monthly scenic photography enhanced with inspiring Scriptures from the Holy Bible. High-quality, heavy-weight stock with gloss coated photo pages and ample space to write appointments and family events.

A few days ago, after leaving a meeting at church, I reached for my car keys in my pocket, only to discover they weren't there. Desperately, I gave myself a quick personal pat down. But they were not in any of my pockets. So, I went back to the meeting room and looked every place I had been. Suddenly it dawned on me, I must have left them in the car. Frantically, I headed for the parking lot.

My wife, Diane, has scolded me many times for leaving the keys in the ignition. My theory is the ignition is the best place not to lose them. Her theory is that the car will be stolen. As I burst through the doors of the church, I came to a terrifying conclusion. Her theory was right. The parking lot was empty.

I immediately called the police. I gave them my location, confessed that I had left my keys in the car, and that it had been stolen. Then I made the most difficult call of all.

"Honey," I stammered. I always call her "honey" in times like these. "I left my keys in the car, and it has been stolen."

There was a period of silence. I thought the call had been dropped, but then I heard Diane's voice.

"Ken," she barked, "I dropped you off!"

Now it was my time to be silent. Embarrassed, I said, "In that case, would you please come and pick me up?"

Diane retorted, "I will...... just as soon as I can convince this policeman I didn't steal your car."



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Bloopers that gnash the teeth

In a church newsletter, caption for photo taken in front of the Eiffel Tower: "Ridgeview Baptist College students visit London."

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"Pastor says all the answers are in here. I guess he never had to take one of Miss Hathorne's geography exams."

### A Prayer for Joy

Grant to us, O Lord, the royalty of inward happiness, and the serenity which comes from living close to Thee. Daily renew in us the sense of joy, and let the eternal spirit of the Father dwell in our souls and bodies, filling every corner of our hearts with light and grace; so that, bearing about with us the infection of good courage, we may be diffusers of life, and may meet all ills and cross accidents with gallant and high-hearted happiness, giving Thee thanks always for all things.

> -Robert Louis Stevenson Reprinted with permission from JoyfulNoiseletter.com