

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

**Return Service Requested**  
**Dated Material**

**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**  
**Vicar - Angela Khabeb**  
**Editor/Church Secretary – Benhi Khabeb**  
**Youth Ministries - Brenda Spahr**  
**Organist - Cody Talarico**  
**Sexton - Brian Sutej**  
**Interfaith Health Ministries - Virginia McGill**

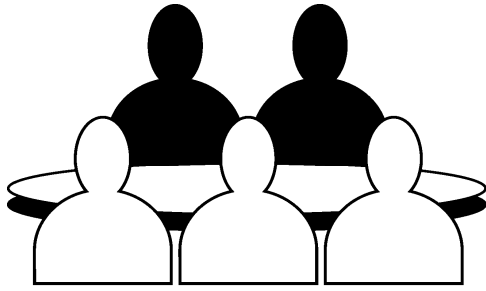
**Non-Profit Org.**  
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*Inspired By Christ, it is our mission  
to share God's Word and Love in  
care and in service to all.*



2009

**THE**  
**GRACE**  
**MESSENGER**



**COUNCIL MEETING**

**2009 Council Members**

Ron Adrian Vicki Cox Andrew Edwards Sarah Emery Arlone Farber June Hilmer Vicar Angela Khabeab Gloria Moore David Nange Ernie Olson Pastor Laaker

\*\*\*\*\*

Officers Serving the Congregation but not on Council:  
Financial Secretary: Janet Hula Treasurer; Margie Sutej

The regular meeting of the Council was held February 10<sup>th</sup>. The Council members shared their prayer concerns: Care for those in need of healing; Bobby Heesacker; care for those within the Grace family that they continue to heal; Ambros Lado, Arlone Farber, Kris Mauler, Lavonne Moss, for those battling cancer, Teri Briley, Sandy Fitzgerald, Mickey Andersen; we pray for an end to all of the unrest and conflict in the world and that safety surround Ivo Mounto.

Pastor led devotions from Isaiah 38:19 and Ephesians 6:4. Both verses speak to us about bringing up our children in the discipline of the Lord, while reminding us to live as we preach to them. Visions for Ministry: The Council is reading “*Radical Welcome*” by Stephanie Spellers. Please read the Intro (pages 1-26) in the book by the next meeting.

Reports were received from the Financial Secretary and the Treasurer. Please continue to give generously. These are tough times and your support is critical.

Christian Education: Wednesday Faith Quest will take a break through Lent until after Easter. The council was also asked to think about restructuring the layout of the Committee Reports.

Evangelism/Outreach: No new report.

Finance: A letter will be sent to the congregation asking for donations in support of the Internship Ministry. These donations will be matched dollar for dollar up to \$2,500 from the GELC Endowment.

Property: No new report.

Service/Social Ministry: ESL classes are growing!

Support/Stewardship: Pastor met with David, Titus, Charles, and John to discuss creating a non-profit organization for the Mabaan community. This non-profit would help them raise funds for critical needs in the Sudan. Some of these needs are: the creation of water wells, schools, delivering supplies, and building churches among other things.

Worship: We will have guest speakers during Lent. The focus will be “A Song of Hope.” Please note, dinner will be served at 6 p.m. and service will follow immediately at 7 p.m.

Unfinished Business: Vicar Angela’s final project is taking shape. It is entitled “Who is my Neighbor?” This will be a four-part Lenten series that encourages us to look within before attempting to minister in outreach. All are welcome. Each session will be from 3:00-5:00 p.m. on the four Sundays in March, beginning with March 8<sup>th</sup>.

New Business: The ELCA report with 2008 congregational numbers was officially submitted. Grace Church will also be presented with an award at the Justice & Advocacy luncheon at the Nebraska Lutheran Legislative Day for their progressive work with refugees. What an honor!

Announcements: No new report. Vicki will bring treats and lead prayer for our March meeting.



Lent is here. As you read this newsletter, we will have entered into this marvelous season. In the resource Sundays and Seasons, the writer says, “Lent is a journey, and that means taking risks. Experienced travelers have tips to share for making the trip go as smoothly as possible, but most people who have been on a journey know that things can go wrong. Buses break down. Planes are delayed. Storms interfere. Luggage gets lost. All these variables mean releasing some of the control we have over our lives. We are at the mercy of pilots, wind and weather, other workers. However in spite of – or maybe because of – all the ways a journey can throw us off balance, travelers have the opportunity to see, taste, hear, smell, feel, experience, even *be* something new.

“Lent is often experienced as a season of reflection, looking inward, soul-searching. It’s a season for looking intently toward Jesus, the author of our faith, and longing to know him better. It’s a season of community, because in many congregations people are coming together twice as often as normal and may come for extra time – to share a simple supper, a bowl of soup, to help with a cleaning or service project, to get to know one another’s stories more deeply than they’ve known them before. This community-building aspect of Lent can be so powerful that people are a little sad when Lent is done, because the commitment to come together for a season has been so powerful. This is a season where in simplicity there is great strength.

“Lent begins with ashes but it is not only a dry season – the waters of baptism flow through it.” Lent is a time to focus on God, the fountain of living water during our wilderness journeys.

I know that many times during Lent individuals give up something that they really enjoy. It is always good to learn control, and master cravings that we often have. So while your practice may be giving up something for which you have a craving, I would invite you to add a new spiritual practice to your routine: spend an extra five minutes in prayer, read a new devotional piece, contribute your time or your treasure to a ministry that touches people with hope. Jesus craves a relationship with you. This is one way to grow in deeper relationship to Christ.

Our Lenten scripture readings will focus our attention on trust, truth and transparency. These are real every day desires that the Scripture speaks too. We’ll hear stories about God’s covenantal desires with Abraham and Sarah and in turn with you and me. We’ll hear how God wants to write God’s promise on our hearts. A clear invitation to a deep and intimate relationship with the one who loves us dearly. We will be invited to be honest with ourselves and others in every aspect of our lives.

Let us be honest as we seek to trust God’s renewing presence. Let us cling to the truth of the good news that we are redeemed. Let us act with transparency in relationship to one another and our Christ.

Let’s take this journey with hope. God can and will help us experience a renewal of God’s amazing grace.

Come, journey with me!

*Pastor Laaker*



## The Vicar's Voice

### God Said *WHAT!*?

Sometimes God asks us to do things that sound scary, difficult, or even illogical. Other times, God asks us to do things that just plain ridiculous. Case in point, our son Konami is about a year and half old—He'll be two in June. And, well, it's kind of a long story, but before Konami was born, the plan was to have him sleep in a bassinet next to our bed, so that night nursing would be easier. Unfortunately, I needed to have an emergency C-section. Consequently, I was unable to reach over into the bassinet and lift him out. So guess what? You got it. He ended up sleeping in our bed... for a long, long, long time. That is until about a month ago.

One day I just had enough. Our usual routine of laying him down to sleep in our bed (and staying with him until he went to sleep) had run out of gas. On this particular night, I laid Konami down in our bed and I stayed with him for an hour and 17 minutes and he still wouldn't sleep! When I finally noticed how much time had passed, well, let's just say I got a revelation. I said, "Konami, you are going in your own room and from now on, you will be sleeping in your own bed." Wow, his whole face changed. But then I decided to quote our president. I told him, "Oh yes you can." "Oh yes you can sleep in your on bed. You have a beautiful room, a gorgeous crib—that you've never slept in." And since his room doubles as our guest bedroom, there's even a queen size bed and television in there.

So, I got up, took him in his room. Laid him down and tucked him into the double bed. And I told him again, "Konami, you're a big a boy and you need to sleep in your own room." Well, he was quiet for a good twenty minutes. Then I think he realized that I was serious and things got ugly real quick. You know how the bible talks about "weeping and gnashing of teeth"? Well that about sums up the first two nights. Things slowly improved. Then he began a new maneuver. He would get out of his bed, stay in his room, but turn on the TV. Lots of times, I wouldn't even notice it. He'd have the volume really low—pretty sneaky, huh? So, I would immediately turn off the TV. And put him back in his bed, and tell him "night, night Konami. No TV" and tuck him back in. But this went on for about three days....4 or 5 times a night.

I consulted friends and family with no success. It was "night-night" time once again. Konami had his routine-- Bath, a story, and then his prayers. And sure enough, a few minutes later the TV is on. I went into his room and did my usual exercise. Then I decided to hide out in the bathroom where I have a clear view of his room. While I was conducting this stakeout, I started to pray. Don't laugh. I'm serious. I prayed, "Dear God, now you know I haven't had a good night's sleep in over a year, nearly two years. God, I need your help because I don't know what to do." Clear as a bell, I heard the words, "SPANK ELMO!" I thought *what? Spank Elmo??* I heard it again, clear as day. "SPANK ELMO!" Now, it didn't make sense. But I was pretty sure that I'd heard from God.

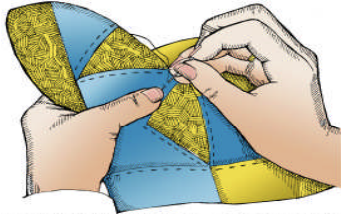
So I abandoned my stakeout and went into the living room and sat down. Then, in a few minutes I heard the low hum of what had to be Konami's TV. I went back to his room and peeked in the door and sure enough, there he was standing in the soft amber glow of C-span live. But I snapped into action. Without saying a word, I scooped him up laid him down. Then, I snatched that Elmo doll out of the bed and I said very sternly, "Elmo what did I tell you!? I told you no TV its night-night time. SMACK, SMACK! (I spanked Elmo) No TV it's night-night time." I threw Elmo back on the bed, and tossed the blanket over both of them. Turned of the TV and left the room. Our son hasn't touched that TV in nearly 30 days! See God really does work in mysterious ways. Oh and I am happy to report that Elmo and I have since patched things up.

4:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.  
Monday thru Thursday

Games, Crafts, and Fun Geared for Elementary Kids!

Free!

Director, Brenda Spahr



QUILTING GROUP

### Quilting 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 is at 10:00 a.m.

*The 2009 Flower Chart has been posted  
on the bulletin board  
outside the church office.*

### • F L O W E R C H A R T •



We **still** need volunteers to sign up each month to pick up the flowers for the altar.

Sign up on the Flower Chart if you are willing to help with this task. The flowers need to be picked up before 10:00 a.m. each Sunday morning at the Hy-Vee at 50th and Center. The church is billed so you will not need to pay for them at the time of pick up. Contact Marilyn Van Ormer or Barb Narducci for more details.

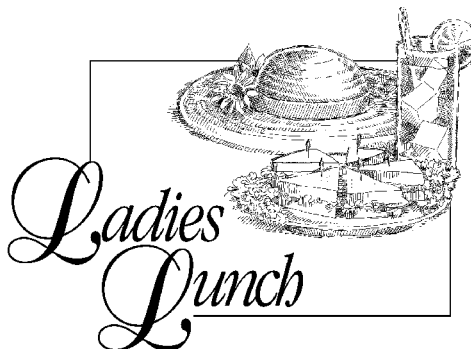
## W/ELCA Board Meeting & W/ELCA Circle Meeting

**March 17<sup>th</sup> 1:00 p.m.**

*Hostess and Bible Study Leader: Marilyn Van Ormer*



*Women of the Evangelical  
Lutheran Church in America*



### Lutheran Women of Omaha Luncheon

**Program:** MUD "A Trip Behind The Water Faucet"  
**Project:** Monetary/Cristo Rey Pantry

**Reservation Required by March 8**  
**Contact Mardell Gocek, 292-1312**  
Cost is \$6.00 per person



# LENTEN CALENDAR

Wednesday Nights

6:00 p.m. Lenten Supper

7:00 p.m. Lenten Service

Forty Days of Lent

Lent begins in Ash Wednesday and ends on Holy Saturday. The number 40 is significant because at the start of his ministry, Jesus spent 40 days fasting, praying and resisting temptation, as we are called to do during Lent.

March 4  
Dinner Hostesses  
Brenda and Andrea  
Kids At Work

Speaker  
Vicar Aaron Decker  
with title "Alone"

March 11  
Dinner Hostess  
Adrian and Laaker

Speaker  
Pastor Liz Conner  
"How Do I Sing a  
song of Hope"

March 18  
Dinner Hosted by  
Grace Lutheran  
Women Circle

Speaker  
Vicar Lowell Nelson  
on Psalm 40:3  
Psalm 46

March 25  
Dinner Hostess  
Volunteer Needed??

Speaker  
Pastor Nate Houfek  
on Psalm "



Sunday, March 29

9:00 a.m. Adult Sunday School

10:30 a.m. Worship Service

Choral Presentation by the Rejoice Lutheran Choir



**Palm Sunday, April 5**

9:00 a.m. Adult Sunday School.

10:30 Palm Sunday Worship Service.



**Easter, April 12**

6:30 a.m. Easter Sunrise Service

7:30 a.m. Breakfast served by the Moyer/Hula families.

9:00 a.m. Adult Sunday School Class.

10:30 a.m. Worship with Communion.



## Prayer Concerns from Family and Friends

- ♥ Elna Burns - Suffered a stroke. (Sister of Don Olson, member)
- ♥ Andrew Edwards - Doing dialysis a couple times a week until a kidney can be found. (member)
- ♥ Teri Briley - Cancer treatments continue. (daughter of Gloria and Richard Moore)
- ♥ Sandy Fitzgerald - Cancer treatment continues. (member)
- ♥ London Colstan - tiny infant struggling with liver problems. (Friend of Morlan/Olson family)
- ♥ David Nange - Healing for regulation of blood pressure and headaches. (Council Member)
- ♥ Fern Matson - Ongoing Health issues. (member)
- ♥ Allisia Fredrickson -Had surgery to repair shattered ankle & torn ligaments. (KAW Alumni)
- ♥ Ambros Lado - Ongoing Health issues as a result of his cancer. (member)
- ♥ Kristine (Nelson) Mauler -Treatment for her cancer. (former member and daughter of Barb Nelson )
- ♥ Arlone Farber - Treatment for her cancer. (member)
- ♥ Wendy Conner - Recovery from transplant surgery. (daughter of Pastor Liz Conner)

Can We Pray for you?

Contact the church office or one of the staff with your prayer concerns.

### **Pray for our Shut - ins and Nursing Home residents:**

Mae Lane

Richard Moore

Thelma Harrahill - (In Kansas with her children)

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

Pray for our Vicar, Angela and her family.

Pray for Benhi Khabebe as he learns the ins and outs of the church office manager job.

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

Pastor Laaker

Bishop David deFreese, Nebraska Synod

Bishop Mark Hanson, ELCA Bishop, United States

- ♥ Pray for the Sudanese community. Titus Duli, David Nange and Charles Tuw are the elders for the Sudanese Worshiping Community.
- ♥ Pray for Jadin Kora. Jadin Kora was born with a disabling birth injury to his arm and shoulder.
- ♥ John Ivo Mounto - As commissioner of Mabaan, Ivo has many responsibilities both to his province and to Southern Sudan as he does representative and ambassador work in various refugee camps to raise support for important elections in 2011. His work makes him a target. Pray for his safety!
- ♥ Pray for peace to prevail in the Middle East.

"Grant that I may not pray alone with the mouth;  
help me that I may pray from the depths of my heart."

Martin Luther

# Jesus loved:



**lepers  
widows  
tax collectors  
orphans  
sinners  
gentiles  
thieves**

**people who might make us  
uncomfortable**

# WHO'S MY NEIGHBOR?

Join us for a four-part Lenten series that encourages “in”-reach before outreach. “Who is my Neighbor?” focuses on faith-filled responses to multicultural ministry.

Each independently themed session showcases a thought-provoking film followed by discussion.

Can't come every week? Join us when you can, and benefit from the conversations and reflections. **ALL ARE WELCOME!**

**Four Sundays – March 8-29 – 3:00 to 5:00 PM**

**Grace Lutheran Church**

1326 South 26<sup>th</sup> Street - Omaha, NE 68105-2380

Call Vicar Angela at (402) 341-7730 for more details.

## Film Series Descriptions

### March 8 – Blue Eyes, Brown Eyes: A Class Divided

In response to the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. in 1968, teacher Jane Elliott devised the controversial and startling Blue Eyes/Brown Eyes exercise for her Riceville, Iowa, classroom. The well-known exercise labeled participants as inferior or superior based solely upon the color of their eyes and exposed them to the experience of being a minority.



### March 15 – A Time for Burning

A Time for Burning follows the attempts of a young Lutheran minister of a 1965 all-white church (Augustana Lutheran, Omaha) to reach out to a nearby African-American congregation. Despite an earnest mission to bring the community together, the minister, Rev. William Youngdahl, faces resistance from his parishioners and meets a young North Omaha barber—Ernie Chambers—who explains to him why his efforts at integration won't work.



### March 22 – Who is My Neighbor / Dying to Live

Several short films and discussions help us reflect on the world of the immigrant. “Dying to Live” is a profound look at the human face of the migrant. In “Who is my Neighbor,” Colorado church people and other professionals ask this question on the issue of immigration.



### March 29 – Tim Wise: On White Privilege

In this spellbinding lecture, Tim Wise explores the related phenomena of institutional discrimination and white privilege, and how they continue to operate in the United States. Wise explores the problem of white denial dating back generations, and the creation of the concept of whiteness.







# "Helping Hands"

Working Together in God's service

## Project Hope Again Participating in "Feinstein Opportunity"

Your donations to Project Hope during March and April will be matched by the Feinstein Foundation. To donate, you may drop an envelope in the offering labeled "Project Hope" on Sunday, give grocery items, or mail a check directly to Project Hope, PO Box 11-1312, Omaha, NE 68111- 1312. On the memo line write "Feinstein."

Mr. Alan Shawn Feinstein of Cranston, RI, writes: "For the past 9 years, I have been giving away \$1 million each year to anti-hunger agencies throughout the country. Why am I doing this? Because I believe each of us was put here on earth to do what we can to help those in need. This has become the greatest grass roots campaign ever to fight hunger in our country. Your donation makes you a partner in it with me! My money started this campaign but it is YOU who will help decide how many needy people in your city or town will be fed this year. I'm only here to give you some support and to remind you of this: All that will matter to us someday is what we did while we were here to help those who needed us. ... Please give whatever you can – I will gladly add some of my money to yours. My \$1 million will be divided in full proportionately among the agencies receiving donations toward my offer."

Project Hope has a 2009 food budget of \$50,000.00. They will get \$1.00 credit for each food item donated and \$1.00 credit for each dollar. Project Hope served an average of 493 families a month or 1,215 individuals. In addition to giving out food, they like to give disposable diapers, donated quilts (both adult and baby), bathroom tissue, and other personal care items when available.



On Sunday, February 1st, Super Bowl Sunday, we collected \$300.15 and 34 items of non-perishable food for the Lutheran Pantry during our Souper Bowl of Caring drive!

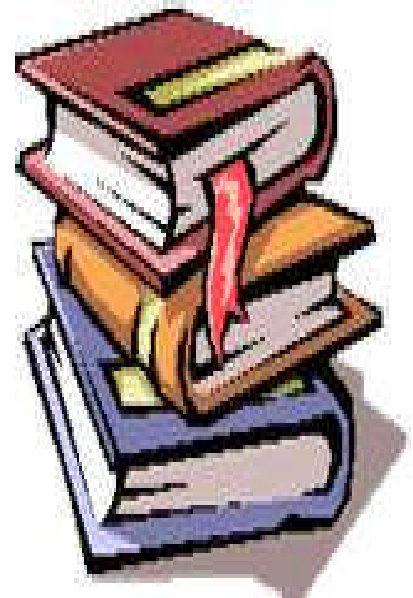
## Happening in the Library!

### Lent Book Sale

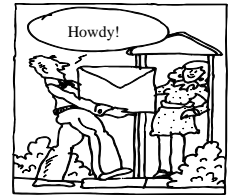
The Library Board is collecting used books, videos, CD's and cassettes in good condition as a fund-raiser for the Library during Lent. A sale table has been set up in the Upper Fellowship Hall.

Place your donated items in the box on the sale table.

Be sure to stop by the table each week and see what's new for purchase! Last year, we had a popular book that was purchased, donated again, purchased and donated again. Several people all read the book and had fun discussing it.



# Community News



Anxious? Sad? Stressed? Marriage difficulties? Family Troubles?  
Free or reduced rate Counseling is Available.

If you would like more information or to set up an appointment, please call Allyson Campbell at South High at 557-3675 or St. Luke's Evangelical Lutheran Church at 733-0172.

Allyson is the counselor for the South Omaha area. The service is made available to members of the community through the support from the Nebraska Methodist Hospital Foundation.

Other Community Counselors are available and serve other parts of the metro. For a complete list of sites and service, check the church bulletin board or call the church office mornings at 341-7730.

## **Kids At Work 2009**



Kids At Work to sponsor Lenten Dinner

Brenda and the Kids At Work Kids will be hosting the Lenten Dinner on March 4th. The dinner will feature kid friendly food. Invite your friends and anyone who might be interested in joining the summer program. All proceeds will go toward Kids At Work supplies and salaries.

Summer is just around the corner, that's when the fun starts! Consider being apart of the fantastic adventure with Kids At Work. The Kids At Work program is currently looking for volunteer Team Leaders. Team Leaders are needed on Tuesday and Wednesdays from 9:45 a.m. to noon. If you cannot volunteer for the whole summer, please consider volunteering the time you can. Any questions; please give me a call, at 551-4347.

*Brenda Spahr, Director of Kids At Work*

# News from the Families of Grace Lutheran Church

## A word of Thanks



Dear friends at Grace,

I would like to sincerely thank you for your cards, support and continued prayers during my ongoing treatment and recovery process for my illness. I certainly find great comfort in my "church family".

Thanks once again and God's Blessings!

*Arlone Farber*

Dear friends at Grace,

Thank you so much for coming to my 80th birthday celebration on February 8. It was a very happy and joyous time for me and I hope it was for you as well. Thank you, very much, friends and family at Grace.

Again, thank you, and may God bless each and everyone of you.

*Jerry Van Ormer*

### Faith Quest

#### Seek ye first the kingdom of God

Grace has done it again, by reaching out to their neighbors in Christ, by providing meals, serving food and cleaning up during our quest for faith. Thank you to all the participants and group leaders.

Gods Blessings and Peace!

Time is Running  
Out to Order  
Your Easter Lily!

The deadline is March 22.

Cost: \$9.50



Stop by the bulletin board and sign up to purchase an Easter lily: The cost to sponsor a lily plant is \$9.50. Please indicate whether you would like to take your lily home after Easter services or leave it to be given to one of our shut-ins.

Join Us On  
Sunday, March 29  
10:30 a.m.

The Rejoice Lutheran Choir of Omaha, NE, under the direction of Ray Swart, will present an Easter Musical Program during our worship hour.



A cookie reception is planned after the service. Volunteers are needed to sign up and bring baked treats for the event. A sign up sheet has been posted on the bulletin board.



## Columbus Park Neighborhood Meeting

March 19, at Grace Lutheran Church

7:00 PM

(LFH)



Virginia McGill  
Director, 660-6689

Gema Wolde  
616-4721

Se habla español.

### **New Partnerships Formed Via Interfaith Health Service**

This month, Interfaith began a new "Healthy Lifestyles" program and partnership with Omaha's Youth Empowerment Program (YEP), Arts for All and the Omaha Public Schools. Working with the Omaha Public School (OPS) System, the Youth Empowerment Program offers quality after-school programs to area youth from grades 4 through 12, while Arts for All seeks to bring affordable arts education through numerous programs throughout Omaha.

Because of Interfaith's track record of collaboration and building programs that are recognized on the National level in meeting community needs, we were approached by YEP and Arts for All to consider offering a class to OPS youth. Out of twenty or so options, the OPS students voted on the four favorite classes they would like to see offered this semester. Based on budget, YEP's board of directors narrowed those selections to two classes, and approved one class for Cartooning and Drawing and one for Zumba, a dance and physical activity movement class.

Gema, our Interfaith Health Promotora/Educator, is a Zumba certified instructor and expressed a genuine willingness to offer a first-ever Zumba class to a totally new age group. Gema has worked for three years with our Latinas in Action adults and she embraced the idea of helping Interfaith reach out to area youth. The curriculum for Gema's class focuses on teaching the basics of Zumba, which combines elements of meringue, salsa and other dances, while bringing about a high level of physical activity, fun and healthy lifestyle choices for youth.

Over 25 students attended Gema's first Zumba class. They received an overview of Zumba and began working with Gema immediately on getting active and learning different dance routines. The Director of the YEP Program, Miriam, shared that she was very impressed with Gema's ability to work with the students and maintain the interest of so many different students. Judy, the Executive Director of Arts for All, also shared that the students have expressed many positive sentiments about Gema's teaching style.

Interfaith has met so many new leaders, students and educators as a result of this Healthy Lifestyles partnership. We have also met many other outstanding staff and participants from other organizations that wish to work along side us to promote hope and healing in our community (these projects will be outlined in the future). We are blessed to be part of such a collaborative ministry and hope that with God's blessing and your prayers, our partnerships continue to grow and thrive in the months ahead.

*Virginia McGill, MA, Interfaith*



## **From the Editor**

### **Grace Has Gifts to Share**

“Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms” (1 Peter 4:10-11 NIV). This has been a very busy time for me during my first weeks in the church office. It is quite interesting getting to know Grace from this perspective. I am more familiar with Sunday morning worship, Faith Quest, and the after school program. During our quest of faith it became evident for me that yes, through the grace that has been bestowed on us by God, we have been faithful to seek God first

I think that we ignored all our personal issues and shortcomings and opened our church doors as well as our hearts to our neighbors in Christ. There were numerous volunteers preparing, providing and serving the food and even cleaning up afterwards. We enjoyed nice hot meal during the cold winter. In fact, by serving this supper, a family friend told me this truly is a blessing for her family that they can sit together at one table and have a warm meal for supper and better yet sit under the Word of God with her family.

Surely Grace has outdone herself by trusting in God yet once again. Faith Quest has been just that; an exercise in faith. On many occasions we did not know how many people would attend. Sometimes the teachers did not know exactly what or how their lesson plan would be for the day. But yet we acted on faith by trusting in God and God provided at all times. I once heard a wise elder say that we need to reach within ourselves before reaching out. Yes. Grace has done the same, in spite of our limitations; we walk hand in hand with our neighbors in search of better hope and enlightened faith. When all bring our gifts together, the Holy Spirit does the rest. I think it is important for each of us to ask God where we should use our gifts. When we try new things, we may even find that we can develop new gifts and talents.

Take me for example; working in the church office has been such a blessing for me. I am learning a lot about church administration and I am also discovering a lot about myself. The learning curve is steep. But I am up for the challenge because I know that God is leading my steps. Sometimes we forget that God is active in the everyday things that we do; preparing meals, cleaning the church, answering the phone, getting children involved in their faith—the list is practically endless.

I think if we remember that we all have God-given gifts, we can stay encouraged to do God's work. Let us continue to search ourselves and discover our gifts. Let us not be afraid to try something new even when it may scare us. I've brought my humble gifts to God and God is multiplying them. Little becomes much when placed in Jesus' hands. Let us all place our humble gifts in God's hands and watch the Holy Spirit work! My prayer for Grace is that we continue to walk closer to God and look deeper in ourselves for God's activity at work in our ordinary lives.

*Benhi !Khabeb*



- ◆
- ◆ Named from the Latin - *Martius* or "of Mars"
- ◆ Mars was the Roman god of war.
- ◆ March was the original beginning of the year, and the time for the resumption of war.
- ◆ has 31 days.
- ◆ Birthstone - Aquamarine
- ◆ Flower - Jonquil, Daffodil or Chrysanthemum which stands for beauty, honesty, loyalty

### Out of the mouths of God's kids

"Little Jack, a four-year-old boy in our pre-kindergarten class, was chosen to be Baby Jesus in the Christmas pageant. He was very proud and did a wonderful job. "Later, when his family was explaining Good Friday to him, he got very upset and said, 'I was Baby Jesus, but they are not getting me up on any cross.'"—Fr. Frank Weber Saint Brendan Parish Clifton, NJ

"On a recent Sunday at Lititz (PA) Moravian Church, I was talking with the children in the 'Children's Chat' in worship about Luke 15 (the lost sheep and the lost coin), and the joy we feel when we find something valued that we lost.

"I asked the children if they ever lost something and then found it. Young Jordan said, 'Yeah, I lost a five-dollar bill once, and I found it in my brother Cody's wallet.'

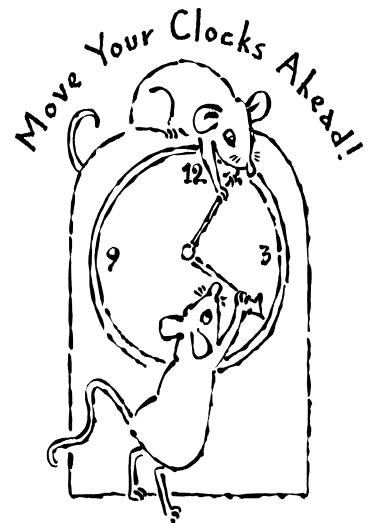
"Older brother Cody was also there, and didn't appreciate it, but the congregation took a long time to stop laughing." —Rev. Dean Jurgen

*Phonesia*, n. The affliction of dialing a phone number and forgetting who you were calling just as they answer.

At a recent seminar at Mantua (NJ) United Methodist Church, the topic of global warming came up, and one woman declared that she knew the cause of the problem. "It all began," she said, "When we instituted Daylight Savings Time."

The other group members were baffled and asked her to explain. "Well," she said, "it stands to reason that if you're going to have the sun shining longer, it's going to get warmer."

—via Rev. Karl R. Kraft



"My partial paralysis necessitates that I walk with a cane. As I stepped to the lectern at the end of a Sunday mass to announce upcoming activities, I stumbled a bit on the rise. I began, 'Paradoxically, my *cane* renders me *able*.' Only the priest laughed. When I added, 'Biblical jokes are okay in church,' the congregation chuckled."

—Chuck Chapman Parishioner, St. Henry Catholic Church Chicago, IL

A man was reading the newspaper one morning when he saw his name in the obituaries. He immediately telephoned his friend and said, "Mike, did you read in the paper that I have died?"

"Sure I did," Mike replied. "Where are you calling from?"

—via Robert F. Sims Eustis, FL