

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

Return Service Requested
Dated Material

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

Secretary - Benhi Khabeb

Youth Ministries - Brenda Spahr

Organist - Lynda Laird

Sexton - Brian Sutej/Titus Duli

Interfaith Health Ministries - Virginia McGill

Lutheran Volunteer - Anna Ernst

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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.*

December 2010



THE GRACE MESSENGER



2010 Council Members

Greg Hula Gloria Moore Vicky Cox
Andrew Edwards David Nange Ernest Olson
Arlone Farber Carolyn Matson Samantha Trejo
Pastor Laaker

Officers Serving the Congregation but not on Council:

Financial Secretary: Janet Hula Treasurer: Margie Sutej

Council Notes

The regular meeting of the Council was held on November 16. The Council members shared their prayer concerns: we pray for Sandy Fitzgerald, who battles brain cancer; we pray for Rick Moore as he struggles with health concerns; we pray for Julie Cahill, who is in rehabilitation and has lost a great grandchild; we pray for Kevin Courtney, as he struggles with side effects from chemotherapy treatments for colon cancer; we lift praise for Jimmy Wyman, although he is still recovering from a bad motorcycle accident, he is feeling somewhat better; we pray for friends and relatives who have lost loved ones, that they will be able to move forward in their own lives; we pray for our custodian, Brian Sutej, who is recovering from a broken leg; we pray for the Hawkins family who has lost a son to a violent act; we pray for John Volcheck who struggles with liver and colon cancer; we pray for the family of Stacey Klinger, the South High teacher, who was killed in a traffic accident, as well as, the gentleman who was involved in the accident who is having a hard time dealing with grief and depression; we pray for the children in the "After School" program and their families, as well as the children who start and then do not return; we pray for safe travel during the holidays while people go to see their loved ones; we pray for people suffering from damages caused by natural disasters; we pray for the needs of our Sudanese brothers and sisters; and we pray for the safety of armed service personnel, as well as our police and fire personnel, who protect each one of us.

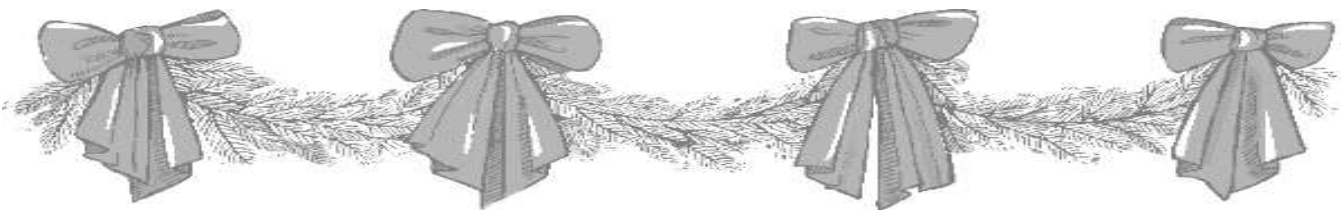
Devotions were led by Pastor Laaker reading the selected verses of Isaiah 2:12 and 1 John 2:17 from the "*Daily Texts*." These verses remind us that we are held accountable and live up to our responsibilities. We cannot be "into ourselves." Loving God shows up in how we treat others. The love of God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, leads us to doing what God wants, not what we want. We remember that we are God's servants and we convey God's goodness's and kindnesses in everything we do.

Visions for Ministry: The Council continued their conversation on "Radical Welcome." Interestingly enough, the Bible verses from the "*Daily Texts*" tied in with the conversation. We represent God's Church, not "our" church. We must take the responsibility to tune into what God is doing and what God wants us to be doing. We must ask ourselves if the things we do within the church are something we want to do our way, or are we following God's mission and doing things God's way. It's a struggle for all of us to stay involved and have trust, but God's love will guide us in the right direction. In God's Church, we must care for one another and hold firm in our faith in God.

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

Christian Education: Anna Ernst has a "fun night" set up for young people on Friday, November 19th from 7:00-9:00 P.M. There will be pizza and a movie shown in the upper fellowship hall. Anna is hoping for a good turnout and volunteers are welcomed.

Evangelism/Outreach: It was reported that the Halloween party went well and approximately ninety-three kids and parents attended. Special thanks to Anna Ernst and Janet Hula for being in charge, as well as the countless volunteers that made it possible.





Council Notes...

Finance: The Council and Pastor Laaker had discussion regarding the property to the north of the Church that is going to be for sale. The owners are giving Grace Lutheran the first chance at buying the property.

This effort would require a loan. The Mission Investment Fund of the ELCA offers such a loan. The Council felt that it would be appropriate for Pastor Laaker to go ahead and submit a “preliminary application” to see if it would be financially feasible to pursue the idea of expanding the Church’s property. Discussions will continue and the Council will keep the congregation up-to-date.

It was reported that Pastor Laaker’s health premiums through the Board of Pensions, will not increase in 2011.

The Council will have a discussion at the December meeting on the amount that will be recommended for the 2011 Mission Share.

Property: Cold weather projects are being completed at the Church. Sealant will be applied to the roof where a leak has developed in the upper fellowship hall.

Service/Social Ministry: On Sunday, November 21st, the 300th “Habitat House” will be dedicated at 2:00 P.M. at Salem Baptist Church in Omaha. Everyone is welcome to come and celebrate this amazing accomplishment in the city.

Support/Stewardship: The Fall Stewardship materials have been mailed. Remember, God wants us to use our time and talent for his purposes.

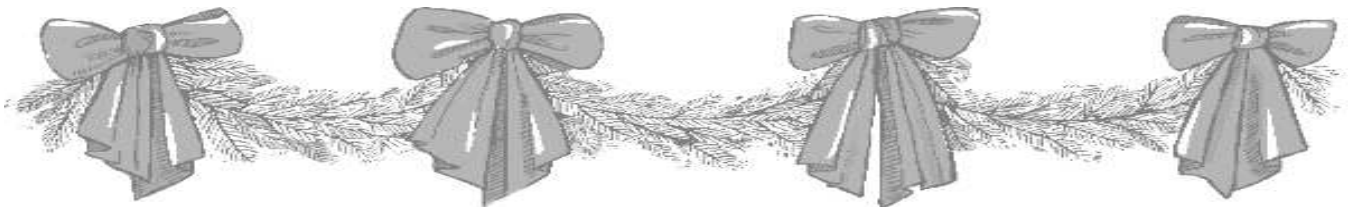
Worship: After much discussion, it was decided by the Council to have one worship service at 6:00 P.M. on Christmas Eve this year. The numbers have steadily declined over the past few years, no longer making it feasible to have two separate services. Pastor Laaker will check with our sister Lutheran parishes on who may be holding services at a later hour and have it printed in this week’s Church bulletin.

Unfinished Business: No unfinished business.

New Business: No new business.

Announcements: The joint Thanksgiving Eve service will be hosted by St. Luke’s on Wednesday, November 24th at 7:00 P.M.

Vicki Cox will bring treats and lead prayer for our December Council meeting.



An Advent Message From the Pastor

We have begun the season of Advent, a time of expectant waiting and preparation for the celebration of the birth of Jesus at Christmas.

For Christians, Advent should be a time of preparation, but our society places lots of pressure to skip Advent and go straight to Christmas. It's much like skipping Lent and going straight to Easter.

Advent is a time for Christians to recognize the great gift God has given to us through the birth of Jesus. It's not just the baby Jesus, but the fact that he grew up to be a man and showed us how to live. We are called to give of ourselves, which seems to be the opposite of what society tells us.

The word Advent is Latin for "coming" or "arrival." It's a whole lot more than looking forward to the birth of Jesus. The scripture readings for the first Sunday center on the second coming of Jesus, while the second and third Sundays focus on John the Baptist and his prophecy that a savior is coming. It's not until the fourth Sunday in Advent that we hear about a baby being born.

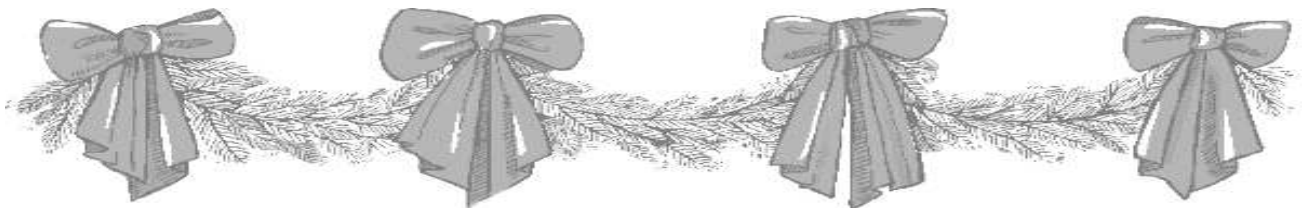
The spirit of Advent is expressed well in the parable of the bridesmaids who are anxiously awaiting the coming of the bridegroom (Matthew 25:1-13). There is profound joy at the bridegroom's expected coming. And yet a warning of the need for preparation echoes through the parable.

"Advent is not just a time of waiting for Jesus, but a time of preparing ourselves," said Sister Roberta Marie Doneth, administrator of the St. Francis Spirituality Center, Tiffin. "(It's) believing in hope that even with all our shortcomings and wrongdoings, God loves us so much that God is willing to dwell in our midst and nourish us abundantly with the graces we need to follow our spiritual journeys."

Advent also symbolizes the spiritual journey of individuals and congregations. A key focus is on God's giving of God's self to the world. We, in turn, focus on sharing the light of Christ with others. All lights point to the light of Christ. Christ is the real light that shines in the darkness.

May we prepare well this Advent and work to become the best reflection of the light of Christ.

Pastor Laaker





Anna Ernst
Community Outreach Associate
Grace Lutheran/ St. Lukes Lutheran Church
Lutheran Volunteer Corps (LVC) Volunteer

My favorite album to listen to at this time of year is the soundtrack to the television special “A Charlie Brown Christmas”, which mostly consists of jazzy, beautiful, comfortable versions of Christmas tunes by the Vince Guaraldi Trio. The chances are likely that if you catch me working at the computer in the church library this month, I’ll have it playing. I especially like the idea of listening to it at church/work because of the way I described the music – comfortable. It turns out that “comfortable” is a good word to describe how I feel whenever I walk through the doors of Grace.

It seems that a lot of other people feel that way, too. For example -

- while we may not host the biggest after-school program around, the neighborhood kids that come really know and love it. They know they can get a snack, a good run-around in, help with their homework, and the chance to be creative by working on a fun art project. (Last week we painted our jeans!) The kids also know that they are welcome at Grace by the affection and concern for their well-being that is shown for them – “Grandma” Eva always gets plenty of hugs whenever she stays for the program!

- the annual Halloween party brought in somewhere around 100 people –friends and family of congregation members, regular attendees of our after-school program and *their* friends and family, and families from the exercise groups that Grace hosts. It seemed as though everyone had a really great time! Many thanks to all the volunteers who donated money, treats, and/or time decorating or running games at the party – LaVonne and Bob Moss, Ron and Donna Adrian, Jerry Van Ormer, Gloria Moore, Arlone Farber, David Hufford, Larry Foreman, Joe Narducci, Ernie Olson, Andrew Edwards, Mary Laaker, Sarah Emery, Jim Harrahill, Elizabeth Harrahill, and last but certainly not least, Greg and Janet Hula, who emptied their basement to bring as many cool decorations as possible and know exactly what to do to make the party happen. Thanks also and apologies to anyone I may have accidentally left off the list!

-the first Friday night “fun night” was a success! The kids from our after-school program enjoyed eating pizza, pretzels, popcorn and pink lemonade, playing circle games and the card game UNO, and snuggling up on the floor with pillows and blankets in front of the projector watching the movie. I want to thank Ernie, Andrew, Brenda, and my housemate Sarah for their help and support with the event.

Also, recently, I attended the Sudanese fellowship worship service for the first time, met the organizer of the Round Dancers, and have spent more time with the leaders of Mujeres Activas and Latinas en Acción. I continue to be amazed by all of the groups who have found a comfortable place at Grace Lutheran.

But I’ve been wondering (as I wander) during this volunteer year – does everyone feel as comfortable as I do at Grace these days, or as comfortable as I think they are? What is the best way to address discomforts that come up as a result of different groups of people using the building for different activities? Who else, especially in our immediate neighborhood, can find comfort at Grace, and how do we reach them? Can we pursue any of the following ideas that have been floating around in my head for the past few months?

- More family-friendly coffeehouse/movie nights
- A bigger after-school program, with more volunteers and more kids
- More advertising of the Saturday ESL class
- An expanded women’s group for Bible study open and advertised particularly to women in the neighborhood
- Sunday School, homework and employment assistance for Sudanese fellowship

I will continue to ask myself these and other questions. I appreciate beyond words everyone’s prayers, support and kindness shown to me so far this year. One way you could continue that would be to ask yourself these questions and share your answers with me. And whatever your answers may be, I hope you find comfort in serving God, who is all about pushing people out of their comfort zones, this Advent season. AMEN.

More Christmas Eve Services

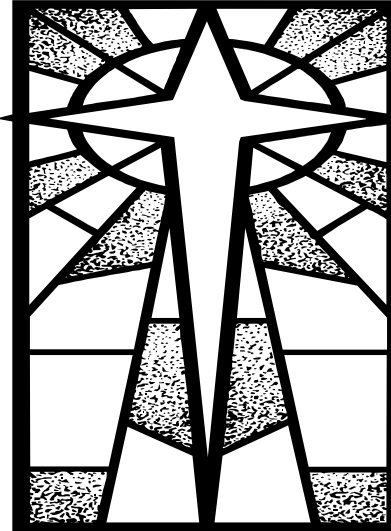
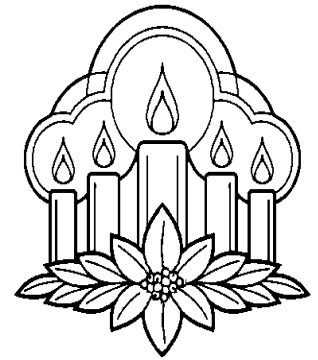
Grace Lutheran Church

(Candlelight Service) at 6:00 p.m.

Bethel Lutheran Church at 11:00 p.m.

First Lutheran Church at 7:00 p.m.

St. Matthew Lutheran Church -5:00 p.m & 11:00 p.m



Lutheran Women of Omaha Luncheon

December 14, 2010 - 12:030 p.m.

Rejoice Lutheran Church
2550 S.138 Street (N of Center)

Cost: \$6.00 for the Luncheon

Monetary gift: Project Hope Pantry
or canned foods (No green beans or pork and beans please)

Reservations due by December 12th

Call Lorraine Palma at 455-4342

Or Mardelle Gocek at 292-1328



Grace Women's Christmas Luncheon

December 14, 2010

Piccolo Pete's Restaurant

2202 South 20 Street

1:00 p.m.

This year, instead of a gift exchange,
an offering will be taken for the Lutheran Food Pantry.

Invite your girlfriends to come.

The food's great but the fellowship's the best part!

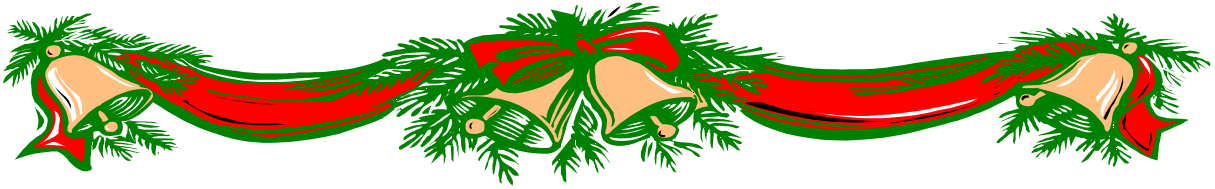
The Mitten Tree is up!

Each year, people from Grace Lutheran Church bring donations of mittens, gloves, scarves, and other warm items and place them on the tree. These gifts of warmth are donated to area shelters.

Winter items are needed in all sizes.
Bring your donations and place them on the tree.



Prayer Concerns from Family and Friends



- ♦ Andrew Edwards - Doing dialysis a couple times a week until a kidney can be found. (member)
- ♦ Mae Lane - Ongoing health issues. (member)
- ♦ Ken Hilmer - As he struggles with health issues. (member)
- ♦ La Vonne Moss - Ongoing health issues. (member)
- ♦ Ferne Matson - Ongoing health issues. (member)
- ♦ Barbara Nelson - as she recovers from a stroke. (member)
- ♦ Barbara Narducci - as she continues to recovers from her fall. (member)
- ♦ Martina Botho - As she recovers from burns and skin grafting surgery.(member)
- ♦ Carolyn Matson - as she recovers from surgery. (member)
- ♦ Brian and Margie Sutej - as he recovers from a broken leg. (member)
- ♦ The Harrahill family as they mourn the loss of Thelma.

Pray for our Shut - ins and Nursing Home residents:

Mae Lane - St Joe Villa.

Barbara Nelson - Life Care Center, Elkhorn.

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

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

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

Pastor Laaker

Bishop David deFreese, Nebraska Synod

Bishop Mark Hanson, ELCA Bishop, United States

- ♦ Pray for the Sudanese community in general. Titus Duli, David Nange and Charles Tuw are the elders for the Sudanese Worshipping Community.

*Let's encourage each other as we see God's hand
in answering our prayers.*

News from the Families of Grace Lutheran Church

"Thank you dear friends, for making my 102nd birthday a delightful celebration. The many cards received were wonderful and the messages were beautiful. I am happy you are all a part of my life at Grace Lutheran Church.

God bless all of you.

Gratefully,

Gertrude Hufford



The 40 member Senior Choir of Rejoice! Lutheran Church will present an Advent Cantata at Grace Lutheran on Sunday, December 12 during morning worship. The choir, under the direction of Ray Swartz and accompanied by Nancy Riley, will sing a variety of traditional and contemporary selections by various composers that reflect the sounds of the season.

A cookie and coffee reception is planned following the service. If you can provide cookies, please sign up on the bulletin board.

HERE at Grace Lutheran Church
Sunday, December 12, 2010
During morning Worship at 10:30 a.m.
Invite your friends

*use this music-filled event to invite your
neighbors to experience God's wonderful
gift of his Son, Jesus Christ.*



Getting the Perfect Gift



"I've seen you stalking the malls, walking the aisles, searching for that extra-special gift. Stashing away a few dollars a month to buy him some lizard-skin boots; staring at a thousand rings to find her the best diamond; staying up all night Christmas Eve, assembling the new bicycle.

Why do you do it? So the eyes will pop, the jaw will drop. To hear those words of disbelief: "You did this for me?"

And that is why God did it. Next time a sunrise steals your breath or a meadow of flowers leaves you speechless, remain that way. Say nothing, and listen as heaven whispers,

"Do you like it? I did it just for you."

—Max Lucado/*The Great House of God* (Word)



4:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.
Monday Tuesday and Thursday

Games, Crafts, and Fun
Geared for Elementary Kids!

Free!

There will be no After School Program during winter break. The last day in December will be Thursday, December 16. The Program will resume on Tuesday, January 4th. On Thursday, December 16, there will be a holiday party for the AfterSchool Program. Please contact Anna if you would be willing to donate rolls of pre-made cookie dough, sprinkles or frosting for holiday cookie decorating the main event of the party.

Please Note that this time and date are correct!

Happy Holidays from Anna and the Kids of the

Happenin' in the Grace Lutheran Church Library

Your church library is a great place to find something good to read.

The Library Committee has been shopping for new books. Over 20 new titles have been added, many of them from requests for the next book in a popular series. Check it out!!!



Got Your 2011 Scripture Calendar Yet?

This is a beautiful, high quality calendar
with scripture verses and wonderful scenes.

Similar calendars at the mall and stationary shops sell for up to \$12.00!

Buy Them for Gifts or for Yourself.

Only \$5.00 each

Hurry! Quantities are Limited!

Coming Event for the Library! 6th Annual Used book Sale .

Start saving your good used books to donate at the end of February for our Lenten Used Book Sale. Proceeds go for Library books and projects.



POINSETTIAS

Cost:

\$9.00 each

A Sign Up sheet
has been posted on the Bulletin Board

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

Deadline: December 10, 2010



2011 Flower Chart

The 2011 Flower Chart will be posted on the bulletin board outside the church office.

The Flower Chart sign-up is your opportunity to sponsor flowers for a special Sunday in honor of an important event in your family's life or in memory of someone dear to you. The cost to sponsor flowers for a Sunday is \$12.00.

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

Sign up on the Flower Chart.

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 Joe Narducci for more details.



Prayer Service

December 08, 2010

7:00 p.m.

Grace Lutheran Church

1326 S 26 St.

People of all Faiths Welcome!

Come for a quiet time of Meditation,
Soft lighting, Gentle Music
Prayer and Anointing for Healing.

*Leave your holiday hustle and bustle behind.
Take the chance to sit quietly and listen to God speak
as you prepare for the celebration of His birth!*



Special Worship Opportunities
at Omaha's Midtown Churches
During December

"Lessons & Carols"

Celebrating The Peace, Love & Joy of the Advent Season.

Featuring

Westminster Sanctuary Choir Omaha Chamber Music
First Lutheran Church Choir First Baptist Church Choir
Bethel Lutheran Choir Omaha Metro Handbells
Creighton Gospel Choir The Manna Singers
The Barnhard Sisters

Friday , December 10, 2010 at 7:00 p.m.

*Westminster Presbyterian Church
3416 Woolworth Ave Omaha NE*

Christmas
Eve
Worship



December 24, 2010

6:00 p.m.

Carols
Scripture
Communion
Candle Lighting



"Helping Hands"

Working Together in God's service

Christmas for Project Hope

This Christmas season, Grace will again be collecting needed items to contribute to Project Hope food pantry. Throughout Advent, please consider bringing in personal care products for Project Hope's clients.

Suggestions include:

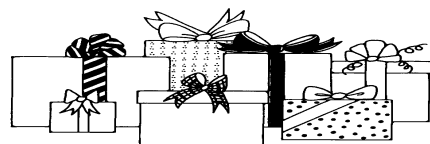
Toothbrushes	Feminine Hygiene products	Scarves
Bathroom Tissue	Shaving Razors	Combs
Deodorant	Tissues	Brushes
Laundry Soap	Hats	Hair Conditioner

Thanks for getting into the Christmas spirit by doing good things for others!

Lutheran Pantry in Omaha

The Lutheran Pantry is supported by congregations, individuals, and grants. It is used to provide food for needy families throughout the Omaha area and is the largest denominational system in the city.

In addition we also work to provide support to Together Emergency Relief Services, the ecumenical pantry system.



*Women of the Evangelical
Lutheran Church in America*

Grace Quilters Send Quilts Around the World

The women of the Grace Quilters completed many beautiful quilts and lap robes to be distributed around the globe as part of the Lutheran World Relief Ingathering in November. 20 full size quilts recycled from polyester clothing were sent to LWR. 27 lap robes were also sent to various nursing homes around the city to provide warmth to the elderly.

Get involved!

Come on Mondays and help!
People needed to cut out squares
or tie quilts.

No Experience Necessary!

Please consider a gift to a charity during your Christmas giving!

Use a Pew envelope or a World Hunger envelope and
list the project you desire your gift to be given to.





Faithful Stewards of God's Infinite Grace"

In addition to time and talents, God has also given us financial resources. For most of us, this means working to secure monetary gain. But make no mistake about it: According to Deuteronomy chapter 8, God gives us the ability to earn money. According to King Solomon, even work itself is a gift from God (Eccl. 5:19) In fact, everything we have — even the air we breathe in order to be able to work — is a gift that has been temporarily loaned to us by God.

The truth of the temporary status of our financial resources was brought home to a pastor who needed a dark suit to conduct a funeral. He had very little money, so he went to a local pawn shop where he found a like-new suit in just the right size at a very inexpensive price. As he paid for the suit, he asked the clerk how the pawn shop could afford to sell the suit at such a low price. The clerk smiled and admitted that all their suits had once been owned by a local mortuary that had gone out of business.

The minister felt a little strange wearing a suit that had once been part of a funeral home's inventory, but he quickly set aside his apprehension since the price was so low and since no one would know. Everything was fine until in the middle of the funeral service, he casually started to put his hand into the pocket of the pants — only to discover there were no pockets! What an object lesson he received that day as he preached about the importance of living in the light of eternity while wearing a pair of pants without pockets!

All of us know the old saying, "You can't take it with you." That's why whatever we are going to do with the financial resources God has entrusted to us has to be done in this life. In fact, whatever we intend to do for the Lord with our money, we need to be doing now. Or as one person observed, "Do your giving while you're living so you'll be knowing where it's going!"

How we use the money which God has given to us is an indicator of our priorities. Our checkbook will reveal clearly the things that are really important to us. How we spend our money is, in fact, a barometer of our spiritual temperature and of our personal faith. You see, it doesn't take a lot of faith to make a rational, logical decision concerning our giving. As we review expenses and anticipated income, we can easily find the balance and base our commitment on the numbers alone. But exercising faith, looking to God as our Source to provide above and beyond what we might reasonably be expected to give, well — that's another story.

As you consider your life during this time of stewardship emphasis, will you — like the Macedonian Christians — begin by first giving yourself to the Lord? Will you then be one of the "Faithful Stewards of God's Infinite Grace" who will step out by faith by giving your time, your talents and your treasure to the Lord?

On behalf of our entire congregation and staff, we want to express our sincere thanks and appreciation to you for your participation in this year's stewardship emphasis, "Faithful Stewards of God's Infinite Grace." We thank God for you and for your willingness to step out by faith with others here at Grace Lutheran Church concerning your giving in the future.

Grace Stewardship Committee



Grace Lutheran's Stewardship Theme for 2011
"Faithful Stewards of God's Infinite Grace"

Plan now and ask God to help you work your plan in 2011.



Merry Christmas!
Feliz Navidad!
From Your Interfaith Director
and Staff.

Interfaith Health Service's Programs Build Relationships, In Large and Small Ways

At Interfaith and Latinas in Action, we have seen quite an increase in participants in all of our programs! Our sewing classes/micro-business classes are at capacity with a waiting list for future classes as soon as we secure additional funding. Our outreach/Zumba program reaching domestic violence survivors has also met capacity and necessitates considering adding another class for women and children. Our evening programs, as always, are welcoming many new families each week and has also meant an increase in our children and teen participants.

I have been in meetings lately with groups of students from the University of Nebraska Omaha and Creighton interested in helping out during our evening programs. If this takes shape, it will likely include some assistance in childcare and in regular activities. Like many other folks, I view partnerships as a two-way street. Volunteers within our programs are sharing their own time and talents. Our participants, too, share their time and talents with the volunteers. The whole experience of mutuality can be very rich and rewarding. Building such relationships does not happen over-night and requires a commitment to honoring the reality that time, care and attention must be intentional in nature for relationships to blossom. Such elements, along with others, are necessary to facilitate mutual trust and openness in relationships.

A very small example of relationship building has been apparent for me this month when one of our Amigos in Action students, Christopher, began returning regularly to our evening classes to participate in teen programming. I had not seen Christopher since I happened to share lunch with him and his family at the zoo this summer. He is now in 7th grade at Beveridge Elementary school and very involved in sports. Many of his soccer games conflicted with Amigos in Action activities. Now that his soccer season is over, Christopher shared that he missed seeing his friends (and even missed talking to me!) and taking part in Amigos in Action a great deal.

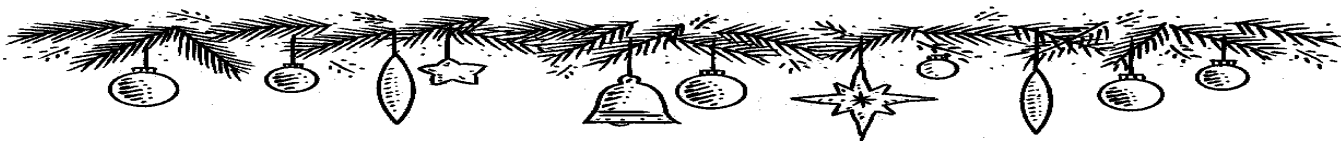
Christopher had been going through a tough time in school and had a setback when he missed several weeks due to illness. He has recovered fully and is now attending school every day and has the energy to attend our programs with his mom. I enjoy checking in with him on school, homework and sports each Wednesday and Friday. His mom shared with me that he values this type of adult time and that she is very happy he has a place where he feels so connected and welcomed each week by other teenagers. She noted that some of his friends and neighbors are already experiencing negative influences, especially after school and in the evenings, and she believes Amigos in Action is having a very positive impact on him. He is the one rushing her out the door to get to classes, she marvels, so that he can spend as much time as possible with Amigos in Action.

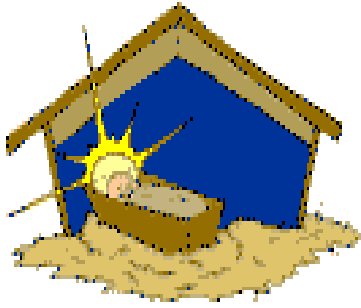
For my part, I am so happy to see Christopher return to our programs! Amigos in Action participants and I were able to take up with him just where we left off in sharing our stories. He is a wonderful young man. He is witty, full of energy, and is always ready with a story about school or a recent experience to share. Christopher is also extremely kind to our younger children and is an amazing example of someone who role models positive behaviors around them. It is remarkable how much our three and four years olds, in particular, pay attention to him and seek him out because of his willingness to engage them.

When we hosted a group of nursing students from Methodist College recently, Christopher was as engaging as ever and eager to talk with the students about college. He shared a few jokes with the students that he learned in school and every student commented on his sparkling personality. For me, just as is true for students or participants, it is easy to spend time with Christopher because I learn a great deal about what his hopes and dreams are, his values, his commitment to his faith and my life is richer for knowing him and his family. He is a real blessing for each one of us.

In this time of Thanksgiving, I am also thankful to all of our partners who support our ministries and who lift up all our programs and participants in prayer as we continue develop, maintain or seek out positive reciprocal relationships with one another here in South Omaha.

Virginia McGill, IHS





Merry Christmas

More “Merry Christmas” and Less “Happy Holidays” *Reminder for the Season*

“It’s called “Christmas,”
What more can I say
It’s about the birth of Christ and you can’t take that away.
You can call it something else but that’s not what it will be.
It’s Called “Christmas” with a capital C!”

From the Go Fish Guys Children’s CD “go fish SNOW”

Let’s intentionally Keep Christ in our Christmas celebrations!

Special Days at Grace

December 1 - World AIDS Day
December 8 - Prayer Service
December 11 - Latinas Christmas Party.(LFH)
December 12 - Rejoice Lutheran Choir
Choir Cantata
December 14 - Women’s Lunch at Piccolo’s
December 15 - Staff Christmas Party
December 15 - Photographers Club
Christmas Party.(UFH)
December 16 - AfterSchool Holiday Party.
December 24 - Christmas Eve Worship
Carols
Scripture
Communion
Candle Lighting.

What did the reindeer
say before launching
into his comedy routine?
This will sleigh you.



What is the purpose of reindeer?
It makes the grass grow, sweetie.

One Christmas, Joe and Peter
built a skating rink in the mid-
dle of a field. A shepherd lead-
ing his flock decided to take a
shortcut across the rink. The
sheep, however, were afraid of
the ice and wouldn't cross it. Desperate, the shep-
herd began tugging them to the other side.



'Look at that, 'remarked Peter to Joe, 'That guy is
trying to pull the wool over our ice!'



Good King Wenceslas phoned
for a pizza.

The salesgirl asked him,
'Do you want your usual?
Deep pan, crisp and even?'

'He who has no Christmas in his heart will never find
Christmas under a tree.'

- Anon.





Christmas Song

According to folklore, the song “The 12 Days of Christmas” was written to help young believers learn about their faith. Although no evidence proves that claim, some say the popular carol contains these codes:

The partridge in a pear tree is **Jesus Christ**.

Two turtle doves are the **Old and New Testaments**.

Three French hens stand for **faith, hope and love**.

The four calling birds are the **four gospels**.

The five golden rings are the **Law: the first five books of the Old Testament**.

The six geese a-laying represent the **six days of creation**.

Seven swans a-swimming represents the **gifts of the Holy Spirit: prophecy, serving, teaching, exhortation, contribution, leadership and mercy**.

The eight maids a-milking are **Jesus’ eight Beatitudes**.

Nine ladies dancing are the **fruits of the Holy Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control**.

The 10 lords a-leaping are the **Ten Commandments**.

The 11 pipers piping stand for the **11 faithful disciples**.

The 12 drummers drumming symbolize the **12 statements of belief in the Apostles’ Creed**.

Silent Night Holy Night Christ the Savior is Born!

