

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

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Email: graceluth@graceluth.com
Web Site: www.graceluth.com

REGULAR SUNDAY EVENTS
9:00 A.M. Christian Education
10:30 A.M. Worship Service

Pastor - Rev. Dr. Damon D. Laaker
Editor/Church Secretary – Brenda Spahr
Organist - Colleen Jeffrey
Sexton - Nenchi Ilka
Families In Action - Virginia McGill

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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.**



2012

THE
GRACE
MESSENGER



2012 Council Members

John Boato
Vicki Cox
Sarah Emery

Ralph Fitle
June Hilmer
David Hufford

Greg Hula
Carolyn Matson
Samantha Trejo
Pastor Laaker

Officers Serving the Congregation but not on Council:

Financial Secretary: Janet Hula

Treasurer: Ralph Fitle

The regular meeting of the Council was held April 10th. The Council members shared their prayer concerns: We pray for the continued recovery of those close to us; Greg's friends, Greg with his last round of chemo, and John for his positive checkup, Ralph's co-worker Randy Haney as he is now home with his new liver. We pray for the healing of Ken and June Hilmer with their continued health struggles, David's friend Al Frazier after his recent surgery for a brain tumor, Sarah's co-worker Loyce's family as they struggle with their nephew Evan's newly discovered tumor, Sarah's sister-in-law, Jeanne as she heals from a skiing accident, Rebecca Yalle from our Sudanese community as she struggles with a painful tooth, for JP's friend Scott Hodgkiss after the loss of his finger, Greg's friend Jim Cokely and his family after the death of his 22 year old stepson Jordan. We pray for peace & stabilization in areas of unrest; Syria, Sudan, North Korea, etc. We pray that God will help lead our fellow Sudanese congregation in wisdom. We pray that folks will help pass LB 599.

Pastor led devotions from Job 4.17 and Titus 2.14. Both remind us that we are claimed! Let's recognize our relationships and do what matters.

Visions for Ministry: The Council continued reading Missional Renaissance. We discussed how to think of church as a who not a what. Realize that God is out there working, lets join in! Please read Chapter 3 for our next meeting.

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

Christian Education: Who might be willing to organize VBS this year?

Evangelism/Outreach: The Nebraska Synod will be our partner as we seek a Lutheran Volunteer Corps person.

Finance: Church Mutual will be dropping our insurance coverage at renewal. Pastor has met with one agent and will meet with another soon.

Property: House to the South of the church is now prepared to sell. The assessed value is \$53,700.

Service/Social Ministry: Early Voting Election Applications will be available at church. A candidates forum, co-sponsored by OTOC will be held at North High School on April 15. LB 599 will have its 3rd vote on Thursday. OTOC will have their spring fund raiser at the Hot Shops on April 21.

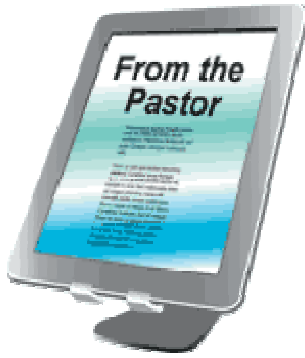
Support/Stewardship: Prayer cards for the Sheriff's Dept and OPD are available. Please take one or more, and keep our protectors in your prayers!

Worship: Reviewed our Lenten services. They were passionate and wonderful. We had 59 worshipers on Easter Sunday.

Unfinished Business: No new report.

New Business: No new report.

Announcements: No new report. Ralph will bring treats for our May meeting.



I recently had the privilege of being a part of the Candidates Forum sponsored by the Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance, the Empowerment Network and Omaha Together One Community (OTOC). I found it interesting to hear the diversity represented in our political candidates seeking to hold the office of Representative to Congress in the Second District. Each candidate answered the questions asked by each of the organizations. It became very clear that some of the candidates supported services that targeted individuals seeking assistance with education and employment. Other candidates expressed no support for expansion of these services.

On Wednesday, April 18, I received an email from Bread for the World. The email contained information on the House Agricultural Subcommittee's proposal to cut 33 billion dollars from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program over the next decade. One committee member was reported as saying that local churches should pick up the responsibility of feeding hungry people. In doing the math, Bread for the World noted that this reduction and shift of costs would require each church in America to spend \$50,000 to accomplish this task. Wow! I have to admit I am a bit perplexed on our current national focus to cut benefits to the poorest of the poor.

Bread for the World reports that hunger is a serious problem in America. I can concur based on the increase in the number of people seeking food assistance through the Lutheran Pantry. We see the numbers of people coming for assistance rise after the 15th of the month. When we ask people about their need, they tell us that their Food Stamp allocation runs out about the 18th of the month.

One of the hallmarks of our Christian faith is to be compassionate. In our recent Sunday morning readings, we have heard the story of the early Christian community in Acts 4:32, "Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common." I am not sure we would be willing to hold everything in common but I am sure that we can commonly support actions that care for those who are the least and lowest in our economy.

I see this as keeping faith with Christ who says to the disciples in Matthew 25:40, "And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.'" I would hope that, at the very least, we would be compelled to speak up on behalf of those who are in need.

I hope that each of us who have the opportunity to participate in our democracy will exercise our faith in learning about the positions of our candidates and vote for those that most closely align with our faith positions.

Pr. Damon Laaker

Early Voting Ballot Applications are available on the back table in the sanctuary for anyone interested in applying. Forms are also available at www.votedouglasscounty.com. The deadline to mail in early ballots is May 9th. A registered voter may vote early at the Election Commission prior to Election Day during business hours, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. Early voting in person for this election ends on Monday, May 14, 2012. Voting will be held on Tuesday, May 15, 2012.





Prayer Vigil

Prayer Concerns from Family and Friends

"Give attention to your servant's prayer and his plea for mercy, LORD my God. Hear the cry and the prayer that your servant is praying in your presence this day."

1 Kings 8:28

Those we pray for named below are members unless otherwise specified:

- ◆ Andrew Edwards - Doing dialysis a couple times a week until a kidney can be found.
- ◆ Ken Hilmer - Ongoing health issues.
- ◆ La Vonne Moss - Ongoing health issues.
- ◆ Jack Williams - Ongoing health issues.
- ◆ Don Olson - Ongoing health issues.
- ◆ Rose Heesacker - Ongoing cancer treatments. (June Hilmer's sister.)
- ◆ Rex Olson - Ongoing cancer treatments. (Don Olson's brother.)
- ◆ Wanda Black - Ongoing health issues. (Don Olson's sister.)
- ◆ Pastor Judy Gifford - Ongoing cancer treatment. (Assistant to the Bishop.)
- ◆ Norma Courtney - Ongoing health issues. (Arlone Farber's Mom.)
- ◆ Mary Jane King - Ongoing health issues. (Donna Adrian's Mom.)
- ◆ Jean Matson - Ongoing health issues. (Andrea Spahr's Grandma.)
- ◆ Mike Novak - Ongoing cancer treatment. (Dorothy Novak's son.)
- ◆ Sharon Bishop - Spiritual healing during cancer treatments. (Friend of Dorothy Novak.)
- ◆ Jeff Van Overen - Healing during cancer treatments. (Friend of many.)

Pray for our Shut - ins and Nursing Home residents:

Mae Lane - St Joe Villa.

Barbara Nelson - Life Care Center, Elkhorn.

Barbara Narducci - Home

Jack Williams - Immanuel Village.

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. 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.*





And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.

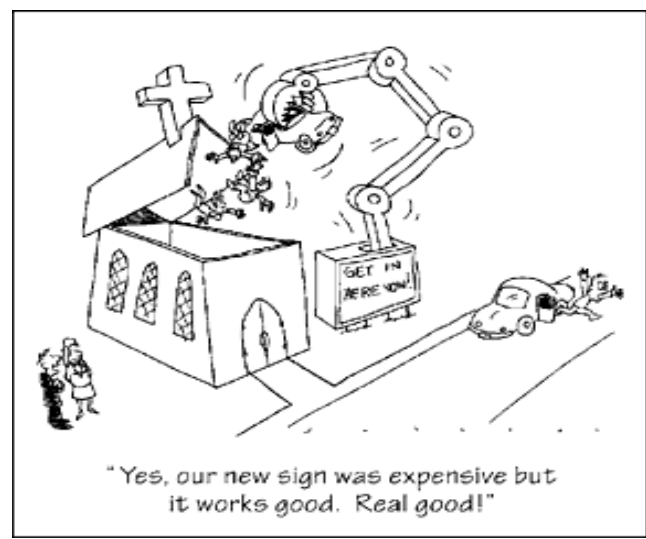
2 Corinthians 9:8

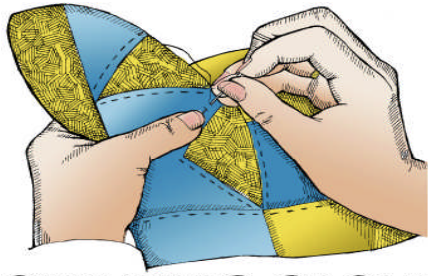
- ◆ Thank you to Marilyn and Jerry Van Ormer for their dedication in tending to the plants in the entry way, they continue to look welcoming.
- ◆ Thank you to Mary Laaker, Tom and Sarah Emery, Arlone Farber and Vicki Cox for their ongoing care in the nursery during Sunday morning worship service.
- ◆ Thank you to Bob Moss and Jerry Van Ormer for their continuing efforts to maintain the church with any projects that need to be completed.
- ◆ Thank you to Marilyn, LaVonne, June, and Eva, with your dedication in quilting for the Lutheran World Relief.
- ◆ Thank you to Nenchi Ilka, you are doing such a great job cleaning the church building!
- ◆ Thank you to Jerry and Marilyn Van Ormer, Joe Narducci, Greg and Janet Hula, and Eva Martin who pick up altar flowers every Sunday morning.
- ◆ Thank you to Ron and Donna Adrian, and Brenda Spahr who take care of the altar, set up and take down communion.
- ◆ Thank you to the Newsletter Assembly Committee (LaVonne, Bob, Marilyn, Jerry, June, Eva, Gloria, and Louise who dedicate one morning every month to assemble the Newsletter for mailing.



Thank you Margie for all the years of dedication as you shared your talents as Grace Lutheran Treasurer. Ralph has graciously stepped forward to continue the gratifying work of Treasurer for Grace Lutheran!

Thank you Larry for sharing your talents with fixing the marquee sign door in front of Grace Lutheran Church. Your time and dedication toward this project is greatly appreciated!





QUILTING GROUP

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

If you have the morning free, drop by and help cut squares and tie quilt tops on to the backs.

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

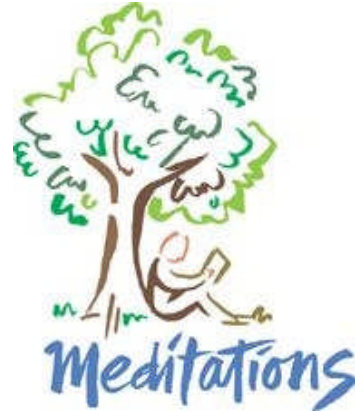
Wednesday Night

May 16, 2012

7:00 p.m.

Candle light Prayer Service
for Confession,
Meditation and Healing
at Grace Lutheran Church.

People of all faiths are welcome!



While volunteering for Meals-on-Wheels, taking lunches to elderly shut-ins, a woman took her five-year old daughter on her afternoon rounds. One day, the woman found her daughter staring at a pair of false teeth soaking in a glass in an elderly woman's apartment. She whispered to her mother: "The tooth fairy will never believe this!"

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Women of the Evangelical
Lutheran Church in America

Lutheran Women of Omaha
will meet May 8, 2012
for a 12:00 Luncheon at
Bethel Lutheran Church
1312 South 45th Street
(North of Center Street)

Program: Fontenelle Forest

Project: Project Hope

Reservations By: May 6, 2012
To

Mardelle Gocek - 402-292-1328
Luncheon: \$6.00 COME JOIN US

Traveling SUN Seniors Understanding Nature

Fontenelle Nature Association has various resources to bring the wonders of nature to you! Learn about humming-birds, delightful ducks, Lewis & Clark expeditions and more! Additional information is posted on our bulletin board and any questions you can call Catherine Kuper at 402-731-3140, ext. 240.



Nebraska Synod Assembly 2012
Bethany Lutheran Church
Elkhorn
May 31, through June 2



**VOLUNTEERS
NEEDED**

Volunteers are needed to help the assembly run smoothly. Volunteer opportunities include; greeting voting and non-voting members, assisting with registration, directing traffic, set-up and tear down before and after the assembly. If you are interested please contact Pastor Brad E. Meyer at pastorbrad@lord-of-love.org or call at 402-493-2946.



Thrivent Financial for Lutherans

Please note: Thrivent Choice participants need to log into your account and direct your Choice dollars for 2012 to Grace Lutheran or some other institution. Thrivent reset all previous directives. Thanks for your help and understanding.

Lutheran Youth Serve Omaha (LYSO)

Kountze Memorial and St. Matthew Lutheran Churches have teamed up for a second year to host Lutheran Youth Serve Omaha (LYSO).

Each day youth are sent out into a variety of service sites in the community. Youth will be divided into groups according to grade level (K-2, 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12th) and a new service site will be scheduled for each group, each day. Those service sites will be based on rotations and develop awareness in the areas of Poverty and Hunger, Children and Youth, Senior Care, and the Environment.

We are inviting Churches, you to join LYSO! June 11th - 15th, 2012 from 8:30 a.m. to noon, grades K - 12th. For additional information please call Ian Hartfield at Kountze Memorial (402) 341-7761 / ian@kmlchurch.org or Stacia Vawter at St. Matthew (402) 556-7030 / stacia@smlutheran.com a brochure has been posted on the bulletin board.

On a Mother's Day morning, two young children told their mother to stay in bed. As she lay there looking forward to being brought breakfast in bed, the smell of bacon floated up from the kitchen. Finally, the children called her to come downstairs. She found them both sitting at the table eating bacon and eggs.

"As a surprise for Mother's Day," one explained, "we decided to cook our own breakfast."

—via Rev. Karl R. Kraft Glassboro (NJ) United Methodist Church
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"Helping Hands"

Working Together in God's service



Special Pantry Needs for May:
Sugar, Coffee, Canned Fruit,
Canned Pasta (Ravioli, Spaghetios, etc.)

These are things our clients can not purchase with their food stamps and are always appreciated.

Deodorant	Dish soap
Can Openers	Toothbrush and toothpaste
Shaving Cream	Mouthwash (without alcohol)
Razors	Feminine hygiene products
Kleenex	Hair products (combs, brushes, picks)
Bar Soap	Dry Laundry Soap
Bathroom tissue	Shampoo
Diaper wipes	
Diapers, especially sizes 4, 5, 6 and pullups	

We always need paper or plastic bags.

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

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

Hunger facts from the Heartland

- Thirty-six percent of our clients fall in the 0 to 17 years old age range.
- Seventy-six percent have incomes below the federal poverty line.
- Approximately twenty percent of children in Nebraska and western Iowa are at-risk for hunger.
- Douglas County has the most children at-risk for hunger (26,970) followed by Sarpy County (7,600) in Nebraska.
- Nineteen percent are homeless.
- 15.9 percent of Nebraskans reported at least one time in the past twelve months when they did not have enough money to buy food that they or their family needed.



Kids At Work 2012



It's true, time waits for no one person, me included. I must have blinked, April is almost over.

The Kids At Work welcome dinner will be held on Tuesday, May 15th at 6:30 p.m. Council members are invited to this annual welcoming of the participants and their families of the Kids At Work 2012 summer program.

Extra copies of the Kids At Work contract will be available at the dinner to be filled out and turned in. How many still have their bank accounts activated at Bank of the West? The deadline for accounts to be opened is May 25th. If you are in need of a new bank form, please let me know.

The annual question continues, are you ready to join in with Kids At Work for some summer fun, growth, accomplishments, and inspiration? Looking to see if you too can successfully fail? Kids At Work is continuously looking for all volunteers, those who can drive 3-4 youth to a work site, and those who are willing to encourage youth in odd jobs around the neighborhood within walking distance. Any questions, conversations, etc., please give me a call at the church office, 402-341-7730.

Brenda Spahr, Director
Kids At Work

Random Acts of Kindness

I have learned from experience that when we commit an act of kindness for others or for strangers, it's only a matter of time before that kindness comes back to us. Being kind is a gift that gives to both the giver and the receiver. Call it "what goes around comes around" - similar to what you may have read about in the universal laws: the law of cause and effect, the law of attraction and etc.

I propose something more direct: see it for yourselves through practice! Some ideas.....

Offer to do pro-bono work on a project where your skills are needed.

Give someone the right of way in traffic.

Help a co-worker, even if it isn't your job.

Compliment a stranger.

Replace an angry or bitter thought toward someone with a kind word or thought.

So, what simple little random acts of kindness can you do today?

Shared by Donna Schellenberger, Administrator, Lutheran Home

The 9th Annual Lutheran Service Corps and Thrivent Financial for Lutherans charity Golf Tournament will be held Monday, May 14, 2012 at the Oak Hills Country Club, located at 12325 Golfing Green Drive. 11:30 a.m. registration opens and raffle begins. Format will be a four person scramble, men's, women's, and mixed flights. If you are unable to join in the golfing, you can still send contributions to Lutheran Service Corps at 6220 N. 30th Street, Omaha, NE 68111. If you have any questions, please contact Heather Abbot at 402-250-3599.



Vacation Bible School

Grace Vacation Bible School is extending the opportunity for an individual to share their talents and gifts of leadership in organizing this summer's events! Are you that individual looking for experience in crazy fun with youth and additional volunteers this summer? Being part of Vacation Bible School is an inspiring presence for all involved both young and old, with this annual summer activity. Unsure you want to be in that leadership position alone? Bring a friend and lead, have fun, and grow together. Many volunteers are waiting to help out! Please speak with Pastor Laaker at your earliest convenience.

A child dies from malaria every 45 seconds.

The ELCA, through the **ELCA Malaria Campaign**, is joining hands with eleven Lutheran church bodies in Africa and becoming part of an historic global movement to say, "enough is enough!" No child, no person, should die of a disease that is both preventable and treatable. Therefore the ELCA Malaria Campaign has committed to raise \$15 million to help prevent, treat and educate communities in Africa about malaria and eliminate deaths from this disease - for good..

Malaria Facts

- Almost 9 out to 10 of the 800,000 people who die from malaria each year live in Africa.
- An African child has on average between 1.6 and 5.4 episodes of malaria each year.
- In countries with high rates of malaria, the disease accounts for up to 60 percent of health clinic visits and 50 percent of hospital stays.

Join us in the fight against malaria. Just \$10 is enough to provide a family with an insecticide-treated mosquito net. A gift of \$50 could provide a course of medicine to help save the lives of 25 people infected with malaria. Your gifts to the ELCA Malaria Campaign will be used where needed most to provide mosquito nets, health care, education and more to help eliminate deaths from this disease — for good.



The new tree at Grace Lutheran isn't this tall yet, it has recently been planted by Loren and Marsha Moyer. Thank you for the gracious and beautiful gift that is a wonderful visual addition to the neighborhood.



FAMILIES IN ACTION – OMAHA



Virginia McGill, MA
Executive Director

Gema C. Wolde
Community Health Worker
Se habla español.

Methodist College Mobile Clinic Visits Families in Action Site.

Interfaith Health Service and Families in Action were pleased to host Methodist College Mobile Clinic and nursing students this past month at our St. Francis Church site. The eight nursing students, accompanied by Dr. Kelly Zinn, MSN, RN, Nursing Professor, provided blood sugar screenings, height and weight measurements, bmi, and blood pressure checks. Our literacy students, along with our Families in Action participants and staff, were honored to work with such an amazing group of students and faculty.

Our participants, men, women, and children over 18, were pleased with their health screening results and credit regular participation in educational, nutritional and exercise programs conducted via Interfaith with meeting their health and wellness needs. As a result of the mobile clinic visit, additional information was requested by several participants concerning elevated blood sugar levels and Gema and I are now planning to facilitate a brief question and answer forum on this topic with one of our Creighton physician volunteers in the future.

I have been in contact with Dr. Zinn to look at the possibility of the mobile clinic returning to a different Families in Action site in the fall. Both Gema and I welcome additional partnerships and programs to continue serving our community in South Omaha.

Community News

Midwest Eye Care, P.C.

On Thursday, May 17, Midwest Eye Care, and Clarkson Family Practice will donate their services to provide cataract surgery at no charge to people in need as part of Mission Cataract USA.

Eligible candidates will be given a thorough eye exam and up to 25 people will be scheduled for free cataract surgery at Midwest Eye Surgery Center, at 4353 Dodge Street on May 17.

Please call 402-552-2020 by March 19 to speak with Jennifer Anderson, Mission Cataract Coordinator with any questions or to set up an examination.



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Special Days in May at Grace Lutheran Church

- May 8 - Grace Council Meeting.
- May 9 - Photographers Club.
- May 13 - Mother's Day.
- May 15 - Kids At Work Welcome Dinner.
- May 16 - Prayer Service.
- May 17 - Neighborhood Meeting.
- May 22 - Newsletter Assembly.
- May 23 - Photographers Club.
- May 27 - Pentecost Sunday.
- May 28 - Memorial Day.



An American journalist in Jerusalem heard about a very old Jewish man who had been going to the Western Wall to pray every day for many years. The journalist went to the Western Wall and watched the old man with his long, white beard pray for nearly an hour. When he finally walked slowly away, the journalist approached him, identified herself, and asked him how long he had been coming to the Western Wall to pray.

"For about 70 years," he replied. "Remarkable! What do you pray for?" she asked.

"I pray for peace between the Jews, Muslims, and Christians. I pray for all the hatred and wars to stop. I pray for the safety of all our children, and that they will grow up to love their fellow man. I pray that politicians in all countries will tell us the truth and put the interests of the people ahead of their own interests."

"How do you feel after doing this for 70 years?" the journalist asked.

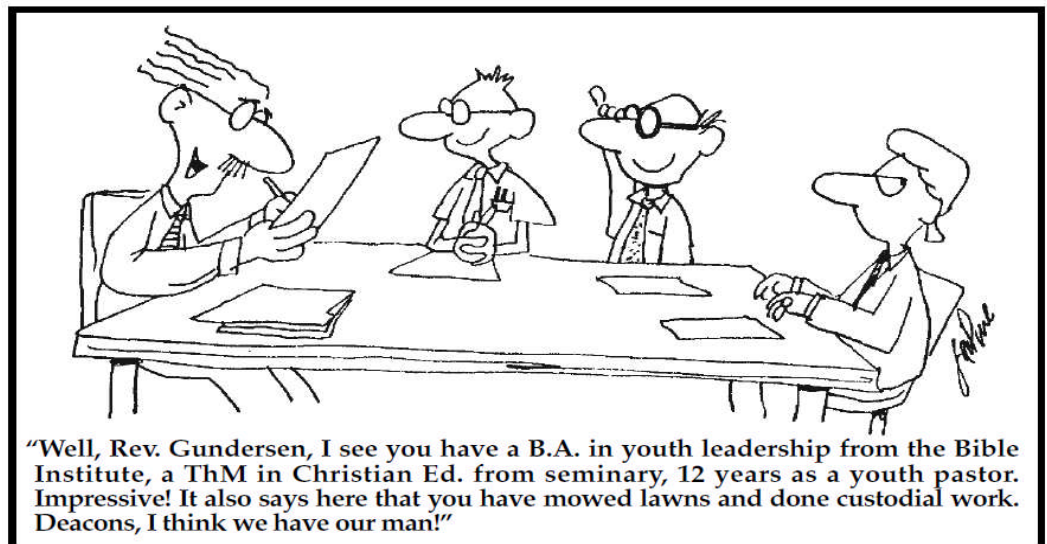
"Like I'm talking to a wall," the old man said.

—via Mildred Katzell, Medford, NJ

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Word Search Answers

1. Faith
2. God
3. Abel
4. Cain
5. Sacrifice
6. Enoch
7. Noah
8. Ark
9. Abraham
10. Isaac
11. Jacob
12. Sarah
13. Esau
14. Joseph
15. Moses
16. Egypt
17. Jericho
18. Rahab
19. Gideon
20. Samson
21. David
22. Samuel



"Well, Rev. Gundersen, I see you have a B.A. in youth leadership from the Bible Institute, a ThM in Christian Ed. from seminary, 12 years as a youth pastor. Impressive! It also says here that you have mowed lawns and done custodial work. Deacons, I think we have our man!"

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FAITH



You may have to use your Bibles to find the words hidden in this word search. All the answers can be found in Hebrews 11. Once you know the answers, look for them in the word search.

The letters must be in straight lines, vertically, horizontally, or diagonally. Words may be spelled either forward or backward.

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



1. The substance of things hoped for. (vs. 1) _____
2. Creator of the world. (vs. 3) _____
3. A brother who pleased God. (vs. 4) _____
4. A brother who displeased God. (vs. 4) _____
5. What Abel offered to God. (vs. 4) _____
6. A man who did not see death. (vs. 5) _____
7. A man who saved his family. (vs. 7) _____
8. What Noah built. (vs. 7) _____
9. A man who left his home to follow God. (vs. 8) _____
10. Son of Abraham. (vs. 9) _____
11. Son of Isaac. (vs. 9) _____
12. Wife of Abraham. (vs. 11) _____
13. Brother of Jacob. (vs. 20) _____
14. Son of Jacob. (vs. 22) _____
15. Leader of Israel. (vs. 23) _____
16. Land of captivity. (vs. 27) _____
17. City captured by Israel. (vs. 30) _____
18. A woman of Jericho. (vs. 31) _____
19. The leader in the defeat of the Midianites. (vs. 32. See also Judges 7.) _____
20. The strongest man. (vs. 32) _____
21. The giant killer. (vs. 32) _____
22. A great prophet. (vs. 32) _____



Answers are located on the reverse side of this page.

