

Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church
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402-341-7730



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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
Lutheran Volunteer - Matt Kong



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



2013

THE
GRACE
MESSENGER



2013 Council Members

John Boato	Sarah Emery	David Hufford
Vicki Cox	Ralph Fitle	Janet Hula
Andrew Edwards	June Hilmer	Eva Martin
		Pastor Laaker

Officers Serving the Congregation:

Financial Secretary: Janet Hula Treasurer: Ralph Fitle

The regular meeting of the Council was held on February 12th. The Council members shared their prayer concerns: We pray for the continued recovery of those close to us;. We pray for Ken Hilmer as he awaits possible surgery, and for Bob Moss as he goes through potential cancer tests. We pray for Rachel Matha and Margie Sutej as they await surgery and Urbano Vasquez while hospitalized. We pray for Sam Spearman as he undergoes testing for migraines, and for Vicki's brother in law, Ron Hansen with his ongoing health issues. We pray for Eva's friend Sue Coe with her health concerns and for Sarah's boss's wife, Julie Lentz as she continues through her cancer treatments. We pray for the thousands that are stranded on the cruise ship without food or drink. We celebrate with David's sister, Mary Vondra, as she and Tom celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary.

Pastor led devotions from Isaiah 48:17 and Matthew 23:10. The first reminds us that God will give us direction to keep us on the right path. The second tells us to watch what we are 'teaching' to others.

Visions for Ministry: We discussed our Mission Site profile in greater detail. We focused on the community – both the characteristics and the trends, looking at how our church fits in...and what possibilities are for change.

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

Christian Education: Early Communion Classes will begin on Sundays in March. There is no age restriction.

Evangelism/Outreach: No new report.

Finance: Every 2 years, we resubmit a form to remain incorporated. Endowment Board gave a report, reviewing the status of the GELC Fund and the Disney Fund. The Council ratified continued expenses for the legal work on our Church Mutual claim and proposed distributions.

Property: No new report.

Service/Social Ministry: Reapplied for LVC volunteer, together with Bethel.

Support/Stewardship: No new report.

Worship: Lent begins tomorrow. Our theme is "Facing the Cross." Our guest speakers will be: Lori Lindberg, Executive Director Project Hope, Matthew Weber, Director of Table Grace Cafe, Matthew Kong, our Lutheran Volunteer, Rev. Lonnie Dinneen, Senior Chaplain with the Omaha Police Department, and Rev. Tom Miller from Lutheran Metro Ministry.

Unfinished Business: No new report.

New Business: No new report.

Announcements: Thanks to all for continued support as Pastor negotiates changes. Vicki will bring treats for our March meeting.



FACING the CROSS

Lent has begun and we have been exploring the theme “Facing the Cross.” On Ash Wednesday, we explored “Facing our sins.” Do you remember the childhood rhyme? Ring-a-round a rosie, A pocket full of posies, Ashes! Ashes! WE ALL FALL DOWN! Indeed, we all fall down. It is only with the help of our sisters and brothers that we can together in unity lift each other to work for justice and peace. It is the ash-shaped cross that reminds me that God is at work in our lives. It is God, through Christ that lifts us all up - to laugh, sing, dance, and work together.

On the first Sunday of Lent, we explored “Facing Temptation.” The Greek philosopher Plato once told a story of a carriage drawn by a pair of young and spirited steeds. In the vehicle, the driver holds the reins and guides the horses on the straight and smooth road.

One day a heavy drowsiness comes upon the driver and he falls fast asleep. The horses, not feeling the restraint of the reins, go off the right path, and soon they are bouncing over bush and brush, to the edge of a deep pit, a bottomless abyss. A man standing nearby, seeing the threatened danger, calls out to the driver in a loud and mighty voice: “Wake up! Save yourself!”

With a start, the driver suddenly awakens. In a moment he realizes his peril. Pale and trembling, he hastily grasps the reins, and, exerting almost superhuman effort, he succeeds in swerving the horses to one side, thus saving his own life and those of his animals. Plato says the moral of the story is this: the fiery steeds are the appetites, desires, lusts, and passions to which the heart of the human inclines from youth. The driver is the wisdom, understanding, and intelligence with which God has endowed human life that we might rule over our appetites and desires and have dominion over our self-destructive impulses. Fortunately, with God’s help temptation is resistible.

On the second Sunday of Lent, we explored “Facing our fears.” There was a little farm boy who was taken to a neighbor's house for the day. As night came on the little boy went out on the porch intending to go home. He became frightened by the darkness and began to cry. There was no one to take him home and he was very worried. After a while, he looked out of the window in the direction of his house. Suddenly his face lit up and he exclaimed, "I'm not afraid anymore!" When the neighbor asked him why, the little boy answered, "Because I can see a light in the window of our house. That means my big sister is coming for me, and I'll not be afraid when I hold her hand."

That's the only real answer to fear that I know. When my power to handle a scary situation is at an end, I still can say, "I'll not be afraid because you, God, are holding my hand."

Over the next three weeks, we will continue to explore themes surrounding the cross. There is no longer a feeling of helplessness and hopelessness when it comes to dealing with all the aspects of our lives, because the death of Christ has done away with its hold on us.

A life superimposed with the cross is a life that is filled with trust in the power of the cross, a life that is focused on Jesus and not on oneself, a life that considers the desires of life on earth not worth comparing to the life yet to come in heaven, where the triumph over the devil will be complete and secure forevermore. Come Face the Cross with me.

Pastor Laaker

Wednesdays	Host/Hostess	Benefit for	Speaker
March 6, 2013	Marilyn Van Ormer LaVonne Moss June Hilmer	Lutheran Pantry	Matt Kong Lutheran Volunteer Corp
March 13, 2013	Marsha and Loren Moyer	To be determined	Rev. Lonnie Dinneen Senior Chaplain for Omaha Police Dept.
March 20, 2013	Donna Adrian Eva Martin Brenda Spahr	To be determined	Rev. Tom Miller Director, Lutheran Metro Ministries
Maundy Thursday March 28, 2013	Tom and Sarah Emery	To be determined	Service of Communion and Stripping the Altar



Palm Sunday, March 24
9:00 a.m. Adult Sunday School.
10:30 Palm Sunday Worship Service.

**SUNRISE
SERVICE**

Easter, March 31

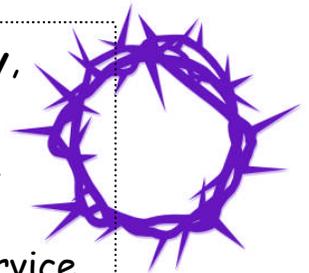
Easter Sunrise Service
at 7:00 a.m.

There will be no
10:30 a.m. service.



Maundy Thursday, March 28
6:00 p.m. Lenten Supper.
7:00 p.m. Maundy Thursday Service.

Good Friday,
March 29
No Supper.
7:00 p.m.
Good Friday Service.



Easter Breakfast
8:00 a.m.
Prepared and Served by the
Moyer family.



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

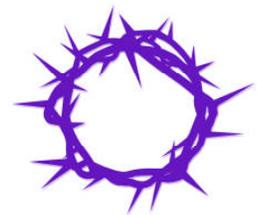
Those we pray for named below are members unless otherwise specified:

- ◆ Andrew Edwards - Doing dialysis a couple times a week until a kidney can be found.
- ◆ Jim Harrahill - Ongoing health issues.
- ◆ Ken Hilmer - Ongoing health issues.
- ◆ Ferne Matson - Ongoing health issues.
- ◆ LaVonne Moss - Ongoing health issues.
- ◆ Robert Moss - Cancer treatments.
- ◆ Don Olson - Ongoing health issues.
- ◆ Lori Vasquez - Recovery from surgery.
- ◆ Urbano Vasquez - Ongoing health issues.
- ◆ Rex Olson - Ongoing health issues. (Don Olson's brother.)
- ◆ Wanda Black - Ongoing health issues. (Don Olson's sister.)
- ◆ Norma Courtney - Ongoing health issues. (Arlone Farber's Mom.)
- ◆ Bob Hargis - Ongoing health issues. (Jerry and Marilyn Van Ormer's son-in-law.)
- ◆ Kevin Jorgensen - Ongoing health issues. (Cody Jorgensen's Dad.)
- ◆ Jean Matson - Ongoing health issues. (Andrea Spahr's Grandma.)
- ◆ Poaya - Very ill - in Sudan. (John Boato's Mom.)



Pray for our Shut - ins and Nursing Home residents:

Gertrude Hufford - Immanuel Village.
Ferne Matson - Her son, Ron's house.
Barbara Narducci - Home.
Barbara Nelson - Life Care Center, Elkhorn.
Jack Williams - Brookstone Meadows, Elkhorn.



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

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

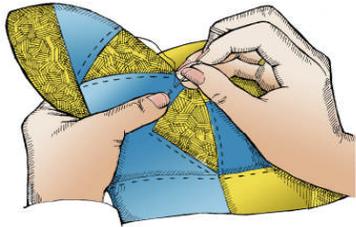
Pray for strength and spiritual wisdom for the leaders in the local church and the Nebraska Synod:

Pastor Damon Laaker, Grace Lutheran Church
Bishop Brian Maas, Nebraska Synod
Bishop Mark Hanson, ELCA Bishop, United States

- ◆ Pray for the Sudanese community in general. David Nange, John Boato 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.*





QUILTING GROUP

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



Coffee Fellowship

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.



*Confessions
Meditations
Healing*

Monthly Wednesday Night Prayer Service
Has been postponed
During the Lenten Season

April's Prayer Service will be
Wednesday, April 17 at
7:00 p.m.

On Sunday, February 3rd, Super Bowl Sunday, we collected \$243.00 and 26 non-perishable items for the Lutheran Pantry during our Souper Bowl of Caring Drive!
Thank You!



As a courtesy, a pastor took an elderly church member to the local nursing home to seek information about how they determine whether or not an older person should be put in a nursing home.

“Well,” said the nursing home director, “we fill up a bathtub. Then we offer the person a teaspoon, a teacup and a bucket to empty the bathtub.”

“Oh, I understand,” said the elderly visitor. “A normal person would use the bucket because it’s bigger than the spoon or the teacup.”

“No,” said the administrator, “A normal person would pull the plug. Do you want a bed near a window?”

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—via George Goldtrap, Ormond-by-the-Sea, FL

BASKETS OF PROMISE



On Easter, we celebrate the joy and hope of Christ's resurrection. Yet around the world "the least of these" — those Christ calls us to serve — continue to suffer.

Grace is reaching out to our brothers and sisters in need by joining Lutheran World Relief's **Baskets of Promise** Lenten appeal. Throughout Lent, we will be collecting [Personal Care Kits](#) to send to families around the world.

Musayev lives in a settlement in Azerbaijan for people who have had to leave their homes. His family does their best to support everyone but they are often unable to afford basic hygiene supplies. Recently Musayev received an LWR Personal Care Kit and was excited to learn how to use it. "How many times a day should you clean your teeth?" he eagerly asked.

For children like Musayev, Personal Care Kits are not only a way to stay healthy but a way to learn personal care and preserve dignity. This Lenten season, as our congregation journeys toward the Cross, let us be Christ's hands to children like Musayev by providing Personal Care Kits and paving the way for a "future with hope." (Jeremiah 29:11)

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

- Bars of Soap (4 to 5 oz., any brand, in original wrapping)
- Bath Towels (light-weight, maximum 52" x 27", dark color recommended)
- Toothbrushes (adult size, in original packaging)
- Combs
- Nail Clippers (metal, attached file optional)
- A Second Bar of Soap

Grace Lutheran will be collecting items to assemble 25 Personal Care Kits to faithfully bring a future of hope to families in need. You can be a part of this Lenten journey and bring an item or two and brighten the hope, faith, and future of an individual or a family through Lutheran World Relief.

Midwest Eye Care, P.C.

On Thursday, May 16, 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 16.

Due to the significant response received in prior years, this program is not open to people with insurance coverage through Medicare or any private insurance company.

Please call 402-552-2020 by March 18 to speak with Jennifer Anderson, Mission Cataract Coordinator with any questions or to set up an examination.

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

2 Corinthians 9:8



- ◆ Thank you to Marilyn and Jerry Van Ormer for their dedication in tending to the plants in the entry way, they continue to look welcoming.
- ◆ Thank you to the Newsletter Assembly Crew for their monthly dedication and time spent in assembling the newsletter and preparing the newsletter for mailing.
- ◆ 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 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.
- ◆ Thanks to everyone who donated books for the Annual Lenten Used Book & Movie sale.



Pastor Laaker will lead four Sunday noon sessions for young children and their parents on First Communion. These classes will begin Sunday, March 3. If you would like to have your young children participate, please speak to Pastor Laaker.

The material we will use will provide delightful and engaging content for children, emphasizing the biblical basis for holy communion, encouraging conversation, sparking ideas, and introducing a deep sacramental understanding. Children will be encouraged to ask questions and explore the ritual and basic theology of Holy Communion.

Donate your used books

The Library Board is collecting used books, puzzles, videos, DVD's, CD's and cassettes in good condition as a fund-raiser for the Library during this Lenten season.

A sale table has been set up in the Upper Fellowship Hall. Stop and browse by the table any time. This is a self-serve sale. A container for the proceeds will be placed on the table along with the merchandise for sale.

Why not use this opportunity to pass on materials collecting dust on your shelves at home to help provide the opportunity to buy new items for the library or stop by and purchase a good used book or movie at a GREAT value!

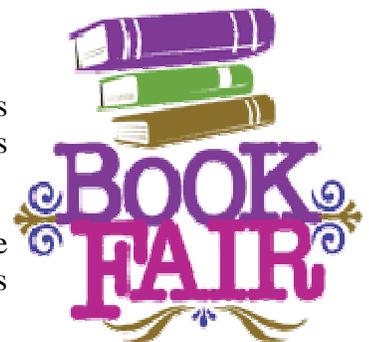


Table Grace Café

1611 1/2 Farnam Street
Omaha, NE 68102
Monday-Saturday
11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
402-965-1276



Table Grace Cafe is serving Brunch on Saturdays from 11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. Join us for cinnamon rolls, waffles, breakfast pizza, and more! Your patronage will help us continue "Nourishing Hungry Bodies & Souls" in downtown Omaha. Table Grace Cafe is also roasting "Fair Trade" coffee from Tanzania. Purchasing our coffee provides a fair price to coffee growers in Tanzania, and supports social capital in Nebraska.

You may order coffee from our website - tablegracecafe.com



**The need is constant.
The gratification is instant.
Give blood.**



**American
Red Cross**

For an appointment, sign up online at
www.redcrossblood.org
(search sponsor code 0092764)
Or e-mail Lisa Sorensen, Event Coordinator at
lisa2204@rocketmail.com

Please bring photo ID or American Red Cross donor card. Be sure to eat something and drink plenty of water before donating!

**Blood Drive
Shepherd of the Hills
Lutheran Church
6201 North 60th Street**

**Sunday, March 10, 2013
9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.**



"Helping Hands"

Working Together in God's service

Special Pantry Needs for March:
Peanut Butter and Canned Fruit



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	

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

We always need paper or plastic bags.

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

2013 Feinstein Challenge 16th Annual \$1 Million Giveaway

Alan Shawn Feinstein has, for the past 15 years, provided one million dollars of his money to anti-hunger agencies throughout the country. Every year Mr. Feinstein challenges these agencies to raise funds and food from March 1st to April 30th. The more money and food collected, the more of Mr. Feinstein's one million dollars will be received.

At Project Hope we are grateful for all the donations congregations in Omaha have shared with us in the past. Once again, we have a unique opportunity to get supplemental funds for all contributions during March and April. We would use this money only for buying food. The Lutheran church and community response in 2012 was incredible with helping us meet and exceed our goal of \$54,000. We will get \$1.00 credit for each food item donated and \$1.00 credit for every dollar donated. This would be an ideal mission opportunity during the Lenten season. Would your congregation please consider joining us in this Challenge by collecting food items or receiving a special offering?

Hello all!

It's been a bit since I last checked in. Here's the latest on what I've been up to.

Capture the flag has been a big hit amongst the youth lately. It can get a little rambunctious at times, but it's all in competitive fun. Superbowl Sunday also saw a small game of touch football played in the parking lot, thanks to the significant increase in temperature that day. I'm looking forward to warmer temperatures so that more of these activities can be played, though snowball fights with the fresh powder does have its moments.



Checkers and puzzles were the popular tabletop distractions last weekend. Who knows, maybe we have a Bobby Fischer of the checkerboard among us?

Lately I've also been in talks with congregation members and my housemates on how best to set up citizenship and English language courses for our Sudanese worshippers. While I have helped several members renew their permanent resident status, the next step for them is to become fully-fledged citizens of the United States. I hope to have more on this by next month.

Best,
Matt

The next
Bobby Fischer!



Just having fun
in the nursery



Dominoes
Anyone?



Puzzles in
the Nursery

And
Boardgames!





FAMILIES IN ACTION – OMAHA



Virginia McGill, MA
Executive Director

Gema C. Wolde
Community Health Worker
Se habla español.

My Life Five Years from Now

In the next five years, I see myself busy in many aspects of my life. First of all, I want to see myself in my final year of college, studying to be an elementary or high school teacher. Due to my own experience with teachers, I want to be an advocate for future students. I remember that at one point in my life, I simply gave up on school, but caring adults saved me and I want to do the same for someone else. I hope that I would have the opportunity to study abroad to eliminate some of my ignorance. I want to be an open-minded educator and what better way than to travel the world.

Secondly, I want to learn a variety of languages in the next 5 years. I have a dream of traveling around the globe and discovering new cultures. Learning a myriad of languages will definitely come in handy when visiting a foreign country. By understanding other cultures, I will become more educated and less naive. If I continue to pursue my career as a teacher, comprehending my students' background will help me connect with them more efficiently.

Lastly, I hope to accomplish something in my community to gain some recognition as a positive leader. More than the recognition, I want to better the place where I grew up. Growing up around so many influential leaders, I see the power they have to make a change. I long for the day that someone will want to live in South Omaha, instead of being afraid even to drive through our community. Our neighborhoods could be so much better if someone simply took the time to figure out how to make that possible; I want that someone to be me.

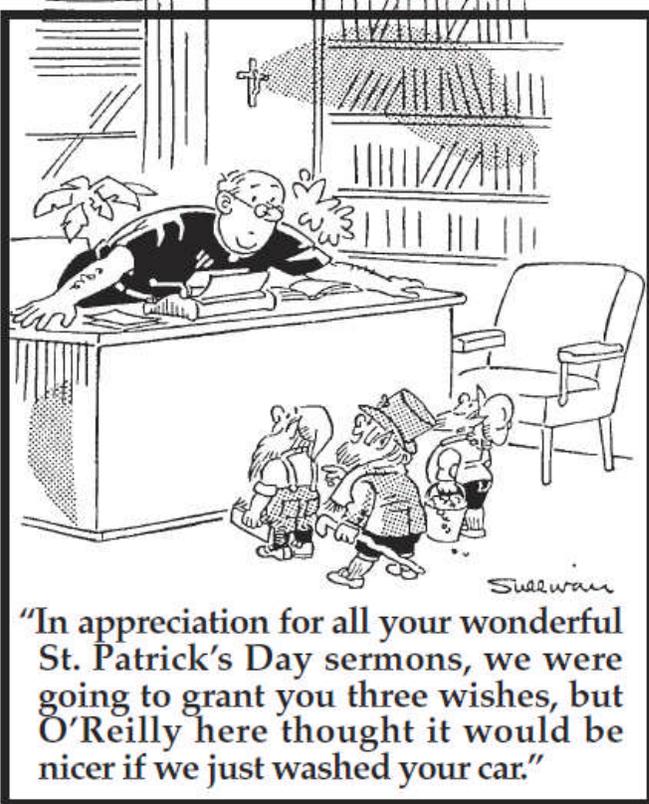
Alexa, Families in Action Participant
College Applicant

Learn How The Police Work Citizen Police Academy

This program provides an overview of the Omaha Police Department to help citizens gain a better understanding of police procedures and methods. Meet the new Police Chief; Participate in the scenario "Shoot Don't Shoot"; Ride with a police officer; and child abuse. Meet officers from: Graffiti Gangs, Narcotics and Meth, Selection and Training, and Crime Prevention.

These sessions will be on Mondays: April 8, 15, 22, 29, and May 6 from 6:00 - 8:00 p.m. Southeast Precinct is located at 25th and Vinton Streets.

You can complete an application at the Southeast precinct. For more information, call 402-444-7743 or e-mail at orobles@ci.omaha.ne.us



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Special Days in March at Grace Lutheran Church

- March 1 - World Prayer Day.
- March 3 - Early Communion Class.
- March 6 - Mid-Week Lenten Service.
- March 9 - Daylight Savings Begins.
- March 10 - Early Communion Class.
- March 12 - Council Meeting.
- March 13 - Mid-Week Lenten Service.
- March 13 - Photographer's Club.
- March 17 - Early Communion Class.
- March 17 - St. Patrick's Day.
- March 20 - Mid-Week Lenten Service.
- March 21 - Neighborhood Meeting.
- March 24 - Early Communion Class.
- March 26 - Newsletter Assembly.
- March 27 - Mid-Week Lenten Service.
- March 27 - Photographer's Club.
- March 28 - Maundy Thursday Service.
- March 29 - Good Friday Service.
- March 31 - Easter!



Resurrection



In every century, in this century, in the next century, the Passion is what it was in the first century, when it occurred; a thing stared at by a crowd.



"It remains a tragedy of the people; a consolation of the people; but never merely a thing of the period... It lives, because it involves the staggering story of the Creator truly groaning and travailing with his Creation; and the highest thing thinkable passing through some nadir of the lowest curve of the cosmos.



"And it lives, because the very blast from this black cloud of death comes upon the world as a wind of everlasting life; by which all things wake and are alive.



"If the whole world was suddenly stricken with a sense of humor, it would find itself mechanically fulfilling the Sermon the Mount."



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—G.K. Chesterton
 (1874-1936)

Bible Wordsearch

The Woman & The Dragon 2

Wordsearch 210

Rev.12:10-17

R G N I N E P O H I D E A T H
 L M C H R I S T E R E F S C E
 I L O S G N I W A E K I U H P
 V O B D O J U G V J A L S I R
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BIRTH ACCUSER
 BLOOD AUTHORITY
 CHILD BROTHERS
 DEATH CHRIST
 EAGLE DESERT
 EARTH DRAGON
 FILLED HELPED
 FURY HURLED
 JESUS HEAVENS
 LAMB KINGDOM
 LIVES OPENING
 LOVE OVERTAKE
 MALE PREPARED
 MOUTH PURSUED
 OBEY REJOICE
 POWER SERPENT
 SWEEP SHRINK
 TIMES SPEWED
 WINGS TORRENT
 WOMAN

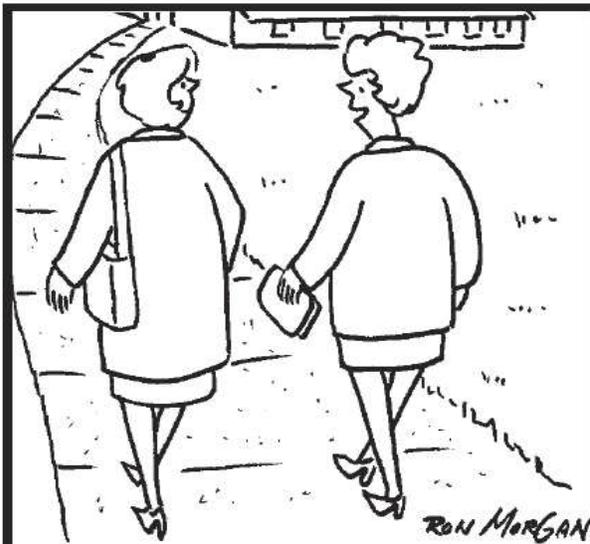
After you find all the hidden words the left over letters spell out a Bible verse reading from the top left to the bottom right

MORE PUZZLES AT:

<http://biblewordgames.com>

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"The best thing about telling God your troubles is knowing that He can keep a secret."

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"I don't have time to go to confession, so could I just send you a collection of my most heartfelt blogs?"

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