

**Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church**  
1326 South 26 Street  
Omaha, NE 68105-2380  
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 April 9th. The Council members shared their prayer concerns: We pray for the healing of those close to us; Ken Hilmer and Bob Moss with their continued struggles, Julie Lentz as she continues her cancer treatments, Jackson & all of Amanda Vazquez's family as they prepare for his surgery on 4/18. We pray for peace & stabilization in areas of unrest, and for resolution in North Korea. We pray for Rebecca Fitle and her family, as she prepares for her preventative surgery on May 9. We pray for Nikki and Justin in Missouri with the birth and ongoing care of their daughter Becca Rose. We pray for the Omaha Police Department & Chief Schmaderer surrounding recent events.

Pastor led devotions from Psalm 28:8 and Colossians 2:7. The first focuses on reassurance. The peace and love that a parent figure provides during difficult times. The second focuses on encouragement. Be thankful and grateful!

Visions for Ministry: The Council began reading "Can Our Church Live?" by Alice Mann. We discussed Chapter one. Maybe having structure & plans isn't necessarily a bad thing, but how do we use it to our advantage? Are we declining as a church? Do we understand it? Do we meet the needs of the people that we serve? Are we redeveloping? When we focus on us, the outlook might be scary. If we focus on God, from beginning to end, the outlook can only be positive. Please read Chapter 2 for our next meeting.

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

Christian Education: David Hufford volunteered to help organize Vacation Bible School for this summer. The date for VBS will be July 14-18.

Evangelism/Outreach: Matt Kong continues to work on the KAW program for this summer. The Omaha Together One Community Event and Fund Raiser will be held at Hot Shops on April 27.

Finance: Our attorney sent a demand for payment to Church Mutual, which was denied. It will now go to court. Pastor is looking closely at all individual investments of the Disney Endowment, to be sure that we are utilizing socially responsible funds.

Property: Will be needing mowers and yard maintenance for this upcoming season. Please feel free to offer some of your time! Pastor has purchased a Daily Deal for 50% off of mulch to replenish those areas.

Service/Social Ministry: Neighborhood cleanup is this Saturday April 13 from 9-2. Thursday evening, April 11 we will host a potluck dinner to meet the recipients of the Habitat build. The build begins Friday, April 19.

*Continued.....*

Support/Stewardship: Financial statements will be distributed the week of April 14.

Worship: On May 30 & 31, there will be a Music & Worship conference preceding the Synod Assembly.

Unfinished Business: Synod Assembly – David will attend 5/30 – 6/1 in Kearney. The focus is “Mission Possible.”

New Business: No new report.

Announcements: May 19 begins Pentecost! Andrea Spahr will be confirmed. September – April will be our 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary – any thoughts? Janet will bring treats for our May meeting.



**Monday, May 6: Candidates' Accountability Session** at St Pius X Catholic Church (6905 Blondo) at 7:00 p.m. Hear whether the final two candidates for Mayor and several City Council district will commit to work with OTOC on several issues which OTOC leaders are developing through individual meetings and small group meetings.

Let's have a half dozen folks attend!

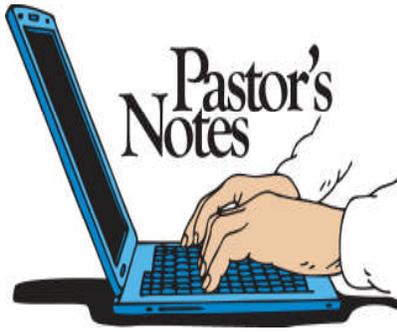
**May 9<sup>th</sup> Omaha Public School Board Candidates Forum** at Pilgrim Baptist Church (25<sup>th</sup> and Hamilton) at 7:00 p.m. in partnership with IMA, Baptist Pastors and Ministers Union and New Era Baptist Association to meet with candidates from OPS districts 1, 2, 3 and 4.



**Sunday, May 19th**  
**Wear Red or Orange in**  
**Celebration of Pentecost!**

*"If you believe in Jesus and are baptized, then you're a part of that called-together group, something much bigger than you are. Being a part of it means you have the Holy Spirit at work in you. And, that means you have tasks that the Lord wants you to do, and you have been given what it takes to do them. You are to listen for the Spirit's leading, through the Scriptures God gave for you."*

*Robert Longman Jr.*



Where to begin? In the past month, we have celebrated Easter, witnessed the election of a new Pope, watched in horror a bombing in Boston, experienced weather that went from 60+ degrees to snow and hail, participated in a primary election that had a few surprises, observed the US Senate unable to pass legislation requiring background checks for all gun purchases, and learned of proposed immigration legislation that may address some of the hardships and barriers individuals and families face in becoming citizens, to name just a few. In addition, we continue to see the impact of food insecurity, hunger, on individuals and families.

If this isn't enough the list could include many more things from the political, economic and local scenes. It is easy then to see how it is possible to cry out with the words of Jesus on the cross, "My God, My God, why. . .?"

Years ago, I was introduced to Bread for the World. This is a citizens organization that intentionally advocates for political and economic solutions to our world hunger issues. Each year they encourage us to become engaged in writing to our elected national leaders, Senators, Congress people and the President on behalf of people living with hunger insecurity.

This year the focus uses the theme "A Place at the Table." Let me share with you a few sentences from the latest Background Paper. "The table is a natural and powerful symbol of community.

"Whether eating meals, playing games, or discussing the household budget, families regularly gather at the table... Jesus met with his disciples around tables to share his teachings and fellowship. He gathered his closest disciples to the table for a last supper to gather strength and provide guidance before his fateful journey to Calvary." On Sunday, April 14, we heard from John's gospel, Jesus gathering the disciples around a breakfast fire on the shore of Lake Galilee.

God's table is abundant for all people. We hear regularly of the abundance that God provides. The difficulty we face is the adequate distribution of God's abundance. Can we find both the will and the way to accomplish a fair distribution?

I invite you to write to Congress to ensure a place at the table for hungry and poor people by protecting programs vital to them. Our letters are encouraged to focus on three issues:

- Protecting anti-hunger and anti-poverty programs like Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly food stamps), the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), and poverty-focused development assistance (PRDA).

- Making permanent the current tax credits for poor families: the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and the Child Tax Credit (CTC).

- Raising adequate revenue to end hunger.

I hope you will consider writing to your Senators and Congress people on the behalf of others. This is a marvelous way for us be Christ for others.

You can check out further information on the web at [www.bread.org](http://www.bread.org).

*Pastor Laaker*



## 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 - Ongoing health issues.
- ◆ Urbano Vasquez - Ongoing health issues.
- ◆ 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 - Thanksgiving for her recovery. (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

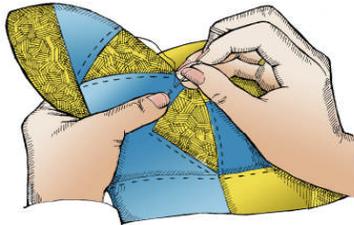
Bishop Brian Maas, Nebraska Synod

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 Worshiping 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. No experience is necessary! Join in the great fellowship and conversation.



*Meditations*  
*Confessions*  
*Healing*

Wednesday Night  
May 15, 2013  
7:00 p.m.  
Candle light Prayer Service  
at Grace Lutheran Church.  
*People of all faiths are welcome!*

**Congratulations to our Confirmand!  
Sunday, May 19, 2013**



*Confirmation Sunday*

Andrea was baptized on Sunday, February 28, 1999. She began her relationship within God's grace at that time. Throughout the years, she has developed and deepened a life of discipleship in preparation for this day. She has lived among God's faithful people, she has participated in listening to the Word of God and shared in the holy supper, she has learned the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and the Ten Commandments, she has read the stories of holy scripture, she has demonstrated faith and trust in God, she has exhibited care for others and the world God has made. In this service of Confirmation she will affirm the baptismal promises made for her, claim them as her own and seek to continue growing as a person of faith in Jesus Christ. Come, celebrate with her, her family, her sponsors and the people of God.



## **Lutheran Youth Serve Omaha (LYSO)**

Kountze Memorial and St. Matthew Lutheran Churches have teamed up for a third 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 10th - 14th, 2013 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](mailto:ian@kmlchurch.org) or Stacia Vawter at St. Matthew (402) 556-7030 / [stacia@smlutheran.com](mailto:stacia@smlutheran.com) a brochure has been posted on the bulletin board.

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### **Blue Flamingo**

**1909 Leavenworth Street  
402-964-2740**

**Monday-Friday, 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.  
Saturday, 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.**



Blue Flamingo, a non-profit thrift, vintage, and Fair Trade shop providing new and donated goods at affordable prices as a neighborhood-based ministry. Stop by--treasures await!

Providing Fair Trade product tables for events such as mission fairs, holiday markets, and other outreach events.

Additional information can be found on the flyer on the bulletin board or on the Blue Flamingo website: [BlueFlamingo.org](http://BlueFlamingo.org)



**National Day of Prayer  
Thursday, May 2nd**

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 and preparing the newsletter for mailing.
- ◆ Thank you to the ladies who dedicate their Monday mornings for creating and sewing quilts for the Lutheran World Relief.
- ◆ 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 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.



Traditional decorations showcasing the family's Sudanese culture will grace David Mushwas and Mariam Yunis' home soon after they move in, keeping their heritage alive for their four children; Ryada, Selama, Para, and Uriya.

They came to Omaha from the Blue Nile region of the Sudan six years ago and have been living for the past three years in a small, older home with heating problems and windows that don't close, meaning they had to worry about safety and the cold. They wanted better security and more space for their family, so when they heard about Habitat for Humanity of Omaha from some friends who had recently become Habitat Omaha homeowners, they applied and were accepted into the program in April 2012.

Neighbors South Habitat Coalition began its 15th house on April 19th. Together, we can empower families and fight to end poverty housing in our community. If you would like to volunteer part of your Fridays or Saturdays during this summer and help fulfill a dream of being homeowners for a family, you can sign up to volunteer for the build at: [neighbors-south.com/ns/volunteer](http://neighbors-south.com/ns/volunteer).



# "Helping Hands"

Working Together in God's service

Special Pantry Needs for May:  
Personal Care Items; Deodorant, Bathroom Tissue,  
Shampoo, 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                      |
| <b>Bathroom tissue</b>                               | <b>Shampoo</b>                        |
| <b>Diaper wipes</b>                                  |                                       |
| <b>Diapers, especially sizes 4, 5, 6 and pullups</b> |                                       |

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 clothing, in all sizes.

**Community Baby Shower**  
**Saturday, May 18, 2013**  
**Grace Lutheran Church**  
**1326 South 26th Street**  
**402-341-7730**  
**1:30 - 3:30 p.m.**



Enjoy games, fellowship, and refreshments!

All items collected this day will benefit Project Hope.

Many items that cannot be purchased with food stamps are in a constant need to families. These items include diapers of all sizes, baby wipes, baby shampoo, baby laundry detergents, and a variety of clothing items.

Any questions, please call Lori Vasquez at 402-575-5504, or call the church office at 402-341-7730.



Hello all!

The weather sure took a turn! Living in the bubble of Southern California, I now see that April showers do exist. Hopefully the weather does not deter the kids and I from a visit to Hanscom Park. Worst case, we'll be having an intense day of dodge ball!



Kids At Work is almost here and I'm in need of drivers. As many of you already know, these drivers will be chaperoning 4-5 of the children at different worksites from 10 am to 12 pm on Tuesdays and Wednesdays during the summer. This year the program will be working with Together, Inc., the Kountze community garden, Precious Memories Childcare, the Lutheran Home, Disciples Church, and Hospice House. If you have any questions my contact information can be found in the Kids at Work announcement blurb in the weekly bulletin.

As I mentioned last month, I've been spending Saturday mornings helping one of our Sudanese congregation members prepare for his citizenship exam. My two citizenship questions for you this month are: How long do we elect a senator for? Why do some states have more representatives than others?

Cheers!

Matt



Sudanese Youth Group spending recreation time at Hanscom Park on Sunday, April 21, 2013. Boys enjoyed playing a basketball game and the girls got creative around the pond. Both groups had plenty opportunity for discussion time.





# FAMILIES IN ACTION – OMAHA



Virginia McGill, MA  
Executive Director

Gema C. Wolde  
Community Health Worker  
Se habla español.

Families in Action and Delta Delta Delta Host Community Fundrasier

Creighton University, our amazing student volunteers and interns from Tri-Delta, and our Families in Action participants and staff took part in a Zumbathon Fundraiser on Creighton's campus last week. This was our 4th community-wide fundraiser, and all proceeds will benefit Families in Action.

Even though the weather was colder for April, over 120 people attended the evenings festivities, which included routines led by our instructors, teenage participants, and students. This was our largest event ever as evidenced by the attached photo!

We deeply appreciate the support of Tri Delta in helping us plan and host this event. Jackie Voight from Tri-Delta worked diligently to plan with us for months to ensure that the evening would run smoothly with parking, sound equipment, alternate space and event details. Due to our success and number of people attending, we hope to schedule an additional fundraiser in September!



Virginia and Gema, IHS and Families in Action



## In Full Swing

The 10th Annual Lutheran Service Corps and Thrivent Financial for Lutherans charity Golf Tournament will be held Monday, May 20, 2013 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. A registration form is available in the church office. If you have any questions, please contact Bill Davis at 402-598-5883 or [bill\\_e\\_davis@msn.com](mailto:bill_e_davis@msn.com); or contact Janelle Domeyer at 402-457-5890 or [lscomaha@lscomaha.org](mailto:lscomaha@lscomaha.org).

### God's kids say the funniest things

A Sunday school teacher asked her class, "If I sold my house and my car, had a big garage sale and gave all my money to the church, would I get into heaven?" "No!" the children all answered. "If I cleaned the church every day, mowed the yard and kept everything neat and tidy, would I get into heaven?" Again, the answer was "No!"

"Well, then how can I get to heaven?" she asked. In the back of the room, a five year- old boy shouted, "You gotta be dead!"

—Columnist Smiley Anders Baton Rouge (LA) *Advocate*  
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*"You may have tangible wealth untold;  
Caskets of jewels and coffers of gold.  
Richer than I you can never be –  
I had a mother who read to me."*

—Strickland Gillian  
*Apple Seeds*

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### Special Days in May at Grace Lutheran Church

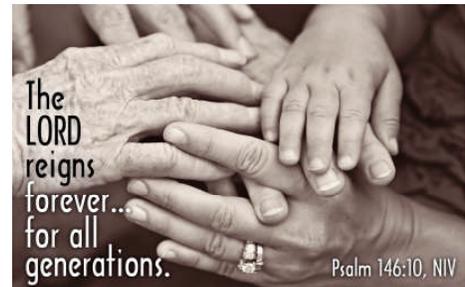
- May 8 - Photographer's Club.
- May 12 - Mother's Day.
- May 14 - Council Meeting.
- May 15 - Prayer Service.
- May 16 - Neighborhood Meeting.
- May 18 - Community Baby Shower.
- May 19 - Pentecost Sunday.  
Confirmation Celebration
- May 22 - Photographer's Club.
- May 27 - Memorial Day.
- May 29 - Newsletter Assembly.



### A Mother's Prayer

**Thank you, Lord,  
for bringing my children  
into my life.  
Help me guide them and  
teach them through example  
to lead lives of wisdom  
and strong, loving faith.  
Please let them learn  
to serve you always  
in thought and deed.  
And remind me, Lord,  
to always be there  
for my family  
as you are always  
there for me.**

**Amen.**



### Famous quotes from various mothers:

Jonah's mother: "That's a nice story, but now tell me where you've really been for the last three days."

Mona Lisa's mother: "After all that money your father and I spent on braces, Mona, that's the largest smile you can give us?"

Columbus' mother: "I don't care what you've discovered, Christopher. You still could have written."

Thomas Edison's mother: "Of course I'm proud that you invented the electric light bulb, Thomas. Now turn off that light and go to bed."

Superman's mother: "Clark, your father and I have discussed it, and we've decided you can have your own cell phone. Now will you quit spending so much time in all those phone booths?"

—via Pastor Jim West, Belgrade, MO

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# Bible Wordsearch

Wordsearch 212

Rev.13:11-18

## The Beast 2

A	L	I	V	E	D	E	A	R	T	H	H	P	D	M
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BEAST ANYONE  
 BREATH CALCULATE  
 EARTH DECEIVED  
 FATAL CAUSING  
 GREAT COMING  
 HONOR DRAGON  
 HORNS EVERYONE  
 IMAGE FOREHEAD  
 POWER FORCED  
 SIGNS HEALED  
 SLAVE HEAVEN  
 SPEAK INSIGHT  
 SPOKE KILLED  
 VIEW NUMBER  
 LAMB ORDERED  
 LIVED RECEIVE  
 MARK REFUSED  
 NAME SWORD

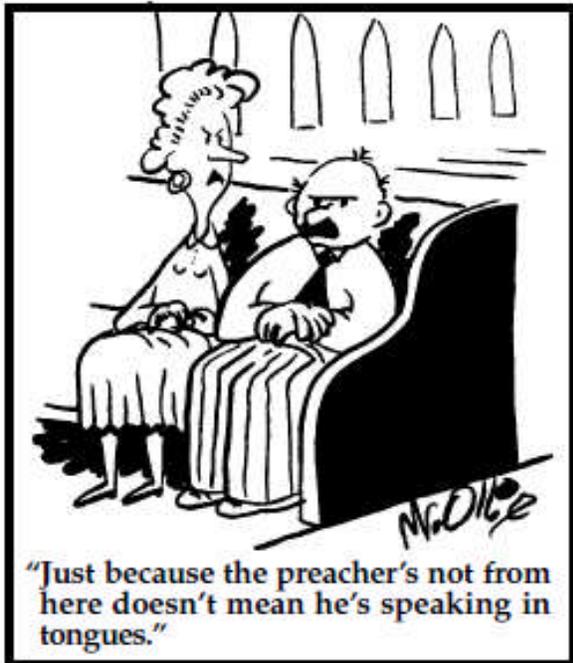
After you find all the hidden words the left over letters spell out a Bible verse reading from the top left to the bottom right

AUTHORITY  
 PERFORMED

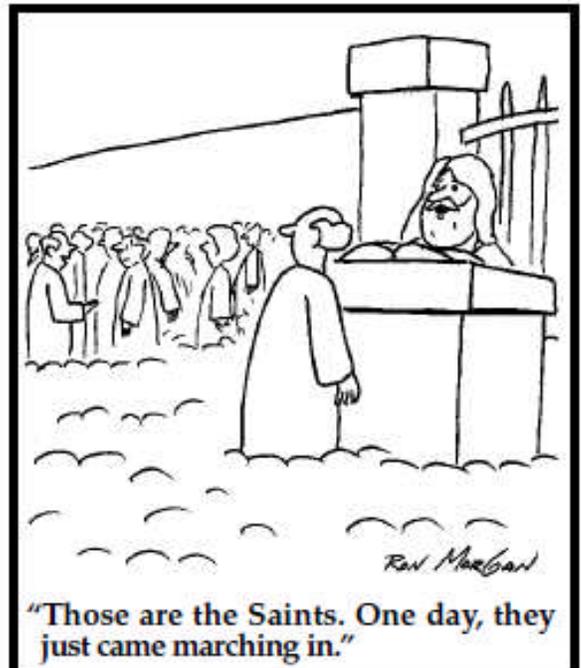
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