

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



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Web Site: www.graceluth.com

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

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 May 14th. The Council members shared their prayer concerns: We pray for the continued recovery of those close to us; We pray for the healing of Ken Hilmer and his ongoing health issues, for Jack Williams after breaking his arm, for David Hufford as he suffers with a collapsed lung, and for Pastor Gittler and his family while he struggles to recover from some health concerns. We pray for the 3 women that were abducted in Cincinnati, and for all the areas of unrest in our world. We pray for all of the new graduates and for the children who will soon be on summer vacation. We pray for Vicki's brother in law, Ron Hansen, with his chronic meningitis, and for Ethel Johannsen's family, mourning her death.

Devotions were led by Pastor Laaker reading the selected verses in the "Daily Texts." Devotions were from Nehemiah 9:33 and 1 John 1:9. The first reminds that we will be punished for our own actions. The second reminds us that we know and should admit that we are wrong. We need to try to correct ourselves. Let's have some honest recognition; we are human beings and must depend on God's Grace and Mercy.

Visions for Ministry: We discussed the studied chapter in our book. Where was our church at its conception? Where was our church during its highest point? We were the suburbs. Were we the affluent? Mixed housing / working class. Lots cost a significant amount of money. We were not an ethnic congregation, but we retain diversity. At the end of the 1960's, end of WWII, with larger families, transportation began, interstate began to come through, which forced the relocation of 60% of the congregation. The church was visible only to the neighborhood, not by accessibility. Now, as native English speaking declines and Spanish speaking continues to grow - how do we bridge and make a connection? Please re-read through chapter two for next meeting.

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

Christian Education: VBS will be July 14-July 18, with the next follow up meeting on May 30 @ 7 pm. Consider participating!

Evangelism/Outreach: No new report.

Finance: There was a motion to ratify the actions submitted by the Endowment Board. We will renew the Witt Fund with a 2 year investment term in the Mission Investment Fund of the ELCA.

Property: Received a lead report on the 1310 S 26th property. It is no longer an issue now that the parking lot has been constructed.

Service/Social Ministry: Pastor interviewed two candidates for Lutheran Volunteer Corps placement, but neither were assigned. He has three more to interview next.

Continued.....

Support/Stewardship: No new report.

Worship: Summer worship - we explored ideas, decided on more singing and less verbal liturgy. Council voted: Beginning with the first Sunday in June, our one worship service will be at 9 a.m.!

Unfinished Business: No new report.

New Business: No new report.

Announcements: June will bring treats for our June meeting.

Matt's Ponderings

Hello all!

This past month has been filled with visits to the park and checker match double headers. Hopefully the weather stays nice this month for more park visits: neither too hot nor too wet (as has been the trend lately). Also I'll take any of you on in checkers! (This means you Eda!)



As I've mentioned, Kids at Work is starting the first week of June. Lori Vasquez has graciously offered her time as a driver this year. Anyone else who can provide his or her own services as a chaperone would also be appreciated. Again, the program will run from 10 am to 12 pm on Tuesdays and Wednesdays during the summer. This year's worksites include Together, Inc., the Kountze community garden, Precious Memories Childcare, the Lutheran Home, Disciples Church, and Hospice House.

Although I haven't been able to host citizenship courses as often as I'd like this month, I'd like to remind anyone who needs it that I'd be happy to assist them in learning about the good old USA.

Cheers!

Matt

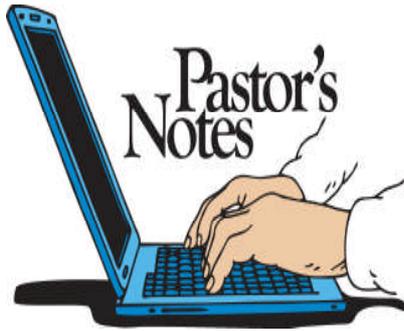


Ten Dollar Gift

Elizabeth was surprised to receive ten dollars from her Aunt for her birthday. The Aunt asked how she was going to spend it.

"I'm taking it to Sunday School and giving it to God." the little girl replied. "He'll be just as surprised as I was at not getting a dollar like usual."

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From guy-sports.com



The Council is reading and studying the book, "Can Our Church Live?" by Alice Mann. The title of chapter two is "Why Your Congregation is in Trouble Now." She begins the chapter by saying that congregations are born from a spark of interaction between faith and context.

I have been reflecting on that statement. In looking through historical documents a number of years ago, I was fascinated to learn that the first pastor of Grace congregation, Rev. Luther M. Kuhns, was the son of the Rev. Henry W. Kuhns, the founder of Kountze Memorial Lutheran. Rev. Henry W. Kuhns was instrumental in starting a number of congregations here on the eastern edge of Nebraska. So, a part of the spark of interaction between faith and context was the mission focus of Rev. Kuhns as he sought to plant churches in this area.

The context of the beginning of Grace congregation was a gift by the Shull family of two lots in what was then a sparsely populated area of southwest Omaha. This was in 1885. Grace was organized on April 7, 1889. This area was the newly developing suburbs of Omaha. Lot prices were high; \$4,000 per lot. Men's worsted wool suits sold for \$15 apiece. It is estimated that costs today are 30 times more than they were in 1889, at least for some things. So, the context of the beginning of the congregation was that this was a prosperous time. New homes were being built. New subdivisions were being planned.

This was a time of hope built on faith. People were moving into this part of the community and there was a need for a neighborhood church.

The congregation grew slowly at first but then much more rapidly following the World Wars. In its prime, the congregation boasted over 600 members. We learned looking back in the records that the first time average worship attendance was reported in the statistics was 1974.

The question that we are called upon to struggle with today is: what current cultural factors must the congregation come to terms with to frame a vital ministry? We are exploring this question along with others as we seek that spark of interaction between faith and context.

I invite your prayers. I invite your creative thinking. I invite your openness to the work of the Holy Spirit as we seek to live out our mission of sharing God's Word and love in care and service to all.

Pastor Laaker

Hunger Free Heartland Summer Meals

It's Summer! Kids Eat Free! Los Niños Comen Gratis

Across Nebraska, over 200 local sites offer summer meals through the SFSP. These include schools, faith-based organizations, and community centers. There is no registration or documentation required; children simply need to be present to have a nutritious meal with their peers. In addition to food, many sites provide educational enrichment and recreational activities that help children continue to learn and stay safe and active when school is not in session.

To find locations – Call 2-1-1, text: freefood 877-877
or visit www.hungerfreeheartland.org/summer-meals/
All kids 18 and under eat free!



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.
- ◆ Pastor Henry Gittler - Ongoing health issues.
- ◆ Jim Harrahill - Ongoing health issues.
- ◆ Ken Hilmer - Ongoing health issues.
- ◆ Ferne Matson - Ongoing health issues.
- ◆ LaVonne Moss - Ongoing health issues.
- ◆ Robert Moss - Ongoing health issues.
- ◆ 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.)
- ◆ The family of Jean Matson - (Andrea Spahr's Grandma.)
- ◆ The family of Pastor Philip Essa. (Pastor in Mabaan, Sudan.)



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

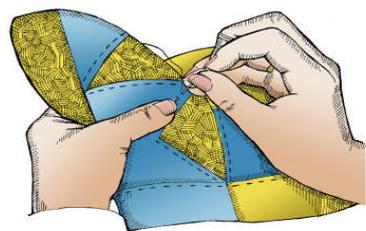
Bishop Brian Maas, Nebraska Synod

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

**Quilting for Lutheran World Relief
Will be taking a summer break!**

Quilting will resume in September!

Have a Great Summer!

Wednesday Night

June 19, 2013

7:00 p.m.

**Candle light Prayer Service
at Grace Lutheran Church.**

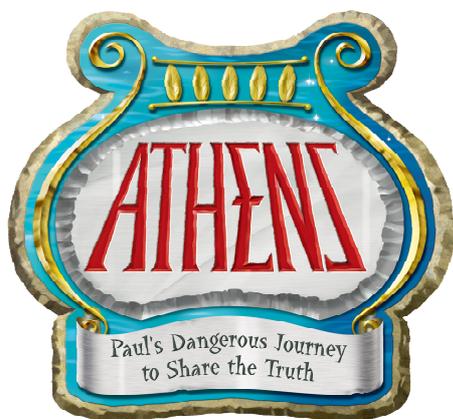
People of all faiths are welcome!



Meditations

Confessions

Healing



VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL JULY 14 - 18, 2013

The theme this year is Athens, Paul's Dangerous Journey to Share the Truth and is scheduled for Sunday, July 14th through Thursday, July 18! Vacation Bible School is an inspiring presence for all involved both young and old, with this annual summer activity. Want to volunteer, help out, or have fun, and grow together? Planning meetings are currently being scheduled, please watch the Sunday bulletin for further information. Any additional questions, please see David Hufford. Watch for next month's newsletter for additional updates.



Fun

Games

snacks

Singing

Crafts

Storytime

Fun



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 or Stacia Vawter at St. Matthew (402) 556-7030 / stacia@smlutheran.com a brochure has been posted on the bulletin board.

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

“Life is 10% of what happens to you,
and 90% of how you respond to it.”

**Remember Beginning
June 2nd
New Worship Time
9:00 a.m.**

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 (LaVonne, Bob, Marilyn, Jerry, June, Eva, and Gloria, who dedicate one morning every month to assemble the Newsletter for mailing. Have a great summer, your help will be needed again in August!
- ◆ 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.

**Remember Beginning
June 2nd
New Worship Time
9:00 a.m.**



Thank you for all the cards, gifts, prayers, well wishes and words of encouragement. Thank you also to everyone who helped in this celebration of my Confirmation!

Andrea Spahr

Thank you for all the prayers, condolences, and cards during this time of mourning with the recent passing of my Mother-in-law, and Andrea's Grandma, Jean. The outpouring of concern and God's reflection of love means a great deal to the Spahr family.

In the 1930's, during the Depression, a study showed that adults laughed an average of 19 minutes a day, but in the prosperous 1980's, adults laughed an average of only 6 minutes a day.

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From JoyfulNoiseletter.com



"Helping Hands"

Working Together in God's service

Special Pantry Needs for June:
Toilet paper, Paper towels, and Kleenex



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 clothing, in all sizes.



HABITAT Project

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 continues its 15th build during the month of June. 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.



FAMILIES IN ACTION – OMAHA



Virginia McGill, MA
Executive Director

Gema C. Wolde
Community Health Worker
Se habla español.

New Partnership Grant: Families in Action and Children's Hospital and Medical Center

Families in Action through Interfaith Health Service was recently awarded a 2013 grant through the Children's Hospital and Medical Center's Preventing Childhood Obesity Community Grants program. Through this exciting new partnership, Families in Action will work closely with Children's Hospital and Medical Center to improve the current and future health of children within our community.

We are thrilled about the partnership and are proud to be collaborating with Children's Hospital and Medical Center in this endeavor! Families in Action, though IHS, has been working since inception to help Latino youth and families lower obesity rates and to promote well-being in the areas of health, wellness, education and physical activity. We have been assisted by several Children's Hospital and Medical Center physicians over the years, and are the only grass-roots, non-profit, stand-alone organization to receive a National Award from the United States Centers for Disease Control for "innovation in health promotion and prevention".

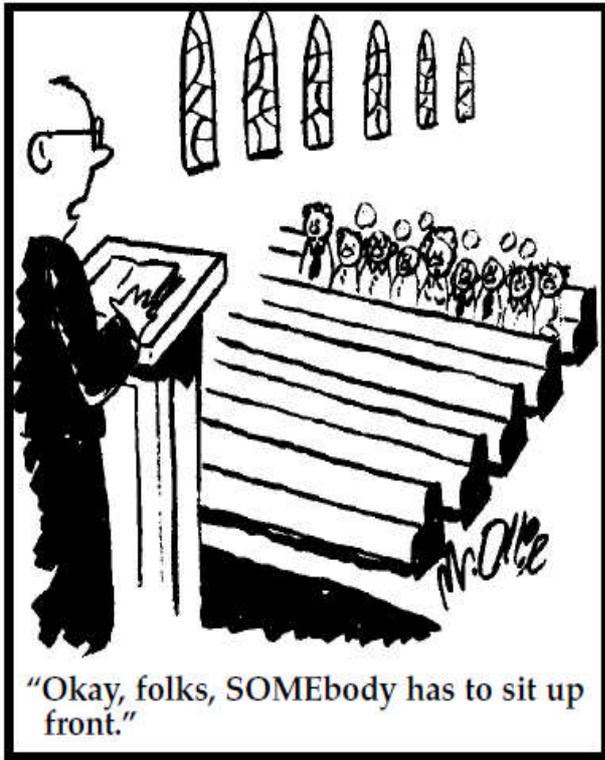
Our partnership with Children's Hospital and Medical Center will enhance current Families in Action opportunities and build on the tremendous trust we have built within the community over the past decade. We will continue to help culturally diverse youth and families augment, gain and maintain positive health and wellness habits. It has been shown that youth who take care of their own health needs and remain active are able to achieve in school, employment and care for their own families. Healthy youth and healthy families create healthy neighborhoods, which, in turn, create healthy communities and ultimately, healthy cities. We welcome this exciting, timely and innovative partnership and look forward working closely with Children's Hospital and Medical Center throughout the year.

Gema Castillo Wolde and Virginia McGill
Families in Action/Interfaith Health Service

World Refugee Day Saturday, June 22, 2013 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The Omaha Refugee Task Force is proud to sponsor this free event at Benson High School located at 5120 Maple Street. There will be a Parade of Flags, Refugee Performances, a Refugee Presentation and a Naturalization Ceremony. In the afternoon there will be a children's Carnival and Health Fair and many additional events are also planned for this day. For more information please contact Susan Mayberger at 402-557-2431 or e-mail her at susan.mayberger@ops.org.





"Okay, folks, SOMEbody has to sit up front."

from JoyfulNoiseletter.com
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Special Days in June at Grace Lutheran Church

- May 31 - June 2 - Synod Assembly in Kearney, NE.
- June 11 - Council Meeting.
- June 12 - Photographer's Club.
- June 16 - Father's Day.
- June 19 - Prayer Service.
- June 20 - Neighborhood Meeting.
- June 26 - Photographer's Club.
- June 26 - Newsletter Assembly.
- Kids At Work every Tues and Wed.

The seagull

A father was at the beach with his children when the four-year-old son ran up to him, grabbed his hand, and led him to the shore, where a seagull lay dead in the sand.

"Daddy, what happened to him?" the son asked.

"He died and went to Heaven," the dad replied.

The boy thought a moment and then said, "Did God throw him back down?"

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A near-sighted pastor glanced at the note that Mrs. Jones had an usher send to him in the pulpit. The note read, "Bill Jones having gone to sea, his wife desires the prayers of the congregation for his safety."

Failing to see the punctuation, the pastor read: "Bill Jones, having gone to see his wife, desires the prayers of the congregation for his safety."
 —Rev. Harry Mahoney

Dedham, MA

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Who's the Boss?

One evening a preschooler, Kristel, and her parents were sitting on the couch chatting. Kristel asked, "Daddy, you're the boss of the house, right?" Her father proudly replied, "Yes, I am the boss of the house." But Kristel added "Cause Mommy put you in charge, huh Daddy?"

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**Remember Beginning
 June 2nd
 New Worship Time
 9:00 a.m.**

Bible Wordsearch

Wordsearch 213

Rev. 14:1-10

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

A New Song

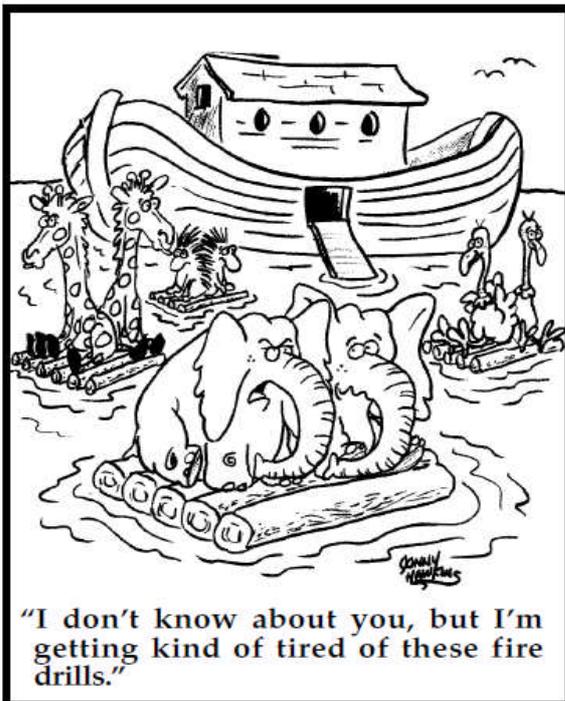
ANGELS BABYLON
 BEAST CREATURES
 DEFILE ETERNAL
 ELDERS FOREHEAD
 FLYING HEAVENS
 FURY JUDGMENT
 GLORY MOUTHS
 GOD MIDAIR
 GOSPEL POURED
 HARPS PRESENCE
 HOLY PROCLAIM
 IMAGE REDEEMED
 LAMB SPRINGS
 MARK STRENGTH
 PEAL SULFUR
 PURE THRONE
 SANG THUNDER
 TRIBE WOMEN
 WINE WORSHIP
 ZION WRATH

F riend
 A dvisor
 T eacher
 H elper
 E mpathizer
 R ole Model
 in Christ

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

_____ Psalm 48

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