

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
Lutheran Volunteer Corp - Jessica Menary



**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 Fittle	Janet Hula
Andrew Edwards	June Hilmer	Eva Martin
		Pastor Laaker

Officers Serving the Congregation:

Financial Secretary: Janet Hula Treasurer: Ralph Fittle

A brief meeting of the Council was held on November 10th. The Council members shared their prayer concerns: We pray for the healing of those close to us; for Janet's sister, Jackie Costello who has had outpatient back surgery, for Eva's grandson, Donavan with his recent bout of illness, and for Ralph's cousin, Steve Anstey and his recent discovery of a spot on his lung. We rejoice that we will be celebrating Gertrude Hufford's 105th birthday! Devotions were shared throughout the morning.

Visions for Ministry: While the Council continues reading "Can Our Church Live?" by Alice Mann, we did not discuss it at this meeting. We heard reports from those that attended the New Vision Workshops, and learned many things. We recognize the need for mission, we continue under guidance and work toward the end goal. Ideas about getting congregations involved were mentioned. What is the biggest need outside of our walls? Maybe the focus should be less about bringing folks inside, but more about reaching out. We will intend to discuss Chapter four of our book at our next meeting.

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

Christian Education: No new report.

Evangelism/Outreach: No new report.

Finance: A motion was made to ratify projected spending by the Disney Endowment Board, and passed.

Property: Balcony corner ceiling is still leaking. Pastor has spoken with Joel Gammon about a fix for this, and plans are being discussed for a possible fix in 2014. Conversation has taken place with our Attorneys again, and it seems as though we will be asked to either 1) settle out of court, or 2) go through a court hearing. The court hearing would be the only way to ask the Judge to assign attorney's fees to Church Mutual as well.

Service/Social Ministry: Halloween party was a great success. Everyone involved seemed to have a wonderful time! The Pre-Thanksgiving dinner initiated by Lori & Davena was wonderful as well. Boxes of foods were sent to the pantry, along with \$183 in monetary support. Thank you to all that participated in either / both of these events!

Support/Stewardship: Fall Mission Gathering – Enjoyable evening, met with many folks that were new to us. Heard many mission stories, many of them similar to our own. Good reminder that what we do at Grace is quite impactful!

Worship: St Luke's will host the Thanksgiving Eve Service, at 7 p.m., for approximately 8 congregations.

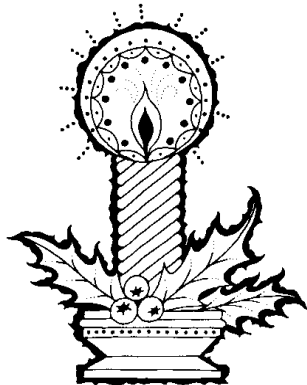
Continued....

Unfinished Business: No new report.

New Business: Pastor and Vicki met and spoke in greater detail to Pastor Edgar Jimenez of Prince of Peace Pentecostal Church. The congregation would like to share our space, due to their current place of worship having no heat, and a leaking roof. This would be fairly immediate – in December. A ‘memorandum of understanding’ will be drafted and ready prior to that time. Larry Foreman has graciously donated a hanging rug of the Lord’s Supper to the congregation. Please take a moment to ask him about it!

Announcements: Chet Worm has donated the framed picture in the fellowship hall. This is the gathering of the General Synod, in 1885, at which point they approved the mission plant of Grace Church. David will bring treats for our December meeting.

***Christmas Eve
Candlelight Service
December 24, 2013
5:00 p.m.***



Oh! Come all ye faithful!
Come celebrate the joy and wonders of Christ’s birth!
Come share in the tradition of singing “Silent Night” by candlelight.
Bring family and friends so that together, we can enjoy the
fellowship of the Spirit of Christmas.

Blue Christmas Service: Does your heart hurt this season? Your faith can help. Worship with others who understand at the Blue Christmas Service of Prayer and Song on Wednesday, December 11, at 6:30 p.m. at Augustana Lutheran Church, 3647 Lafayette Avenue. There will be a Soup and Bread Supper at 5:30 p.m. If you have any questions, please call Augustana Lutheran Church office at 402-551-4728.





Our fall stewardship emphasis theme has been “Fulfilling God’s Purpose.” Over the last four weeks we have explored four aspects of this theme.; 1. Building Relationships, 2. Witnessing for Jesus, 3. Living as a Servant, and 4. Giving Joyfully and Generously. I have found the exploration of these aspects to be encouraging and hopeful.

The adult group that has met on Sunday morning has also explored these aspects of the theme. We have shared personal stories and thoughtful responses to questions like: 1. What is the difference between knowing about Jesus and having a relationship with him? 2. Why can’t you rely solely on your lifestyle to witness? 3. How can serving bless the server? and 4. How has God demonstrated God’s love for you?

This time has been especially enriching to me since it has come before we celebrate Thanksgiving. It has given me pause to think about all the ways the people of God at Grace Lutheran exemplify being children of God.

Sometimes it is easy to think Grace is a small congregation and therefore is limited in its mission outreach. I really believe this is a false thought. When I think about the manner in which the people of God share their regular giving so that we can provide leadership and outreach within the Omaha community, I am amazed and thankful.

I am thankful for the kind of response the people of God have shown for sponsoring a weekly emphasis on childhood hunger by gifting to the Backpack program of the Heartland Food Bank. I see the results of regular gifts to the Lutheran Pantry. I witness the monthly contribution sent through the Nebraska Synod for the ELCA World Hunger program.

I have served on the Bishop’s staff and know that not every congregation, large or small does these kinds of things on a regular basis. The witness of these efforts is a big thing as followers of Jesus.

You have heard me say in worship and in print that I believe Grace Lutheran is meant to be a place for all peoples. You will see in the Council Notes that our leadership has made a decision to share our physical space with another small worshipping community, Prince of Peace Pentecostal Church, a Latino congregation. This decision, I believe, is made through the leading of the Spirit.

As we prepare during Advent for the celebration of the coming of our Savior, may we give thanks for God’s amazing grace and for the marvelous ways we are invited to be living examples of this grace in and through our lives. May we rejoice in the privilege to share our resources with others. May we experience the joy and wonder of Christ alive in each of us.

The closing prayer of The Daily Texts for Tuesday, November 26, read like this: Creator God, you are the giver of all life and possessions. You freely give to us and yet we fear we lack so much. We desire more and more. Break our attitude of greed. Give us your generous Spirit so that we can know your life-giving abundance. Amen.

May your Thanksgiving celebrations be more than a memory. May we live in thankfulness and praise each day for the abundance of God’s grace among us.

Pr. Laaker





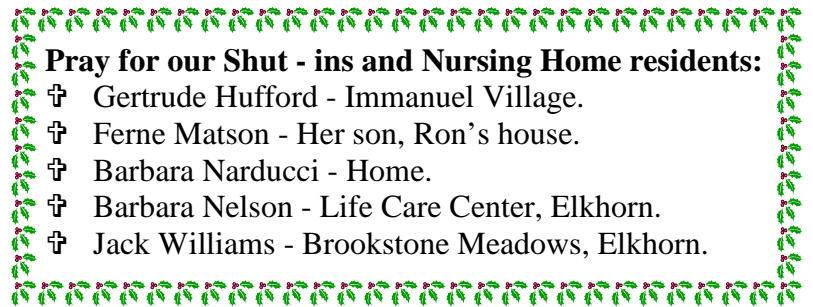
Prayer Concerns from Family and Friends

*"The prayer of a person living right with God
is something powerful to be reckoned with."*

James 5:16b

Those we pray for named below are members unless otherwise specified:
We pray for those with ongoing health issues:

- ✝ Andrew Edwards
- ✝ Jim Harrahill
- ✝ Ken Hilmer
- ✝ David Hufford
- ✝ Carolyn Matson
- ✝ Ferne Matson
- ✝ LaVonne Moss
- ✝ Robert Moss
- ✝ Don Olson
- ✝ Lori Vasquez
- ✝ Urbano Vasquez
- ✝ Norma Courtney (Arlone Farber's Mom.)
- ✝ Bob Hargis (Jerry and Marilyn Van Ormer's son-in-law.)
- ✝ Christian Barajas (Samantha Trejo, Angela & Alex Everitt's brother.)
- ✝ Sandy Fitzgerald (Gloria Moore's daughter.)



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 Elizabeth Eaton, 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.*



Wednesday Night
December 18, 2013
7:00 p.m.
Candle light Prayer Service
at Grace Lutheran Church.
People of all faiths are welcome!



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



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.

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 ESL tutors; Vicki Cox, Arlone Farber, Mary Laaker, Jessica Menary, and Amanda Vazquez, for making that connection with the students willing to learn and form friendships.
- ◆ Thank you to the Quilters, Marilyn, LaVonne, Bob, June, and Eva. Your dedication to creating quilts for Lutheran World Relief is truly a reflection of God's love.
- ◆ 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.
- ◆ Thank you to the Newsletter Assembly crew; Marilyn, Jerry, LaVonne, Bob, June, Gloria, and Eva. The dedication and great conversations during assembly is greatly appreciated!

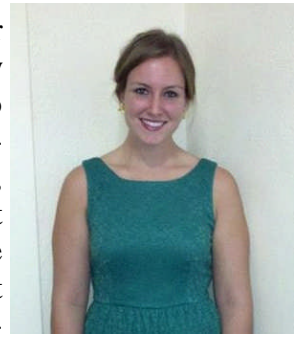
News from the Families of Grace Lutheran Church

Congratulations to Joel Gammon!

He will graduate on December 8th, from
ITT Technical Institute
School of Drafting & Design
Bachelor of Science in Construction Management



Happy Thanksgiving! I have a lot to be thankful for this year; I am thankful for my family, my health, my old and new friends. I am having a blast living in my intentional community of LVC volunteers. What is intentional community? To me it is striving to be compassionate, understanding, and mindful in our interactions with each other. It is about intentionally having discussions, being open, learning, sharing knowledge, and meeting people where they are in their different journeys in their lives. While mindfully making meaningful contact with those you live with can be more taxing than just only existing under a roof together, it is very rewarding and I aspire to continue this practice of being present throughout my life.



I have also been blessed with this opportunity to work here in Omaha. I have observed a lot already about the culture and community. While I have been exposed to a lot of the injustices and sadness that exists here in Omaha, I have also met a lot of caring people and seen things that represent the good in people and the progression for a better society. I do not have all the answers about what society should look like in our world, our city, our community or how we can get there, but one thing that I have been doing lately is just thinking about the questions. I hope we all can be reflective on how our words and actions impact others and be accepting of ourselves while still striving to grow.

Jessica Menary, Lutheran Volunteer Community Outreach Associate,
(641-990-5324 outreach@graceluth.com)

Fundraiser for Christian Barajas

Christian Barajas is the grandson of Lori Vasquez and brother to Samantha Trejo, Angela and Alexandra Everitt. On December 11th between 5:00 - 7:00 p.m. you will have the opportunity to experience a traditional Latina Meal with a free will offering in the hopes to off set the ever increasing medical bills that are accumulating during Christian's fight against cancer.



Electronic Fund Giving

The gift of generosity

This holiday season, we thank everyone who has supported Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church this past year with their time, talent and financial contributions and look forward to support from all of our members in the year ahead. If you need a convenient way to make regular offerings or if you plan to make an additional gift before the end of the year, we encourage you to look into our electronic giving options. As the pace of life speeds up, especially around the holidays, you may find electronic giving a most welcome way to make contributions. Please contact the church office if you have any questions or for more information.

Order Your Poinsettias Today
Cost: \$6.00 each

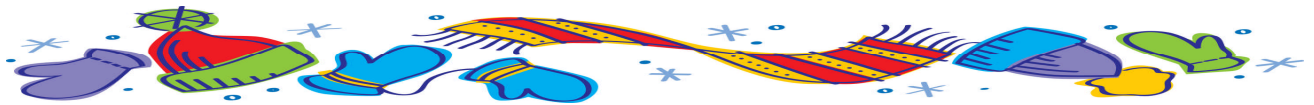


Poinsettia Sign-Up

A Sign Up Sheet will be posted on the Bulletin Board.

The Deadline for Ordering is December 9th

Be sure to designate whether you would like a red or white plant and whether you are taking your flowers home after the holiday or leave them at the church to be shared with shut-ins. For your convenience, you can call the church office at 402-341-7730 and place a poinsettia order.



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

The Christmas Mitten Tree will stand in the upper fellowship hall during the month of December.

During the special sales in the month of November and December, consider adding a pair of mittens or a scarf or two to your shopping cart, and place them on the mitten tree.



**Grace Lutheran Church
Christmas Luncheon at
Piccolo Pete's Restaurant
2202 South 20th Street
Tuesday, December 17, 2013
1:00 p.m.
Everyone Welcome!**



Please plan to attend in the celebration and fellowship time. There is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board, or you can call the church office, 402-341-7730, with your planned reservation.



FAMILIES IN ACTION – OMAHA



Virginia McGill, MA
Executive Director

Gema C. Wolde
Community Health Worker
Se habla español.

Mobile Clinic and Staff Provide Services to IHS/Families in Action Participants

Nursing students and faculty members from the Nebraska Methodist Health System joined IHS and Families in Action this past month to provide a Health Fair and Screenings in South Omaha. The students and faculty members, assisted by Families in Action staff, provided blood pressure checks, cholesterol checks, height and weight measurements, flu shots and blood sugar levels for our participants and neighbors in the community. Those seen ranged in age from 6 years old to 80 years old, with 120 families seen during the evening.

We are grateful to Nebraska Methodist College for providing staffing and their Mobile clinic for the evening!

We are also grateful to Children’s Hospital and Medical Center for their support for this event.

We will be hosting additional clinics in the Spring and Summer to work with more families to promote health and wellness. Many thanks to all who volunteered with the clinic and to all of our participants, children and family members who attended!



Virginia and Gema, IHS



“Helping Hands”

Special Pantry Needs for December:
Coffee/Tea/Cocoa

Items that clients cannot purchase with their food stamps are always appreciated: Dish Soap, Kleenex, Bar Soap, Deodorant, Toothbrush and toothpaste, Shaving Cream, Razors, Mouthwash (without alcohol), Feminine hygiene products, Hair products (combs, brushes, picks), Bathroom tissue, Shampoo, Dry Laundry Soap, Can Openers, Diaper wipes, and Diapers, especially sizes 4, 5, 6 and pull-ups.

We always need paper or plastic bags.

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



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

12 days of Christmas

- † The partridge in a pear tree was Jesus Christ.
- † Two turtle doves were the Old and New Testaments.
- † Three French hens stood for faith, hope and love.
- † The four calling birds were the four gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.
- † The five golden rings recalled the Torah or Law, the first five books of the Old Testament.
- † The six geese a-laying stood for the six days of creation.
- † Seven swans a-swimming represented the sevenfold gifts of the Holy Spirit, Prophecy, Serving, Teaching, Exhortation, Contribution, Leadership, and Mercy.
- † The eight maids a milking were the eight beatitudes.
- † Nine ladies dancing were the nine fruits of the Holy Spirit. Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness, Self-control.
- † The ten lords a-leaping were the ten commandments.
- † Eleven pipers piping stood for the eleven faithful disciples.
- † Twelve drummers drumming symbolized the twelve points of belief in the Apostles' Creed.

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THE FAMILY CIRCUS

By Bil and Jeff Keane



"Then the three wise men came to baby-sit Jesus so Mary and Joseph could finish Christmas shopping."

from JoyfulNoiseletter.com
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Sign outside Center Street Baptist Church,
Marshalltown, IA:

The greatest gift of all was delivered in a man-
ger, not a sleigh.

~via Pastor Dale A. Schoening
Woodward United Methodist Church,
Woodward, IA.

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Sign outside Lititz (PA) Moravian Church:

"O Come All Ye Faithful!
And Everyone Else, Too!"

~via Pastor Dean Jurgen
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Special Days in December at Grace Lutheran Church:

December 10 - Grace Council Meeting.
December 11 - Photographers Club.
December 11 - Fundraiser Dinner.
December 17 - Christmas Luncheon.
December 18 - Prayer Service.
December 19 - Neighborhood Meeting.
December 24 - Christmas Eve Service.
December 25 - Merry Christmas!
December 31 - New Years Eve.

Christmas Eve

It's Christmas Eve, at last. The children are finally fast asleep and I look around the house. The presents are under the tree. The turkey is ready to bake. The pies, all three are cooling on the shelf.

Tomorrow will be a busy day. I should go to bed myself but here I stand instead so full of love and joy.

Thank you, dear God, thank you for your new-born baby boy.

—Marjorie Spalsbury
(Marjorie Spalsbury, the author of
Gentle Hills, is the mother of Jeff R.
Spalsbury of Visalia, CA, author of
Merry Christmas Stories.)

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Inherit the Mirth

by Cuyler Black



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Christian Christmas Word Find



Jesus Is The Reason

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

Jesus
Angel
Rejoice
Magi
Messiah
Stable

Manger
Noel
Joseph
Savior
Incense
King

Gold
Worship
Myrrh
Mary
Emmanuel
Christ

Prophecy
Bethlehem
Good News
Shepherds
Great Joy
Eastern Star

He Is Christ The Lord
Glory To God On High
Town Of David
Peace On Earth
Good Will To All
For All People