Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church 1326 South 26th Street Omaha, NE 68105-2380

402-341-7730

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 - Alma Lopez Families In Action - Virginia McGill Lutheran Volunteer Corp - Jessica Menary

**Delivered to the Post Office April 29** 



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2014

Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church







#### **2014 Council Members**

Janet Hula Eva Martin Loren Moyer Charles Tuw Pastor Laaker \*\*\*\*\*

Officers Serving the Congregation: Financial: Janet Hula Treasurer: Ralph Fitle

Vicki Cox

Sarah Emery

June Hilmer

Arlone Farber

Andrew Edwards

The regular meeting of the Council was held on April 8th. 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 continues to struggle with different health issues, for Arlone's mother, Norma Courtney. We pray for continued healing and strength for Roseanne Emery, and for Pastor's return to health. We pray for God's safety around all those affected by the recent mudslides in Washington and the shooting at Fort Hood. Devotions were shared from Isaiah 66:10 and Philippians 1:3-4 The first speaks to us about being glad for what is, while remembering what used to be. We celebrate & lament at the same time. The second reminds us to feel uplifted! It focused on encouraging a community that was at struggle with the future.

Visions for Ministry: We looked at. We discussed being ok with whatever feels right at the time as we discussed the book "The Future Starts Now." No need for permissions and clearance - feel free to let God work through you, however you see fit! Watch what God is doing around us. Read Chapter 2 for our next meeting.

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

Christian Education: No new report. Please keep VBS in mind, and think about how you might participate.

Evangelism/Outreach: Second round of LVC interviewing to begin.

Finance: No new report.

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#### Question: "Who is the boss at your house?"

- "Mom doesn't want to be boss, but she has to because Dad's such a goof ball."
- "Mom. You can tell by room inspection. She sees the stuff under the bed."

#### Question: "What would it take to make your Mom perfect?"

- "On the inside she's already perfect. Outside, I think some kind of plastic surgery."
- "Diet. You know her hair I'd diet, maybe blue.

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# Why and how did God make mothers?

In her book *Laugh Again! The Ha That Heals*, FMC member Thelma Shirley-Taylor reports the following answers given by second-grade school children to several questions, starting with

### "Why Did God Make Mothers?"

- "She's the only one who knows where the Scotch tape is."
- "To help us out of there when we were getting born."
- "Mostly to clean the house."

#### Question: "How did God make Mothers?"

- "Magic, plus super powers and a lot of stirring."
- "He used dirt, just like for the rest of us."
- "God made my Mom just the same like he made me. He just used bigger parts."

# Question: *"If you could change one thing about your Mom, what would it be?"*

- "She has this weird thing about me keeping my room clean. I'd get rid of that."
- "I'd make my Mom smarter. Then, she would know it was my sister who did it, not me."
- "I would like for her to get rid of those invisible eyes on the back of her head."

# Question: "What ingredients are Mothers made of?"

- "God makes mothers out of clouds and Angel hair and everything nice in the world and one dab of mean."
- "They had to get their start from men's bones. Then they mostly use string, I think."

# Question: "What kind of a little girl was your Mom?"

- "My Mom has always been my Mom and none of that other stuff."
- "I don't know because I wasn't there, but my guess would be pretty bossy."
- "They say she used to be nice."

#### Question: "Why did your Mom marry your Dad?"

- "My Dad makes the best spaghetti in the world. And my Mom eats a lot."
- "She got too old to do anything else with him."
- "My grandma says that Mom didn't have her thinking cap on."

Continued on next page....

<u>Property:</u> Church Mutual Lawsuit - Attorney is optimistic. Pastor will be deposed Thursday, April 10. Light bulbs in the sanctuary are no longer available. OPPD is exploring what options are available. Outside light will need to be replaced, upstairs kitchen flooring will need to be replaced, and outside front steps will need to be recovered soon.

<u>Service/Social Ministry:</u> 125th Anniversary banner is done, and looks wonderful - thanks Janet! Columbus Park cleanup was April 12th. Jessica is planning to sell treats to help support NAMI. Please show your support!

Support/Stewardship: No new report.

Worship: No new report.

Unfinished Business: No new report.

New Business: No new report.

<u>Announcements:</u> Pastor announced that there are part-time work options through Signal 88 Security for anyone with a need for some extra income. Please see Pastor for contact information. Sarah will bring treats for our May meeting.

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Mark your calendars! A dinner event is being planned for Saturday evening May 17th with a Meet, Greet and Remince at 4:00 p.m. with dinner being served at 5:00 p.m. Our guest speaker, Mitch McCartney, from the Synod Office will be joining Grace for this celebration. A special worship service will be held on Sunday, May 18th. To reserve your place



at the dinner please sign the RSVP sheet posted on the bulletin board, call the church office at 402-341-7730, or send an email at graceluth@graceluth.com. Please plan to attend one or both special events! Continue to be on the lookout in future newsletters for additional events happening during this summer!



**P** So we can say with confidence, 'The Lord is my helper: I will not be afraid. What can anyone do to me?"

We have just celebrated the amazing Resurrection of Jesus. In my thoughts on Easter Sunday, I shared that there are natural rhythms to life. One of those is apparent when we plant tulip bulbs in the fall. The bulb is dry and appears dead. Nonetheless, we plant it in the ground knowing that when Spring arrives, a tulip will emerge from the ground and blossom with beauty.

Resurrection is a different matter altogether. When we bury a loved one in the ground, we do not expect that come Spring they will emerge from the ground to rejoin life and living. Resurrection is an unnatural event. Jesus had to take the risk that God would fulfill on the promise to bring about new life.

I was reading a devotional item this week and it had in it these words: "One cannot live without taking risks. Risk is woven into every aspect of our daily experience!" It then quoted the following poem from an Unknown Author.

- "To laugh is to risk appearing the fool.
- To weep is to risk appearing sentimental.
- To reach out for another is risk involvement.
- To expose feelings is to risk exposing our true self.
- To place your ideas, your dreams, before the crowd is to risk loss.
- To love is to risk not being loved in return.
- To love is to risk dying.
- To hope is to risk despair.
- To try at all is to risk failure."

These are thoughtful words that remind me that God continues to risk it all by entrusting the word of grace to each one of us.

THE FAMILY CIRCUS By Jeff and Bil Keane THE FAMILY CIRCUS By Jeff and Bil Keane



A four-year-old boy whose Dad was a mortician was puzzled when a Sunday School teacher told him that Jesus rose from the dead.

"You mean Jesus came out of the grave?" the boy said.

"Yes, he sure did," the teacher replied.

"If my Daddy had put him there, he would have stayed!" the boy exclaimed with great confidence.

Reprinted with permission	—via Chaplain Jack Hinson
From JoyfulNoiseletter.com	Waynesville, NC

Sign on a Roberts Dairy milk truck, Omaha, NE: "Cow'nt on Roberts Dairy."

-via Pastor Dale Schoening Woodward, IA

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The quickest way to double your money is to fold it and put it back into your pocket."

—Will Rogers

# When the new day has come

A rabbi was asked by one of his students, "How can you tell when the new day has come?"

"You tell me how you can know," the rabbi replied.

"Is it when the rooster crows to signal a new dawn?" the student guessed.

"No," said the rabbi.

"Is it then perhaps when one can discern the silhouette of a tree against the sky?"

"No," said the rabbi. "The surest way to know when the night is over is when you can look into the face of a stranger, the one who is so different from you and recognize him or her as your brother or sister. Until day comes, it will always be night."

–via Bud Frimoth, Portland, OR

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# Sunrise in the Ozarks

Those who sleep past a sunrise miss one of nature's most beautiful sights. It comes at a calm and peaceful part of the day, before the noise of street traffic, carpenter's saws, jackhammers and the blare of boom boxes.

"Sometimes only a rooster's crow breaks the silence. A sunrise is more than the beginning of a new day, more than the end of another night of darkness. It is another throb in the pulse of time.

"The gradual change of sunrise from early in summer to later in March is part of the seasonal rhythm. There is the rhythm, we are told, of starlight, of the ocean tides, of the human pulse. And there is the rhythm of the days, of the rising of the sun.

"Dawn, sunrise, then daylight, bring a new day unblemished, unlived. It all starts when a breath-taking sunrise lights up the eastern sky."

-Jim Reed, Random Pages from an Ozarks Journal

I wish that I sometimes had a crystal ball that gave me a glimpse into the future. I could then take risks that I knew would lead to something good and promising. However, I am probably better served by not being able to see into the future. I may not like what it reveals and therefore, I would not take the risk of acting on what I think God calls me to do at this time.

I don't know what God "really" wants us to do in this time. However, I am willing to risk exploring possibilities and acting on some of them trusting that if it is of God, it will blossom and bring forth life.

May we be willing risk takers in Jesus name.

# Pr. Laaker

Thank You! Thank You! Thank You!

I am deeply appreciative of the special celebration marking my 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Ordination. I was surprised by the gathering and the special gifts. I want to thank Vicki Cox for organizing this special event and for the special words she shared as we began the celebration.



I will savor the nuts and candy. I will use the gift card in some special way to mark your kindness. The book that captures many different moments of ministry was extra special. Thank you for extra efforts that were made to create this unique gift.

I am grateful to God for the love and care you have shown in honoring this special milestone. In many ways it feels like it was just yesterday that I was ordained a minister within Christ's church. In other ways, it feels like I have been blessed to do this all my life. Thank you for the opportunity to serve Grace, its people and its community. Thank you for honoring me with this special celebration.



Yet 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:

### **†** Individuals listed below have ongoing health issues

- ✤ Andrew Edwards
  - ards 登 Jim Harrahill 登 David Hufford
- ✤ Ken Hilmer✦ Carolyn Matson
- ✤ Earne Matson
- Gloria Moore
- LaVonne Moss
- Robert Moss
- 한 Don Olson
- t Lori Vasquez
- Urbano Vasquez
- ✤ Scott Moore (Gloria Moore's son.)
- ✤ 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.)
- The family of Jack Williams

# 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

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.

# A Mother's Prayer

"Precious Heavenly Father,

Give me patience when little hands Tug at me with their many demands.

Give me gentle hugging arms To help protect them from rebellions harm.

Give me wisdom from above To teach these little ones of Your love.

Give me strength, Your love not to spare That they may obey and live under Your care.

Give me a spirit....quiet and meek Let my words show kindness as I speak.

Give me the ability to teach from the heart To help my children learn Your Word from the start.

> Give me the words You'd have me say To teach my children how to pray.

Give me time, special moments to share That they may know, "Mommy really does care."

Give me hands that work willingly A steadfast example that I may be.

Give me courage to stand in Your might To teach my little ones to always do right.

Give me boldness to do all these and more That I may not be ashamed when I stand at Your door.

> Thank You Father, In Jesus Name I pray, Amen."

Author unknown ~ skywriting.net

Families in Action will again be awarded a grant from Children's this week, to be used in our multi-faced programs impacting the health and well-being of Latino youth and families living in South Omaha. By partnering with Children's, Families in Action and IHS will continue to provide fitness, nutrition and cooking classes and mobile health screenings, while regularly measuring participants' health data.

We are deeply grateful for the support, commitment and dedication of Children's in working with our organization, participants and community to address childhood obesity. Without their efforts, our work and the differences we see in the lives of our children and their parents, would not be possible.

Food

Virginia, Gema and Kaela,

Lutheran South Pantry 4401 S. 23rd Street

#### Items that clients cannot a purchase with their food stamps are always appreci-



# We always need paper or plastic bags.



# BASKETS OF PROMISE

Thirty personal care kits were assembled after worship service on Palm Sunday, April 13th. A great appreciation goes to all who helped organize and direct the assembly and to the sideline directions and encouragement were awesome! Through this effort 30 people will hopefully see God's reflection of love in the personal care kits they receive.





A Spaghetti Benefit Dinner will be held on Wednesday, May 7th from 5:00 to 7:00 pm. Proceeds from the dinner will help offset costs for Samantha Trejo's journey to London, through one of UNL's programs. Please plan to attend and support this experience for Samantha. If you have any questions about how you can help or questions surrounding Samantha's trip, please speak with Lori Vasquez at 402-541-8613 or Davena Garcia, at 402-968-2416.

Books are packed away and will be shared with folks either at the Lutheran Home or Precious Memories Daycare. Items will be personally delivered by the Kids At Work Summer Program. Thanks to all who donated or purchased items during the sale, over \$50.00 was collected!





Virginia McGill, MA Executive Director Gema C. Wolde Community Health Worker Se habla español.

www.familiesinactionomaha.org

Families in Action/Interfaith Health Service To Receive Children's Hospital & Medical Center Grant

We are delighted to share that Families in Action via Interfaith Health Service will be receiving a grant again this year to address Childhood Obesity with our partner, Children's Hospital & Medical Center!

According to the 2012 Community Health Needs Assessment, co-sponsored by Children's Hospital & Medical Center, childhood obesity ranked as the number one concern of parents in the greater Omaha Metropolitan area. Childhood obesity is a health crisis on the national level, as well, affecting 17 percent of children and teens in the United States. Obese children are more likely to have high blood pressure, high cholesterol, heart disease and Type 2 diabetes.

Children's Hospital & Medical Center is committed to preventing childhood obesity through proactive programs focused on education. Children's dedication stems from its mission—"so that all children may have a better chance to live"—and its responsiveness to the health concerns of Heartland families. Children's is uniquely positioned in the area to be an effective leader for change on this critical issue. By providing leadership and support to the community, Children's hope to achieve the vision of eliminating childhood obesity. In 2013, Children's teamed up with five community partners to reverse the dangerous trend of childhood obesity through the first-ever Preventing Childhood Obesity Community Grants. One of my LVC housemates works at NAMI and I have learned about the ways NAMI serves members of our community. She will be joining us on Sunday June 1st to tell us more about NAMI. In Nebraska, it is estimated that tens of thousands of people struggle with serious mental illness. And mental illness not only affects the individual living with the diagnosis - parents, spouses, other family members and friends of the individual are all affected too. NAMI Nebraska works to provide support groups and education programs to individuals living with mental illness and/or substance abuse disorders and their family, friends, and other loved ones. Every service offered through NAMI is free.

I know that this fundraiser is crucial to NAMI's continued existence in the community. I want to be a part of supporting this organization because mental illness affects many people and their loved ones and is not something to be ashamed of. I believe everyone deserves strong mental health and so I invite you to help me support NAMI through this fundraiser!

Sunday June 1st I will bring treats for fellowship after service. I will have a donation jar available for anyone who wants to donate to the NAMI Walk. All donations, big or small, are appreciated! If you would like to learn more about NAMI, the fundraiser, more ways to get involved, or have any other questions, please contact me. :)

Jessica Menary,

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

"Long ago, when people cursed and beat the ground with sticks, it was called witchcraft; today it's called golf."

-Will Rogers



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, Greg and Janet Hula; who pick up altar flowers every Sunday morning.
- Thank you to Ron and Donna Adrian, and Brenda Spahr who take care of the altar, and prepare the communion table.
- 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!
- Thank you Alma for taking over the responsibility of cleaning this busy building, it looks fantastic!



#### Lutheran Service Corp Lutheran Volunteer Corp

There are 10 Lutheran Service Corp Volunteers living in the Hillstrom House this year and as in years past a few items are showing up on a wish list. The top wish is knowledge of any notifications about FREE events in the Omaha Metro area. Some additional items are as follows:

- ✤ Vacuum Cleaner
- ✤ Zoo/Museum day passes
- ✤ Bed linens (mostly twin)
- ✤ Taper and tea candles
- ✤ Laundry soap / Fabric softener
- Dishwasher detergent, dish soap, and other "green" cleaners
- ✤ Non-perishable food items
- Paper products, such as toilet paper

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- ✤ Financial contributions
- PRAYERS!

Your continued support toward this inspiring organization provides the opportunity of service for young people like Jessica Menary, our LVC volunteer.

Neighbors South Habitat Coalition is now underway every Friday and Saturday through the end of July. Together, we can empower families and fight to end poverty housing in our community. This year's build will make a few dreams reach reality for Maria Lopez and her children. If you



would like to volunteer part of your Fridays or Saturdays during the summer and help fulfill a dream of being homeowners for a family, you can sign up to volunteer for the build at: https://habitatomaha.volunteerconnect.com/ NeighborsSouth/full or speak with Pastor Laaker for additional information.

### Join Us Volunteering With Kids At Work!

Happy Spring! Which means what is coming sooner than we know it?...Summer! Do you remember what summertime was like as a child and teenager? Did you play, work, help your family, serve your community, were you ever bored or wish you had more to do? Well *you* can help the



youth of our community find joy and fulfillment this summer! *You* can help kids gain experience and help them find interests in helping others as they learn to value work, service, community, church, and more!

Kids at Work happens for a just a few hours in the morning (10 a.m. - noon), just two days a week (Tuesdays and Wednesdays), just June through July. So please join us! I am excited for this opportunity this summer and am looking forward to finding adult volunteers who can help drive and supervise the small groups of kids this summer.

Please contact me if you are interested or have questions! My email is outreach@graceluth.com or 820jessica@gmail.com and feel free to call me at church 402-341-7730 or on my cell: 641-990-5324.

# I am having a **bake sale** after church on **June 1** to support NAMI Walks!

My LVC housemates and I are participating in the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)'s Walk on June 14. We are walking to raise funds for the free mental health support and education programs NAMI offers in Omaha and to raise awareness about mental illness in the community. NAMI Nebraska is a local organization that works hard to provide help to people struggling with mental illness and/or substance abuse disorders and strives to fight the stigma surrounding mental illness.

# May 2014



4 – Mary Laaker 11 – Arlone Farber 18 – Greg Hula 25 – Brenda Spahr June 1 – Lori Vasquez



May Ushers Ron Adrian Larry Foreman Jerry Van Ormer Andrew Edwards

#### **Greeters**

- 4 Loren and Marsha Moyer
- 11 Andrew Edwards and Larry Foreman
- 18 Bob and LaVonne Moss
- 25 Bobby Stechenfinger and Greg Hula
- June 1 Mary Laaker and Sarah Emery



- 7 Christi Edwards James Harrahill
- 8 Ellison Simon
- 10 Juan Vazquez
- 13 Danaka Ashcraft
- 16 Marissa Halfhill Alexandra Everitt
- 18 Shedu Lado
- 21 Jessica Armstrong
- 22 Parsila Dike
- 25 Arlone Farber
- 26 Estir Lewa
- 27 Brenda Anzalone Donna Adrian
- 31 David Wallace Edda Nviwe

Did we miss your birthday? Please contact the church office and let us know!



# Responsibility List

### **Altar Flowers**

- 4 Andrew, Christi, Clay Edwards, and Tracy Petrini, in loving memory of their mother, Charlotte.
- 11 Bob and LaVonne Moss, for all Mothers.
- 18 Vicki Cox, in honor of her sister, Bev Hanson's birthday.
- 25 Jerry and Marilyn Van Ormer and Charlotte Palczynski, in loving memory of their parents.
- June 1 Brenda Spahr, in honor of her sister, Emily Martin's birthday.

#### <u>Flower Pick-Up for May</u> Jerry & Marilyn Van Ormer



# **Backpack Program**

- 4 Joe Narducci, in honor of his wife, Barbara's birthday.
- 11 Eva Martin, in honor of her great-granddaughter, Marissa's birthday and in celebration of her great-grandson, Donavan's graduation.
- 18 Vicki Cox, in honor of her sister, Bev Hanson's birthday.
- 25 Brenda Spahr, in celebration of 125 years of Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church.
- June 1 Eva Martin, in honor of her daughter, Emily Martin's birthday.

