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

402-341-7730

Email: graceluth@graceluth.com Web Site: www.graceluth.com Like us on Facebook at: www.facebook.com/gracelutheranomaha

REGULAR SUNDAY EVENTS 9:30 a.m. Christian Education 11:00 a.m. Worship Service Pastor - Rev. Dr. Damon D. Laaker Editor/Church Secretary - Brenda Spahr Organist - Colleen Jeffrey Sexton - Alma Lopez Community Outreach - Malachi Black

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THE GRACE MESSENGER 1889 - 2017



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



2017 Council Members

The regular meeting of the council was held on May 9, 2017. We offered prayers for world peace, individual and family needs, victims and families in Missouri affected by recent floods, and for all individuals in authority positions.

Devotions were led by Pastor Laaker, reading the selected verses in the "*Daily Texts*" from Hosea 8:12 and Galatians 1:6. Both seem to say that people want to go their own way even with the instructions of the prophet and Paul. Even we tend to go our own way despite the good news of Christ.

<u>Visions for Ministry</u>: "The Agile Church" chapter 3, Forming and Restoring Community in a Nomadic World. "God meets us where we are". Jesus constantly breaks down barriers \sim do we? God loves us! Where will that take us? Where will God's love take the church?

Re-read chapter three of "The Agile Church" and answer question 1 for next month.

<u>Committee Reports</u>: Reports were received from the Financial Secretary and the Treasurer. Please continue to give generously.

<u>Christian Education</u>: VBS one-day event on Saturday, July 22nd 12-5pm. Amanda and Malachi continue their work with "Fruit of the Spirit."

<u>Evangelism/Outreach</u>: Seven people attended the OTOC Accountability Sessions with the mayoral and city council candidates on May 1st. Those in attendance agreed they learned more details in the issues thanks to the personal stories that were shared surrounding the issues of housing, pay-day lending, and police policy toward immigrants.

Malachi continues to prepare for this summer's Kids At Work Program. Volunteers are needed!

Finance: Premium for our Insurance will be due June 1.

The Witt Flower CD comes due May 28th, motion to reinvest for a 6 year term at 3% was passed.

Thank you letter from Ted Asay, Director of Development with the Nebraska Synod was shared.

Pastor Laaker will attend the Together A Greater Good (TAGG) Lunch and Learn event on Tuesday, June 6th.

<u>Property</u>: Bids are out to repair cracks in the Corian counter tops in the upper fellowship kitchen.

The sprinkler system needs repair.

Time for the spring air condition system to be checked.

<u>Service/Social Ministry</u>: Four people have signed up for the Crossroads Connection meal that we will sponsor on July 16th. Arlone will submit a request to use Thrivent money for food.

Support/Stewardship: No new business.

Worship: No new business.

<u>Unfinished Business</u>: Thank you to Malachi for all he did to coordinate the reading program at Liberty Elementary.

New Business: No new business.

<u>Announcements</u>: The next meeting is scheduled for June 14th. Pastor will bring treats in June, Vicki will bring treats in July and Terry will bring treats in August.

The family was viewing old slides and one flashed on the screen that caught everyone's attention. My father, wearing his favorite golf shirt, was holding me at the tender age of three weeks. The look on his face told all. "Theres my prize possession," my father said. Touched, I smiled at him as he continued, "I wonder whatever happened to that golf shirt?"

~ Jeanne Graves, shared by rd.com

Continued...



At St. Luke's, the council and pastor are reading "Joining God, Remaking Church, Changing the World." Fascinating title, don't you think? The author is trying to make the point that what well-meaning, good-hearted people have been doing over the past fifty years is trying to fix the church instead to trying to join God at work in the world. Clearly, this is an over simplification of thoughtful work.

However, as we ended the most recent chapter, he states: "Each time I frame these proposals, I hear responses like, 'It sounds like there is no place for the church' and 'So you think the church doesn't really matter!' I am certain God is active in the church. God calls and forms us into communities of worship, learning, support, and discernment.

"The point I am making is not an either/or claim about where God is to be found. It is a contextual claim about the Euro-tribal, Protestant churches and how the Spirit is calling them at this time. These churches have so turned in on themselves that they presume the church is the primary focus of their energy; they work on being attractional, on growing, on meeting needs and helping people, or on designing programs to send a segment of their members to serve outside their walls. What has happened through this long period of introversion and anxious search to fix the unraveling is that these churches, overall, have lost the capacity to discern the disruptive work of the Spirit beyond their circles."

In a few days, we will celebrate the gift of the Holy Spirit on those early disciples. This gift truly disrupted their lives. They had lived with a belief strong in Jesus' time that if liturgical and moral laws were obeyed more perfectly —absolute ritual, priesthood, and Sabbath purity—then the Glory of God would return to the Temple. But it didn't. The wind and the fire of the Spirit of God came upon a group of persons in an upstairs room. It forced them out into the community to share the good news of Christ, true, but it did more than that. It reshaped the way they experienced God's presence.

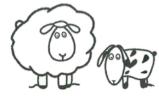
I wonder if God is trying to help us see and experience a different way of experiencing God's presence in this time? Yes, we need the church as a place where God's people gather around the Eucharist as a non-negotiable fact of Christian identity. It is here that we are formed into the body of Christ. It is from here that we are sent into the world to be little Christs.

May the work of Christ's Spirit continue to shape and form us for the world in which we live. May the Spirit help us discern how best to be Christ in our daily lives.

Pastor Laaker

Stewardship Moment

Which sacrifice do you think made God happier?



Do you remember our fall stewardship program of a couple years ago? Living Generously? One of the videos featured the story of the good sheep and the bad sheep.

As you see by the heading on the picture, the question asked was which sheep made God happier? The accepted answer was the good sheep.

I've thought about this and wondered if God made both sheep, wouldn't God be happy receiving either one? Sometimes we separate our giving into good giving and not so good giving. I have come to think that what God really wants is our generous giving. If we have the capacity to give \$1,000 a month, God blesses the giving. If we have the capacity to give \$100 a month, God blesses the giving.

As a faith community, we are blessed by your generous giving. It helps provide a beautiful space for us to worship. It helps provide capable and committed leaders. It helps support ministry that touches lives here and around the world. Thank you for your generous giving!!



Are you caring for a loved one with special needs? Do you feel you could benefit from a short break from caregiving?

If so, **RESPITE IS FOR YOU!** You are probably wondering what respite is. It is temporary, short-term care for families/parents caring for adults and children with disabilities or other special heath are needs such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's diseases. The respite care providers come to your home to provide you a break. **Respite Across the Lifespan** is here to assist you in locating someone to come and provide that short-term break and to help you in securing potential funding to pay for respite care. Please contact our office at **402-559-5732** for details or write Ellen Bennett at edbennett@unmc.edu.



And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.

Ephesians 6:18

Please keep in your prayers the individuals listed below who have health issues and concerns:

Ron Adrian Theresa Courtney Jayne Gustafson Ken Hilmer Jack Pablo McGill LaVonne Moss Linda Pafford Brian Sutej Urbano Vasquez Mickey Andersen Andrew Edwards James Harrahill Carolyn Matson Sue Mize Don Olson Pam Reents Dan Taylor Dave Wallace



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

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.

Pray for our Shut-ins and Nursing Home residents:

Ferne Matson - Home. Joe and Barbara Narducci - Home. Barbara Nelson - Life Care Center, Elkhorn. Jerry Van Ormer - Life Care Center, Elkhorn.





Grace Lutheran Church ESL (English as a Second Language) Classes Saturdays 9:00 to 11:30 a.m. 402-341-7730

The Grace ESL Class had the opportunity to go on a field trip and visit Morrill Hall at the University of Nebraska in Lincoln! The entire group had a very enjoyable and educational day.





Prayer Service Wednesday June 21, 2017 7:00 p.m.

An inspiring and quiet experience in meditation, light music, and a deeper connection within God's presence, peace, and love.



World Refugee Day 2017 Saturday, June 24, 2017 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Joslyn Art Museum 2200 Dodge Street

World Refugee Day honors and celebrates the courage, strength, and determination of women, men, and children who are forced to flee their homeland under threat of persecution, conflict, and violence. The FREE event will feature:

cultural music, dance, and fashion presentations a naturalization ceremony at 10:30 am gallery viewing and hands-on art-making activities an informative speakers series and, for refugees only, a health fair.

An important educational component of the day will be an engaging series of talks:

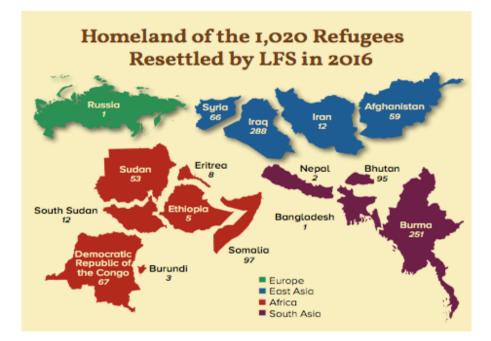
Gharghashta Khatawazai, the youngest parliament member in Afghanistan, and the first-ever female spokesperson for that country, became both famous and a target. After endangering her own life to help others, Gharghashta and her husband were forced to escape the country, becoming refugees in the U.S.

Abeny Kucha will recount her family's experience of surviving seven years of civil war and genocide in South Sudan in a talk that is both heartwrenching and hopeful. Abeny has published a book entitled Tears of a Mother and appeared on TEDxLincoln.

Our speaker from Syria was forced to flee that region's devastating conflict for the safety of her family and children. She will recount her powerful story of tragedy, hope, and survival.

Abdi Hussein fled the civil war in Somalia, then devoted himself to assisting the refugee community through work with Care International, National Council of Churches, and Islamic Relief U.K. He is now a bilingual liaison working with Somali families in Omaha.

For additional information, please contact Susan Mayberger at (402) 557-2431 or email her at susan.mayberger@ops.org



As people of faith, Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska (LFS) stands in solidarity alongside refugees. We cannot forget who refugees are — they are parents and children who have lost everything. They flee discrimination, threats and violence in search of safety and a future of hope. Last year, LFS welcomed 1,020 refugees from 16 countries; 653 in Omaha and 367 in Lincoln.

Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. ~ Martin Luther King, Jr.

I would rather walk with God in the dark than go alone in the light. \sim Mary Gardiner Brainard

Our duty is not to see through one another, but to help see one another through. \sim Anonymous

To look up and not down, To look forward and not back, To look out and not in, and To lend a hand. \sim Edward Everett Hale

Quotes from SkyWriting.net



For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Ephesians 2:10

- Thank you ESL tutors; Malachi, Vicki, Arlone, Mary, and Amanda, for making connections with the students willing to learn and form friendships.
- Thank you Greg, Janet, Mary and Eva; who take turns picking up altar flowers every Sunday morning.
- Thank you LaVonne, Marilyn, Gloria, Donna, Ron, Eva, and Malachi for your dedication and help in assembling the monthly Grace Messenger!
- Thank you Ron, Donna and Brenda for taking care of the altar, and preparing the communion table.
- Thank you to all ushers, Andrew, Vicki, Larry, Mary, and Malachi for greeting everyone on Sunday mornings.
- Thank you to the Grace readers who participate in reading books and growing imaginations to both 2nd and 3rd grade students at Liberty Elementary School.
- Thank you to Prince of Peace for caring, maintaining, and making the lawn at Grace Lutheran look so inviting.

Lutheran South Pantry 4401 South 23rd Street 402-502-7070



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 wipers, and Diapers, especially sizes 4, 5, 6 and pull-ups.

We always need paper or plastic bags.

Carol Joy Holling Camp 29th Annual Quilt Auction Saturday, July 29th 9:30 a.m.



Join in this exciting day with good food, great fun and lots of beautiful quilts donated by friends of Carol Joy Holling Camp. The auction and barbecue lunch will be held rain or shine. (The Town Hall will be used in case of rain.) Bring your family and friends!

There is an opportunity to go online at www.caroljoyholling.org to preview all the quilts that have been so generously donated. If you have any questions please call Heather Abbott at 1-402-944-2544 or you can email Heather at habbott@nlom.org.

A special thanks to Thrivent Financial for Lutherans Chapters across Nebraska for sponsorship of the Quilt Auction.

Below is the Schedule for this exciting day!

Event Schedule

9:00 a.m.	Quilts on Display
9:30 a.m.	Auction Begins
9:00 a.m 2:00 p.m.	Silent Auction Bidding
11:30 a.m 1:30 p.m.	Barbecue Lunch
2:00 p.m.	Service Project Quilt Blessing
12:30 - 5:00 p.m.	Swimming, Paddleboating, & Canoeing
	Hayrack Rides & Camp Tours

Free Parking and Admission

HUGE Barbecue Lunch: Adults ~ \$6, Kids (4~12) \$3, 3 & Younger ~ Free

Become a Member of the Columbus Park Neighborhood Association:

Monthly Meetings are held the third Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m. at Grace Lutheran Church. If you have any questions, please call the church office, 402-341-7730.





4 - Mary Laaker 11 - Greg Hula 18 - Arlone Farber 25 - Margie Sutej July 2 - Brenda Spahr



- 11 Brenda Spahr 18 - Janet Hula
- 25 Greg Hula
- July 2 Andrea Spahr

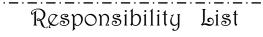
<u>June Ushers</u> Malachi Black Larry Foreman Andrew Edwards





- 2 Samantha Trejo Leigh Ann Wiskus
- 3 Angelina Adrian
- 5 Cade Hargis
- 9 Jason Bauer
- 10 Trina Rodriguez
- 11 Micah Laaker
- 14 Benjamin Laaker
- 22 Amanda Vazquez
- 25 Scott Adrian
- 26 Colleen Jeffrey 28 – Solomon Lewa
- 28 Solomon Lewa

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



Altar Flowers



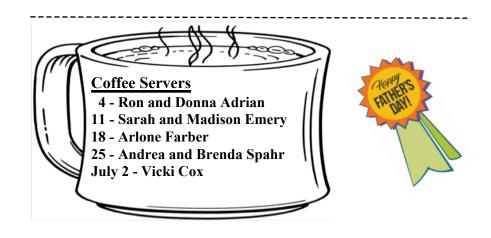
- 4 Terry and Sandy Nielsen in celebration of their Wedding Anniversary.
- 11 Greg and Janet Hula in celebration of their grandchildren, Trina and AJ's birthdays.
- 18 Andrew, Christie, Clay Edwards and Tracy Petrini in loving memory of their father, Albion Edwards.
- 25 Ron and Donna Adrian in celebration of their grandson, Leo's birthday.
- July 2 Margie Sutej in loving memory of her mom, Emily Mommsen.

Flower Pick-Up for June:



Backpack Program

- 4 **OPEN**.
- 11 Arlone Farber for all who face hunger issues.
- 18 Eva Martin in celebration of her great-grandsons, Milo and Aiden's birthdays.
- 25 Ron and Donna Adrian in celebration of their son, Scott's birthday.
- July 2 Margie Sutej in loving memory of her mom, Emily Mommsen.



Ushers & Greeters



June Greeters

- 4 Larry Foreman and Ralph Fitle
- 11 Mary Laaker and Sarah Emery
- 18 Bobby Stechenfinger and Greg Hula
- 25 Loren and Marsha Moyer
- July 2 Gloria Moore and Vicki Cox



Pentecost is soon upon us. It commemorates the ascension of Jesus into heaven as well as the descension of the Holy Spirit onto earth. While this time in jewish history represents a turbulent and challenging time, this

would signify as a symbol of hope that God was still present among the people. No longer would they have to cling tightly to the synagogue or holy of holies as the place to commune with God, but they cold have a personal, intimate relationship with God wherever they resided. People could be led by the Spirit to do great work all over the world.

Much like the apostles were chosen and blessed, so too are we blessed with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. We are empowered to share the Good News and be vessels of hope to a dying and desperate world. The empathy, care, and concern we show for others illuminates God's presence in the world. We embody the ethic of God's love when we choose to humbly sacrifice for the sake of others. We may not always see we are impacting others, but others get to see God shine through us.

I am hopeful the summer months will provide opportunities for people to live in God's light, such as serving for the Prison Ministry dinner in July, getting involved in community oriented events, and being present with others in their time of need. I am thankful for the great work we have done already this year, particularly with the conclusion of another successful Grace Reads program year at Liberty Elementary. I am excited to see what the upcoming months bring.

Malachi Black Community Outreach Associate outreach@graceluth.com (940)414-3362



My father was completely lost in the kitchen and never ate unless someone prepared a meal for him. When Mother was ill, however, he volunteered to go to the supermarket for her. She sent him off with a carefully numbered list of seven items. Dad returned shortly, very proud of himself, and proceeded to unpack the grocery bags. He had one bag of sugar, two dozen eggs, three hams, four boxes of detergent, five boxes of crackers, six eggplants, and seven green peppers.

~ Joan Flood, shared by rd.com

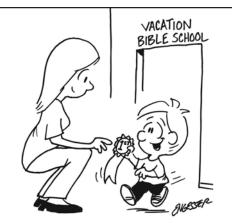


Grace Lutheran Church Vacation Bible School - One Day Event

Sat. July 22nd. 12:00 pm - 5:00 pm Kids 3 yrs - Grade 6. Free Barbecue to follow - Families invited.

Volunteers are needed to help in a variety of ways including setting up, participating within a group, help with the cook-out and clean up. If you are interested or have any questions, please speak with Amanda, Malachi, or call the church office, 402-341-7730.

Please watch the bulletin and next month's Messenger for additional information!



[&]quot;Got first place in Bible trivia by being a Noah't all!"

"F" aithful "A" lwavs there "T" rustworthv "H" onoring "E" ever-loving "R" ighteous "S" upportive

Have You Included Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church Endowment Fund in Your Will?



A current, Remember the Church in Your Will, brochure has been placed on the back table in the sanctuary. Please pick up a free copy during your next worship time and consider Grace Lutheran a place for rememberance.



Electronic Giving is a convenient, consistent way to help our church year round.

⁵ Consider scheduling a recurring electronic contribution today. It's easy! You will no longer

need to write out checks and prepare envelopes every week. Even when travel, illness or other circumstances prevent you from attending services, your electronic contributions will continue to be received on an uninterrupted basis.

Get started today! Ask for an authorization form in the church office.

Lutheran Night at Werner Park

Friday, June 5th 7:05 p.m.

Awesome Add-ons:

\$7.00 Slice of Pizza & Soda Voucher\$6.00 Hot Dog & Soda Voucher\$4.00 Centris Family Fun Zone & Mini Golf Pass

Sing "Take Me Out to the Ball Game" during the 7th inning stretch

Featured Mission will Campus Ministries of ELCA and LCMS 1,501 Lutherans attended in 2016. Come enjoy the fun with family and friends!

To purchase your tickets, please contact Andy Baker at 402-738-5137 or AndyB@omahastormchasers.com

Deadline to receive special pricing is May 31st!

\$11.00 for Group Infield Box Seats (\$15.00 value) \$7.00 Group Outfield Box Seats (\$13.00 value)



Like to make a donation to Grace but all you have is your credit or debit card? You can now with our iPad and Square reader. The Square reader is a hand held device that has the mobile capacity to swipe your card. Ask an usher to provide this unique experience for you.



"Do you accept credit cards?"



Grace's Free Little Library is on display outside in the front island of the parking lot! Stop on by and browse for an interesting book! If you have any books for all ages you would like to contribute to the outdoor library or have any questions regarding this continuing adventure, please speak with Malachi. Let's help spread the joy of imagination through reading a good book!



Green Sun Protection Tips



On average, one American dies from melanoma (skin cancer) every hour. To protect your skin from harmful UV rays using healthy and environmentally0-friendly methods, follow these rules:

Wear those shades. Sunglasses that provide 99-100% of UVA and UVB protection greatly reduce sun exposure that can lead to cataracts and other eye damage. Check the label when buying sunglasses to make sure they have proper UV protection.

Choose a powerful, green sunscreen. Many sunscreens contain chemicals that pose risks to our health and the environment. Avoid nanoparticles and choose a mineral-based product recommended by the Environmental Working Group sunscreen guide instead. Apply it liberally and frequently, paying particular attention to your ears, face, back and neck.

Listen to the weather reports. The UV Index, developed by the National Weather Service and the Environmental Protection Agency, provides a forecast of the expected risk of overexposure to the sun and indicates the degree of caution that you should take when working, playing or exercising outdoors. Weather predictions in print and broadcast media announce the UV Index daily.

Stay clear of the midday sun as much as possible. The sun's UV rays are strongest between 10:00 am and 4:00 pm. If you're spending the day at the beach, take refuge under a beach umbrella during those hours when the sun's rays are most intense.

Dress up. Wear light, long-sleeved shirts and ankle-length pants if you're going to be out in the sun for long periods of time and you'd rather not wear sunscreen. A wide brimmed hat will shade your face, neck, ears and eyes.

green tips from earthshare.org

UnderTheSink 4001 South 120th Street Omaha, NE 68137-1205

Under The Sink is a clean and environmental safe way to dispose of your harmful waste such as weed killer, thermostats, rust removers, fertilizers, syringes, cleaning products and much, much more. For a complete list of items acceptable and not acceptable, please go on-line at underthesink.org or call (402) 444-7465.



One of the Midwest's most popular brass quintets, the Nebraska Brass presents five sets of concerts each year in Lincoln, Omaha and other Nebraska communities.

> Nebraska Brass will present their "A Musical Safari" at Grace Lutheran Church, Thursday, June 15th at 7:30 p.m.

Founded in 1987, the Nebraska Brass is one of the Midwest's most popular brass quintets. Audiences young and old enjoy the group's serious musicianship and light-hearted humor as they present a variety of music ranging from classical to popular, Dixieland, and jazz. The ensemble presents an annual series of five concerts in both Lincoln and Omaha, as well as five additional series concerts in other Nebraska

communities. In addition, the Nebraska Brass participates in the touring programs of the Nebraska Arts Council and the Heartland Arts Fund, performing throughout the Midwest.



Our family sheltered in the basement after hearing a tornado warning. My husband told everyone to stay put while he got his cell phone from the car, in case the lines went dead. He didn't return for the longest time, so I went looking for him. I was upstairs calling his name, when I heard our phone machine click on. "Hi," a voice said. "This is Dad. I'm locked out of the house."

~ Laure Jorges, shared by rd.com

When my dad ran out of gas, he called mom to pick him up in her car. They went to a gas station, filled a can, and returned to his car. After a few minutes, he got into her car again. "We need to go back to the gas station," he said. "One gallon wasn't enough?" mom asked. "It would have been if I'd put it in the right car."

~ Kent T. Critchlow, shared by rd.com

Heavenly Humor

Before I took the old family car to college, my father loaded the trunk with soft-drink bottles filled with oil, coolant, and transmission fluid. Sure enough, my car overheated. Scholding myself for not listening to my father's instruction, I looked at the engine and saw how well he knew me. The oil cap was labeled Dr. Pepper, the transmission stick, Coke, and the empty coolant container, Diet Pepsi. I finished the trip safely.

> ~ Charlotte G. Alexander, shared by rd.com



Things to Do With Dad Word Search





Four students walked in halfway though the American history test my father was giving at the community college. "Sorry," they said, "We had a flat tire." An understanding man, dad said that if they could all answer just one question correctly, he would give them each an "A" for the exam. They agreed. So dad handed each one a piece of paper, placed the in four separate corners and said, "Write down which tire was flat."

~ Kurt Smith, shared by rd.com