

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

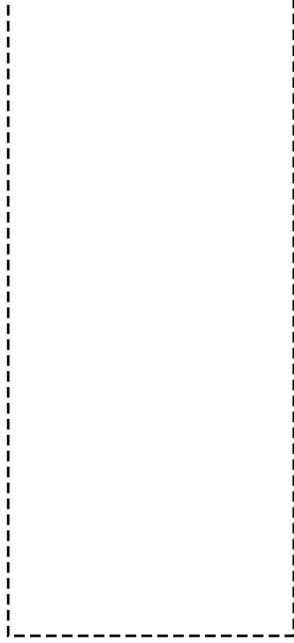
Pastor - Rev. Dr. Damon D. Laaker
Editor/Church Secretary - Brenda Spahr
Organist - Colleen Jeffrey
Sexton - Alma Lopez

Delivered to the Post Office August 29



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THE GRACE MESSENGER 1889 - 2017

SEPTEMBER

2017

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



2017 Council Members

Ron Adrian	Vicki Cox	Andrew Edwards
Ralph Fitle	Greg Hula	Marsha Moyer
Terry Nielsen	Brenda Spahr	Amanda Vazquez
Pastor Laaker		

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

The regular meeting of the Council was held on August 8th. The Council members shared their prayer concerns individuals, kids preparing to return to school, and for all of the unrest around the world.

Pastor Laaker led devotions from Isaiah 65:1 and Luke 14:22-23. The first tells us that God was ready for us before we knew of God. The second tells us that God invites all people into God’s kingdom.

Visions for Ministry: This chapter described “disciplines” that should be used to encourage thoughtful reflection and learning how to reach God’s people. Council members are encouraged to **read chapter six of The Agile Church for next month.**

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

Christian Education: Sunday School is set to begin on September 10th. Preparations are underway for the Liberty Reading Program to get volunteers and work with teachers to choose books for the year. Augsburg Luther Book Display – there is no cost to us and provides an opportunity for people to purchase books celebrating Reformation 500.

Evangelism/Outreach: The meal that we provided for the prison ministry program went very well. Their attendance was lower than usual, so everyone ate well and enjoyed the evening.

Finance: The Immanuel Vision Foundation grant is due this month. We could possibly submit the grant for the reading program. Pastor will work on it.

Property: None.

Service/Social Ministry: OTOC has asked us to share with our congregants an opportunity for individual support. God’s Work Our Hands – We will plan to provide supplies again for the teachers as we did a couple of years ago. This will serve as our God’s Work Our Hands project.

Support/Stewardship: None.

Worship: Table Grace Ministries shared their music and ministry with us this past Sunday and it was very enjoyable.

Unfinished Business: None.

New Business: Farewell preparations for Malachi are being made. His last day with us is Sunday, August 27th. We will purchase an Omaha photo book and let people sign it with messages for him to remember Grace and his time in Omaha.

Announcements: Amanda will bring treats in September.

Respectfully Submitted, Amanda Vazquez, Secretary



Worship on the River

We will gather on Sunday, September 17, beginning at 9:30 am at the River City Star. We will sail the Missouri River at 10:00 am. A short worship service will be conducted on the boat. A pot luck luncheon will be held at St. Luke’s following the service. Someone will be at St. Luke’s to receive food before the river boat ride.

Continued...



On Sunday, August 20, I attempted to share a bit of the journey that God has had me on for the last 50 years. It is a journey that author Courtney Ariel has captured nicely in an article for Sojourners entitled “For Our White Friends Desiring to Be Allies.”

She states up front: *I'm writing this in hopes that it can be used to lighten the load of marginalized folks, keeping in mind that not all marginalized people want to engage in the ally conversation, and that is perfect as well. For those who do, my prayer is that when someone asks you the question, “how can I be a stronger ally?” you might choose to save your breath/energy and send this in its place. (<https://sojo.net/articles/our-white-friends-desiring-be-allies>)*

She then identifies six things that one can do to become stronger allies. I will share them in brief.

1. Listen more; talk less. You don't have to have something to say all of the time. You don't have to post something on social media that points to how liberal/how aware/how cool/how good you are.
2. For one out of every three opinions/insights shared by a person of color in your life, try to resist the need to respond with a better or different insight about something that you read or listened to as it relates to their shared opinion. Try just to listen and sit with someone else's experience.
3. Being an ally is different than simply wanting not be racist (thank you for that, by the way). Being an ally requires you to educate yourself about systemic racism in this country. Read Michelle Alexander's The New Jim Crow] and Ta-Nehisi Coates' Between the World and Me, for example.
4. Please try not to, “I can't believe that something like this would happen in this day and age!” your way into being an ally when atrocities like the events in Charleston, S.C., and Charlottesville, Va., happen. People of color have been aware of this kind of hatred and violence in America for centuries, and it belittles our experience for you to show up 300 years late to the oppression-party suddenly caring about the world.
5. Ask when you don't know — but do the work first. This is nuanced. Some marginalized/disenfranchised folks will tell you not to ask them anything; don't be offended by that. Folks are tired, and that is understandable because it is exhausting to be a marginalized person in this world.

Continued.....

6. And finally, stop talking about colorblindness. It's not a thing. Colorblindness is totally impossible in a nation whose land was taken from the indigenous inhabitants through an attempt at genocide and horrific colonization.

This journey that God has led me on is not one that I sought or that is pleasant. It has meant learning to live with heartache and struggle. It has meant feeling out of place in monocultural gatherings. At the same time, this journey has opened me up to listen and learn how to be one who can accompany those who are marginalized.

If this is a journey God has placed you on, welcome. I'm delighted to have fellow sojourners. If this is a journey that God has yet to awaken in you, may you welcome God's push to begin the journey.

May God bless us with grace and perseverance.

Pastor Laaker



Omaha CROP Hunger Walk



The 35th Annual Omaha CROP Walk will be held Sunday, October 8. We register and begin walking at Luther Memorial Lutheran Church, 61st and Western Ave.

You can help by signing up to walk, or you can help by sponsoring someone who will be walking. Sign up sheets will be available from Pastor Laaker at church.

25% of the funds raised through the Walk are donated to hunger fighting agencies in the Omaha area. The remaining 75% goes to eradicate hunger and poverty worldwide.

Plan now to support the Omaha CROP Walk.

IN OUR
Thoughts and Prayers

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:

Mickey Andersen
Andrew Edwards
Jayne Gustafson
Carolyn Matson
Sue Mize
Don Olson
Pauline Stechenfinger
Urbano Vasquez
The family of Ferne Matson
The family of Jerry Van Ormer



Theresa Courtney
Clay Edwards
Ken Hilmer
Jack Pablo McGill
LaVonne Moss
Pam Reents
Dan Taylor



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 Worshipping 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:

Joe & Barbara Narducci - Autumn Pointe, Ft. Calhoun
Barbara Nelson - Life Care Center, Elkhorn.



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

Do you know anyone searching for the opportunity to learn the English language? Please direct them here at Grace. Every Saturday morning they would be greeted with a smile and very helpful tutors to start their education in one of the most difficult languages to learn as a second language.



Prayer Service
Wednesday
September 20, 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.



****Now Open****

The Salvation Army
Kroc Center Food Pantry
2825 Y Street, Omaha NE 68107

They will be open every Wednesday from
9:00 - 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 - 3:30 p.m.

Documentation needed: Photo ID, social security cards or birth certificates for everyone in the household and mail dated within the past 30 days.



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 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, and Mary for greeting everyone on Sunday mornings.
- ✝ Thank you to Prince of Peace for caring, maintaining, and making the lawn at Grace Lutheran look so inviting.

Hearts full of thankfulness and gratitude to all who sent condolences and made the sharing of the meal following Ferne's Funeral services a memorable day. Thank you for all the caring hospitality!

Carolyn Matson



Thank you for all the cards, words of caring and encouragement. Many friends and family expressed such kind words to the wonderful service and hospitality they felt while at Grace Lutheran celebrating Jerry's life.

Marilyn Van Ormer

You are Invited...

To commemorate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation in a spirit of mutual reconciliation, repentance, and hope, the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Omaha and the Nebraska Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America are hosting a prayer service in Omaha. The service will be held at Kountze Memorial Lutheran Church (2650 Farnam Street). Bishop Brian Maas of the Nebraska Synod and Archbishop George Lucas of the Archdiocese of Omaha will co-preside at the service. Please join us at the Reformation prayer services to celebrate our shared virtues and affirm our common faith.

For more information on the reformation prayer service, please visit <http://nebraskasynod.org>



The Nebraska and Western Iowa Synods are partnering in a joint Reformation Commemoration Service at St. John's Parish on the Creighton University Campus in Omaha on Sunday, October 29, 2017 at 2:00 p.m. Because seating is limited, we encourage you to register for this free event beginning September 15th if you plan to attend in person. If you are unable to attend in person, livestream community worship events are being planned across our synods, or you may watch the vent from home. More information including the livestream and registration links can be found at <http://nebraskasynod.org>.

Habitat – Neighbors South Coalition

As a Christian housing ministry, Habitat depends on the commitment from our faith partners. Each faith partner is part of a Coalition. A Coalition consists of numerous churches and other places of worship who come together each year to fundraise and build/renovate a Habitat Omaha home. This year Habitat Omaha's six coalitions will help build four new homes and renovate two more in the Omaha area.

Neighbors South Coalition is partnered with Interfaith and Carpenter's Crew Coalitions for the Faith Build this year. The work began on Saturday, August 5, at 3905 N 22nd Street and continues each Friday and Saturday throughout the months of September, October and the first part of November.

Volunteers are welcome. To volunteer: Go to the Habitat Omaha website at <https://www.habitatomaha.org/volunteer> .

****NOTE: When you first register with this new program you will be asked to create a profile but you will not be asked to create a password. The system will send you an email with a temporary password. You can sign-up the first time without creating a password, but the second time you try to log in you will need to either have your temporary password or you will have to click "Don't know password" on the login page.**

Follow the instructions and sign up for the dates you can help.



Grace Lutheran celebrated the ministry work through Community Outreach of Malachi Black with a potluck luncheon following worship service on Sunday, August 27th. Many good memories, conversations and well wishes were shared during and after the meal. The highlight of the afternoon came during some quiet time after the cleanup with one more Pokemon trading card session with Tommy, Jaydn, Jackson and Charlie.

Grace Lutheran extends heartfelt gratitude for all the work, energy and dedication that has been so graciously given by Malachi. Each time someone is reading at Liberty Elementary School, holding conversations with some of the students that attend the ESL Classes or future meals prepared and shared with Crossroads Connections, we will continue to remember the ministry of Malachi.

May God's abundant love and mercy surround your continued work, energy and dedication. God's Blessings Malachi!



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!

Stewardship Moment

“Working Together – Celebrating God’s Good Gifts”



This will be our theme for our Fall Stewardship effort. Each of us plays an important part in acting on the manner in which we support the work and ministry to which God has called us.

Max Lucado wrote,

Once there was a man who dared God to speak. “Burn the bush like you did for Moses, God, and I will follow. Collapse the walls like you did for Joshua, God, and I will follow. Still the waves like you did on Galilee, God, and I will follow.”

And so the man sat by a bush, near a wall, close to the sea, and waited for God to speak.

And God heard the man, so God answered. He sent a fire, not for a bush, but for a church. He brought down a wall, not of brick, but of sin. He stilled a storm, not of the sea, but of a soul.

And God waited for the man to respond. And He waited . . . and waited.

But because the man was looking at bushes, not hearts, bricks, and not lives, seas, and not souls, he decided that God had done nothing.

Finally, he looked to God and asked, “Have you lost your power?”

And God looked at him and said, “Have you lost your hearing?”

What is your response to God’s good gifts? As one who is “working together” with God and **listening** to God, will you make a fresh commitment to use the time, talents and treasure you have received from Him in an even greater way as we conclude 2017 and enter 2018?



Grace Reads

As Grace Lutheran plans for the upcoming school year partnership with Liberty Elementary, there is a need to fulfill each classroom with readers! There is the opportunity for two readers on each day Grace representatives read at Liberty Elementary. Two readers are needed on the first Tuesday of the month and one reader for the first Wednesday of the month. If you are interested to share your talents by being a blessing and reading to a classroom at Liberty once or twice a month, please call the church office at 402-341-7730.

God’s Work ~ Our Hands

The ELCA is continuing the invitation for congregations to put their faith into action by serving their communities in ways that share the love of God with all of God’s people. Grace Council has proposed that Grace continue their partnership and support for Liberty Elementary teachers with items needed in each classroom. Items needed for each classroom are: Clorox Wipes, Hand Sanitizer (no alcohol), Hi-liters, Dry Erase Markers, Copy Paper, Post-it Notes, Kleenex and Pencils. All are invited to bring donations to Grace until Sunday, September 10th when all are invited to gather and assemble items into bags for classrooms.



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.

September 2017



- 3 - Margie Sutej
- 10 - Mary Laaker
- 17 - Greg Hula
- 24 - Brenda Spahr
- Oct. 1 - Arlone Farber



- 1 - Terry Nielsen
- 3 - Munna Lewa
- 5 - Lealen Costanzo
- 7 - Ronald Andersen
- 13 - Loren Moyer
- 23 - Katelyn Bauer
- 28 - Damien Rodriguez



- September Alcolytes*
- 3 - Andrea Spahr
 - 10 - Damien Rodriguez
 - 17 - Worship on the River
 - 24 - Janet Hula
 - Oct. 1 - Brenda Spahr

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

September Ushers

- Vicki Cox
- Oren Powley
- Andrew Edwards

Ushers & Greeters



September Greeters

- 3 - Ron and Donna Adrian
- 10 - Brenda and Andrea Spahr
- 17 - Worship on the River.
- 24 - Bobby Stechenfinger / Larry Foreman
- Oct. 1 - Greg and Janet Hula



Responsibility List

Altar Flowers



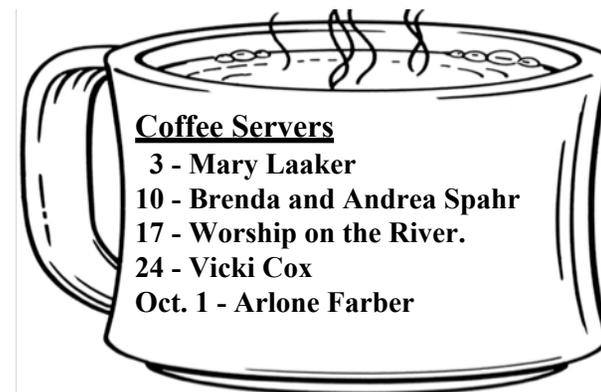
- 3 - Sandy Nielsen in celebration of her husband, Terry's birthday.
- 10 - OPEN.
- 17 - Worship on the River.
- 24 - Greg and Janet Hula in celebration of their 25th Wedding Anniversary and their grandson, Damien's birthday.
- Oct. 1 - Arlone Farber for the Glory of God.

Flower Pick-Up for September:



Backpack Program

- 3 - Ron and Donna Adrian in celebration of their daughter in-law, Melissa's birthday.
- 10 - OPEN.
- 17 - Arlone Farber for all who face hunger issues.
- 24 - Brenda Spahr in celebration of the Spahr Wedding Anniversary.
- Oct. 1 - OPEN.



Coffee Servers

- 3 - Mary Laaker
- 10 - Brenda and Andrea Spahr
- 17 - Worship on the River.
- 24 - Vicki Cox
- Oct. 1 - Arlone Farber



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 remembrance.



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

Electronic Fund Giving 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.



**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 health care 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.

Sunday School will begin at 10:00 am on September 10th. Did you ever wonder what sounds were made during creation? Imagination will grow during the Creation story which will be the first Bible story shared.



Children ages 4 and up are invited and encouraged to learn through stories, discussions, crafts, games and fun.

Curriculum will be Spark House based. Spark House has been supplying the little devotional booklets that have been available on the back table in the sanctuary.

I look forward to sharing Sunday adventures.

Faithfully in Adventure!
Brenda



Life Line Screening, a leading provider of community-based preventive health screenings, will offer their affordable, non-invasive and painless health screenings at Saint Lukes Lutheran Church of Omaha on September 29, 2017. Five screenings will be offered that scan for potential health problems related to: blocked arteries which is a leading cause of stroke; abdominal aortic aneurysms which can lead to a ruptured aorta; hardening of the arteries in the legs which is a strong predictor of heart disease; atrial fibrillation or irregular heart beat which is closely tied to stroke risk; and a bone density screening, for men and women, used to assess the risk of osteoporosis. Register for a Wellness Package which includes 4 vascular tests and osteoporosis screening from \$149 (\$139 with our member discount). All five screenings take 60-90 minutes to complete. **In order to register for this event and to receive a \$10 discount off any package priced above \$129, please call 1-888-653-6441 or visit www.lifelinescreening.com/communitycircle or text the word circle to 797979.**



Fall Planting Pointers

Though many people gear up to work on their yards and gardens in the spring, fall is actually an ideal time for yard work. Here are a few ideas for bringing your garden to life in the fall:

Compost the leaves. Falling leaves are beautiful to look at but may seem like an inconvenience when planning your garden. Instead of bagging the leaves and leaving them out with the trash, consider collecting them and composting them to create nutrient-rich, organic soil that will be ready for use by the spring.

Fertilize organically. When preparing your soil for next year, add organic, slow-release fertilizers that will help enhance your soil over time. These fertilizers are made of natural materials, contain vital nutrients to help your plants grow, and prevent plants from getting nitrogen. Most garden stores today carry a wide variety of organic fertilizers; many catalog companies also sell organic products.

Plant trees. By the time autumn rolls around summer heat waves are long past, rainfall is usually more plentiful, and new trees, bushes and flowers have a greater chance of surviving than they would if they were planted during a hotter season. Choose species native to your area as well as those that are drought and pest resistant and can grow in the kind of soil and amount of sunlight available on your property.

Other ideas. If you have a vegetable or fruit garden that you want to maintain throughout the winter, consider planting root bulbs and leafcrops that will continue to produce despite the colder weather. This will work in many regions of the country, but some places might still be too cold. Building a greenhouse or a hot bed to cultivate your veggies could keep the fresh food coming through the winter!

Can't sustain your crops through the winter? Find local farms that do. There are Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) programs and farmer's markets in many cities and towns that allow farmers to sell their locally grown, fresh food all year long!

green tips from earthshare.org



All of these opportunities can help support the mission work at Grace Lutheran. If you have any questions, give us a call and we'll do our best to help you get connected and supporting Grace without costing you anything but a few moments in time to use these opportunities.

TAGG ~ Together A Greater Good

Amazon Smile



Grace's unique link is: <https://smileamazon.com/ch/47-0667089>

Kroger Community Rewards Giving More Back to the Community!

Kroger is committed to helping our communities grow and prosper. Year after year, local schools, churches and other nonprofit organizations will earn millions of dollars through Kroger Community Rewards.

Kroger Community Rewards makes fund-raising easy, all you have to do is shop at Kroger and swipe your Plus Card!

Register your Bakers Plus card with Kroger and choose Grace Lutheran as your charitable choice.

Here is the link to register your card: <https://www.kroger.com/account/enrollCommunityRewardsNow>



A lonely bachelor went to a pet store and bought a talking centipede (a 100-legged bug) and took it home in a little box.

On Sunday, he asked the centipede in the box, "Would you like to go to church with me today? The pastor always has a good sermon." But there was no answer. The bachelor asked the centipede to go to church with him several more times, but each time there was still no answer.

Finally, the bachelor put his face up against the centipede's house and shouted, "Hey in there! Would you like to go to church with me and learn about God?"

This time, a little voice responded, "I heard you the first time! I'm putting my shoes on!"

-via Rise Samra, Hallandale Beach, FL
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Stewardship Humor



from JoyfulNoiseletter.com
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"The widow's mite,
given to the Lord,
becomes the widow's might."

- via Rev. Paul Lintern
Oakland Lutheran Church
Mansfield, OH
Reprinted with permission from
JoyfulNoiseletter.com

"Money talks - but
all mine ever says is goodbye."

- via Rev. Dr. Karl R. Kraft, Dover, DE
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Bible Wordsearch

Wordsearch 264

Matt. 13:44-58

**The Kingdom
of Heaven**

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

FAITH AMAZED
FIELD ANGELS
FIERY BASKETS
GREAT CAUGHT
HONOR COMING
HOUSE FINISHED
JAMES HEAVEN
JESUS JOSEPH
JUDAS KINGDOM
KINDS MIRACLES
MARY MOVED
SHORE OWNER
SIMON PEARLS
TEETH PEOPLE
THINGS POWERS
THREW PROPHET
VALUE PULLED
WISDOM SISTERS
TEACHER

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

MORE PUZZLES AT:

<http://biblewordgames.com>

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A girl wrote this letter to Ann Landers about her skinflint uncle:

"My uncle was the tightest man I've ever known. All his life, every time he got paid, he took \$20 out of his paycheck and put it under his mattress. Then he got sick and as he was dying, he said to his wife:

'I want you to promise me that when I'm dead, you'll take my money from under the mattress and put it in my coffin so that I can take it with me.'

"His wife kept her promise," the girl wrote. "When he died, she took all the money under the mattress, went to the bank, deposited it, and wrote out a check and put it in his coffin."

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