

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

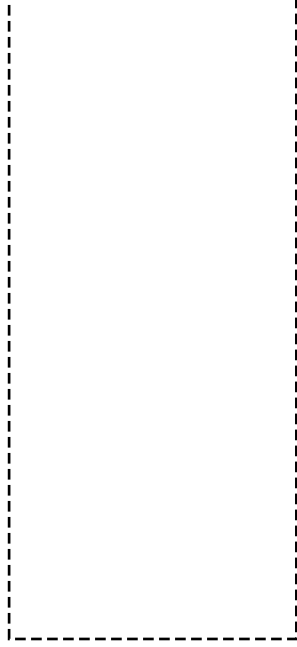
Sexton - Alma Lopez

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THE GRACE MESSENGER 1889 - 2017



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 September 12th. Council members shared their prayer concerns for individuals, their desire that people don't lose hope in the midst of all of the natural disasters occurring around the country, for Malachi as he starts his new adventure in Texas, and for all of the people suffering from the natural disasters in other parts of the world.

Pastor Laaker led devotions from Isaiah 43:1 and Acts 26:22. The first tells us that we are precious to God and God has saved us. The second tells us that God has been with us from the beginning and will always help us.

Visions for Ministry: The author discussed the importance of balancing innovation and foundational stability. There is value in keeping traditions while also exploring new opportunities for positive advancement. We should be comforted in knowing that God is always with us and will help see us through the uncertain, uncomfortable times.

Finish what you haven't read of The Agile Church for next month; reflect on some of the things that you have found helpful and how we should apply it going forward.

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

Christian Education: Sunday School began last Sunday and they plan to meet twice a month. Augsburg Luther Book Display is up through the month on Sundays.

Evangelism/Outreach: The Liberty Reading Program is off to a good start. We could still use a couple of volunteers. Vicki will look into keeping our Little Library up to date and filled.

Continued...

Finance: Pastor Mark Grorud from The Immanuel Vision Foundation will be here at the end of the month. Portico did indicate that the cost for Pastor's health insurance will drop by half starting in November.

Property: The kitchen countertop cracks have been repaired.

Service/Social Ministry: OTOC was one of the sponsors of the rally in Lincoln concerning DACA. There were probably about 500 people in attendance. You can learn more about this issue and others from Justice for our Neighbors, and others.

God's Work Our Hands – we will put together the bags on Sunday, September 24th following worship. We could still use Clorox wipes and Kleenex.

Support/Stewardship: None.

Worship: Riverboat Worship this Sunday on the River City Star. A potluck will follow at St. Luke's.

Announcements: Andy and Pastor attended the worship service last night at Kountze. It was very enjoyable with an outstanding message and hopes to do it again.

Brenda will bring treats in October.

Respectfully Submitted, Amanda Vazquez, Secretary



Worship on the River

Congregations from Grace and St. Luke's enjoying the peaceful River City Star Boat ride before, during and after the worship service on September 17th.



Last year, St. Luke’s Council read “*The Agile Church*.” This year Grace Council is reading this book. About midway through the book, the author has a chapter that is titled “Disciplines of a Learning Church.” As he introduces the chapter, the author states “Leadership in the agile church is about fostering the spaces in which people can learn, practice, and play. It involves creating the holding environment for adaptive work in which people can engage in relative safety with the tough questions for which there are no easy answers, questions like, *how do we share our faith with younger generations who don’t seem interested? How can we form meaningful community with our neighbors in the name of Jesus? How can we give witness to abundant life in Christ in a broken world? What is God up to in our neighborhood?*” He then offers a series of Disciplines. I’d like to share each of those disciplines in brief for your thoughts.

Discipline 1: Cultivate Spaces for Conversation and Practice

The author states that: “This idea represents a culture shift for many congregations whose formality and solemnity exclude playfulness, laughter, experimentation, and the open acknowledgment of mistakes. Whether intentionally, or not, these churches communicate to participants a message that one must come to church buttoned up, polished, put together, and competent.” This in effect precludes the idea that we must grow through a lot of imperfection and even then never achieve perfection except through the blood of Christ.

So, how might we cultivate space for conversation and practice within our Christian faith? How might we create a culture of participation and play in which we are not shamed for having the wrong answer, expressing a doubt or question, or failing?

Discipline 2: Address Fear and Shame

The author states: “We live in a culture in which we are taught to evaluate our self-worth based on our perfection – our ability to perform, achieve, meet others’ expectations, and generally keep it all together.” Later he would say, “There is no innovation and learning without vulnerability.”

How can we share effectively this amazing love of God for us if we pretend that we have to have it all put together? How can we communicate the extravagance of God’s love for a broken humanity if we are caught up in our perfection?

Continued.....

The author suggests that “the key to getting beyond the paralysis of shame is to acknowledge it, to practice self-compassion that is rooted in God’s compassion for us, and to trust that others will stay in relationship with us even when we are open about our faults and failures.” Can we practice God’s grace with each other?

What might be your best thinking about these two? I will share Disciplines 3 and 4 in next months Pastoral reflections.

Pastor Laaker

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 month of 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.

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
Ken Hilmer
Jack Pablo McGill
LaVonne Moss
Pam Reents
Dan Taylor



Theresa Courtney
Jayne Gustafson
Carolyn Matson
Sue Mize
Don Olson
Pauline Stechenfinger
Urbano Vasquez



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:

Joe & Barbara Narducci - Maple Crest, Omaha
Barbara Nelson - Life Care Center, Elkhorn.



Grace Quilters for
Lutheran World Relief

Monday mornings from 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Join a lively group of people and assemble amazing tie quilts for Lutheran World Relief organization. These quilts are delivered around the world to areas most in need of a little comfort. Please feel free to stop by check out the activity. Coffee break and joke time is 10:00 a.m.; another opportunity in fellowship with one another. No experience necessary!

**COFFEE
FELLOWSHIP**

Join us!



Prayer Service
Wednesday
October 18, 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.



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 neighborhood presence, please speak with Vicki. Let's help spread the joy of imagination through reading a good book!



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; 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, and Ron, 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, Oren, 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.
- ✝ Thank you to all who donated and assembled the classroom gift bags given to Liberty Elementary School.



DOING THE MOST GOOD

****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.



Omaha CROP Walk

Ending Hunger One Step at a Time is the effort of the 35th Annual Omaha CROP Walk scheduled for Sunday, October 8, beginning at 1:45 pm. Walkers will gather at Luther Memorial Lutheran Church and have the option of walking 1, 2.5 or 5 mile route.

Please speak to Pastor Laaker to sign up to walk. Sponsors of walkers are needed and can sign up on the individual walker sheets on the back table in the sanctuary. Please turn in your \$ for sponsorship to your sponsored walker by Sunday, October 8.

Thank you for helping end hunger in our community and abroad!!



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>.

Stewardship Moment



Dear Friends and Members of Grace Lutheran,

You don't owe me anything! That's what my friend told me with a smile on his face one day after he made me a small loan. And he meant it! He just wanted to make a gift. But do you know something else? Since he was my friend, I found myself looking for ways that I might return his kindness.

That got me thinking: Isn't it something like that in our life with God? God has blessed us, and while we actually can't repay God, we can respond to God from our heart in many, many ways.

I thank you for responding to God with your financial support for Grace and its work in the mission of Christ. Our Fall Stewardship theme will be "Working Together: Celebrating God's Good Gifts."

It takes many hands — working together — to accomplish all that takes place in a church like Grace Lutheran Church. Some of those "hands" are highly visible as they lead worship services, usher, teach Sunday school classes, or participate in musical presentations. Others are not seen as much as they labor behind the scenes mowing the grass, cleaning the building, serving on committees, or in many other ways.

It also takes many different gifts to support this ministry. Endowment gifts, memorial gifts, regular offering gifts and special gifts are all needed to accomplish the ministry of outreach. Your faithful efforts in support of God's work here is vital.

Thank you for making ministry in Christ's name thrive and grow.

Pastor Laaker



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.

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.



Sunday School will meet every second and fourth Sunday of the month from 10:00 to 10:45 am.

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.

We look forward to sharing Sunday adventures.

Faithfully in Adventure!
Brenda, Mary and Sandy

October 2017



- 1 - Brenda Spahr
- 8 - Greg Hula
- 15 - Terry Nielsen
- 22 - Margie Sutej
- 29 - Mary Laaker
- Nov. 5 - Brenda Spahr



- 1 - Kym Bauer
- 7 - June Hilmer
- 10 - Jordan Vazquez
- 11 - Jonah Laaker
- 16 - Tom Emery
- 18 - Jericho Vazquez
- 22 - Moses Nyiwe
- 23 - Omaina Lado
- 24 - Donavan Halfhill
- 26 - Rosemary Gaunt
Chadney Everitt
- 27 - Lori Vasquez
Jadyn Vazquez
- 29 - Andrea Spahr

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

October Alcolytes

- 1 - Vicki Cox
- 8 - Brenda Spahr
- 15 - Greg Hula
- 22 - Donna Adrian
- 29 - Damien Rodriguez
- Nov. 5 - Andrea Spahr



October Ushers

- Larry Foreman
- Mary Laaker
- Andrew Edwards

Ushers & Greeters



October Greeters

- 1 - Greg and Janet Hula
- 8 - Loren and Marsha Moyer
- 15 - Madison and Sarah Emery
- 22 - Gloria Moore and Vicki Cox
- 29 - Ron and Donna Adrian
- Nov. 5 - Andrew Edwards and Ralph Fitle



Responsibility List

Altar Flowers



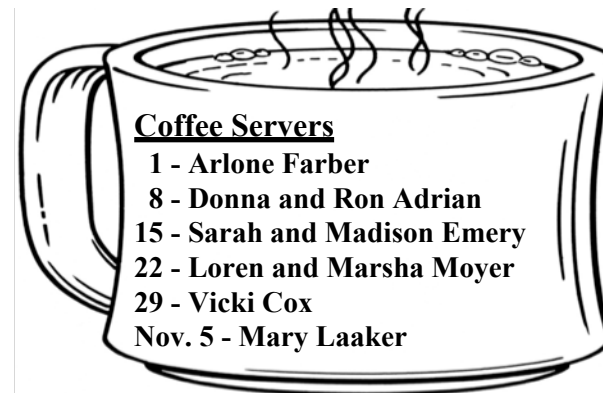
- 1 - Arlone Farber for the Glory of God.
- 8 - Vicki Cox for the Glory of God.
- 15 - OPEN.
- 22 - Ron and Donna Adrian in celebration of their grandson,
Jack's birthday.
- 29 - Brenda Spahr in celebration of her daughter, Andrea's
birthday.
- Nov. 5 - OPEN.

Flower Pick-Up for October:



Backpack Program

- 1 - Vicki Cox.
- 8 - Amanda Vazquez in celebration of her son, Jordan's birthday.
- 15 - Amanda Vazquez in celebration of her son, Jericho's birthday.
- 22 - Amanda Vazquez in celebration of her son, Jaydn's birthday.
- 29 - Eva Martin in celebration of her granddaughter, Andrea's
birthday.
- Nov. 5 - OPEN.



Coffee Servers

- 1 - Arlone Farber
- 8 - Donna and Ron Adrian
- 15 - Sarah and Madison Emery
- 22 - Loren and Marsha Moyer
- 29 - Vicki Cox
- Nov. 5 - Mary Laaker



500TH
Anniversary
OF THE REFORMATION

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.

Immanuel Lutheran Church
2725 North 60th Avenue
Omaha



Sponsored by Immanuel Lutheran Church Women



Card Party & Luncheon
on
Friday, October 13, 2017
9:00 am - 3:00 pm

A donation of \$6 is all that is needed to attend.
Bring friends and come for a day of cards
or just come to socialize and enjoy lunch!

Quilt Raffle (tickets \$1.00)
Basket/Prize Raffle (tickets .50)
Bake Sale
Free Coffee



Door Prizes! Great Lunch!
Good Company! Card Games!



**Electronic
Fund Giving**

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

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.

Handmade Quilts - stitched with LOVE-to-be raffled off!
Delicious Baked Goods to Start off Your Day!
For Questions or more information contact
Linda Dian Olson at (402) 934-4340



**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.



Celebrate Halloween & Make it Green!

Are you gearing up for ghouls and goblins? To get you in the spirit, we're sharing some of our favorite activities and ideas for making the haunted holiday fun for you and good for the planet. Yes, you can be spooky AND sustainable! Join our member groups and take part in some extra green Halloween-themed fun.

Green Your Costume. Did you know that many costumes sold in stores contain toxic chemicals like PVC and phthalates? Yuck! Instead, get creative by going handmade and upcycled. Host a pre-Halloween costume swap in your community, repurpose existing clothes, or fashion costumes from recycled materials (check out the Earth Share Pinterest page for ideas and add your own.

Hand Out Healthy Treats. Instead of buying sugary candy, consider giving small boxes of raisins, mandarin oranges, trail mix, crayons, stickers, granola bars, or Rainforest Alliance Certified chocolate.

Use Natural Decorations. Decorating with locally-grown gourds and pumpkins are a great way to reduce waste and carbon emissions. Use recycled paper to make window decorations like spooky Halloween trees, and masks.

Throw a Low or No-Waste Party. Instead of buying plastic plates, cups and utensils for your next party, use silverware or compostable utensils. Visit your neighborhood thrift store and purchase mismatched cloth napkins and have guests toss them in a bin for washing and reusing at your next party. Recycle bottles and cans.

Compost Leftovers. Once Halloween is over, recycle your pumpkins, leaves, straw and any other organic material by composting it. Pumpkins also make great food for wildlife.

Celebrate Bats. Bats — an iconic part of Halloween — are often wrongly feared and misunderstood. Find out why bats are cool and essential to our ecosystems with Bat Conservation International!

Head to the Farm. Enjoying fresh produce, hay rides and corn mazes at your local farm is a great way to celebrate Halloween!

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>



OMAHA'S THIRD
LAWYERS IN THE CITY

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2017
9 am–Noon and 1–4 pm

Metropolitan Community College

2801 Edward Babe Gomez Ave
South Omaha Campus–Connector
2nd Floor, Classroom 250

Volunteer lawyers and paralegals along with law students and paralegal students will meet with Omaha area residents to answer basic legal questions, provide legal resources and general legal information.

If you do not have the financial means to hire a lawyer, volunteers will meet with you to provide basic legal information on:

- uncontested divorce
- child custody and support
- name changes
- protection orders
- filing a small claim
- tenant rights
- bankruptcy and debts
- immigration (9 - 12 only)

Community members will be seen on a first-come first-serve basis.
Spanish-speaking volunteers will be onsite.

There is NO COST to Meet with a Volunteer!

A community service event sponsored by:



Pastor Appreciation Day
October 8, 2017



Why, Pastor, Why

As we see you standing there reading from God's Word

We think back to all those wonderful,
blessed sermons from you that we have heard.

No, there's no secret why God brought you out

Oh! The many times your joy has made us shout!!!

You see, Pastor, there was a reason that God saved your soul

Because God knew that serving Him with all your heart
would be your life's goal.

You see, Pastor, there was a reason that it was you that God chose

Not your good looks, perfect hair, and stylish clothes.

No, Pastor, the reason that God reached down His hand and saved you

Let there be no doubt!

The reason God chose you is because

He knew how you would turn out!

The reason, Pastor, that you mean so much to us
Is that when we look at you, it's Jesus that we see.

For in your footsteps we so gratefully trod

Because we know that in following you,

We are following God.

~ Richard Vincent Rose





from JoyfulNoiseletter.com
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One Halloween night, three of us were returning from our evening classes at the university. We were dressed in our habits.

Three young men followed us, making snide remarks. I turned suddenly and faced them without saying a word.

One of them exclaimed, "Hey, they're for real!" They thought we were in costume. They quickly melted into the shadows and we went home peacefully.

~ via Sr. Mary Norbert Bauer,
Daughters of Divine Charity
Hackettstown, NY



Signs and Wonders
JoyfulNoiseletter.com

Sign outside Taylorsville (MD) United Methodist Church:
"Follow Jesus, Not Twitter."

~ via Lorene Iring, Lutherville Timonium, MD

Halloween sign at Lititz (PA) Moravian Congregation:
"Hallowed be God's name."

~ via Rev. Dean R. Jurgen

Sign outside So. Seminole Church of Christ, Winter Park, FL:
"Life's shadows might result from your standing in your own sunshine."

~ via Bobbe Lyon, Maitland, FL

Sign outside a church in Albany, GA:
"People cannot change the truth, but the Truth can change you."

~ via Charles Garrett, Fort Gaines, GA

Bible Wordsearch

Wordsearch 265

Matt. 14:1-15

P	R	N	E	S	I	R	I	J	R	N	T	S	E	D
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Death of John the Baptist

BOAT	BAPTIST
BODY	BEHEADED
BOUND	BIRTHDAY
BURIED	BROTHER
CROWD	CARRIED
DANCED	DAUGHTER
DINNER	DISCIPLES
GUESTS	GRANTED
HEALED	LAWFUL
HEROD	MOTHER
JESUS	ORDERED
JOHN	PLATTER
KING	PLEASED
OATH	POWERS
PEOPLE	PROPHET
PLACE	REMOTE
PRISON	REQUEST
RISEN	SAYING
TOWNS	WANTED

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

WORK

MORE PUZZLES AT:
<http://biblewordgames.com> COPYRIGHT 2017 ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

Pastor, we want to thank you for all your great advice, for all your beautiful sermons, and keeping Faith in our lives.



Main Street Community's men believed in taking Pastor Appreciation Day to the streets.