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Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church

Omaha, NE 68105-2380

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326 South 26th Street

Return Service Requested

THE GRACE

MESSENGER

1889 - 2017



2017

Dated Material

www.facebook.com/gracelutheranomaha Email: graceluth@graceluth.com REGULAR SUNDAY EVENTS Web Site: www.graceluth.com 9:30 a.m. Christian Education 11:00 a.m. Worship Service Like us on Facebook at:

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

Delivered to the Post Office October 31

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 October 10th. 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 and around the world, and for the individuals recently laid off from Hood Manufacturing. May they find employment quickly.

Pastor Laaker led devotions from Daniel 4:34 and Acts 5:29. The first tells us that God is present with each generation and always will be. The second tells us that we should obey God before human authority.

<u>Visions for Ministry</u>: Council Members shared some of their thoughts concerning things they found helpful and engaging from our reading.

Finish what you haven't read of The Agile Church for next month; select something from each chapter that causes you to change the way you think about church and how we might apply it going forward.

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

<u>Christian Education</u>: Sunday School continues to meet and grow spiritually twice a month.

Augsburg Luther Book Display is up through the month on Sundays.

<u>Evangelism/Outreach</u>: The Liberty Reading Program is off to a good start. We could still use a volunteer. Vicki and Arlone have been tracking the activity with the Little Library and Vicki has reported that books are being used and new books are being replaced and shared by neighbors.

<u>Finance</u>: The Immanuel Vision Foundation application requires additional time therefore a committee should be in place for 2018's grant writing efforts. Portico did indicate that the cost for Pastor's health insurance premium would drop by half starting in November. The Endowment Board met on October 2 and the distribution of funds were ratified from the Disney Endowment.

Continued...

<u>Property</u>: The kitchen countertop was damaged during a recent celebration and will be repaired accordingly.

<u>Service/Social Ministry</u>: God's Work Our Hands – Gifts bags were delivered and Liberty Elementary Principal Oberst was very happy to accept the gifts for each classroom.

Pastor is applying for an LVC Volunteer to be a part of the outreach work offered through Grace Lutheran.

<u>Support/Stewardship</u>: Fall Stewardship Campaign "Working Together – Celebrating God's Good Gifts" will begin early in November.

<u>Worship</u>: Riverboat Worship conversations revealed a majority in agreement that the experience was such a relaxing and enjoyable trip on the river and great conversations during the pot luck luncheon held at St. Luke's.

The 500th Anniversary Reformation Service will be held on Sunday, October 29th at 2:00 pm at St. John's Cathedral on the Creighton Campus. Early registration is suggested with the anticipation of a large attendance.

Pastor asked the Council to think about the Thanksgiving Eve Service.

<u>New Business</u>: Greg and Janet Hula have agreed to organize the Halloween Party this year. The Party will take place on Friday, October 27th from 6:30 to 8:30 pm. The Annual Event will again be free due to Thrivent Funding.

<u>Announcements</u>: Kountze is sponsoring an Open House in the newly built Kountze Community Commons Center on Wednesday, October 18th from 3:00 to 5:00 pm.

2017 OTOC Delegates Congress will be held on Monday, November 13th at St. Pius Catholic Church.

Pastor will attend the Voyagers Continuing Education event in DC during the week of November 6th.

The Synod provided material for congregations starting conversations and moving from "At Risk" to Risking for Mission and how they are rethinking church. Representatives from St. Matt's, St. Luke's, Bethel, and First Lutheran met at Bethel, October 10th, at 6:00 pm.

Ralph will bring treats in November.

Respectfully Submitted, Brenda Spahr



Last month, I began sharing the Disciplines that are offered in the book, *The Agile Church*. The author states "Leadership in the agile church is about fostering the spaces in which people can learn, practice, and play. Let me continue sharing the next disciplines.

Discipline 3: Engage Ambivalence and Conflict

The organizational scholar Chris Argyris explains that people in organizations tend to operate with defensive routines that are overprotective and inhibit learning. An example of this is a church that boldly proclaims "All are Welcome!" on its website, sign and bulletin, yet in its actual practice, shuts out any newcomer. To break out of this pattern involves conversations that get beyond "What should we do?" to the deeper level of "Why are we doing what we're doing?" It means making our values and operating assumptions explicit.

Robert Kegan and Lisa Lahey remind us that there are often "competing commitments" that block people and organizations from learning and changing. These are underlying values, beliefs and behaviors that oppose the new, sometimes for good reason. For instance, a church might wish to be more flexible and innovative, yet it had deep competing commitments around avoiding loss and discomfort for its members.

How might we engage this difficult effort at transformation? The author suggested simple practices of prayer, biblical engagement, or shared hospitality.

Discipline 4: Interpret the Present in Light of the Past

What questions might we ask for which we do not know the answer, or questions that have no easy answer, or questions that the whole community must own and engage? This of course would require some real effort at humble inquiry. The author states that in the biblical story, leaders help people connect their present situation with God's faithfulness and promises.

What in our history helps us connect with understanding of God's faithfulness and promises in our current situations?

I'll continue with disciplines 5 and 6 next month. Give these some thought. Ask some questions and wrestle with humility.

Pastor Laaker



The OTOC Immigration Action Team invites you to attend an OTOC Issues Cafe: Journey to Omaha: Walking with Omaha Families in Times of Uncertainty on November 6th at 6:45-8:00 pm at Urban Abbey, 10th and Jackson. Long-time residents of Omaha will share their family story and how they came to live in Omaha from El Salvador in 2001. They will explain their documentation status, Temporary Protective Status, which could soon be terminated. Come learn more about how to help families with deep Nebraska roots stay in our community.

After fleeing to Honduras during the Salvadoran Civil War, this family helped found a repatriated community in El Salvador. Committed to peace and to community, they struggled to piece together enough to survive the poverty and isolation in post-war El Salvador. Seeking a better life, they fled again to the United States. After several compounding natural disasters, the family was issued Temporary Protective Status. Recent administration decisions have put this family's future at risk. Come learn about Temporary Protective Status and its local impact on 3,000 Nebraska families. As OTOC we support strong families and strong communities. This family with varied immigration status needs your support. Come learn more about how to help families with deep Nebraska roots stay in our community.

Omaha CROP Walk

CROP HUNGER WALK ENDING HUNGER ONE STEP AT A TIME

The 35th Annual Omaha CROP Walk was held on Sunday, October 8th. Grace had a fun group walking on a beautiful fall day.

Grace was able to add \$455.00 toward ending hunger in our community and abroad! Thank you for helping!!



: 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 Javne Gustafson Carolyn Matson Sue Mize Don Olson Pauline Stechenfinger Urbano Vasquez The family of Ron Powley

Theresa Courtney Will Gugat 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 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!





Prayer Service Wednesday November 15, 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 share their time and talents with Liberty Elementary through the "Grace Reads" partnership.



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.



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 continues to 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

Cirriculum is shared from Spark House. Spark House has been suppling 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

"Working Together — Celebrating God's Good Gifts"

"For we are God's servants, working together" (1 Corinthians 3:9).



It takes many hands — working together — to accomplish all that takes place in a church like Grace Lutheran. 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 in cleaning the building, serving on committees, or in many other ways.

That is true of all types of organizations, but what sets the church apart — especially a church like Grace Lutheran — is that we are not just working by ourselves and for ourselves. We are working together hand in hand with Almighty God. As Annie Johnson Flint wrote, "Christ has no hands but our hands to do His work today."

What we are doing, whether it is one of the highly visible functions or one of the behind-the-scenes tasks, we are doing for God's glory. We are "God's fellow servants." We are truly working together with God! And as we do so, we have the opportunity to celebrate God's good gifts to us.

As God's children, sometimes our emphasis is on things like food, clothing, shelter, crops, and a land that brings forth God's bounty in abundance. As we benefit from God's good gifts like these and many others, our response should be one of thanksgiving and gratitude to God.

But God's good gifts are also spiritual in nature. For example, God gave the gift of the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to be our Savior. Without doubt, this is the greatest gift of all! God gives the gift of faith so that people can trust Christ for salvation. God gives the gift of grace, which is an expression of God's unconditional love towards us. God gives the gift of wisdom to those who ask. God gives the Holy Spirit to us to help us in our Christian lives and in our praying. God gives spiritual gifts that enable us to serve God and to minister to others. God even provides as special gifts the people who work in God's kingdom as pastors, teachers, and missionaries.

Perhaps the gifts of God are best summarized in James 1:17.

Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.

Think about it: Every good gift is from God. All God requires of us, God's children, is that we diligently follow God with the full expectation and confidence that God will reward our faithful obedience.

Obedience has been defined as doing what God says, when God says, with the right heart attitude. A spirit of willing obedience is essential as we seek to use the time, talents and treasure that God has entrusted to us for God's glory and for the good of other people. So is a willingness to listen to God.

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 God in an even greater way in 2018?

"... we are God's servants, working together."

Continued.....

November 2017



- 5 Brenda Spahr
- 12 Arlone Farber
- 19 Greg Hula
- 26 Terry Nielsen

Dec. 3 - Mary Laaker



- 5 Andrea Spahr
- 12 Janet Hula
- 19 Vicki Cox
- 26 Greg Hula

Dec. 3 - Brenda Spahr



- 2 Barnaba Nyiwe
- 5 Alexandra Granillo
- 6 Jan Monico
- 9 Mickey Andersen
- 10 Telly Mounto
- 11 Margie Sutej
- 17 Emerita Alberto
- 18 Charlotte Palczynski
- 20 Pastor Laaker
- 22 Don Olson
- 26 Greg Hula Ralph Fitle
- 29 Ron Adrian

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

November Ushers

Vicki Cox Oren Powley Andrew Edwards





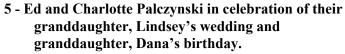
November Greeters

- 5 Andrew Edwards and Ralph Fitle
- 12 Bobby Stechenfinger / Greg Hula
- 19 Brenda and Andrea Spahr
- 26 Loren and Marsha Moyer

Dec. 3 - Sarah and Madison Emery

Responsibility List

Altar Flowers





- 19 Mary Laaker in celebration of her husband, Pastor Laaker's birthday.
- 26 Janet Hula in celebration of her husband, Greg's birthday.

Dec. 3 - LaVonne Moss.

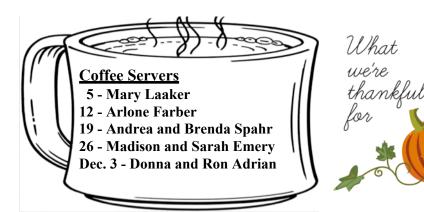
Flower Pick-Up for November: Mary Laaker



Backpack Program

- 5 Terry and Sandy Nielsen for all who hunger.
- 12 Arlone Farber for all who hunger.
- 19 Vicki Cox.
- 26 Ron and Donna Adrian in celebration of their son, Jim's birthday.

Dec. 3 - Brenda Spahr.



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.

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 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.



Order Your Poinsettias Cost is \$8.00

A Sign-Up Sheet has been posted on the Bulletin Board, please order before December 4th

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

Buy Your 2018 God's Creation Calendar!



The Calendars Are Here! Calendars are open for everyone, if you would like to purchase a copy, please look for Donna or Brenda on Sunday mornings or call the church office at 402-341-7730.

Calendars include beautiful monthly scenic photography enhanced with inspiring Scriptures from the Holy Bible. High-quality, heavy-weight stock with gloss coated photo pages and ample space to write appointments and family events.

Same Great Price ~ Only \$5.00



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.

Green Tips for Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving is not only a time for family and friends but also a celebration of the environment and all it provides for us. You can make it truly sustainable by following these tips:

Get Active: Get outdoors and work off that second slice of pumpkin pie! National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA) has tips for winter hiking and suggestions for great cold weather trails so you can tell your family to take a hike and not get in trouble.

Travel Light: Heading home for the holidays? If you have the time, why not take a train, which produces less carbon than planes or cars?

Feast on local, seasonal foods: Fruits and vegetables in season for the late fall don't need to be trucked around the country, and your purchases support your community.

Use natural decorations: Forgo craft store supplies for beautiful, biodegradable decorations you can find in nature. Pinecones, gourds, leaves, and acorns are just some of the materials that can add seasonal ambience to your dining room.

Seek out an authentic heritage turkey... Because industrialized turkeys are specially bred and raised with hormones to force them to gain weight very quickly, heritage birds are smaller, have less meat, and are closer to wild birds. It may not be that easy to find a true heritage bird and they have to be ordered ahead of time.

...or go meatless: Most of your Thanksgiving feast is meatless anyway. Why not try some of the countless vegetarian (meat-free) and vegan alternatives to classic Thanksgiving receipes?

Compost kitchen scraps: All those squash peels and carrot tops could be working to enrich your potting soil. Invest in a compost bin and turn your kitchen scraps into something useful instead of throwing them away.

Don't forget about the leftovers: Americans waste almost 40% of all edible food, much of it through improper storage.

green tips from earthshare.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 at 3905 N 22nd Street 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.



Grace Lutheran Church has three additional ways that you could contribute without spending any out of pocket funds.

Only a few moments of your time to download apps for TAGG - Together A Greater Good and when you shop at smile.amazon.come Amazon will donate - Grace's unique link is: https://smileamazon.com/ch/47-0667089. Register your Bakers Plus card with Kroger and choose Grace Lutheran as your charitable choice! All of these opportunities will match a certain percentage of your purchases and direct those funds to Grace.



Augustana Lutheran is inviting us to share Thanksgiving Eve in fellowship and worship. A simple soup supper will begin at 5:00 pm. A Thanksgiving Eve worship Thanksquing will begin at 6:00 pm. Please come and worship service share in this wonderful opportunity of share in this wonderful opportunity of

fellowship and praise. Augustana is located at 3647 Lafayette Avenue, Omaha NE 68131-1363

Sunday Morning Christmas Eve Service

Sunday, December 24th Grace Lutheran has been invited to St. Luke's Lutheran to enjoy the opportunity to watch the Children's Christmas Program given by San Andreas. The Sunday morning worship service will begin at 10:00 a.m. at St. Luke's Lutheran located at 2315 I Street. If you have any questions, please contact the church office at 402-341-7730.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service Schedule:



Grace Lutheran Church 1326 South 26th Street 4:30 pm

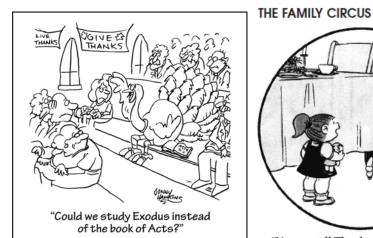
And

St. Luke's Lutheran Church 2315 "I" Street 6:30 pm.



The Grace Lutheran Annual Halloween Party was an evening full of kid friendly fun for everyone! Awesome volunteers from Interfaith Health provided much needed assistance with games! The amazing organizational skills of Janet and Greg made the Halloween event another opportunity to share God's love and abundance.







By Jeff and Bil Keane

"You can tell Thanksgiving isn't like a regular dinner 'cause the table gets to be dressed up too."

from JoyfulNoiseletter.com Reprinted with permission of Jeff and Bil Keane



It was the day of the big football game, and in church the time for the collection of tithes and offerings was approaching. The pastor, a sports enthusiast, reached into his pocket, took out a quarter, flipped it into the air, watched it land, and like a referee joyfully announced, "The ushers have elected to receive."

> —via Rev. Dr. Karl R. Kraft. Dover. DE Reprinted with permission from JoyfulNoiseletter.com



"For three things I thank God every day of my life: thanks that He has granted me knowledge of His works; deep thanks that He has set in my darkness the lamp of faith; deep, deepest thanks that I have another life to look forward to - a life joyous with light and flowers and heavenly song."

> —Helen Keller, blind and deaf from infancy Reprinted with permission from JoyfulNoiseletter.com





Daylight Savings Time Ends on November 5th

Remember to set your clocks back one hour before going to bed Saturday night!

If you forget, not a big deal ~ First to arrive, please make the coffee and Serve with a smile!