

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

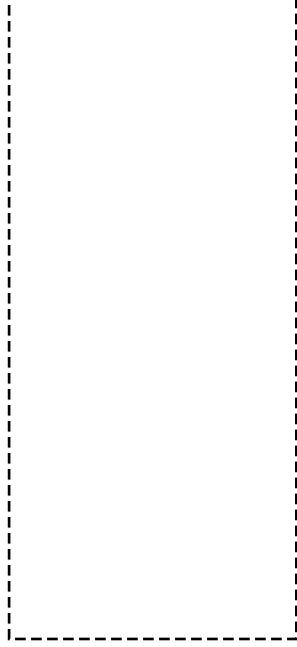
Pastor - Rev. Dr. Damon D. Laaker
Editor/Church Secretary - Brenda Spahr
Organist - Colleen Jeffrey
Sexton - Alma Lopez

Delivered to the Post Office December 28



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THE GRACE MESSENGER

1889 - 2018



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 December 12th. Council members shared their prayer concerns for individual health concerns, all of the individuals who have lost their homes and been affected by the recent fires, for patience and for safety for everyone traveling during the holiday season.

Pastor led devotions from Psalm 119:172 and Colossians 3:16. The first invites us to praise God for God's wisdom through the commandments given to us. The second encourages us to sing God's praise for all God has done for us.

Visions for Ministry: We shared thoughts around a write up by the same author as the book we shared this past year. It emphasized the importance of listening and the incredible impact that listening can have on a person.

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

Christian Education: Sunday School ended for 2017 this past week. The teachers shared the Christmas story with the children and gave them a small gift.

Evangelism/Outreach: ESL Class held its Christmas Party this past Saturday for the ladies and their families. We had a fun celebration together.

Finance: None.

Property: Douglas County Tax Exemption form has been submitted and approved. Internet connection is not working, causing some setbacks with the office work.

Service/Social Ministry: Vicki talked about an event coming up on Monday evening that OTOC is putting on. It's an interfaith prayer vigil in support of Dreamers and Persons with TPS at St. Johns Church on the Creighton Campus. On February 12th, OTOC will have another meeting at First United Methodist Church to share our church's vision for supporting our community.

Continued...

There is a training at St. Thomas Lutheran on Saturday, January 13th for individuals who want to become a part of the Guardian Angel movement to accompany minor children involved in the immigration process. Prison Ministry Update – Vicki received confirmation that we can provide the meal here at Grace, as well as the service. Colleen agreed to play for it, as well. The date is set for February 11th. Amanda will request funds from Thrivent. We will plan to meet after church on January 14th to discuss a possible menu.

Support/Stewardship: There is a new app that Vanco is offering called Give+ Church. This app is currently free and allows individuals to set up and schedule donations.

Worship: Our projector is no longer working. Pastor has found a Hitachi projector that he believes would be a good purchase. Ron motioned that we purchase the Hitachi projector out of the memorial funds. Greg seconded. Motion carried.

Christmas Eve – A reminder that there will be one service Sunday morning at St. Luke's. San Andres will no longer be providing a children's program. The typical Christmas Eve services will be held at 4:30 pm at Grace and 6:30 pm at St. Luke's to keep with tradition and accommodate those who come only on the major holidays.

Unfinished Business: Brenda and Vicki attended a conversation with other congregations at St. Mathews last week. They shared their thoughts on how it went, including how a shared ministry might work between churches. Grace and St. Luke's offered to help them through that transition should they decide to move forward in that direction.

New Business: There is a report from the Endowment Board that includes some proposed distributions from the Disney Endowment Fund. Motion was made by Ron to ratify these distributions. Vicki seconded. Motion carried. Our annual meeting will take place the last week of January, so annual reports need to be in to Brenda by January 14th. The Council agreed to move our service on February 4th to 9:00 am to accommodate for St. Luke's annual meeting. Terry made a motion to make this an annual accommodation. Ralph seconded. Motion carried.

The Council agreed to provide the usual gift cards for staff members for Christmas.

Announcements: Marsha will bring treats for January. Terry will bring treats for February. Vicki will bring treats in March.

Respectfully Submitted, Amanda Vazquez, Secretary



In my daily devotions from Fr. Richard Rohr, he recently shared this. I find it a thoughtful piece for the end of the year and the beginning of a new year. So, I share it with you.

“My friend Brian McLaren expertly maps the process of rebuilding Christianity in his book The Great Spiritual Migration. In the introduction, Brian explains how humans are people in motion, as evidenced by anthropology, the biblical Exodus, and Jesus’ disciples who were to “go into all the world” [Mark 16:15]. Brian’s own story moved from fundamentalist Christianity to Evangelicalism and now is more of a pilgrimage than a static place: “I’ve come to see that what matters most is not our status but our trajectory, not where we are but where we’re going, not where we stand but where we’re headed. . . . [Religion] is at its best when it leads us forward, when it guides us on our spiritual growth as individuals and in our cultural evolution as a species. Unfortunately, religion often becomes more of a cage than a guide, holding us back rather than summoning us onward, a buffer to constructive change rather than a catalyst for it. “In times of rapid and ambiguous change, such a regressive turn in religion may be understandable, but it is even more tragic: when a culture needs wise spiritual guidance the most, all it gets from religious leaders is anxious condemnation and critique, along with a big dose of nostalgia for the lost golden age of the good old days. We see this regressive pull in many sectors of Christianity, along with sectors of Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, and other religions too.

Continued.....

“In that light, it’s no surprise that people by the millions are moving away from traditional religions entirely, often into secularism, often into experimental forms of spirituality that are not yet supported by religious traditions. But at this pivotal moment, something else is happening. Within each tradition, unsettling but needed voices are arising—prophetic voices, we might call them, voices of change, hope, imagination, and new beginnings. They say there’s an alternative to static or rigid religion on the one hand and religion-free secularism on the other. They claim that the Spirit is calling us, not to dig in our heels, but rather to pack up our tents and get moving again. “Brian doesn’t try to whitewash Christianity’s history of oppression; the church has often led or supported war, colonization, segregation, slavery, sexism, and many other abuses. But, he says: Thank God that Christianity has a rich tradition of changing course! The Catholic theologian Gustavo Gutierrez agreed: “Conversion is a permanent process,” he said, “in which very often the obstacles we meet make us lose all we had gained and start anew.” Or as Martin Luther said in the first of his oft-mentioned but seldom-read ninety-five theses, repentance, rethinking, and yes, experiencing ongoing migration and conversion are absolute necessities, not just at the beginning of one’s faith journey but at every step of the way. Without continuing conversion, our traditions grow proud and corrupt, self-seeking and ingrown, rigid and constricting. Without continuing conversion, we can be faithful neither to Christ nor to ourselves and the world around us.”

Pastor Laaker

PEACE LOVE HOPE JESUS PEACE LOVE HOPE JESUS

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
Will Gugat
Ken Hilmer
Jack Pablo McGill
LaVonne Moss
Pam Reents
Pauline Stechenfinger
Urbano Vasquez



Theresa Courtney
Larry Foreman
Jayne Gustafson
Carolyn Matson
Sue Mize
Don Olson
Trent Spence
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 - 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
January 17, 2018
7:00 p.m.**

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

Christmas Mitten Tree

Time is quickly approaching when all the beautiful decorations will once again be packed away until next Christmas Season.

If you have been waiting for the right time to place a pair of mittens, gloves, scarf or any additional warm apparel on the tree ~ that time is now. The Christmas Mitten Tree will soon be packed away and the generous donations and gifts will benefit the Lutheran South Pantry.





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 for the wonderful Christmas party.
- ◎ Thank you Greg, Janet, Mary and Eva; who take turns picking up altar flowers every Sunday morning.
- ◎ Thank you LaVonne, Eva, Marilyn, Donna and Mary for your continued dedication in creating a reflection of God's love and care in every quilt sent to support Lutheran World Relief.
- ◎ 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, Oren, and Mary for greeting everyone on Sunday mornings.
- ◎ Thank you to all who share their time and talents with Liberty Elementary through the "Grace Reads" partnership.
- ◎ Thank you Loren for installing new windows on the north side of the church building, no more drafts!

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



Open every Wednesday
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

Liberty Elementary will resume their class schedule during the second week of January; therefore, readers will be asked to adjust their reading schedules by one week. If you normally read during the first week, you will be reading during the second. If you normally read during the second week, you will be reading during the third week and if you normally read during the third week, please plan on reading during the fourth week. If you have any questions, 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.

Curriculum is shared from Spark House. 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



**Stewardship
Moment**

Thank You! You have helped make the mission of Christ present throughout 2017 with your regular and special giving. This work could not continue without you. May the blessings of God continue to motivate you and your giving in 2018.

PEACE LOVE HOPE JESUS PEACE LOVE HOPE JESUS

Without apology

Without apology and without restraint-
Tho' some don't wanna hear it, and others all but faint...
I wish you a Merry Christmas! To proclaim our Savior's birth-
For nothing of greater consequence has ever happened upon the earth.
God sent His Son from Heaven to be our Savior and King-
That's why we celebrate Christmas-
That's why we can't help but to rejoice and sing.

— Pastor Bob Wickline
Saltair Church of Christ, Bethel, OH
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I want to thank each and every one of you for your kindness and generosity shared with Mary and me throughout the year. We are warmly blessed and deeply appreciative of your support and care. The Christmas remembrances and gifts are but a small part of the blessings we receive. Merry Christmas!

Grace Council and Members,
Thank you so much for the gift cards! We will greatly enjoy using them! It's a real treat for our whole family to go out to eat. Thank you for allowing me to serve as organist at Grace. It's such a pleasure to work with a wonderful congregation like Grace.
Merry Christmas!
Colleen Jeffrey



Notes of **THANKS**

Thank you for the Christmas gift cards! The opportunity to spend family time out is always hilarious! The good news of Christmas is not found under the tree, but in the hearts of those who worship Jesus.
Merry Christmas!
John, Brenda & Andrea Spahr



January 2018



- 7 - Terry Nielsen
- 14 - Arlone Farber
- 21 - Mary Laaker
- 28 - Greg Hula
- Feb. 4 - Brenda Spahr



- 1 - Martina Mure
- Nenchi Ilka
- 11 - Larry Foreman
- 12 - Satta Lewa
- 13 - J.P. Gammon
- Dige Dige
- 23 - Theila Nyiwe
- 26 - Janet Hula
- 31 - Gerald Helm
- Bobby Stechenfinger

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

January Acolytes

- 7 - Janet Hula
- 14 - Brenda Spahr
- 21 - Donna Adrian
- 28 - Vicki Cox
- Feb. 4 - Greg Hula



January Ushers

- Vicki Cox
- Oren Powley
- Andrew Edwards



January Greeters

- 7 - Mary Laaker and Bobby Stechenfinger
- 14 - Greg and Janet Hula
- 21 - Madison and Sarah Emery
- 28 - Andrew Edwards and Ralph Fitle
- Feb. 4 - Ron and Donna Adrian



Responsibility List



Altar Flowers

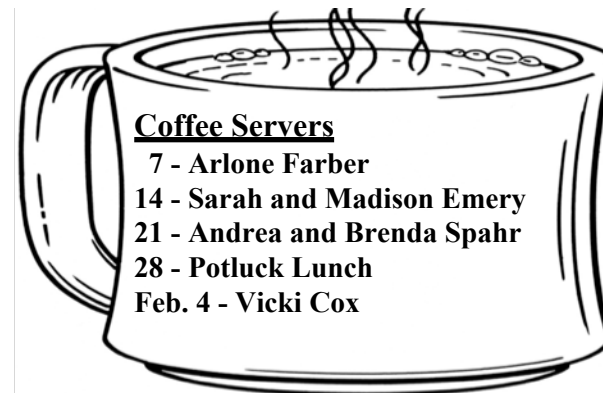
- 7 - OPEN.
- 14 - OPEN.
- 21 - Ed & Charlotte Palczynski in celebration of their grandsons, Trae, Camren and Carson's birthdays.
- 28 - OPEN.
- Feb. 4 - Brenda Spahr in celebration of her birthday and in loving memory of Jerry Van Ormer's birthday.

Flower Pick-Up for January:



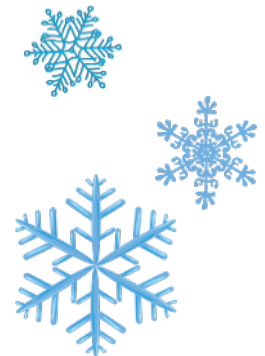
Backpack Program

- 7 - Brenda Spahr.
- 14 - Terry and Sandy Nielsen for all who hunger.
- 21 - Ed & Charlotte Palczynski in celebration of their grandsons, Trae, Camren and Carson's birthdays.
- 28 - Pastor & Mary Laaker in celebration of the 129th Annual Meeting.
- Feb. 4 - Brenda Spahr.



Coffee Servers

- 7 - Arlone Farber
- 14 - Sarah and Madison Emery
- 21 - Andrea and Brenda Spahr
- 28 - Potluck Lunch
- Feb. 4 - Vicki Cox



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.



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.com 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.

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



Prison Ministry

Grace will host the Crossroads Connection Sunday evening meal on February 11th. Following worship service on January 14th, there will be a planning meeting to discuss set up, menu, serving the meal and clean up. If you are interested in this inspiring opportunity to help and/or serve through the Prison Ministry, please plan on attending the meeting. If you have any questions, please speak with Vicki or call the church office.

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.



Grace's Free Little Library continues to be used in the neighborhood on a regular basis and is now in need of additional books. Pre-school, 1st grade and 2nd grade books and periodicals seem to be the most popular items. If you have any of these items that you are willing to donate, please speak with Vicki or Arlone. Please continue your participation by stopping and browsing for an interesting book. Let's help spread the joy of imagination through reading a good book!

Words to Start the New Year

Live simply. Love generously. Care deeply. Speak kindly. Leave the rest to God. God loves you; He always has and always will.”
 ~ via George Goldtrap, Ormond-by-the-Sea, FL

“Our life is frittered away by detail. Simplify, simplify.”
 ~ Thoreau

“If you could choose one characteristic that would get you through life, choose a sense of humor.”
 ~ Jennifer Jones

“Celebrate your successes. Find some humor in your failures.”
 ~ Sam Walton

“A well-developed sense of humor is the pole that adds balance to your step as you walk the tightrope of life.”
 ~ William Arthur Ward

“Let your face show your faith - smile!”
 ~ Author unknown

“A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.”
 ~ Proverbs 15:1

“A lot of people are in debt because they spend what their friends think they make.”
 ~ Jim Reed

“It’s better to walk alone than with a crowd going in the wrong direction.”
 ~ Diane Grant

“Endeavor to so live that when you die even the undertaker will be sorry.”
 ~ Mark Twain

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Bible Wordsearch

Wordsearch 268

Matt. 15:21-39

P	A	S	C	R	H	D	P	I	M	E	R	C	Y	N
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Loaves & Fish

AMAZED BRINGING
 ANSWER DAUGHTER
 BREAD GALILEE
 BROKEN HEALED
 CROWD HUNGRY
 CRUMBS LEAVING
 DAVID LOAVES
 FAITH NOTHING
 ISRAEL NUMBER
 JESUS PRAISED
 KNELT REGION
 MERCY REMOTE
 MUTE REQUEST
 PICKED THANKS
 PIECES VICINITY
 SHEEP WALKING
 SIDON WOMAN
 THOUSAND

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

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