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

402-341-7730

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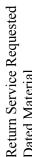
REGULAR SUNDAY EVENTS 9:30 a.m. Christian Education 11:00 a.m. Worship Service

Editor/Church Secretary - Brenda Spahr Pastor - Rev. Dr. Damon D. Laaker Organist - Colleen Jeffrey Sexton - Alma Lopez Delivered to the Post Office February 27

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.



Dated Material





#### **2018 Council Members**

Donna Adrian Tom Emery Marsha Moyer Vicki Cox Arlone Farber Corry Nielsen H

Andrew Edwards Greg Hula Brenda Spahr

Pastor Laaker

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Officers Serving the Congregation:

Financial: Janet Hula Treasurer: Ralph Fitle

The regular meeting of the Council was hald an Entrugry 12th Council

The regular meeting of the Council was held on February 13th. Council members shared their prayer concerns for individual's medical needs; individuals who have lost loved ones, unrest around the world and peace during the Olympics.

<u>Devotions</u>: Pastor led devotions from Proverbs 1:7 and Colossians 1:9. The first speaks about the knowledge of God and the second speaks about gaining knowledge, wisdom and understanding.

<u>Visions for Ministry</u>: Council will need to read to page 20 in "We Are Here Now" by Patrick Keifert.

Pastor read a Lenten letter received from Bishop Maas that spoke about decline in congregations, the fear that surrounds and through reading the Gospel we can remain both Hopeful and Faithful.

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

Christian Education: None.

<u>Evangelism/Outreach</u>: Dinner held on February 11th in partnership with Crossroads Connections was a joyous event for all. During the dinner Pastor Edgar Jimenez from Prince of Peace inquired with interest of the possibility that their congregation may join in for the August dinner.

Vicki attended the Omaha Together One Community meeting held February 12th and reported that OTOC is actively engaging congregation with the knowledge of important issues and looking for anyone with interest to call Senators in regard to TPA and Payday Lending.

OTOC will hold their 9th annual Spring Fundraiser on March 24th at Kaneko, 1111 Jones Street. In support of the fundraiser auction Grace will provide a basket.

Finance: None.

Property: The new water fountain has been installed and is working great!

Leo's Heating has serviced the boiler.

Thank you to Prince of Peace for repairing the ceiling cracks in the kitchen and in the tower.

<u>Service/Social Ministry</u>: Pastor has submitted an application to the Lutheran Volunteer Corps for a Service Volunteer for 2018 - 2019.

Support/Stewardship: None.

Worship: Lent begins with Ash Wednesday which will be hosted at Grace. Maundy Thursday at Grace and Good Friday at St. Luke's. There will be a round robin with 7 congregations (Grace, St. Luke's, Kountze, Bethel, First Lutheran, St. Matthews, and Augustana) The theme will be "We are Lutheran": Grace Alone, Faith Alone, etc.

John Ivo Mounto was here following service on Sunday, February 11th. John's role in South Sudan is similar to a governor; he has moved back to the US for medical reasons and safety. The South Sudan continues in a state of unrest with more than 250,000 people living in refugee camps; please pray for peace.

<u>Unfinished Business</u>: Brenda has volunteered to represent Grace and attend the Synod Assembly in Kearney this year.

<u>New Business</u>: Pastor Laaker has been nominated for Bishop in this election year. Pastor has also been nominated to attend the Churchwide Assembly in July, 2019 held in Milwaukee.

<u>Announcements</u>: Pastor encouraged all to stay healthy. Vicki will bring treats in March.

Terry closed in prayer at 7:55 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted, Brenda Spahr, Secretary

Continued...



Lent has begun. We heard first of the covenant God made with all of creation and Noah. Then, we were first introduced to Jesus' baptism, testing and call. God's time was now. How is this time God's time today?

On the Second Sunday of Lent, we heard first of the covenant God made with Abraham and Sarah. Generations were to follow. Then we heard Jesus teaching that he would undergo great suffering, die and rise again. How are we to follow Jesus in this time?

On the Third Sunday of Lent, we will hear of God's new covenant with the Israelites freed from slavery in Egypt. The gift of the commandments established a new way of life for the freed ones. We will also hear of Jesus' clearing the temple of commercialization. His prediction about his death is puzzling.

On the Fourth Sunday of Lent, life in the desert is tough. It is easier to complain than to trust. The image of a bronze snake on a pole brings life in the midst of death. We will also hear of the visit of Nicodemus to Jesus. How will looking on the crucified Christ bring life in the midst of death?

On the Fifth Sunday of Lent, we will hear of God's plan for a new covenant with the exiles from Babylon. No new law, just a relationship that centers on the heart. Jesus will speak of a grain of wheat needing to die before it can rise and produce in abundance. How does the promise of resurrection instill hope for new life?

On Palm Sunday, we begin with the celebration of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem. Things take a quick turn as the celebration dies away, the plans unfold for Jesus' arrest, quick trial and his death on Golgatha. How might we join those who rejoiced and then watched as injustice led to Jesus' death?

Continued.....

Lent is a marvelous time to journey through the amazing efforts of God's love toward humanity. There is much for us to ponder. May our spiritual pondering lead us to the joy of the resurrection on Easter morning. God is a God of surprises. May this Easter surprise invigorate our lives for service.

Pastor Laaker



**Omaha Together One Community** 

Cordially invites you to

Our Ninth Annual Spring Fundraiser

## **Celebrating Community: Lighting the Way**

Silent Auction \* Cash Bar \* Appetizers \* Music

Saturday, March 24, 2018 6:00 - 9:30 p.m. Kaneko, 1111 Jones Street

Tickets: \$25 per person in advance, \$30 at the door.

Tickets are now available, if you would like to purchase tickets please contact Pastor Laaker or Vicki Cox.

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 Jack Pablo McGill LaVonne Moss Pam Reents Dan Taylor The family of Ken Hilmer The family of Joe Narducci Theresa Courtney Larry Foreman 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-in and Nursing Home resident:

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!



**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.

#### **Grace Reads**

As Grace Lutheran continues their 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. One reader is needed 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.

## **Stewardship Moment:**

Scripture Reading: "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do no destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your



treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matthew 6:19-21).

## **Becoming Rich**

Through the working of the Holy Spirit, Christians come to understand that riches do not solely consist of money. In fact, riches have little to do with money. We can have very little money and be very rich or be very wealthy and be impoverished. True riches have to do with a right relationship with Jesus who brings us satisfaction, joy, love and peace. Material possessions do not constitute real riches.

Material things are transitory. What we possess materially is subject to loss in a variety of ways. Our wealth can be lost in the stock market or through rust, obsolescence, and thievery. No matter how much money we may have, we have no way of guaranteeing that it can be kept safe and secure. Money can be lost, stolen, or its purchasing power lost through inflation. Investments can decline in value and businesses can fail. Our property can be burned or robbed. All material things can be gone quickly. Even if our material things stay with us, we will eventually leave them, because, at the end, we can take nothing with us.

So, if we want to be rich, it cannot be on the basis of material things. Things of this world are much too precarious a foundation on which to build a life. If we are to be rich, we have to turn away from material things and turn toward Christ. In our Scripture reading, Jesus tells us to "store up for yourselves treasures in heaven."

In order for us to store up treasures in heaven, we first need to love God with all of our heart, soul, and strength and love our neighbors as ourselves. To store up treasures in heaven, we need to loosen our grip on things of this world. We need to learn to be content with what we have rather than always wanting more worldly things.

Through faith, we are rich. As Christians, we receive the riches of eternal life with our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.



Palm Sunday, March 25th 9:30 a.m. Conversations 11:00 a.m. Worship with Palms





Maundy Thursday, March 29th Grace Lutheran 5:30 p.m. Potluck Dinner 6:30 p.m. Service

Last year Grace attended St. Luke's Maundy Thursday Service and St. Luke's attended Grace's Good Friday Service. This year we will switch and St. Luke's will join Grace for the Maundy Thursday Service.

Grace has been invited to attend St. Luke's Good Friday Service.

Good Friday, March 30th St. Luke's Lutheran 2315 | Street 7:00 pm







Sunrise Service
Easter Morning, April 1st
Grace Lutheran ~ 6:30 a.m.
Easter Breakfast prepared and served
by the Moyer Family and Friends
following Sunrise Service.
St. Luke's Easter Service
will be at 9:00 a.m.



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, and Mary; 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.



## **Prison Ministry**

Grace received a Thank You note from Diane Greenfield with Crossroads Connection:

Vicki, Mary, Pastor and all of the rest of those who prepared and served the wonderful fellowship meal on Sunday evening, February

11th! It was delicious. Your warm and welcoming hospitality was so appreciated by all. We look forward to August. Blessings, Diane.

The Thank You note has been posted on the bulletin board.

### **Visiting Nurse Association**

VNA is looking for people interest in becoming Hospice volunteers. The Hospice Volunteer Education Class that is conducted by VNA Hospice, Methodist Hospice, CHI Health at Home Hospice, and Hospice House - The Josie Harper Residence will be taking place in March.



Hospice Volunteers are needed to provide companionship and support for individuals living with terminal illnesses and their families. Volunteers choose the hours they are able to serve and determine the geographical location in the metro Omaha/Council Bluffs and surrounding area. We are specifically looking for volunteer support during day time hours and those willing to do in-home visits.

Please call one of the following agencies to request an application. Space is limited.

VNA Hospice: Celeste Feuerbach 402-930-4143 Methodist Hospice: Roz Merrick 402-354-3200

CHI Health at Home Hospice: Mary Pendell 402-989-8239

Hospice House: Brittany Dymm 402-343-8600

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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



Being Lutheran Together: Lent 2018 in Omaha's "non-suburban" congregations

For over 160 years, Lutherans have been actively serving in Omaha. So much has changed in that time: Continual movement to the west; types of jobs; waves of new ethnic groups; activities and values for children and adults; and much more. What role do congregations – planted more than a century ago – have in God's mission in this place today?

Seven congregations in Omaha's urban core have been asking that question together. To help seek God's answer, we will share this season of Lent guided by the theme, *Being Lutheran Together*. The topics are based on material that will be used throughout the Nebraska Synod.

Here, we will get to meet lay-leaders and pastors from our partner congregations. Each congregation will hold mid-week Lenten worship in their customary manner. The topic for the evening will be presented by these teams of lay-leader and pastor from the various congregations. Our goal is to encourage one another as we learn the unique story and ministry of each congregation. And, as we know more about one another we will be strengthened in our mission together.

The Congregations: Augustana traces its ministry to Immanuel Church, founded in 1868; Bethel, 1916; First, 1872; Grace, 1889; Kountze Memorial, 1858; St. Luke, 1905; St. Matthew, 1929. This represents almost 900 years of ministry! And, we are confident God still has work for us to do in our unique settings.

The topics (from the material prepared by the Synod) are: Grace Alone – presented by St. Luke and Grace (of course); Faith Alone – First; Scripture Alone – St. Matthew; Christ Alone – Kountze Memorial; To the Glory of God Alone – Augustana; The Gospel-Evangelical-Alone – Bethel.

Our guests will be as follows:

Wednesday, March 7, Bethel (meeting at St. Luke's) Wednesday, March 14, Kountze (meeting at Grace) Wednesday, March 21, First (meeting at St. Luke's)

We will begin our Lenten journey with Ash Wednesday. Supper at 5:30 pm and Service at 6:30 pm hosted at Grace. Come participate in the journey of Being Lutheran Together.

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This season of Lent, we will walk with people around the world afflicted by war, displacement and poverty by collecting and assembling Lutheran World Relief Personal Care Kits.



During Lent, Grace will be collecting items each week to assemble 30 Personal Care Kits on Palm Sunday, March 25th following worship services. The Personal Care Kits provide basic sanitation and hygiene items for families who have lost their belongings in some of natures devastating disasters. These kits help individuals to stay healthy, clean, and preserve personal dignity.

Items needed to complete a Basket of Promise are:

February 25th Bar of Soap (4 to 5 ox., any brand, in

original wrapping).

March 4th Bath Towels (light-weight, maximum 52" x 27",

dark color recommended).

March 11th Toothbrushes (adult size, in original packaging).

March 18th Combs.

March 25th Nail Clippers (metal, attached file optional).

You can be a part of this Lenten journey and bring an item or two and brighten the hope, faith, and future of an individual or a family through Lutheran World Relief.

## March 2018



- 4 Brenda Spahr
- 11 Terry Nielsen
- 18 Arlone Farber
- 25 Greg Hula
- 29 Mary Laaker
- Apr. 1 Brenda Spahr



- 4 Janet Hula
- 11 Greg Hula
- 18 Brenda Spahr
- 25 Damien Rodriguez
- 29 Donna Adrian

Apr. 1 - Andrea Spahr and Vicki Cox



- 9 Andrew Edwards
- 12 Mary Laaker Carolyn Matson
- 13 Hannan Koka
- 14 Suata Lewa
- 16 Martina Koka
- 19 Craig Helm
- 21 Catlin Cuffe
- 22 Marsha Moyer Regina Lewa
- 24 Esahia Nyiwe
- 27 Abigail Hegarty

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

## **March Ushers**

Vicki Cox Oren Powley Andrew Edwards





## **March Greeters**

- 4 Bobby Stechenfinger and Mary Laaker
- 11 Ralph Fitle and Andrew Edwards
- 18 Greg and Janet Hula
- 25 Sarah and Madison Emery

Apr. 1 - Ron and Donna Adrian

## Responsibility List

## **Altar Flowers**



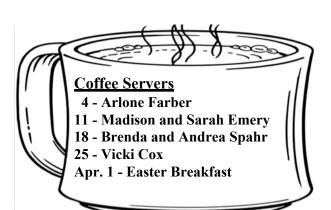
- 4 Terry and Sandy Nielsen in loving memory of their parents.
- 11 June Hilmer in loving memory of her husband, Ken's birthday.
- 18 OPEN.
- 25 Ron and Donna Adrian in celebration of their granddaughter, Madelyn's birthday.
- Apr. 1 Brenda Spahr in celebration of her Mom, Eva Martin's birthday.

Flower Pick-Up for March: Mary Laaker



## **Backpack Program**

- 4 Brenda Spahr in celebration of her daughter, Andrea's baptismal anniversary.
- 11 OPEN.
- 18 Vicki Cox for all who face hunger issues.
- 25 Ron and Donna Adrian in celebration of their granddaughter, Madelyn's birthday.
- Apr. 1 Mary Laaker in celebration for her daughter, Sarah and her grandson, Tommy's birthdays.









# 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.

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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.

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You are invited to St. Thomas Lutheran Church, 17007 Q Street on Friday, March 9th from 5:30 to 8:30 pm to celebrate a Decade of Table Grace Ministries. This year's fundraiser is in memory of Grace Hansen. Along with Dinner there will be a Silent Auction and awesome Music.

You can purchase your tickets at www.tablegraceministries.com or call Simone Weber at 402-965-1276. Please reserve your table or tickets by March 3, 2018.

Table Grace is also working on Mobile Grace Cafe - A Food Truck for All. The food truck program will allow them to reach many more neighborhoods within the Omaha Metro Area.

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.\*

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## 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.



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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!



## Place Your Order for Easter Lilies by Sunday, March 18th

\$8.50

Celebrate Christ's resurrection by ordering your Easter Lily and help make the sanctuary both visually and aormatically beautiful! A sign up sheet has been posted on the bulletin board, or you may call the office, 402-341-7730 to place your order.



The Easter Lily. For many, the beautiful trumpet-shaped white flowers symbolize purity, virtue, innocence, hope and life - the spiritual essence of Easter.

The pure white lily has long been closely associated with the Virgin Mary. In early paintings, the Angel Gabriel is pictured extending to the Virgin Mary a branch of our white lilies, announcing that she is to be the mother of the Christ Child. In other paintings, saints are pictured bringing vases full of white lilies to Mary and the infant Jesus. St. Joseph is depicted holding a lily branch in his hand, indicating that his wife Mary was a virgin.

A mark of purity and grace throughout the ages, the regal white lily is a fitting symbol of the greater meaning of Easter. Gracing millions of homes and churches, the flowers embody joy, hope and life. Whether given as a gift or enjoyed in your own home, the Easter Lily, along with other Easter blooms, serves as a beautiful reminder that Easter is a time for rejoicing and celebrating.

 $shared\ from\ Appleseeds.org$ 





The Greater Omaha (Detro Area Momeschool Community and One For All (Dusical Theater A Monprofit Organization presents



The Salvation Army Kroc Center Omaha

2825 Y Street Omaha, Nebraska



Showtimes for Thursday March 8th through Saturday March 10th begin at 7:00 p.m. and a 2:00 p.m. matinee on Sunday, March 11th. Tickets are now on sale at www.Cinderella2018Omaha.com

Tickets are

If you are unable to purchase tickets online, there is now the opportunity to buy paper tickets! If you are interested, please speak with Brenda Spahr.



Two of Grace's young adults are part of the production; Andrea Spahr and Marissa Halfhill.

## **Health Tips for Lent**

"Jesus models fasting and assumes his disciples will do so as well. Fasting is healthy for the body."

Etta Dale Hornsteiner, Author, The Ten Guiding Lights to Health and Wholeness

"Take care of your body. It's the only place you have to live."

Jim Rohn

"Eat the foods God created for you."

Rex Russell, M.D., Radiologist, Mayo Clinic

"The way he treats his body, you'd think he was renting."

Robert Brault

"Movement is medicine."

Donald L. Cooper, M.D., Stillwater, OK

"The best place for your bathroom scale is in front of your refrigerator."

Jim Reed

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St. Patrick's Day Blessing

May your joys be as deep as the oceans, your troubles as light as its foam.

And may you find sweet peace of mind, wherever you roam.

May your thoughts be as glad as the shamrock, May your heart be light as a song,

May each day bring you bright happy hours, That stay with you all the years long.

~ via Norma Sims, Eustis, FL reprinted with permission from JoyfulNoiseletter.com



#### Bible Wordsearch 🤻 Peter the Rock BIND ANGELS DNUOBLFORFEIT **BEHIND** BOUND ASYEKDICROSSBHR **BUILD BLESSED** NDNIHEBTRUTHUBE CHRIST CHURCH COMING CROSS RLSUSEJWEDRIET GAINS **ELDERS** EAUSTONOAECNLLE **FATHER** GATES LWOENORCSHDTDDP **GLORY** FOLLOW SESOMLHIBFATHER GOOD **FORFEITS HADES** CRTIDEADPLGGMRH HEAVEN **HANDS** KINGDOM SOSSRREYREEAOSA LOOSED **JESUS** ECMSINRYIWKSTON JONAH **PRIESTS** DGYIRRRFETOUSED **KEYS** REBUKE AOAANOHRSVALBES PETER REWARD H M W I L G C C T E A S L E D ROCK **TEACHERS** SAVE RAISED MODGNIKKSRCSTOR TRUTH SIMON JONAHSYNEVAEHEF SOUL WARNED **TASTE** WORLD 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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Daylight Saving Time Begins on Sunday, March 11th!

Remember to change your clocks on March 10th.