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1326 South 26th Street

Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church

402-341-7730

www.facebook.com/gracelutheranomaha Email: graceluth@graceluth.com Web Site: www.graceluth.com Like us on Facebook at:

Return Service Requested

Dated Material

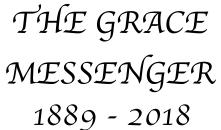
REGULAR SUNDAY EVENTS 9:30 a.m. Christian Education 11:00 a.m. Worship Service

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

Delivered to the Post Office April 24

Permit No. 39 Omaha NE PAID







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



2018 Council Members

Donna Adrian Vicki Cox Andrew Edwards Tom Emery Arlone Farber Greg Hula Terry Nielsen Brenda Spahr Marsha Moyer Pastor Laaker

************* Officers Serving the Congregation:

Financial: Janet Hula Treasurer: Ralph Fitle

The regular meeting of the Council was held on April 17th. Council members shared their prayer concerns for individual's medical needs; unrest in Syria, Iraq, Sudan and around the world; and for wisdom for world leaders.

Devotions: Pastor led devotions from Isaiah 58:7 and 1 John 4:19. The first reminds us how we should clothe, feed, accept and care for those less fortunate and the second speaks about God's unconditional love and leads us to ponder who taught us to love; parent, grandparent or a special caregiver.

Visions for Ministry: Council discussed Chapter 1; conversations led from the statement "We start where we are" and continued how each individual church is different, some are more inviting than others and how it feels that today Grace seems to be intentional about being inviting to ANY visitor that attends. Traditional churches are in a time of decline or in a time of change? This gives us hope that we are not in a decline, always ready to grow in the possibilities for experiments and changes within active programs like Crossroad Connections, Grace Reads, and ESL classes. Council will read Chapter 2 in "We Are Here Now" by Patrick Keifert before the next meeting.

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

Christian Education: Vicki will talk with Amanda regarding this summer's VBS program.

Council received a flyer for Lutheran Youth Serving Omaha in early June. This is a VBS alternative for one week to serve different organizations in the Metro area. Council members are encouraged to share this information with any youth they think might benefit from this opportunity.

Evangelism/Outreach: Pastor did not receive any follow-up notices from the first round of Lutheran Volunteer Corp for 2018-2019, we will wait for round 2.

Continued...

Finance: Council received the Endowment Board Report and after a brief discussion Council ratified the proposed funding.

Property: Boiler permits have been taken care of and Grace is once again legal!

The Backflow Devices underwent the annual inspection and all is working properly.

Table Grace has asked for permission to park their new Food Trailer in our parking lot 2 to 3 times a week. Council read, discussed and made one change to the Agreement between Table Grace Mobile Café and Grace Lutheran. The Agreement will be reviewed annually.

Service/Social Ministry: Five seats are still available for the TriFaith Initiative Dinner in Abraham's Tent this Sunday, April 22, if interested please speak with Pastor asap.

Support/Stewardship: None.

Worship: Nebraska Brass Concert will be here at Grace on Friday, May 11th at 7:30 pm. Volunteers are needed for a cookie reception intermission. Additional volunteers will be in need to sell tickets and pass out any programs.

Unfinished Business: Grace donated a Basket for the OTOC Spring Fundraiser with the theme of a Women's Day Spa.

Vicki will reach out to Prince of Peace and schedule a meeting in late May or early June to discuss working together for the next Crossroads Connection dinner.

New Business: Council received a draft Policies for Congregation Computer and Internet Use and Ethics. Council was asked to read the policies and bring any thoughts and feedback to next month's meeting.

Pastor provided a policy in support of Metro Omaha Tobacco Action Coalition's agreement for a Tobacco-Free Parks Initiative. Council has agreed to support this initiative.

Announcements: Pastor will be on vacation the week of April 23rd, Pastor Joyce Miller will be here on Sunday, April 29th.

Pastor will bring treats in May. Marsha closed in prayer at 8:33 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted, Brenda Spahr, Secretary



In recent months, there has been a number of articles and conversation about the decline that each of our Urban congregations face. We have had meetings and have shared our lament and our ideas. Last week, in a weekly blog on Day 8 Strategies, Rev. Dr. David Daubert shared these thoughts:

God Always Goes First

In the midst of congregational decline, it can be easy to slip into the, "What are we going to do about it?" mode of thinking. Of course, it is a good question and one that must be asked. But it is not really the first question to be asked. It is really a follow up question.

The first question in renewal is always, "What is God doing?" Jesus is clear, apart from what God does, we can do nothing. We can be busy and feel like we are doing something. We can convince ourselves that we are working hard, digging in deep, and fighting the good fight. But none of this is of lasting value if it is not connected to the first (and always the most important question), which is, "What is God doing?"

The second question in renewal is always built on the first. That's why you have to ask the first question first – it really is the first question. The second question is, "In light of what God is working on, what should we do?" And this second question should be an almost instinctive, knee jerk reaction to the first. Once we see what God has done and is doing, our desire to respond is the natural desire of faith.

Nowhere is this pattern more obvious that in Peter's Pentecost sermon. Peter tells what God has done in the death and resurrection of Jesus. People see that God is doing an amazing and new thing and they ask, "What then should we do?"

Peter tells them to "repent" and "be baptized." In other words, commit to being different than you have been and be joined to the life, death and resurrection of Jesus through whom God is working.

This pattern seems to be the basic pattern for every aspect of Christian life. God acts. People wonder how to respond. They are called to be transformed and be joined to the work of God.

Continued....

What would it look like in the congregation where you lead or participate if the first question around every major decision and every brainstorming session was, "What is God doing?" And only after people were able to wrestle with and try to answer that question, could they then move on to, "In light of that, what should we do?"

"In light of that..." requires that we decided, as a community of the faithful what "that" the light is pointing to. Figuring out what God is up to is always the first step in vibrant and meaningful ministry. Without it, the church may still exist as an organization, but it ceases to be an intentional instrument of God's mission in the world.

This leads me to pause and reflect on the effort to discern what is God up to in our immediate communities. What are the clues that the Spirit offers in this discernment? Now, in light of that, what should we do?

Please join me in thinking and responding to the clues that God's Spirit presents before us.

Pastor Damon Laaker



Arts For All, Inc (AFA) serves thousands of local students each year, many of whom would not otherwise have opportunities to receive arts education.

Summer semester is just around the corner! The upcoming semester is 8 weeks long and includes the variety of classes you come to expect from Arts For All, Inc. Summer classes begin the week of June 4th. Register online at artsforallinc.com or call 402-556-7821. Cost is \$10.00 per class with a \$20 deposit which goes toward the total tuition.

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:

Theresa Courtney Jayne Gustafson Jack Pablo McGill LaVonne Moss Pam Reents Dan Taylor



Andrew Edwards 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:

Mickey Andersen - Home 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 May 16, 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.





Grace Lutheran concludes their school year partnership with Liberty Elementary this month. During the summer break, consider the opportunity to be a reader in the 2018 - 2019 school year. If you would like to hear some inspirational stories and

experiences from this past school year, please speak to any of the readers; Vicki, Arlone, Sandy, Eva, Brenda, Mary and Pastor Laaker. 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.



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 students through the "Grace Reads" partnership. Enjoy your summer break!

Congratulations on your Graduation
Andrea Spahr!

The Lord is my light and my salvation;
whom shall I fear?
The Lord is the stronghold of my life;
The Lord is the stronghold of whom shall I be afraid?

Psalms 27:1

Psalms 27:1

Psalms 27:1



Mother's Day Brunch May 13, 2018 9:00 am - 1:00 pm

Morning Star Lutheran Church, 331 S. 85th Avenue, is hosting a Mother's Day Brunch catered by Table Grace Cafe. Morning Star's worship times are 8:30 am and 10:30 am. Brunch prices are \$18 for adults, \$12 for children ages 8 - 12, ages 4 - 7 is \$6.00 and 3 years or younger are free.

Please RSVP online at www.tablegracecafe.com or by calling 402-965-1275 by Friday, May 11th

Mobile Grace Cafe Food Truck

A FOOD TRUCK FOR ALL

Your donations have helped Table Grace
Cafe's current service programs to allow
feeding more people with equity and

expand the 10-Day Job Readiness program, thereby increasing participants' competitiveness and readiness in the growing food service industry. Which now includes Omaha's first ever "Pay" What-You-Can food truck.

To stay informed of what's happening at Table Grace or Mobile Grace, please visit the following websites:

Tablegracecafe.com and Mobilegracecafe.com

Mission Statement - to foster a healthy community by offering great food prepared and served in a graceful manner to anyone who walks up to the truck.

Seven Financial Stewardship Myths from The Parish Paper

Church leaders frequently share with one another the following inaccurate statements that they believe to be true:

- 1. "Christians automatically commit themselves to generous financial stewardship." Wrong! Strong financial giving habits, like every other aspect of Christian discipleship, happen through education, repeated decisions, and continued personal growth.
- 2. "If worship attendance is high, the money takes care of itself." Wrong! Every church's financial secretary knows that this is inaccurate.
- 3. "Our people are giving all they can." Wrong! Among Americans who regularly attend worship, only 26 percent give 10 percent of their income. The average across the ELCA for individual giving is 1.9 percent.
- 4. "telling people 'Our church needs the money!' produces generous giving." Wrong! Centering a stewardship appeal on "Let's be loyal to our church and balance the budget!" produces much lower giving levels than asking people to give out of thankfulness for God's blessings, love for God, obedience to Scripture, or to help hurting people.
- 5. "People will increase their giving to support our increased budget needs without us annually asking them to consider doing so." Wrong! People tend to continue the same pattern of giving unless someone asks them to consider changing that pattern.
- 6. "Our church should use methods that work well in civic organizations and philanthropic causes." Wrong! Fund raising for nonprofit organizations in the community is as different from Christian stewardship as a bicycle is from an eighteen-wheeler. Both are valid forms of transportation but they are not interchangeable.
- 7. "Our members will give generously without us teaching the biblical principle that giving money is an essential part of spiritual growth." Wrong! Failure to repeatedly teach biblically based financial stewardship keeps churches in the poverty category. Generous giving follows effective stewardship programs and biblical teaching regarding the connection between giving money and growing rich toward God.

Jesus had a lot to say about stewardship. Yes, that includes money, too. Have you considered your stewardship response as an example of your faith in God's abundant goodness? If not, give some thought to the question. If so, how is it going? May God supply in abundance your needs and motivate you to share abundantly.

Nebraska Brass Concert Summer Sizzlin' Brass Selections Friday, May 11, 2018, 7:30 p.m. Grace Lutheran Church



Come enjoy an evening of entertaining music, fantastic fellowship, and delicious refreshments!

Founded in 1987, the Nebraska Brass is one of the Midwest's most popular brass quintets. Audiences young and old enjoy the group's serious musicianship and light-hearted humor as they present a variety of music ranging from classical to popular, Dixieland, and jazz. The ensemble presents an annual series of five concerts in both Lincoln and Omaha, as well as five additional series concerts in other Nebraska communities. In addition, the Nebraska Brass participates in the touring programs of the Nebraska Arts Council and the Heartland Arts Fund, performing throughout the Midwest.

The Nebraska Brass is dedicated to preserving the great American tradition of brass music and to providing educational programs for young musicians to improve their musical skills. The Nebraska Brass commissions new compositions for brass ensemble and also provides an outlet for professional musicians to improve their skills while presenting a professional series of concerts of the highest quality for the citizens of Nebraska.

Ticket prices are: adults \$15, seniors \$12 and students are free.

For additional information please contact the Nebraska Brass at nb@artsincorporated.org or by calling 402-477-7899.





May 2018



6 - Brenda Spahr

13 - Terry Nielsen

20 - Mary Laaker

27 - Greg Hula

June 3 - Brenda Spahr



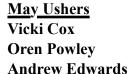
6 - Donna Adrian

13 - Vicki Cox

20 - Andrea Spahr

27 - Janet Hula

June 3 - Greg Hula







7 – Christi Edwards James Harrahill

8 – Ellison Simon

10 – Juan Vazquez

13 – Danaka Ashcraft

16 – Marissa Halfhill **Alexandra Everitt**

21 – Jessica Armstrong

22 – Parsila Dike

25 – Arlone Farber

26 – Estir Lewa

27 – Brenda Anzalone **Donna Adrian**

31 – David Wallace **Edda Nyiwe**

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

Ushers & Greeters

May Greeters

6 - Andrew Edwards and Mary Laaker

13 - Janet and Greg Hula

20 - Sarah and Madison Emery

27 - Gloria Moore and Vicki Cox

June 3 - Donna and Ron Adrian

Responsibility List

Altar Flowers



6 - Andrew, Clay, Christi Edwards and Trace Petrini in loving memory of their Mom, Charlotte Edwards.

13 - John and Brenda Spahr in celebration of their daughter, Andrea's Graduation.

20 - Ron Adrian in celebration of his wife, Donna and their daughter, Brenda's birthdays.

27 - Marilyn Van Ormer, Charlotte and Ed Palczynski in loving memory of their parents.

June 3 - Terry and Sandy Nielsen in celebration of their 40th Wedding Anniversary.

Flower Pick-Up for May: Mary Laaker



Backpack Program

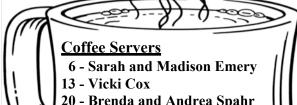
6 - OPEN.

13 - Arlone Farber for awareness of all who face hunger issues.

20 - OPEN.

27 - Ron Adrian in celebration of his wife, Donna and their daughter, Brenda's birthdays.

June 3 - Marilyn Van Ormer in celebration of her granddaughter, Kristen's birthday.



20 - Brenda and Andrea Spahr

27 - Mary Laaker

June 3 - Donna and Ron Adrian

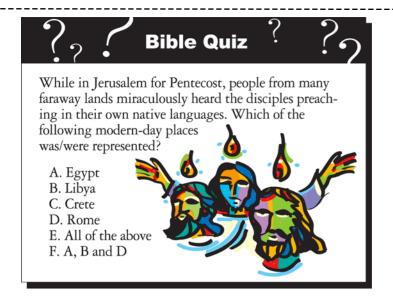




Adult Faith Formation ~ The Apostle's Creed Saturday, May 19th ~ 9:00 am - 4:00 pm

What are we actually saying when we profess the creed? How do I put words to my own faith? What is God's work in the world? During this course, we will dive into these questions in the context of the Apostles' Creed from Luther's Small Catechism.

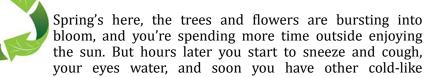
Prior to the course, participants are invited to email any questions on faith or religion to Pastor Paula at PLawhead@NLOM.org. These questions will be incorporated into the class content as often as possible. Pastor Paula prefers to teach using the questions of the people in the room so what you are learning is what you want to know.





Please wear red or orange on Sunday, May 20th in observance of Pentecost!

Kick Seasonal Allergies Naturally



symptoms. According to the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA), you're one of nearly 40 million Americans who have indoor/outdoor allergies that show up as the seasons change.

The not-so great news for allergy sufferers: trees and grasses - the biggest culprits of seasonal allergies - are blossoming earlier and sticking around longer because of climate change. This means allergy season is getting longer, too!

If you are a seasonal sufferer who's looking for ways to treat allergies other than medication, here are some tips for natural relief:

First, get tested for regional allergies. The seasonal allergies you have depend upon where you live and what kind of allergens are in the air. If you live in an area with high humidity, your allergic reaction will likely be stronger as pollen thrives in these areas. Getting tested for allergies can help you determine what's causing your symptoms and how best to treat them.

Some experts swear by nasal rinses to wash out the allergens that get in your nose. Irrigation with neti pots, hydrating irrigating units, and squeeze bottles are becoming more mainstream - some experts think the treatment is even more effective than medication! Nasal irrigation - rinsing the nose and nasal passages, typically with a salt water solution - is a cheap and easy way to alleviate allergy symptoms. You can even do the rinse yourself at home.

Clean your home regularly to reduce indoor allergies. Twenty percent of Americans have not just one, but two kinds of allergies, so staying indoors isn't always the best option when you're trying to escape those irritants.

Sadly, all the tissues you do end up using during allergy season can't be recycled - used tissues just aren't recyclable, despite being paper products. So consider buying tissues and toilet paper made from recycled paper or use a cloth handkerchief.

earthshare.org

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.



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.

Lutheran South Pantry 4401 South 23rd Street 402-502-7070



Items that clients cannot purchase with their food stamps are always appreciated: Dish Soap, Kleenex, Bar Soap, Deodorant, Toothbrush and toothpaste, Shaving Cream, Razors, Mouthwash (without alcohol), Feminine hygiene products, Hair products (combs, brushes, picks), Bathroom tissue, Shampoo, Dry Laundry Soap, Can Openers, Diaper wipers, and Diapers, especially sizes 4, 5, 6 and pull-ups.

We always need paper or plastic bags.



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

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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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

Free Trash Dump! Columbus Park Neighborhood Clean Up



May 12, 2018 9:00am – 2:00pm Only No early Drop Offs! Columbus Park Community
Center Parking Lot
1515 S 24th Street

Metal: We are accepting iron, steel, brass, aluminum and car parts.

Tires: We are accepting tires and batteries.

We are accepting bulky materials.

Please consider donating your usable items to St. Vincent DePaul.

The new director of Good Neighbor Ministries is Paul Dyke. Please feel free to stop by Faith Bible Church, 1213 South 27th Street, to visit or you can send an email at paul@goodneighbornetwork.net.



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 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.

You Know You're a Mom When....

You count the sprinkles on each child's cupcake to make sure they are equal.

You want to take out a contract on the kid who broke your child's favorite toy and made him or her cry.

You have time to shave only one leg at a time.

You hide in the bathroom to be alone.

Your child throws up, and you catch it.

You mastered the art of placing large quantities of pancakes and eggs on a plate without anything touching.

You hire a sitter because you haven't been out with your husband in ages, then spend half the night talking about and checking on the children.

You hope ketchup is a vegetable because it is the only one your child eats.

You find yourself cutting your husband's sandwiches into unusual shapes.

You fast-forward through the scene when the hunter shoots Bambi's mother.

You use your own saliva to clean your child's face.

You cannot bear to give away baby clothes - it is so final.

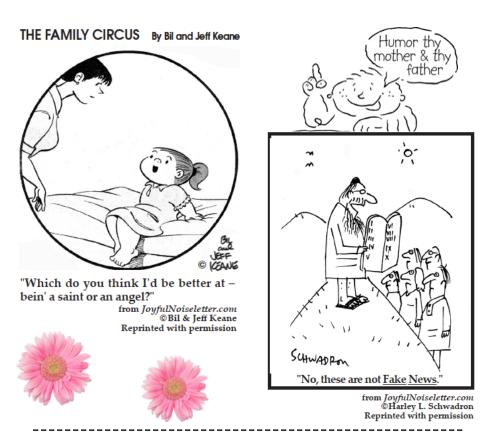
You read that the average five-year-old asks 437 questions a day and feel proud that your child is above average.

You say at least once a day, "I am not cut out for this job", but you know you would not trade it for anything in the world.

shared by skywriting.net







Easter Potpourri - JoyfulNoiseletter.com

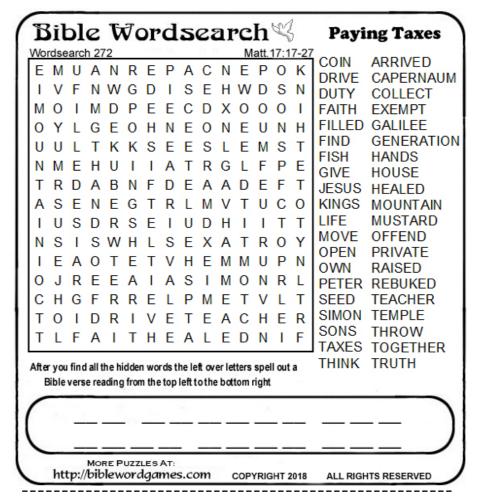
Rev. Gary Sims of Urbandale, IA, reported to Rev. Dale Schoening of Madrid. IA:

"I'm combining Easter and April Fools' Day this year. I'm sending the kids out to look for eggs I haven't hidden."

It was Palm Sunday, and because he had a cold, five-year-old Johnny stayed home from church with a sitter. When the family returned home, they were carrying several palm branches.

The boy asked what they were for. "People held them over Jesus' head as He walked by," his father explained.

"Wouldn't you know it," the boy fumed. "The one Sunday I don't go, Jesus shows up."



Signs and Wonders - JoyfulNoiseletter.com

Sign outside Faith Evangelical Church, Moline, IL:

"Pray is a 4-letter word you can use anywhere."

~ via Joe Brozovich, East Moline, IL

Seen on a bumper sticker in Iowa:

"There is only ONE God. Quit applying for His position."

~ via Rev. Dale A. Schoening, Madrid, IA

Correction: The church sign seen outside of Gethsemane Lutheran Church, St. Louis, by Mark Herbers of St. Louis should have read: "The Holy Trinity is not Me, Myself and I."