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

402-341-7730

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

Editor/Church Secretary - Brenda Spahr Pastor - Rev. Dr. Damon D. Laaker REGULAR SUNDAY EVENTS 9:30 a.m. Christian Education 11:00 a.m. Worship Service Organist - Colleen Jeffrey Sexton - Alma Lopez

Delivered to the Post Office June 26

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.



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2018 Council Members

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

Officers Serving the Congregation:

Financial: Janet Hula Treasurer: Ralph Fitle

The regular meeting of the Council was held on June 12th. Council members shared their prayer concerns for individual's medical needs; individuals seeking help through suicide prevention; concern surrounding the peace talks in North & South Korea; concern for countries in conflict including Iraq and Sudan; for the people involved in both the wildfires and the Hawaiian Islands; praise for individuals with good medical outcomes including recent births in the family.

Devotions: Pastor led devotions from Jeremiah 14:9 and Galatians 3:26. The first reminds us that anyone who might be in the midst of depression that God is always with us. A nice connection was made with our assigned reading; what is God calling us to do. The second speaks how we are children of God and as children we are to grow in our faith and share or serve to other individuals.

Visions for Ministry: Council discussed part of Chapter 3 and the connections it reveals to lead us to serve and how the mysteries of God has brought a partnership with Loaves and Fishes Pantry. Council Member are asked to reread Chapter 3 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 and Amanda will hold a VBS planning meeting following worship service on June 24th. Amanda has ordered VBS materials for "Lego: Building on Jesus; Faith." Ron received funds from Thrivent in support of Vacation Bible School.

The Cluster Churches will be gathering at St. Matthews on Monday, June 25th to discuss and share Sunday School ideas. Brenda will attend the meeting.

Evangelism/Outreach: Grace has received the good news that Tyler Birkhoff will be our Lutheran Volunteer Corps member assigned for 2018-2019. Tyler is currently working at an ELCA Wisconsin Summer Camp and will begin at Grace on August 20th.

Pastor Laaker provided an OTOC handout titled "Who is my neighbor" and encouraged council members to please read.

There will be a Guardian Angel Training session at St. Matthew's on September 22nd, the meeting time will be set soon.

Continued...

Finance: Please review Policy Proposals for next month's meeting.

Property: The air conditioning units have been serviced, it was discovered that the big unit is loosing Freon and will need to be watched closely.

The big drain in the parking lot is required to be inspected on a yearly basis, the drain was recently inspected and Grace received the report stating everything is working properly.

The sprinkler system was serviced and is working great.

Several Door Closers were recently repaired and the doors are now closing nicely. In addition, the north hall door will stay open when needed.

Service/Social Ministry: Grace will host the Crossroads Ministry meal on Sunday, August 5th, Colleen has agreed to play for the service and Mary, Arlone and Amanda will be in charge as Vicki will be out of town that weekend. There will be a sign up sheet for volunteer opportunities posted on the bulletin board.

Support/Stewardship: None.

Worship: Grace council has agreed to host a Nebraska Brass Concert during their Christmas tours, a date will be picked soon.

Unfinished Business: None.

New Business: The Council listened to a visitor, Mary Thompson, as she shared with much enthusiasm, the opportunity to serve our surrounding neighborhood and others in need with a new adventure call Loaves and Fishes Pantry. Trader Joe's and Whole Foods donate foods that are close to expiration. A group of volunteers collect those donations early every Sunday morning and deliver them to Grace and will help put all the items either in freezers or refrigerators. Then on Monday mornings individuals in need are invited to pick out items to provide for themselves or for families. After a long discussion, Grace Council agreed to enter in this new adventure of serving those in need. Volunteer opportunities will be given to anyone interested in helping out in the pantry.

Announcements: There will be a Council Gathering from the six cluster churches on Wednesday, August 22nd to participate in cross conversations and enjoy three different meal courses at three different locations. Bethel, Augustana, and St. Luke's, please reserve the day.

Please read the Creative Leaders handout provided by Pastor, there will be no quiz.

Arlone will bring treats in July. Brenda closed in prayer at 8:58 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted, Brenda Spahr, Secretary



Each day I receive and read a devotional piece from Richard Rohr. I find myself often in tune with his thoughtful presentation of a meditation. On Tuesday, June 19, he shared the following:

Earlier this year, I collaborated with a group of Christian leaders in the United States to write a statement to our churches, "Reclaiming Jesus: A Confession of Faith in a Time of Crisis." I invite you to meditate on three of our affirmations:

The church's role is to change the world through the life and love of Jesus Christ. The government's role is to serve the common good by protecting justice and peace, rewarding good behavior while restraining bad behavior (Romans 13). When that role is undermined by political leadership, faith leaders must stand up and speak out. Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said, "The church must be reminded that it is not the master or the servant of the state, but rather the conscience of the state." [2]

I. WE BELIEVE each human being is made in God's image and likeness (Genesis 1:26). That image and likeness confers a divinely decreed dignity, worth, and God-given equality to all of us as children of the one God who is the Creator of all things. Racial bigotry is a brutal denial of the image of God (the *imago dei*) in some of the children of God. Our participation in the global community of Christ absolutely prevents any toleration of racial bigotry. Racial justice and healing are biblical and theological issues for us, and are central to the mission of the body of Christ in the world. We give thanks for the prophetic role of the historic black churches in America when they have called for a more faithful gospel.

II. WE BELIEVE we are one body. In Christ, there is to be no oppression based on race, gender, identity, or class (Galatians 3:28). [I would add sexual orientation as well.] The body of Christ, where those great human divisions are to be overcome, is meant to be an example for the rest of society. When we fail to overcome these oppressive obstacles, and even perpetuate them, we have failed in our vocation to the world—to proclaim and live the reconciling gospel of Christ.

III. WE BELIEVE how we treat the hungry, the thirsty, the naked, the stranger, the sick, and the prisoner is how we treat Christ himself. "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me" (Matthew 25:40). God calls us to protect and seek justice for those who are poor and vulnerable, and our treatment of people who are "oppressed," "strangers," "outsiders," or otherwise considered "marginal" is a test of our relationship to God, who made us all equal in divine dignity and love. Our proclamation of the lordship of Jesus Christ is at stake in our solidarity with the most vulnerable. If our gospel is not "good news to the poor," it is not the gospel of Jesus Christ (Luke 4:18).

I am hopeful that our ministry together exemplifies these important beliefs.

Pastor Damon Laaker

Prison Ministry



Grace will host the Crossroads Connection Sunday evening meal on August 5th. If you are interested in this inspiring opportunity to set up, plan the menu, serving the meal and clean up, please speak with Vicki or call the church office.

Continued....

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





Prayer Service Wednesday July 18, 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 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.



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.



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. Enjoy your summer break!
- 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.

MOTAC - Metro Omaha Tobacco Action Coalition Tobacco Free Parks

Send a positive message to youth, families, and athletes.

Decrease ugly tobacco litter that can be ingested by children and animals.

Ensure adults serve as positive role models.



Decrease secondhand smoke exposure.

For more information please visit: TobaccoFreeForMe.org

Your Cafe's

Mobile Grace Cafe Food Truck

A FOOD TRUCK FOR ALL 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.

Grace's Free Little Library continues to be used in the neighborhood on a regular basis and continues to be 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 denote please greak with

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 encourage the youth this summer through reading a good book!

Stewardship Moment Love through Faith

What is it that precedes the disciples' request of Jesus to increase their faith? Luke 17:1-10. It is Jesus command to count others so precious as to avoid putting any kind of temptation in their paths. It is his command to love others so dearly that they would forgive without limit.

How is this possible? If we are honest with ourselves, we must admit that, in and of ourselves, we cannot follow these commands. Then we, like the disciples, must ask of our Lord, "*Increase our faith*."

How does Jesus respond to their request? He assures them that even faith as small as a mustard seed can accomplish great things. It is God who gives the faith, and it is God who gives us the ability to act on it. It is God who gives us the love through faith that sacrifices our own desires for the good of others, love through faith that knows no limit, love through faith that serves instead of asking to be served.

It is faith that gives us such love for God and our neighbor that we serve and help and give without thought of reward, so that we "when [we] have done everything [we] were told to do, should say, 'We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty'" (Luke 17:10).



Carol Joy Holling Camp 30th Annual Quilt Auction Saturday, July 28th 9:30 a.m.



Join in this exciting day with good food, great fun and lots of beautiful quilts donated by friends of Carol Joy Holling Camp. The auction and barbecue lunch will be held rain or shine. (The Town Hall will be used in case of rain.) Bring your family and friends!

There is an opportunity to go online at www.caroljoyholling.org to preview all the quilts that have been so generously donated. If you have any questions please call Heather Abbott at 1-402-944-2544 or you can email Heather at habbott@nlom.org.

A special thanks to Thrivent Financial for Lutherans Chapters across Nebraska for sponsorship of the Quilt Auction.

Below is the Schedule for this exciting day!

Event Schedule

9:00 a.m. Quilts on Display 9:30 a.m. Auction Begins 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. Silent Auction Bidding 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. Barbecue Lunch

2:00 p.m. Service Project Quilt Blessing

12:30 - 5:00 p.m. Swimming, Paddleboating, & Canoeing

Hayrack Rides & Camp Tours

Free Parking and Admission

HUGE Barbecue Lunch: Adults ~ \$6, Kids (4~12) \$3, 3 & Younger ~ Free

Lord's Laughter ~ JoyfulNoiseletter.com

The doctor called Mrs. Cohen and said, "Mrs. Cohen, your check came back."

"So did my arthritis," Mrs. Cohen replied.

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"My wife and I always hold hands when we go downtown," Abe Goldberg told a friend. "If I let go, she shops."

# July 2018



- 1 Greg Hula
- 8 Brenda Spahr
- 15 Mary Laaker
- 22 Terry Nielsen
- 29 Arlone Farber
- Aug 5 Greg Hula



# July Acolytes

- 1 Andrea Spahr
- 8 Janet Hula
- 15 Vicki Cox
- 22 Greg Hula
- 29 Damien Rodriguez
- Aug 5 Donna Adrian



- 4 Bryce Bojanski
- 8 Charles Farber
- 9 Madison Emery
- 11 LaVonne Moss Urbano Vasquez
- 17 Caleb Ketelson
- 20 Dustin Moyer
- 24 Angela Everitt Aden Hargis
- 25 Samantha Moyer

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

# **July Ushers**

Vicki Cox
Oren Powley
Andrew Edwards





# **July Greeters**

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

Aug 5 - Bobby Stechenfinger and Mary Laaker

# Responsibility List

# **Altar Flowers**

- 1 OPEN.
- 8 Damien Rodriguez in celebration of his Mom, Nena's birthday.
- 15 OPEN.
- 22 Greg and Janet Hula in celebration of July birthdays.
- 29 OPEN.
- Aug 5 OPEN.

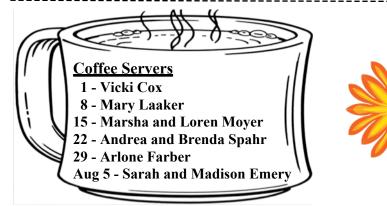
Flower Pick-Up for July:



# **Backpack Program**

- 1 Brenda Spahr.
- 8 Pastor and Mary Laaker in celebration of their granddaughter, Madison's birthday.
- 15 OPEN.
- 22 OPEN.
- 29 OPEN.

Aug 5 - OPEN.





# Loaves and Fishes Pantry

Grace Lutheran Church 1326 South 26th Street 402-341-7730

North Door (Parking Lot Door) Opens at 9:45 am

Pantry is Open 10:00 - 11:00 am Every Monday



Variety of fresh foods donated by Trader Joe's and Whole Foods.

All are served with love and care.

Loaves and Fishes Pantry needed a new location and Grace Council agreed to enter into a new adventure and provide assistance to individuals in need. In any new adventure, there is the opportunity to serve one another. Grace's mission statement: "Inspired by Christ, It is our mission to Share God's Word and Love in care and service to all."

A Sign-up sheet has been posted on the bulletin board with the opportunity to volunteer your time in a few needed areas, including unloading food items on a Sunday morning, placing food items in freezers or refrigerators and help with distribution on Monday mornings. Above all pray for weekly success in all that God is directing Grace Lutheran!

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Save the Date! Worship on the River

We will gather on Sunday, September 24th, beginning at 9:30 am at the River City Star. We will sail the Missouri River at 10:00 am. A short worship service will be conducted on

the boat. A pot luck luncheon will be held at Grace following the service. Someone will be at Grace to receive food before the river boat ride.



Lego: Building on Jesus - Faith

Grace Lutheran Church
Vacation Bible School - One Day Event

Sat. July 21st 12:00 pm - 5:00 pm Kids 4 yrs - 6th Grade. Free Meal to follow - Families invited.

Volunteers are needed to help in a variety of ways including setting up, participating within a group, help with the cook-out and clean up. If you are interested or have any questions, please speak with Amanda, Vicki, or call the church office, 402-341-7730.

Please watch the bulletin and next month's Messenger for additional information!

# 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.





Join OTOC Leaders on Monday, July 9th at Augustana Lutheran Church, 3647 Lafayette at 7:00 pm to learn how to hold "house meeting" campaigns in your congregation and community to identify leaders, uncover issues, and get to know one another. Plan for holding a short listening campaign for Fall 2018.

Any questions, please contact Omaha Together One Community at 3647 Lafayette Avenue; Suite 110, Omaha, NE 68131 or 402-344-4401, and by email at www.otoc.org.

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# St. Luke's & Grace Baseball Outing Saturday, August 4<sup>th</sup>

\$14/Ticket includes: Game, Disc. Food, Fireworks, Concert Gates Open 5pm, First Pitch 6:05pm Transportation On Your Own \*\*Reservations Due by July 15th Questions? Call Steve Braun 402-558-1128



# 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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# 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.

# **5 Green Sun Protection Tips**



On average, one American dies from melanoma (skin cancer) every hour. To protect your skin from harmful UV rays using healthy and environmentally-friendly methods,

follow these rules:

**Wear those shades.** Sunglasses that provide 99-100% of UVA and UVB protection greatly reduce sun exposure that can lead to cataracts and other eye damage. Check the label when buying sunglasses to make sure they have proper UV protection.

**Choose a powerful, green sunscreen.** Many sunscreens contain chemicals that pose risks to our health and the environment. Avoid nanoparticles and choose a mineral-based product recommended by the Environmental Working Group sunscreen guide instead. Apply it liberally and frequently, paying particular attention to your ears, face, back and neck.

**Listen to the weather reports.** The UV Index, developed by the National Weather Service and the Environmental Protection Agency, provides a forecast of the expected risk of overexposure to the sun and indicates the degree of caution that you should take when working, playing or exercising outdoors. Watch or read the weather forecast in your area to learn the UV Index.

**Stay clear of the midday sun as much as possible.** The sun's UV rays are strongest between 10:00am and 4:00pm. If you are spending the day at the beach, take refuge under a beach umbrella during those hours when the sun's rays are most intense.

**Dress up.** Wear light, long-sleeved shirts and ankle-length pants if you're going to be out in the sun for long periods of time and you'd rather not wear sunscreen. A wide brimmed hat will shade your face, neck, ears and eyes.

Pastor Marty Toepke-Floyd of First United Methodist Church, Redfield, SD, serves rural churches in the Dakotas. One Sunday morning the children's message focused on Matthew 5:6 - "Blesses are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled."

After showing the congregation some crackers, candy, snacks, an orange and an apple he had brought with him, Rev. Toepke-Floyd asked them, "What are you hungry for?"

"I'm hungry for a banana," a man exclaimed.

"Sorry, I don't have one," the pastor said.

Just then the 80-year-old organist called out, "Here, pastor. Catch!" and to his surprise, she threw a banana to him.

"God will provide," the pastor said, tossing the banana to the happy man, as the entire congregation burst into laughter.

The organist later told the pastor that she had brought the banana to church with the intention of eating it.

"God provided a great children's message that morning." the pastor said.

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"This is my favorite shirt 'cause it has our country's logo on it."

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# Signs and Wonders

Sign outside Center Street Baptist Church, Marshalltown, IA: "No bungee cords. We encourage leaps of faith." ~ via Rev. Dale Schoening, Madrid, IA

> Sign outside Holy Trinity Catholic Church: "Too hot to keep changing sign. Sin bad, Iesus good, Details inside." ~ via George Goldtrap, Ormond-by-the-Sea, FL

> > JoyfulNoiseletter.com