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



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 August 28

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.



Return Service Requested Dated Material



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 August 14th. Council members shared their prayer concerns for individual's medical needs; O'Neill families; for both students and teachers as they begin the new school year; for all the families of the recent increase of missing girls; and for all the families going through any of the natural disasters including the wildfires and floods.

<u>Devotions</u>: Pastor led devotions from Psalm 62:1 and Matthew 28:20. The first reminds us to seek the quiet stillness and remember that God, who is constant, is our ultimate salvation. The second reminds us that we are to remember always God's presence and guidance.

<u>Visions for Ministry</u>: Council discussed Chapter 4 and learned that it is okay to fail, we learn from our failures. Chapter 4 also explains the difference between Adaptive and Technical changes. Adaptive change is a long-term effort to change the whole system while technical change is fixing one piece of the system or a "quick fix." Just remember that we are "a work in progress." Council Members are asked to read Chapter 5 in "We Are Here Now" by Patrick Keifert before the next meeting.

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

<u>Christian Education</u>: Brenda has met with Sunday school teachers from Bethel, Augustana, St. Matthew's and St. Luke's to begin a new opportunity once a month for children to meet and learn together. Classes will rotate each month to a different location. Grace/St. Luke's will host at Grace the first Wednesday in December. First classes will be September 5th at St. Matthew's with a dinner at 6:00 p.m. and classes from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.

<u>Evangelism/Outreach</u>: OTOC House meeting will take place on Sunday, August 26th following worship service. St. Luke's, Prince of Peace and an exercise class have been invited to share in a House meeting.

Guardian Angel Training session will be at St. Matthew's on September 22nd, from 9:30 am to noon. Vicki, Arlone, Sandy and Brenda have indicated they will attend the training session.

Continued...

Five new volunteers with Lutheran Volunteer Corps will be touring the different locations for their placements on Friday, August 17th. The 5 volunteers will participate Sunday, August 19th, for their Commissioning for their year of work.

<u>Finance</u>: Grace received a World Hunger Appeal Letter stating that "ELCA World Hunger is inspired and encouraged by you - a congregation who acts similarly to David in 1 Samuel: despite and in spite of your size, you are one of nearly 150 congregations across the ELCA that gives most generously to ELCA World Hunger based on average attendance." We may be a small congregation, however, we can do mighty things!

<u>Property</u>: MUD backflow preventer saga continues! Conflicting information regarding the need for a preventer or not had been given to Grace; all should be resolved by the end of the month.

One light switch has been replaced with one additional switch in need of replacement.

The urinal in the upstairs restroom overflowed recently and continued to overflow throughout the night, there was water damage in the restroom, hallway and the ceiling tiles in the basement. If you are the last one in the building, please be sure all is quiet and no handles need to be jiggled!

<u>Service/Social Ministry</u>: Grace received a thank you note from Ann Carroll from Crossroads Ministry stating that Grace Lutheran is a special and inviting church. Vicki asked the Council if Grace should remain at volunteering to host two meals during 2019 or three. The response was to host two meals for 2019 with the opportunity to increase for 2020.

Support/Stewardship: None. Worship: None.

<u>Unfinished Business</u>: Pastor reminded the Council of the council conversations between the six cluster churches on Wednesday, August 22nd. Appetizers will be at Augustana at 6:00 p.m. Bethel will serve the 7:00 p.m. meal and dessert will be at St. Luke's at 8:00 p.m. Carpooling was encouraged.

Council discussed "God's Work – Our Hands" Sunday project. Council decided to invite the congregation to bring donations in support of our partnership with Liberty Elementary School. The gift boxes will include needed items such as tissues, Clorox wipes, pencils, markers, and hand sanitizer.

New Business: None. <u>Announcements</u>: None.

Tom will bring treats in September.

Donna closed in prayer at 8:48 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted, Brenda Spahr, Secretary



As I sit and write these thoughts, I am reveling in the cooler temperature that this day brings. At the same time, I am fully aware that as these days progress, these cooler temperatures will devolve into cold temperatures before we know it.

Notes shared in the publication, Sundays and Seasons, offer these thoughts. "Autumn comes as a signal that inevitable winter lies ahead. To many, especially those of us in the northern hemisphere, autumn's cool, crisp air is a welcome relief from summer heat, and its brilliant colors are a thing of beauty. . . The outside air is different, and so is the pace. But just when we think the earth is undergoing its seasonal death, seeds are being planted for new growth – in the soil and in the people.

"In an autumn reflection for the Fetzer Institute, Parker Palmer writes that faced with inevitable winter, autumn 'scatters the seeds that will bring new growth in the spring – and she scatters them with amazing abandon.'

"In a paradox, opposites don't negate each other, Palmer reminds us. 'They cohere in mysterious unity at the heart of reality . . . We live in a culture that prefers the ease of either – or thinking, and have a difficult time holding opposites together. We want light without darkness, the glories of spring and summer without the demands of autumn and winter.""

I wonder if we might be willing to live with the paradox of darkness and light. I find in them wholeness and health offered to each of us. As we experience the living and the dying, the dying and the living, we find that our lives are real and often colorful, bearing fruit and wholeness.

Continued.....

As we come together to worship, may we hear the stories of Jesus' teaching and healing as a place where we can find the realness of life. In Jesus, we are reminded of God's abundant grace. Within that grace, we blossom and flourish, wither and die. In turn, we are reborn as children of God.

May we rejoice in the wonder of God's replanting and renewal. May we be reminded of the way God plants the seed, nurtures its growth and brings forth the harvest. May we give thanks for the wonderful ministry that takes place seen and unseen.

Pastor Laaker

Stewardship Moment

Congregations as cultures of generosity The centrality of relationships

At an Ecumenical Stewardship Center event in Dallas this past spring, speaker Aimee Laramore gave a terrific, down-to-earth presentation on congregations as cultures of generosity. Laramore is a person of faith with a background in development and faith-based fundraising. She covered many topics, but the core of her message was about the importance of relationships, meeting people where they are, being truly interested in how they are doing, talking about money without always asking for any, and celebrating all the ways people make a difference including outside of the church. She asked how congregations can help people see themselves as benefactors. What if we didn't limit our storytelling to just how giving makes the world better but also cultivate stories about how generosity has blessed their lives?

Laramore mentioned her friend and mentor William Enright, the founding director of the Lake Institute on Faith & Giving, part of the Lilly Family School of Philanthropy at Indiana University. Enright recently authored a book worth reading titled "Kitchen Table Giving: Reimagining How Congregations Connect With Their Donors," in which he shares a similar relational approach.



William G. Enright

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 Pauline Stechenfinger Urbano Vasquez Andrew Edwards Carolyn Matson Sue Mize Pam Reents Dan Taylor



Pray for wisdom for your Church Council here at Grace Lutheran.

Pray for the Council Members. Ask God to bless their ministry among us. Pray for strength and spiritual wisdom for the leaders in the local church and the Nebraska Synod:

> Pastor Damon Laaker, Grace Lutheran Church Bishop Brian Maas, Nebraska Synod Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, ELCA Bishop

Pray for the Sudanese community in general. David Nange, John Boato and Charles Tuw are the elders for the Sudanese Worshiping Community.

Let's encourage each other as we see God's hand in answering our prayers.

Pray for our Shut-in and Nursing Home resident:

Mickey Andersen - Home Barbara Nelson - Life Care Center, Elkhorn





Prayer Service Wednesday September 19, 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.



Worship on the River

We will gather on Sunday, September 23rd, 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.



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, 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 Loaves and Fishes Pantry Volunteers; for delivering food items on Sunday mornings, unloading and putting foods items away until Monday mornings, getting everything ready for Mondays and in greeting and serving all with smiles, care and love!

We would like to thank everyone for their care and support during the loss of our dear son, Jim. Many thanks to Pastor for his care and help. Also to everyone for the cards and memorial gifts.



Donna & Ron Adrian and Family

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



Wonderful volunteers served over 70 people as part of the Crossroads Connection Prison Ministry last evening. The guest preacher was Rev. Mary Newbern-Williams, the Executive Presbyter for the Presbytery. She reminded folks that the journeys in life are not always without detours and distractions but one can be

assured that each are loved by a gracious God.

Food was shared and stories told. God's grace was very real. A simple note from Anne Carroll was received that stated:

"The hospitality of Grace Lutheran was 5 stars as was the meal. I heard a lot of happy, overeating moaning sounds.

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 donate, please speak

with Vicki or Arlone. Please continue your participation by stopping and browsing for an interesting book. Help encourage the youth through reading a good book!





Grace Lutheran received a wonderful letter from the ELCA World Hunger Appeal. It read in part "ELCA World Hunger is inspired and encouraged by you - a congregation who acts similarly to David in 1 Samuel: despite and in spite of your size, you are one of nearly 150 congregations across the ELCA that gives most generously to ELCA World Hunger based on average attendance. You come in the name of the Lord to over 60 countries worldwide through your generosity to ELCA World Hunger. We could not do this transformative work around the world without you. Your David-like generosity is indeed battling the giant need of communities experiencing hunger and poverty, and as church together, our combined efforts are doing much to bring about a just world where all are fed."

This is wonderful acknowledgement of the efforts of the people at Grace to make a difference in our world.



Lutheran Family Services Foster. Care.

Foster Homes are needed. Open your heart and your home to a foster child. Training and 24-hour support are provided.

Every year, hundreds of youth in Nebraska are removed from their families because of neglect and abuse. While these families heal, their children need a safe, loving, home-like atmosphere with minimal judgment and abundant patience.

Make a difference in a child's life ~ become a foster parent.

For further information access us on—line: www.lfsneb.org or call 402-661-3125.



Grace Reads

As Grace Lutheran plans for the upcoming school year partnership with Liberty Elementary, there is a need to fulfill each classroom with readers! There is the opportunity for two readers on each day Grace representatives read at Liberty Elementary. Two

readers are needed on the first, second and third Tuesday and Wednesdays 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; Tuesday reading at 12:20pm and Wednesday reading at 3:05pm. A sign-up sheet has been posted on the bulletin board, if you have any questions, please call the church office at 402-341-7730.

God's Work ~ Our Hands

The ELCA is continuing the invitation for congregations to put their faith into action by serving their communities in ways that share the love of God with all of God's people. Grace Council has proposed that



Grace continue their partnership and support for Liberty Elementary teachers with items needed in each classroom. Items needed for each classroom are: Clorox Wipes, Hand Sanitizer (no alcohol), Hi-liters, Dry Erase Markers, Post-it Notes, Kleenex and Pencils. All are invited to bring donations to Grace until Sunday, October 22nd when all are invited to gather and assemble items into bags for classrooms.



The Omaha CROP Hunger Walk is scheduled for Sunday, October 14.

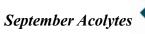
Kickoff for the walk is at 1:30 pm. Registration and start of the walk takes place at Luther Memorial Lutheran Church, 61st and Western. Plan now to walk or sponsor someone who will be walking.

September 2018



2 - Mary Laaker

- 9 Greg Hula
- 16 Brenda Spahr
- 23 Worship on the River.
- **30 Arlone Farber**
- Oct. 7 Terry Nielsen



- 2 Greg Hula 9 - Damien Rodriguez
- 16 Donna Adrian
- 23 Worship on the River.
- 30 Brenda Spahr
- Oct. 7 Andrea Spahr

September Ushers Oren Powley Vicki Cox Andrew Edwards





September Greeters

- 2 Madison and Sarah Emery
- 9 Mary Laaker and Gloria Moore
- 16 Greg and Janet Hula
- 23 Worship on the River City Star.
- 30 Bobby Stechenfinger and Vicki Cox
- Oct. 7 Ron and Donna Adrian



- 1 Terry Nielsen
- 3 Munna Lewa
- 5 Lealen Costanzo
- 7 Ronald Andersen
- 13 Loren Moyer
- 23 Katelyn Bauer
- 28 Damien Rodriguez

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

Responsibility List



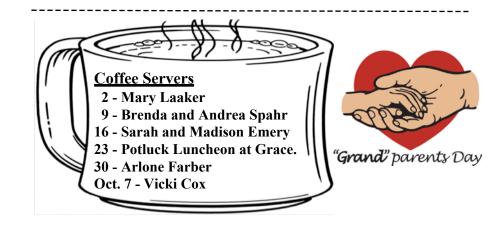
- Altar Flowers
- 2 Ron and Donna Adrian in celebration of their daughter in-law, Melissa's birthday.
- 9 OPEN.
- 16 Vicki Cox in celebration of her daughter, Cimber's birthday.
- 23 Worship on the River City Star.
- 30 Greg and Janet Hula in celebration of their grandson, Damien's birthday.
- Oct. 7 Arlone Farber in loving memory of her Dad, Charles Courtney.

Flower Pick-Up for September: Mary Laaker



Backpack Program

- 2 Ron and Donna Adrian in celebration of their daughter in-law, Melissa's birthday.
- 9 OPEN.
- 16 OPEN.
- 23- Vicki Cox in celebration of her daughter, Cimber's birthday.
- 30 OPEN.
- Oct. 7 Amanda Vazquez in celebration of her son's, Jaydn, Jericho, and Jordan's birthdays.



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

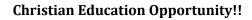
> Variety of fresh foods donated by Trader Joe's and Whole Foods.

All are served with love and care.



Loaves and Fishes Pantry is currently serving the surrounding neighborhood. 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 at Grace Lutheran!



There are some exciting Christian Education opportunities coming your way! St. Luke's/ Grace, St. Matthew's, Bethel, and Augustana are



combining to offer a new program for the children and young people of our congregations!

<u> Kindergarten – 6th grade</u>

What? A once-a-month Sunday School class!

Who? Any child from Kindergarten through 6th grade is invited. Students will be divided into two sections – Kindergarten through 2nd and 3rd through 6th.

When? Classes will be held on the *FIRST* Wednesday of the month. Sept. 5th – St. Matthew's, 1725 S. 60th Street Oct. 3rd – Bethel Lutheran, 1312 S. 45th Street Nov. 7th – Augustana Lutheran, 3647 Lafayette Street Dec. 5th – Grace Lutheran, with St. Luke's *Dates and church locations for 2019 to be determined.

Time? 6:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. - Supper will be served! 6:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. - Classes will be held.

Bible Stories? The SPARK Curriculum will be used.

Sept. - Come and learn about Noah!

Oct. – Come and learn about Joseph and his brothers!

Nov. - Come and learn about Baby Moses!

Dec. - Come and learn about Advent and the birth of Jesus!

What an awesome opportunity to grow in faith and meet new friends! If you have any questions, please see Brenda Spahr at Grace or Connie Tefft at St. Luke's.

Grace Sunday School News



The regular Grace Sunday School classes will continue SUNDAY SCHOOL to meet every second and fourth Sunday and will begin UNDERW. this year on Sunday, September 9th at 10:00 am.

If you have any questions, please speak with Brenda, Mary, or Sandy.





Habitat Faith House Build Every Saturday through September 3323 Emmet Street; 8:30 a.m.

All are welcome! It will be a wonderful opportunity to meet the future homeowners, Lino and Grace, and share in fellowship with one another, as well as the Thrivent representatives who are helping to fund some of the project. The event itself will be casual and informal. Food will be provided! As soon as the celebration is over, folks can sign up as construction volunteers and start working. The is a GREAT opportunity to engage new people in your church with Habitat! Some people don't know what to expect, so this will give them a wonderful in-person overview.

Congregation members who want to volunteer are encouraged to register ahead of time at https://tinyurl.com/faithhouse2018. Registering ahead of time 1)helps our construction supervisor Mike know how many people to expect ahead of time, 2) helps us accurately track volunteers for grant purposes, 3) helps us to be safe and have a one stop shop for your emergency contact info.

Confirmation Classes

We will be participating in a joint Confirmation Class with Bethel. St.

Matthew and Augustana. Orientation is Wednesday, August 29, 6:30 pm at St. Matthew. The first class will be held at St. Matthew, 60th & Walnut on September 5, 6:30 pm.

Hi everyone! I hope you've all had a great month. If I didn't get the chance to meet you yet, let me introduce myself, my name is Tyler Birkhoff and I will be the new Lutheran Volunteer Outreach Coordinator here at Grace Evangelical. To give a little background about myself, I come from McHenry, IL, which is a town about fifteen minutes south of the Wisconsin border and my congregation back home is Living Waters Lutheran Church in Crystal Lake, IL. In my spare time I enjoy volunteering for organizations such as the Boy Scouts and my former High School's theatre program, along with working at Lutherdale, a summer camp in Elkhorn, Wi. When I'm not out in the community working, I like to camp and go on adventures with my friends and family. I'm so excited to be a part of your community and I can't wait for this upcoming year. Feel free to come up and talk with me about what you think the community could benefit from, places you think I should check out in Omaha, or just

come say hi. Smiles,

Tyler Birkhoff Community Outreach Coordinator Grace Lutheran Church



Pastor Laaker and Grace Community,

Thank you so much for welcoming us into the community and giving us so much wonderful food. We used the ribs for our first dinner together. We're looking forward to more shared time together over food. We're also looking forward to meeting more of the Grace Community.

With Joy, Joey, Julie, Tyler, Taylor and Jordan





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.

Drinking From The Well is a new program of spiritual formation for adults, offering teaching and prayer practices to help open them receive the fullness of life in Christ and the richness of God's mercy - right here, right now! Information about the program and the process of



registration can be found at www.nebraskasynod.org, drinking from the well. You may also contact Deacon Connie Stover at 308-440-4450 or conniestover@nebraskasynod.org.



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.



Temporary Protected Status (TPS) Journey for Justice Bus Caravan in Omaha

Tuesday, September 4th at 7:00 pm TPS Workshop and Table Talk Countryside Community Church 8787 Pacific Street

Learn about the current situation facing TPS families and ways to respond to the termination of TPS - - forcing 1,500 long-time Nebraskans to leave their families, jobs and congregations. Meet and talk with families who have TPS from Omaha and around the U.S.

Wednesday, September 5th at 10:00 am Temporary Protected Status Workshop First United Methodist Church 7020 Cass Street

What is TPS? Who are TPS holders in Nebraska and the US? What are their contributions to our economy, community, and congregations? What are some possible solutions for documentation and residency for Salvadorans and others?

> 11:00 am Press Conference about TPS at First United Methodist Church

7:00 pm Interfaith Prayer Service St. Frances Cabrini Catholic Church 1248 S. 10th Street

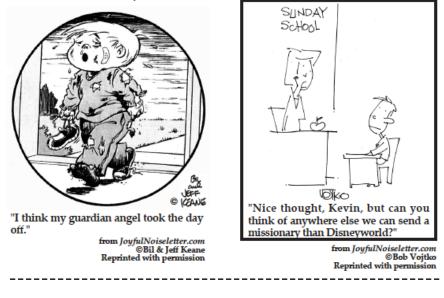
Join diverse faith communities for prayers, reflection, and action for TPS recipients and all immigrants. Reception following the service.

Qmaha Together One Community

Candidate Accountability Session: OPPD & US Congress September 17th at 7:00 pm - Location to be determined

OTOC Leaders will ask candidates running for Omaha Public Power District (OPPD) and the US Congress District 2 where they stand on specific issues that emerge from OTOC Action Teams and the Listening Campaign. Join OTOC to make sure candidates respond to the issues affecting our families and communities.

THE FAMILY CIRCUS By Bil and Jeff Keane



Happy Grandparents Day!

Grandparent Jokes ~ *shared from mytowntutors.com*

When my grandson asked me how old I was, I teasingly replied, "I'm not sure." "Look in your underwear, Grandpa," he advised "Mine says I'm 4 to 6."

A grandfather was delivering his grandchildren to their home one day when a first truck zoomed past. Sitting in the front seat of the fire truck was a Dalmatian dog. The children started discussing the dog's duties. "They use him to keep crowds back," said one child. "No," said another. "He's just for good luck." A third child brought the argument to a close. "They use the dogs," she said firmly, "to find the fire hydrants."

A grandmother was telling her little granddaughter what her own childhood was like. "We used to skate outside on a pond. I had a swing made from a tire; it hung from a tree in our front yard. We rode our pony. We picked wild raspberries in the woods." The little girl was wide-eyed, taking this all in. As last she said, "I sure wish I'd gotten to know you sooner!"

The wisdom of Charles Schulz, Peanuts cartoonist:

"The smile on my face doesn't mean my life is perfect. It means I appreciate what I have and what I have been blessed with. I choose to be happy."

"I love the kind of hugs where you can physically feel the sadness leave your body."

"Worrying can't stop the bad stuff from happening. It just ((stops you from enjoying the good."

"The less you respond to rude, critical, argumentative people, the more peaceful your life will become."

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