Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church 1326 South 26th Street Omaha, NE 68105-2380 402-341-7730

Non-Profit Org.

U.S. Postage

PAID

Permit No. 39

**Omaha** NE



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 February 27

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



THE GRACE MESSENGER 1889 - 2020

\*



#### **2020** Council Members

Donna Adrian Ralph Fitle Brenda Spahr Pastor Laaker \*\*\*\*\*

Tom Emery Arlone Farber Janet Hula Sandy Nielsen Amanda Vazquez

Officers Serving the Congregation: Financial Secretary: Janet Hula Treasurer: Ralph Fitle

\_\_\_\_\_

The regular meeting of the Council was held on February 11th. Council members shared prayer concerns for the state of our nation, Ralph's neighbor Evie who was taken to the hospital, those with differing views - especially politicians and our President - to try to find common ground, praise for Joel and Nena who recently bought a house, and those affected by coronavirus.

Devotions: Devotions were led by Pastor Laaker, reading the selected verses in the "Daily Texts" from Psalm 23:3 and John 10:14. The first tells us he leads us down right paths in his name's sake. The second tells that He is the good shepherd who knows his own and His own know him.

Visions for Ministry: Council members read chapter 1 of the book Uproar. The author provides definitions of this time period that we're living, explaining our natural instinct to react, and the difference it makes when we are intentional about our responses. Anxieties are higher now than they have ever been, leading to a greater need for more intentional, calm response. Read chapter 2 for next month.

Committee Reports: Reports were received from the Financial Secretary and the Treasurer. Please continue to give generously. Christian Education: The Art of Gathering - TriFaith

Evangelism/Outreach: none.

Finance: Moss Gift to Endowment: \$500 into GELC Endowment Lakota Thank You.

Fire Pup Program: requesting support of new educational program they are implementing.

Continued...

Property: North Basement wall repair - wall continues to weep. Received bid from man who worked on the west wall of the basement.

Service/Social Ministry: OTOC "Celebrating Community" March 28th - Vicki has tickets if you are interested in attending. Habitat Faith Coalition Kickoff 2/22 LWR Personal Care Kits - we will gather items during lent to provide these kits again this year.

Support/Stewardship: ELCA Annual Report Nebraska Synod Road Show April 18 at St. Timothy's

Worship: Lent theme - We Are Church for the Sake of the World - the mid week services will use "make me an instrument of your peace" which comes from the prayer of St. Francis.

Midweek Lent Meals - San Andres Tuesday 7 pm 2/18 (5 churches: Augustana, Bethel, Grace, St. Luke's, and San Andres) We have 4 meals to prepare; and next Tuesday 2/18 at 7 pm there will be a meeting at San Andres 25th & J to discuss meals for the 2 mid-weeks we will share at St. Luke's. New Hymn: O God of All the Nations

Unfinished Business: none.

New Business: Synod Assembly Voting Members - end of May, Pastor + 2 people may attend. If you're interested, let him know. Early registration ends at the end of February. Theme: Festival - will have more options for workshops, less voting/decision making.

Announcements: Brenda will bring treats for March.

Adjournment: The Council meeting closed in prayer and adjourned at 8:13pm.

Respectfully Submitted, Amanda Vazquez, Secretary

Set Your Clocks Ahead One Hour Daylight Savings Begins Sunday, March 8th





People often think of Christmas as an emotionally tough time of year to get through, but in reality all Christian holi/holy days are difficult in the years after the loss of a loved one, the loss of a job or any other major transition.

Add to all our personal challenges the ghosts of global insecurity, political mayhem and the fear of a pandemic and this may be a difficult Lent for many. How are we to clean out our spiritual closets when even opening the door may be more painful than usual?

"What are you giving up for Lent?"

As the church begins the 40-day journey of the season, this question will be repeated in many a coffee-hour conversation. The question reflects some of the central themes of Lent: self-sacrifice, repentance and humility.

It is an austere season of self-reflection on sin, death and fallibility. Sandwiched between the bright lights of Christmas and the glowing pastels of Easter, Lent is a somber reminder of the distance yet remaining between the world as it is and the world as we know, by faith, that it one day will be.

That may be why it seems odd for this year's ELCA 40 Days of Giving theme to be "Hope." Lent, certainly, is a season for reflection on temptation, sin and loss. But it is also a season for reflecting on hope. What else but God-given hope could have sustained the spirits of the ancient Hebrews wandering in the wilderness? What else but hope could have nourished Jesus' resistance to temptation and sustained him on his march to the cross? What else but hope could have led our forbearers here in Omaha to plant a ministry called Grace or St. Luke's?

The invitation to reflect this Lent is not "What will you give up in repentance for your past?" but "What will you take on in hope for our future?"

Pastor Laaker (Thoughts shared by the ELCA's World Hunger 40 Days of Giving.) Lent

Our theme for our Mid-week Lenten emphasis is "We are Church for the Sake of the World – Make Me an Instrument of Your Peace."

As people baptized and called, "We are Church for the Sake of the World" we recognize that we're called to speak to the need for making lasting relationships with our neighbors of differing views, backgrounds, and traditions in a changing world. The world that the church exists for the sake of, is changing! What does that mean for our witness to the Gospel in the 21st century, and how we invite others to hear and experience the good news of Jesus Christ? How are we called to accompany and live among all God's people (as is proclaimed and promised in our baptism)? How are we called to step into our neighbors' shoes and honor the image of God in each of us, from all corners of the earth?

Each of our mid-week services will share a reflection from one of the segments of the Prayer of Saint Francis. The Prayer of the Saint Francis boldly but gently challenges us to resist the forces of evil and negativity with the spirit of goodwill and generosity.

Dinner will begin at 5:30 pm and Worship Service will follow at 6:30 pm at the following dates and locations:

March 4 - St. Luke's, 2315 | Street

March 11 - Augustana, 3647 Lafayette Avenue

March 18 - Bethel, 1312 South 45th Street

March 25 - St. Luke's, 2315 | Street

April 1 - Augustana, 3647 Lafayette Avenue

Maundy Thursday, April 9th - Here at Grace, Potluck Dinner at 5:30 pm & Worship at 6:30 pm.

Good Friday, April 10th - St. Matthew, 1725 South 60th Street (No Meal) - Worship 6:30 pm.



#### Stewardship and Lent

Lent is traditionally a season of penitence and reflection. It is a time to turn away from the concerns of this world, and focus our lives on the Christian Vocation: proclaiming the good news of God's reign come near. In our world, which is so driven by consumerism, greed, and wealth, this season calls us to turn away from these, and look again to the one true God. Penitence involves both a confession of past sins, and a change in behaviors and actions.

As we near Ash Wednesday, we once again are invited to walk with Jesus through the wilderness. We are asked to deny the distractions of this world, and focus on God's reign. This denial, and this refocusing, are instances of stewardship: in our lives, in our church, and in our world.

One of the special ways we can walk with Jesus during Lent is to be very intentional about our support of the ELCA World Hunger effort. Please consider making an additional gift for this very special work during the Lenten season.



**Early First Communion** 

Pastor Laaker will be leading a class for younger children on preparation for receiving Holy Communion. Parents are encouraged to have a conversation with their younger children and determine if this is something that the child and the parent would like the child to participate in.

The class will be held at Grace Lutheran, beginning at 12:30 pm, Sundays, March 15, 22, 29. The class will last one hour. Those participating in the class will be able to receive their first communion on Palm Sunday, April 5.

Please talk with Pastor Laaker if you plan to have your child(ren) participate in this special preparation for Holy Communion.







Sunday, April 5th when we will wave palm leaves just as the people of Jerusalm once did in welcoming Jesus. Service is at 11:00 a.m.



Thursday, April 9th, Potluck dinner will be served at 5:30 with Worship Service at 6:30 pm. Come and be reminded of the Last Supper and the betrayal.



Good Friday, April 10th - Service will be at 6:30 pm at St. Matthew's Lutheran Church located at 1725 S. 60th St. Join the Cluster Congregations for the final time this Lenten Season and hear the story of the Passion of the Christ.



Easter Sunday, April 12th Sunrise Service will begin at 6:30 am. Join together in the Celebration of the Risen Christ! Easter Breakfast will follow Service.



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:

Vicki Cox Justin Kobold Susan Miller Carol Nabarez Pam Reents Urbano Vasquez Andrew Edwards Carolyn Matson Sue Mize Oren Powley Marilyn Van Ormer



#### 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 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!



#### **Grace Sunday School News**

Sunday School classes will continue to meet every second and fourth Sunday from 10:00 to 10:45 am. Classes in March will be on the 8th and 22nd.

Sunday, March 8th, students will learn the story of Jesus, and how He multiplies the loaves and how we can multiply Jesus' love. On Sunday, March 22nd, the Lesson title is "Where'd They Get The Nerve?!" Class will discover how someone might get the nerve to do a good thing.

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



Place Your Order for Easter Lilies by Sunday, March 29th



Cost: \$8.00

Celebrate Christ's resurrection by ordering your Easter Lily and help make the sanctuary both visually and aromatically 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.



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



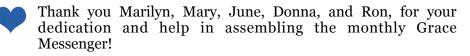
Thank you ESL tutors; Vicki, Arlone, Mary, and Amanda, for making connections with the students willing to learn and form friendships.

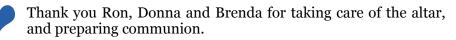


Thank you Greg, Janet, and Mary; who take turns picking up altar flowers every Sunday morning.



Thank you Marilyn, June, Eva, Donna, and Mary for your weekly fellowship while creating quilts in support of Lutheran World Relief.







Thank you to all ushers, Andrew, Oren, Vicki, 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!

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.



#### A Season of Hope Personal Care Kits

This Lenten season, Lutheran World Relief is inviting congregations to reach out to our neighbors in the most fragile corners of the world and in the most challenging circumstances by assembling and shipping LWR Personal Care Kits. Listed below are the items needed to fulfill our 35 Care Kit goal:

March 1st	Bar of soap (each kit will need 2 bars)
March 8th	Bath Towel (between 20"x40" and 52"x27"),
	dark colors are recommended
March 15th	Toothbrushes
March 22nd	Combs
March 29th	Nail

Palm Sunday, April 5th, all are invited to stay after worship services and help assemble the Personal Care Kits.

Update from the Nebraska Synod:



The Nebraska Synod's Disaster Response Team needs your assistance to continue to do the recovery work that will be ongoing for the next four to five

years as well as the disaster preparedness work that will help make our communities even more resilient in the years to come. Please prayerfully consider if God is calling you to serve in any way, go to the website at nebraskasynod.org; follow the news & resources tab at the top of the website and scroll down to Nebraska Floods.

Prayers and donations for those impacted are always needed.

Donations made to Grace Lutheran Church with the memo line indicating "Nebraska Floods" will be forwarded to the Nebraska Synod office in support of the continuing cleanup efforts.



Spire Chamber Ensemble is in their 10th season, under the baton of Founder and Artistic Director, Ben A. Spaulding, will perform the Bach Mass in B Minor. Spire's repertoire ranges from Baroque and Classical works with period instruments to work by contemporary composers. Performancs will be held Friday,

March 6, at 7:00 p.m. at Saint Cecilia Cathedral, 701 North 40th Street. This will be a world-class treat for music lovers - not to be missed. Free Admission.

Presented by Cathedral Arts Project, Gift in Honor of St. Paul's Lutheran Music Conservatory in Council Bluffs, Omaha Chapter of the American Guild of Organists, Saint Cecilia Institute of Sacred Liturgy, Music and the Arts.

Additional information can be found on the website: cathedralartsproject.org/2019-20-season

Persistent Grace is a ministry of spiritual fitness for people living with chronic disabilities. A medical diagnosis leads us to work on our physical and mental wellness. But what do we do about spirital wellness? Persistent Grace is about making space to confront the spiritual challenge to living with a chronic disability.

Persistent race

How can Persistent Grace help you? Like our Facebook page to receive daily words of encouragement and find information about upcoming gatherings.

We gather on the first Sunday of every month at 3:00 pm for a time of worship and fellowship at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, 13271 Millard Avenue.

If you have any questions, please contact Pastor Glen Thomas at St. Matthew Lutheran, 402-556-7030 or email: persistentgrace@gmlutheran.com



Purchase your tickets through Vicki Cox before March 28th!



Table Grace Cafe will be holding their annual fundraiser, Voices of Empowerment, on Friday, March 6th at 5:00 p.m., at St. Thomas Lutheran Church, 17007 Q Street. Event includes; Heavy hors d'oeuvres, Music, Live and Silent Auction. To sponsor a table or if you have any questions, please call 402-965-1276.

The Heart of Camp Gala Saturday, April 4, 2020 LaVista Conference Center 12520 Westport Parkway



The Heart of Camp Gala ensures that all children have the ability to attend camp. No child is turned away from attending Carol Joy Holling Camp due to their inability to pay. Each year, nearly 300 children attend camp who require financial assistance, and this event helps to extend the invitation to more children. Carol Joy Holling Camp also subsidizes every child who attends by almost \$300 per child. This helps keep our fees in-line with what we believe most families can afford.

Attendees will learn how Carol Joy Holling Camp touches the lives of thousands of children each summer and how the ministry helps conference and retreat guests accomplish their goals. Attendees will help honor and recognize individuals who exemplify Carol Joy Holling Camp's core values. This year's award recipients are Larry & Jan Novicki, Pr. Harold & Caroline Rice and Seward Middle School.

5:00 p.m. Cocktails and Silent Auction 6:55 p.m. Prayer 7:00 p.m. Dinner and Awards

You can register online at nlom.org If you have any further questions, please contact Heather Abbott by phone at 402-944-2544 or email at HAbbott@NLOM.org

#### Circle Theatre Presents GODSPELL



Circle Theatre Omaha will present Godspell from March 27-April 4. Fridays and Saturdays at 7:00 p.m. Circle Theatre produces productions in partnership with Hanscam Park United Methodist Church at 4444 Frances Street.

For tickets visit http://www.circletheatreomaha.org or call our box office at 402-533-4715. Prepare ye for the timeless tale of friendship, loyalty and love based on the Gospel According to St. Matthew. Godspell was the first major musical theatre offering from three-time Grammy and Academy Award sinner, Stephen Schwartz (Wicked, Pippinm Children of Eden), and it took the world by storm.



If you have any questions, please contact Fran Sillau at 402-660-6892 or email at francis.sillau@gmail.com

#### The Phantom of the Opera

An all-original musical production based on Gaston Leroux's classic book.

Performances will be shown at The Salvation Army Kroc Center, 2825 Y Street, on March 19 - 21 at 7:00pm and on Sunday, March 22nd at 2:00pm. Tickets available at oneforallmusicaltheater.org or at the door.

Adult tickets are \$25 or \$23 through Andrea Senior tickets (65 and over) are \$20 Students age 13 - 19 are \$18 Children age 3 - 12 are \$12 2 years old and younger are free.



If you have any questions, please speak with Andrea or Brenda Spahr.

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.



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.

#### **Souper Bowl of Caring**

The 30th Annual Souper Bowl was Sunday, February 2nd. Thanks to the generosity of Grace Lutheran Church 93 food and paper items were collected and delivered to the South Omaha Food Pantry!



### 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.



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.

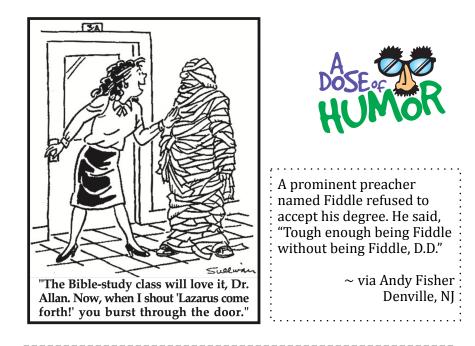
We always need paper or plastic bags.

#### Methodist Community Health Clinic



Methodist Health System is committed to improving the health of the community by the way they care, educate

and innovate. March's class will focus on FREE Colon Cancer Screenings Kits (as available) and will be held on Monday, March 16th from 10:00 am to noon. Classes are held at the Methodist Community Health Clinic & Kountze Memorial Food Pantry located at 208 S. 26th Avenue, for more information please call 402-354-3198.



Smiley Anders, columnist for the Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, passed along this bizarre Lenten story:

A priest was making his way down a dark alley to his parked car when a man thrust a revolver in his ribs and demanded, "Hand me your wallet."

When the priest reached into his inside coat pocket for his wallet, the robber saw his clerical collar and exclaimed, "Are you a priest?"

"Yes, I am," the priest replied.

"Oh, I'm a Catholic, too, and I don't rob priests," the robber said.

Greatly relieved, the priest withdrew a cigar from his inside pocket and offered it to the penitent thief.

"Oh, no! I can't take that," the thief exclaimed. "I've given up smoking for Lent."

Jokes and cartoons on this page shared by JoyfulNoiseletter.com

A friend of Rev. Dr. Karl R. Kraft of Dover, DE, passed along this anecdote about his 10-year-old niece. His sister had been ill, so he called to see how she was doing. His niece answered the phone.

"Hello," she whispered.

"Hi, Honey. How's your mother doing?" her uncle asked.

"She's sleeping," she answered, again in a whisper.

"Did she go to the doctor?" he asked.

"Yes. She got some medicine," the niece said softly.

"Well, don;'t wake her. Just tell her I called. What are you doing, by the way?"

Again in a very soft whisper, she answer, "Practicing my trumpet."

March 2020



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

Apr. 5 - Mary Laaker

March Acolytes

- 1 Andrea Spahr
- 8 Greg Hula
- 15 Janet Hula
- 22 Donna Adrian
- 29 Damien Rodriguez
- Apr. 5 Brenda Spahr

## 

Mary Laaker Andrew Edwards





- 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
- 27 Abigail Hegarty

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

## GREETERS

- 1 Greg and Janet Hula
- 8 Bobby Stechenfinger and Ralph Fitle
- 15 Sarah Emery and Mary Laaker
- 22 Donna and Ron Adrian
- 29 Andrea and Brenda Spahr
- Apr. 5 Loren and Marsha Moyer

# Responsibility List

### **Altar Flowers**

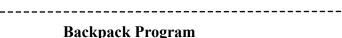


- 1 Terry Nielsen in celebration of his wife, Sandy's birthday.
- 8 OPEN.
- 15 OPEN.
- 22 OPEN.
- 29 Donna and Ron Adrian in celebration of their granddaughter, Madelynn's birthday.

Apr. 5 - OPEN.



Flower Pick-Up for March: Mary Laaker



- 1 Brenda Spahr
- 8 OPEN.
- 15 Amanda Vazquez and Sarah Emery in celebration of their Mom, Mary Laaker's birthday.
- 22 Loren and Marsha Moyer.
- 29 Charlotte & Ed Palczynski in celebration of their granddaughter, Lindsey's birthday.

Apr. 5 - OPEN.

