

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

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

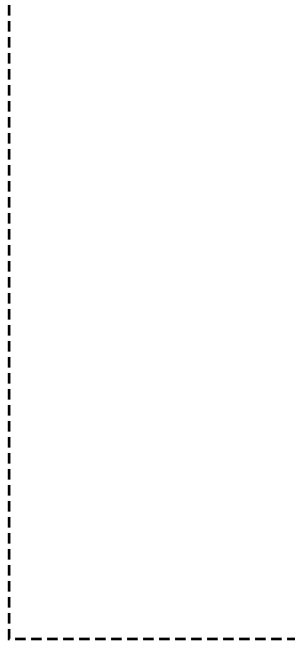
Pastor - Rev. Dr. Damon D. Laaker
Editor/Church Secretary - Brenda Spahr
Organist - Colleen Jeffrey
Sexton - Alma Lopez

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THE GRACE MESSENGER

1889 - 2020

Mother's
DAY



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



2020 Council Members

Donna Adrian	Tom Emery	Arlone Farber
Ralph Fitle	Janet Hula	Sandy Nielsen
Brenda Spahr	Amanda Vazquez	
Pastor Laaker		

Officers Serving the Congregation:

Financial Secretary: Janet Hula Treasurer: Ralph Fitle

The regular meeting of the Council was held on April 14th. Council members shared their prayers concerns for leadership of our country, unification on the part of our leaders so that there's good sense in the decisions that are being made, those who are in nursing homes and isolated, Brenda's father who was recently diagnosed with Alzheimer's, the whole world and those affected by the coronavirus.

Devotions: Pastor Laaker led devotions, reading the selected verses in the "Daily Texts" from Isaiah 51:5 and 1 Peter 1:3. The first talks about God's righteousness, salvation, and judgement. The second reminds us that God's mercy gives us a new living hope through Jesus' resurrection.

Visions for Ministry

Chapter 3 - a lot of what the author talks about is very fitting with the current situation we are facing in our country. We will continue reading and talk about chapters 3 and 4 at our next meeting.

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

Christian Education: VBS - Tentative plans for 1-day VBS - July 18 or 25.

Evangelism/Outreach: No applicants with Lutheran Volunteer Corps - President emailed saying that the number of people who have already submitted applications is pretty low, and decisions about placement may happen as late as July.

Continued...

Finance: Payroll Protection Program - Pastor submitted the application to First National Bank a week ago Monday and received an email on Friday indicating it had been approved. So he is awaiting the paperwork to be able to sign off on it in order to receive the funds requested. Donations for the month of April are up due to a couple of larger donations.

Property: North_Basement Wall Repair - contract has been signed and contractor is awaiting receipt of materials. Potential delay in materials due to the shutdown.

Service/Social Ministry: OTOC "Celebrating Community" moved to August.

Support/Stewardship: Nebraska Synod Road Show April 18th - cancelled, currently no plans to reschedule.

Worship: How is online stuff working for you? We have enjoyed being able to view the service videos at home. Do we want to continue videoing services once things open up and we start gathering again? If so, we would need to have some type of camera or other setup in order to make it work.

Unfinished Business: Synod Assembly (canceled) - we will work on planning a celebration at Grace for Terry's 40th ordination. We could invite other congregations where he has served.

Announcements: Sandy will do treats when we meet next.

Adjournment: The Council meeting closed in prayer and adjourned at 7:50pm.

Respectfully Submitted, Amanda Vazquez, Secretary

While we have suspended in-person gatherings through April, please join us online via our YouTube channel and our Facebook community. Help us to stay connected during this time, please visit Grace's website at graceluth.com and update or add your contact information. You will find it in yellow on the top right corner of the home page. Click it, fill it in, and submit.





I would like to share some excerpts from an article written by Wes Granberg-Michaelson for Sojourners recently. He writes: “In these post-resurrection days of celebration and mystery, Christians across time, language, and culture share a common greeting: “Christ is risen!” “He is risen indeed!”

“This Easter, a pastor and friend shared that in some Orthodox Christian communities, a third phrase is added: “I can see him in your face.”

“In this coronavirus pandemic, adding that response seems more essential than ever.

“What faces we see, either in person or in our hearts, carry a sacred and saving significance. Those of us with the luxury of being able to shelter in place because we have adequate space, who can maintain physical distance because there’s no need to be crowded, and who can wash our hands because we never have to think about soap and hot water, can exchange post-Easter greetings in safety, probably on Zoom. We treasure those bonds with one another in a socially isolated time.

“But so many other faces face stark vulnerability, helpless anxiety, and the dread of death that seems nearer to their communities than to others.

“COVID-19 has revealed the pre-existing conditions of U.S. society: a health care system sickened by market forces and heartless profit, excluding millions, and an economic system corrupted by raging income inequality, with 40 percent of adults lacking \$400 in savings for an emergency, much less a pandemic. And we lack coverage, as a nation, for these deadly pre-existing conditions.

“See the faces of the Navajo family 40 miles from Gallup, N.M., living without running water, making choices between dishes and hands. The African-American postal worker and father of three in Milwaukee who is two to three times more likely to die from COVID-19 than his white coworker. The Latino restaurant worker in Orlando’s Magic Kingdom now without money, health insurance, or hope. He has a bad cough and serious chest pain. If he tests positive, he has no money to pay a hospital bill, even if a bed is available. Can we see Christ in these faces?

Continued.....

“The Orthodox Church now travels through their Holy Week, moving toward Easter Sunday, or Pascha, celebrated on April 19 this year. Its ancient theology first deepened my theological understanding of Christ’s death and resurrection. . . .

“My favorite icon of the resurrection pictures Christ bursting forth from the tomb, holding the hands of two figures whom he is lifting out of their coffins of death. They are Adam and Eve. The meaning is that all humanity is being liberated through the power of the resurrected Christ, as the apostles and biblical personalities in the icon look on. It’s a cosmic redemption, even as Paul proclaimed, “reconciling all things.”

“But how does this powerful, redemptive, healing promise of the resurrection become real in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic? We know this hope is never just for the end of history, but breaks forth into this history, into the present. Yet, where does this begin to take hold?

“One portal opens when we see the face of Christ in each of those rendered most vulnerable and most likely to be inflicted by the deadly, silent, invisible spread of this virus. We see Christ holding each hand, wanting to lift them out of places of death. We see Christ’s complete identification with all humanity, and his presence with them, his face reflected through them. This vision then prompts continual, creative acts of solidarity, local and global, confronting the power of sin and death. That is one way the power of the resurrected Christ, breaking free from the tomb, continues to break into the world, so loved by God. “If you have done it unto the least of these, you have done it unto me.”

“Of course, this takes aggressive policies and practices, as well as sacrificial service by nurses, doctors, and truck drivers, and massive efforts marshalling financial and human resources in global solidarity. But it begins by what faces we see.

“So, our post Easter greeting in these days of COVID-19 can be: “Christ is risen.” “He is risen indeed.” “I can see him in your face.”

May we each be able to see Christ in one another’s face.

Pastor Laaker



IN OUR Thoughts and Prayers

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
Oren Powley
Marilyn Van Ormer



Andrew Edwards
Carolyn Matson
Sue Mize
Pam Reents
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 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

Pandemic Generosity (Stewardship)

"Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." Galatians 6:2 RSV

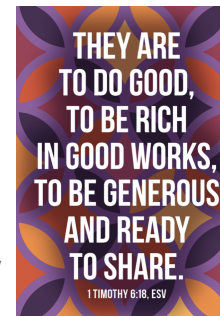
As I write this COVID-19 is changing everything about life as we know it. We're asking ourselves how we can be helpful to others when sheltering-in-place and social distancing are our best protections against infection. For each of us those answers will be different depending on our age, our health status, where we live, our access to the internet, and what we are comfortable doing.

I trust you have seen the many news stories about restaurants preparing meals for those in need; the Open Door Mission's efforts to provide food for families; the individual family that made up meals for neighbors. The Loaves and Fishes Pantry here at Grace continues to provide fresh food to individuals and families each week. In addition, there have been other stories about ways people have shared generosity with others.

For many of us the larger question is how can we be generous with our dollars when we don't know what is going to happen to us financially in the months that lie ahead. We can reassure ourselves that God continues to give in abundance and invites us to trust this generosity and practice it with one another.

Make no mistake about it. We will get through this and we will be stronger because of our response to the virus, but it isn't going to happen overnight and everyone's help is needed. Please continue to give generously to support the mission work that Christ seeks to engage with us. May the tender mercies of our God grant us the capacity to be generous.

Pastor Laaker





The council members of Grace and St. Luke's shared a virtual conversation on Sunday afternoon to address plans for resuming worship. It was a shared feeling that we wait and not immediately resume our regular gatherings. The shared feeling was that we don't know enough at this time to feel comfortable bringing all of us together. We are grateful that everyone continues to be un-infected by the virus.

So, we will look toward the first Sunday in June, June 7th as the potential date for resuming worship in our buildings.

Councils will meet during their regular meeting time and talk over further the details of when and how to safely manage our shared worship experience.

Some concerns that need to be addressed are: do all of us need to wear masks; do we have the ability to maintain 6 feet of separation during worship; what kinds of things do we need to do to be able to share communion; what do we do with fellowship time; how do we handle the distribution of the bulletin; how do we handle the gathering of offerings; do we have sufficient supplies of masks and sanitizer to feel safe; do we need to limit access through one door only. These are some of the questions and practices that we need to discuss and make plans for safe conduct. There may be other concerns, too.

Please know that all of us desire to share worship and fellowship together, however, it is most important at this time that we err on the side of safety. Please hold our leaders up in prayer and hold one another in prayer, too.

On behalf of our council leadership,

Pastor Laaker

Daily Prayer in The Lutheran Prayerbook

Christ, greater than hatred, teach us tolerance when we encounter hatred. Christ, greater than death, help us appreciate life when we encounter death. Christ, greater than night, help us realize sunrise always follows sunset when we encounter discouragement. Christ, greater than sin, teach us penance when we encounter our faults. **Amen.**



In the meantime, I will do the best I can to create videos for our reflection for each Sunday and post them on YouTube. They can be accessed by opening a browser on your computer, typing in the search bar **youtube.com**, once it opens typing in **Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church Omaha Nebraska**. There you will find all the videos that have been and will be posted.

I will be using Google Meet to conduct meetings with Councils and any other meeting needs. So, if you get an invite for a specific meeting, please follow the directions to connect at the appropriate time. If we do not have your email address and you are willing to share it with us, please send us a note via your email to one of the following: graceluth@graceluth.com, or pastor@graceluth.com.

Pastor Laaker

The disciples were afraid of the authorities who had killed Jesus. They were grieving the loss of their savior. They were disheartened by recent events. When the resurrected Jesus passed through the locked doors to come to the disciples in the upper room, he pronounced peace to them. Then he breathed on them the Holy Spirit and gave them responsibility to express forgiveness to each other.



Have you ever thought of peace, the Holy Spirit, and forgiveness going hand in hand? The disciples needed all three to face the crucifixion of their beloved rabbi. They needed all three - peace, the Holy Spirit, and forgiveness - to embrace the truth of Jesus' resurrection.

When we are surrounded by fear and loss, Jesus brings peace. When grief and sorrow overpower us, Jesus sends the Holy Spirit to minister to us. When we are most disheartened and discouraged, Jesus forgives us.

God, help me to receive the peace, Holy Spirit, and forgiveness that you offer every day. Amen.

shared from Word in Season Devotional, May 31st, Pentecost Sunday

7 – Christi Edwards
James Harrahill
8 – Ellison Simon
10 – Juan Vazquez
13 – Danaka Ashcraft
16 – Marissa Halfhill
21 – Jessica Armstrong
22 – Parsila Dike
25 – Arlone Farber
26 – Estir Lewa
27 – Brenda Anzalone
Donna Adrian
31 – David Wallace



Wishing you much happiness,
On this special day
And for the coming year
May blessings come your way.

Be thankful for each day you have
Thank God in heaven above
Fill your life with happy not sad
Remember you are loved.

The U.S. Census happens every 10 years. Your information is confidential and safe. It cannot be shared. The 2020 census counts everyone – all races, ages, citizens, and non-citizens. The 2020 census will not ask about your citizenship status. Have you filled out your 2020 Census yet? If you need any help you can call 402-677-8794, for any help, if you have questions, or to request a paper form to be mailed to you. For additional information visit NebraskaCounts.org.



Thousands of Nebraskans are now voting by mail. The only way we win elections and end the current one-party rule of our state is to vote. Join fellow Democrats, Republicans and Non-Partisans (Independents) in growing the good life for all Nebraskans. You have the power to change our state. You can receive your Vote By Mail Application by going online at sos.ne.gov or by calling 402-434-2180. Deadline to receive your vote by mail is May 1st. Ballots will be sent out beginning April 6th. Last day to register to vote is April 27th. Primary elections are on May 12th.

The National Day of Prayer is observed annually on the first Thursday in May. This day of observance, designated by the United States Congress, asks people “to turn to God in prayer and meditation.” The modern law formalizing the annual National Day of Prayer observance was enacted in 1952 and each year since, the President of the United States has signed a proclamation, encouraging all Americans to pray on this day.



Before 1952, there have been a few other individual National Days of Prayer in United States history:

July 20, 1775 - The Continental Congress issued a proclamation recommending “a day of public humiliation, fasting, and prayer” be observed.

In 1795 - George Washington proclaimed a day of public thanksgiving and prayer.

May 9, 1798 - John Adams declared this day as “a day of solemn humility, fasting, and prayer.”

March 1863 - on March 3, Abraham Lincoln signed a Congressional resolution, during the Civil War, which called for April 30, 1863, as a day of fasting and prayer.



A Season of Hope Personal Care Kits

This Lenten season, Lutheran World Relief invited 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 (with a current count of each item) needed to fulfill our 35 Care Kit goal:

2 Bars of soap	47	Toothbrushes	40
Combs	14	Nail Clippers	13
Bath Towels	34		
(between 20"x40" and 52"x27"), dark colors are recommended			

Once we are reunited, plans will be made and all will be invited to stay after worship service and help assemble the Personal Care Kits.

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.com](https://smile.amazon.com/ch/47-0667089) Amazon will donate - Grace's unique link is: <https://smile.amazon.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 remembrance.



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.

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.

Staying within the CDC guidelines the Pantry continues to reach out to those in need on a weekly basis. During this time of reduced gatherings, clients of the Loaves and Fishes Pantry have been driving through the alley and picking up prepared sacks and bags of much needed food items. The Pantry is in need of additional bags and paper sacks to continue this community service, if you are able to donate please call the church office 402-341-7730.



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.



Patriotism is supporting your country all the time, and your government when it deserves it.

Mark Twain

On Memorial Day, I don't want to only remember the combatants. There were also those who came out of the trenches as writers and poets, who started preaching peace, men and women who have made this world a kinder place to live.

Eric Burdon



Patriotism consists not in waving the flag, but in striving that our country shall be righteous as well as strong.

James Bryce

Brainyquote.com

Daughter: Mom, what's it like to have the greatest daughter in the world?

Mom: I don't know dear, you'd have to ask Grandma.

A mother said to her son, "Look at that kid over there; he's not misbehaving." The son replied, "Maybe he has good parents!"

"If evolution really works, how come Mothers only have two hands?"
-Milton Berle

Chris: Why is a computer so smart?

Mom: It listens to its motherboard.

Why is Daenerys Stormborn the patron saint of Mother's Day?
Because she's the mother of all dragons.

What did the mother rope say to her child?... "Don't be knotty."

What did the digital clock say to its mother?... "Look, Ma! No hands!"

Knock, knock! Who's there? Justin!

Justin who?

Justin time for Mother's Day

Mother's Day Jokes provided by yellowoctopus.com

SHEKNOWS Mother's Day

WORD SEARCH

W	H	A	P	P	Y	W	G	N	I	R	A	C	O	H
S	N	S	R	E	H	T	O	M	D	N	A	R	G	L
P	V	T	H	O	U	G	H	T	F	U	L	D	N	K
G	A	E	N	H	N	E	N	E	N	H	H	Y	V	L
N	C	R	C	G	G	O	C	R	C	G	R	A	N	A
E	N	G	E	F	F	U	H	U	N	E	F	D	C	I
R	S	I	S	N	K	I	D	S	S	P	A	I	N	C
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L	L	I	L	A	A	J	E	J	L	A	I	O	F	P
I	O	N	O	Y	S	C	O	H	A	P	O	H	A	S
H	I	G	A	W	T	L	O	V	I	N	G	K	M	W
C	K	M	K	Q	Q	M	K	M	K	Q	Q	O	I	Q
B	U	D	U	S	P	R	I	N	G	A	M	B	L	A
J	A	E	T	A	R	E	D	I	S	N	O	C	Y	Z
Y	H	H	S	R	E	H	T	O	M	V	V	M	J	P

MOTHERS
DAY
MOMS
KIDS
PARENT
HOLIDAY
LOVING

CARING
CHILDREN
GRANDMOTHER
RESPECT
THOUGHTFUL
FAMILY
CONSIDERATE

HONOR
GIVING
SPECIAL
HAPPY
MAY
SPRING



She gets up while it is still night;
she provides food for her family.
Her children arise and call her blessed.

Proverbs 31:15, 28