

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

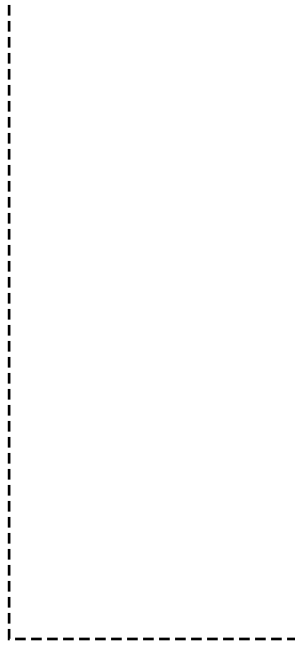
Pastor - Rev. Dr. Damon D. Laaker
Editor/Church Secretary - Brenda Spahr
Organist - Colleen Jeffrey
Sexton - Alma Lopez

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THE GRACE MESSENGER

1889 - 2020



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

Connect with us on the web: graceluth.com



In one of my Daily devotions from Richard Rohr, he began it by saying, “My friend and CAC colleague Brian McLaren has spent years imagining “a new kind of Christianity” that invites people into a deepening commitment to love of God, neighbor, and self. Such a movement for the common good is surely disruptive or “disordering” to our status quo, just as Jesus disrupted the status quo in his own day.” He caught my attention and I began wondering what he might have to say about Jesus’ disruptive actions. I hadn’t thought about Jesus’ ministry in that specific way.

He then went on to quote Brian McLaren. Here is how he began. “Jesus was introducing what, in today’s parlance, might be called a disruptive technology. Where sustaining technologies stimulate incremental improvements, like, say, going from a rotary phone to a touch-tone or keypad phone, or even from a landline to a wireless phone, a disruptive technology displaces established assumptions, as in, say, combining a phone, a camera, a computer, a music library and player, a GPS device, and a mobile Internet portal. The old status quo is disrupted, the game changes, and old technologies become irrelevant.” I couldn’t help but think about all of the Omaha Public School students now working from iPads. (If you’d like a bit of humor, I was pointed to a YouTube video titled “Monk needs help opening a book.”) Here is the link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-xmTTzCAALc>

McLaren goes on to say, “A later New Testament writer repeated and expanded upon the disruption and migration Jesus was calling for (1 Peter 2:5). The way of life centered in the Temple must be disrupted because God wanted to dwell not in buildings of bricks or stones cemented together by mortar, but rather *in human beings—living stones*, he called them—cemented together by mutual love, honor, and respect. . . .

“This disruptive revolution, this liberation, this great spiritual migration begins with each of us presenting ourselves, with all of our doubts and imperfections, all of our failures, fears, and flaws, to the Spirit, our legs as pillars, our bodies as temples. . . . You. Me. Everyone. No exceptions.”

I was with him. This seems like an honest and helpful way of considering our current circumstances. He then surprised me with his last comment. It may surprise you, too. “If you want to see the future of Christianity as a great spiritual migration, don’t look at a church building. Go look in the mirror and look at your neighbor. God’s message of love is sent into the world in human envelopes. If you want to see a great spiritual migration begin, then let it start right in your body. Let your life be a foothold of liberation.”

Continued.....

You and I are human envelopes. We are sent with a message of love from God to our neighbor. It would appear that a focus on being sent to church is not the disruption that Jesus sought. He sought our lives to be focused on love of neighbor, lived with honor and respect for the other. How do you think we are doing?

Blessings

Pastor Damon Laaker

Worship Plan Update

Our morning worship service outside on the west lawn of St. Luke’s Lutheran went well. We are grateful the weather cooperated and we were able to gather socially distanced and masked.

The continuing high numbers of infections of Covid-19 here in Omaha causes us pause. We had hoped that we would be able to gather safely indoors by now. It is clear that this is not a time to do this safely.

Therefore, your Council Leaders have decided to continue offering a 9 am outdoor worship on the west lawn of St. Luke’s Lutheran for the month of September. We hope that the weather will continue to cooperate.

Please note the following expectations:

- * All persons attending are expected to wear a mask. If you do not have one, one will be provided.
- * All persons attending will be expected to follow appropriate social distancing at all times. Please no touching, shaking hands, or hugging.
- * All persons attending will be expected to bring their own lawn chair.
- * An offering plate will be on a table. We will not be passing the plate.
- * If you have any potential symptoms, please refrain from attending. We want everyone to be safe.

May God grant us good weather and a safe experience!

Please continue to observe all of the precautions recommended by the CDC and the Douglas County Health Department.

For those who continue to wait safely at home, we will be recording the service. It will be uploaded to YouTube after the service. So, it will not be available the first thing in the morning but will be posted as soon as possible after the service.



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 August 11th. Council members shared their prayer concerns for family friends, our leaders to make good decisions, prayers for people to follow the new mask mandate in Omaha, a Sudanese family who lost their mother in the Sudan, and praise for an uplifting visit with Greg's mom who will be 90 this week.

Devotions: Devotions were led by Pastor Laaker, reading the selected verses in the "Daily Texts" from Psalm 68:3 and Philippians 4:4. The first is a message of encouragement and reminder to be joyful. The second is a reminder to rejoice in the Lord always.

Visions for Ministry: Growing Disciples + Walking Together + Serving God's World 2020 - register for online webinars in August by visiting the Nebraska ELCA website: <https://nebraskasynod.org/>

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

Christian Education: Online Confirmation - Pastor is planning to hold an online confirmation class.

Evangelism/Outreach: LVC - no further information.

Finance: Immanuel Vision - application is due September 30. Any ideas?

Property: North Wall - has been completed in the basement. Alma waxed the basement floors and it looks very nice.

Service/Social Ministry: None.

Continued...

Support/Stewardship: Fall Program - has been ordered and is ready to go for November.

Worship: Online Reflections - People like the brief descriptions between each piece. A suggestion was to lengthen time the prayer requests are up on the screen.

Outdoor at St. Luke's - scheduled for August 30th. Council members are asked to come together the week prior for a test run outside.

Adjournment: The Council meeting closed in prayer and adjourned at 8:15pm.

Respectfully Submitted, Amanda Vazquez, Secretary



Pastor Laaker will be conducting Confirmation classes online this year. If you have a young person in 7th or 8th Grade or older that would like to participate, now is the time to contact Pastor Laaker. Classes will be held on Wednesday evening at 7pm lasting one hour. Classes will begin Wednesday, September 16. Pastor Laaker will need an email address to which he can send a Google Meet link for joining in on the class.

Dear Friends,

Pastor Terry Nielsen was ordained at his home congregation, Fredericksburg Lutheran, Minden, NE, on July 27, 1980. He went on to serve two Nebraska congregations: St. Paul's (Soap Creek) Lutheran Church, DeWitt, from 1980 - 1994, and Immanuel Lutheran, Bellevue, from 1994 - 2010. We were blessed to live among two wonderful worshipping communities! Would you join us in celebrating his 40th anniversary of ordination by dropping a note or card to him? Our address is: 4617 County Road P43, Fort Calhoun, NE 68023. Email: sandy.nielsen72@gmail.com Thank you!

Yours in Christ,

Sandy, Megan, and Erik





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
Carolyn Matson
Sue Mize
Pam Reents
Urbano Vasquez



Andrew Edwards
Susan Miller
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:

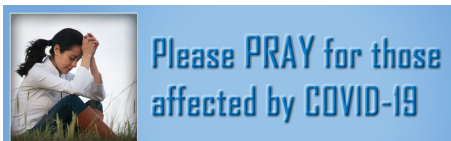
Pastor Damon Laaker, Grace Lutheran Church
Bishop Brian Maas, Nebraska Synod
Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, ELCA Bishop

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



**God's Work - Our Hands
Sunday
September 13, 2020**



God's Work Our Hands Sunday is an opportunity to celebrate who we are as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America – one church, freed in Christ to serve and love our neighbors.

In partnership, St. Luke's and Grace will collect jars of peanut butter and jelly which will be donated to the Loaves and Fishes Pantry at Grace.

St. Luke's members – you are able to drop off your peanut butter donation, the "Our Hands"/Social Ministry team will be at St. Luke's on Sunday, September 13, 2020, from 9:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

Please drive in the alley to the alley door entrance and a team member will retrieve your donation from your car.
Our goal is to collect 40 jars of peanut butter.

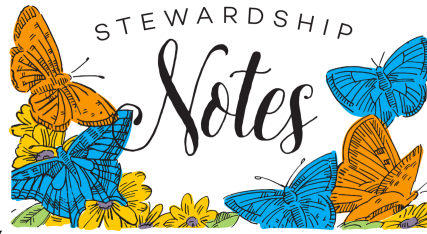
If you prefer to make a monetary donation, a member of the "Our Hands"/Social Ministry Team will shop for you. Please mail your donation to the church office and state that it is for the Spread The Love project.

Grace members – if you would like to drop off your jelly donation, the "Our Hands" team will be at Grace on Sunday, September 13, 2020, from 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Please drive in the parking lot and a team member will retrieve your donation from your car. Our goal is to collect 40 jars of jelly.



If you prefer to make a monetary donation, a member of the "Our Hands" team will shop for you. Please mail your donation to the church office and state that it is for the Spread The Love project.



Several years ago, Christian Smith and Hilary Davidson wrote a book titled, “The Paradox of Giving; Giving We Receive, Grasping We Lose.” In a review written by Kieran Healy, he said, “My bounty is as boundless as the sea,” Juliet says to Romeo. “The more I give to thee, the more I have.” In The Paradox of Generosity, Christian Smith and Hilary Davidson argue that giving works in just that way. The book, in fact, deals with two distinct paradoxes. The first paradox of generosity is that it’s good for those who practice it: The more you give, the better off you are. The second is that despite these benefits, relatively few people are especially generous. The purpose of the book, Smith and Davidson suggest, is not only to document the benefits of living a generous life, but also “to help less generous readers find their way to more generous life practices.”

I wonder, do we really believe “the more you give, the better off you are”? The authors of the book suggest that Americans as a whole have plenty of room for improvement when it comes to giving behavior. They did a survey in which they asked if persons tithe. Twenty percent of the respondents said they did. However, when they were pressed to report actual amounts, only 2.7 percent actually gave away ten percent.

The authors in their evidence that they have gathered strongly supports the conclusion that we do well by doing good.

Maybe the early followers of Jesus were onto something. Giving generously does lead to a healthy life spiritually and physically.

YOUR GIVING MATTERS!

Arts For All, Inc.



Arts for All, Inc. is under new management and will begin their fall semester during the week of October 5th. The 10 week semester will conclude the week of December 12th. You can register by calling 402-556-7821 or online at register@artsforallinc.com. Classes are \$10 per session , 10 weeks for \$100, music books may be required. Classes are in-person Wednesday and Friday (2315 “I” St.) and Saturdays (510 N. 93rd St.) and also on-line. Visit www.artsfoallomaha.org for a complete class and schedule list.

SEPTEMBER Birthdays

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

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.

Sign on Main Entrance to Grace Lutheran Church:

Covid-19 Notice



Grace Lutheran Church is taking necessary precautions by cleaning, sanitizing and social distancing. We cannot completely eliminate the risk of exposure, however. By participating in activities in this location, you are however assuming risk that may result in exposure to infectious and communicable diseases.

Please honor one another by wearing a mask and observe social distancing.



Project Hope's Annual "Bread for Life" event is still scheduled on Saturday, September 27th at noon. However; due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic concerns in our community, the fundraising committee has decided to change this from a live in person event to a virtual event.

This "Bread for Life" event kicks off the celebration for our 35th year of serving Omaha and the surrounding communities. They will be providing all participants in the Omaha area with a wonderful event box filled with food for your Sunday brunch, champagne and juice to make your own Mimosas, a loaf of fruit bread, and a gift item. This event box will be delivered to your home on Saturday, September 26th between 1:00 - 4:00 p.m. and will include the program with log on information.

If you have any questions or would like to register, please call the Project Hope office at 402-453-7649 or visit their website at projecthopeomaha.org, there is still time to register for this year's event!



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.



Sunday, October 11, 2020
Food Truck World Tour
Immigrant Legal Center

Annual fundraiser held at the Mastercraft at Millwork Commons, 1111 N 13th St. will be a drive-thru event from 2:00 - 6:00 p.m. This fundraiser is to celebrate immigrants in our community and safely receive your special sample platter of meals from Omaha's favorite food trucks!

As a non-profit, Immigrant Legal Center depends on the generosity of our community to serve immigrants in need. In response to COVID-19 and concerns for the safety and well-being of the staff, volunteers, and supporters, Food Truck World Tour will be a drive thru event!

Event sponsors include Omaha Steaks, Warren Distribution, Millwork Commons, Weitz Family Foundation, Mulhall's, Verizon Media, and National Justice for Our Neighbors.

If you have any questions, please contact Immigrant Legal Center at events@immigrantlc.org or call at 402-898-1349.

We know how to slow the spread of the coronavirus.

I know it doesn't always seem that way. And, yes, there is still a great deal we don't know about the virus.

You should wear a mask if you're going to spend time near anybody who is not part of your household. You should minimize your time in indoor spaces with multiple people. You should move as many activities as possible outdoors.

You should wash your hands frequently. And you should stay home, away from even your own family members, if you feel sick.



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 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.



Loaves and Fishes Pantry

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

Pantry is Open 10:00 - 10:30 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.



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.

“Our four-year-old great-granddaughter, Reegan Dowdy, who was born on Christmas Eve, attends St. Paul Lutheran Church in Boca Raton, FL, with her parents. Since she was old enough to talk, she has loved to tell everyone that Jesus is in her heart.

“She recently injured her foot slightly and prayed that night asking Jesus to heal it. The next morning, she declared with joy and gratitude: ‘Last night Jesus left my heart while I was sleeping and went down to my foot and made it all better! That sneaky Jesus!’”

- Jan Hough, St. Michael's Lutheran Church, Portage, MI

“I am enjoying my subscription to *The Joyful Noiseletter* more than ever during this coronavirus crisis. We shouldn't downplay the seriousness of the virus, but we need to keep a sense of humor during this crisis. Keep the good humor coming!”

- Fr. John S. Trimbур, Poland, OH

Jokes on this page shared by JoyfulNoiseletter.com

Do you know of a family or individual in need of food assistance? Please share the Pantry information with them. You could be the link to helping someone's stress be a little bit less!



Protect the
volunteers,
yourself and
your family!

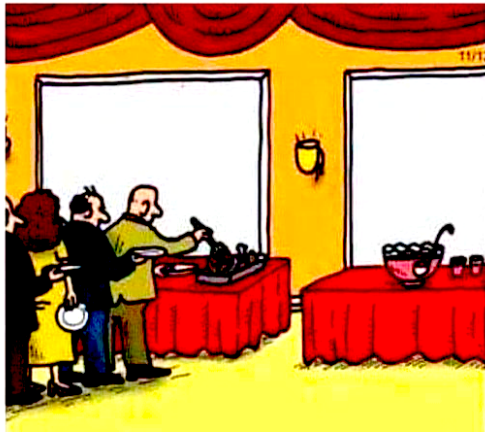


Lutheran South Pantry
4401 South 23rd Street
402-502-7070

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.

This would be funny except there's no punch line...



Church sign outside First Baptist Church of Macedon, NY.
 "An example of the timely wit and wisdom of my colleague, Pastor Steve Matteson," commented Pastor Carl Prostka of Farmington, NY, who sent it to JN.

Sign outside the First Baptist Church in Providence, RI, during pandemic:

"Had not planned on giving up this much for Lent."

- via Bill Breen, Taunton, MA

JN subscriber Joygerm Joan E. White of Syracuse, NY, founder of Joygerms, advises that we all "look for the positives during the coronavirus lockdown. Perhaps we can comfort and console one another by creating our own acronym for L.O.C.K.D.O.W.N. Here's mine:

*Laugh heartily; It's healthy.
 Order worry to depart.
 Courtesy and civility is a must.
 Kindle the flame of faith.
 Dip deeply into your Resilience Bag.
 Offset negative thinking with positive thoughts.
 Wait patiently in hope.
 Nourish and nurture one another (stay in touch).*

"And above all remember: It is noble to be global. We're all in this together (W.A.I.T.T.) Amen!"

Jokes on this page shared by JoyfulNoiseletter.com

Bible Wordsearch

Wordsearch 254

Matt 10:34-11:3

Jesus the Teacher

S	E	N	O	Y	N	A	F	U	F	P	R	T	E	S
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ANYONE AGAINST
 CHRIST BECAUSE
 CROSS CERTAINLY
 EARTH DAUGHTER
 EXPECT DISCIPLE
 FATHER ENEMIES
 FOLLOW FINISHED
 GIVES GALILEE
 HEARD MEMBERS
 JESUS MOTHER
 PEACE PREACH
 PRISON PROPHET
 SWORD RECEIVES
 TRUTH REWARD
 TEACH SHOULD
 TOWNS SOMEONE
 TWELVE SUPPOSE
 WATER WORTHY

After you find all the hidden words the left over letters spell out a Bible verse reading from the top left to the bottom right



MORE PUZZLES AT:
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SPEED BUMP

by Dave Coverly

