

Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church
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402-341-7730

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www.facebook.com/gracelutheranomaha

REGULAR SUNDAY EVENTS
10:30 a.m. Worship Service
on the Lawn at St. Luke's, 2315 "T" Street

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

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THE GRACE MESSENGER

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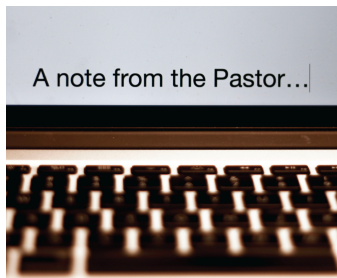


HAPPY
Mother's
DAY



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



A note from the Pastor...

As I share my thoughts, this day is being observed as Earth Day 2021. Many of you know that I try to walk outdoors each morning. I enjoy observing the birds and the changing of the seasons. I notice the flowers and the landscape. Lately, I have been noticing what seems to be a growing practice of using the environment as one's personal trash can. The amount of litter, of all types, is significant along roadways, walkways, yards, etc.

This morning one of the devotionals that I read daily offered by Richard Rohr was titled "Grieving the Trees." He shared a prayer from Rev. Dr. Margaret Bullitt-Jonas. I share it here.

"In times like these, our prayer may need to be expressive and embodied, visceral and vocal. How else can we pray with our immense anger and grief? How else can we pray about ecocide, about the death that humanity is unleashing upon Mother Earth and upon ourselves? How else can we break through our inertia and despair, so that we don't shut down and go numb? . . .

"I've taken to praying outdoors. I go outside, feel the good earth beneath my feet and the wind on my face, and I sing to the trees—to oak and beech, hemlock and pines. Making up the words and music as I go along, I sing my grief to the trees that are going down, and my grief for so much more—for what we have lost and are losing, and for what we are likely to lose. I sing my outrage about these beautiful old trees being cut to the roots, their bodies chipped to bits and hauled away to sell. I sing my fury about the predicament we're in as a species. I sing my protest of the political and corporate powers—that-be that drive forward relentlessly with business as usual, razing forests, drilling for more oil and fracked gas, digging for more coal, expanding pipeline construction, and opening up public lands and waters to endless exploitation, as if Earth were their private business and they were conducting a liquidation sale. I sing out my shame to the trees, my repentance and apology for the part I have played in Earth's destruction and for the part my ancestors played when they stole land and chopped down the original forests of the Native peoples who lived here. I sing my praise for the beauty of trees and my resolve not to let a day go by that I don't celebrate the precious living world of which we are so blessedly a part. I'm not finished until I sing my determination to renew action for trees and for all of God's Creation. . . ."

Continued.....

Earthday.org reminds us: *Climate change and other environmental degradations have broken our natural systems, leading to new and fatal diseases as well as a breakdown of the global economy. But just as climate change and coronavirus painfully remind us of the harm we've caused, Restore Our Earth reminds us of the opportunities that lay ahead.*

We must Restore Our Earth not just because we care about the natural world, but because we live on it. Every one of us needs a healthy Earth to support our jobs, livelihoods, health & survival, and happiness. A healthy planet is not an option — it is a necessity.

May we take the necessary steps to not only pray for Mother Earth but do all we can as stewards of God's creation to provide for a healthy community and world.

Pastor Laaker



2021 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 13th. Council members shared prayer concerns for the issues around race and violence in Minnesota, health care issues for family members and friends, and the immigration crisis at the southern border.

Devotions: Devotions were led by Pastor Laaker, reading the selected verses in the "Daily Texts" from Jeremiah 4:14 and Luke 3:8. The first tells us that we need to clean our hearts of wickedness so that we may be saved. The second tells us to bear fruits worthy of repentance.

Continued...

Visions for Ministry: The author described narcissism and how people with narcissistic tendencies often tend to be like a magnet, drawing blind followers who are mesmerized and attracted to what is said. He goes on to say that a leader should be willing to confront problems, calling them out and dealing with the fallout. The leader who is able to adapt to necessary changes will be successful.

Read chapter 11 for next month.

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

Christian Education: none

Evangelism/Outreach: Grace Reads - 2nd grade classrooms today, 3rd grade classrooms a couple weeks ago.

Invited ideas for the Immanuel Vision Grant Remaining Funds.

Reminded folks to participate in the OTOC candidate accountability session.

Finance: none

Property: CLS will be here Friday April 30th to tear out the portion of the basement floor, put in the drain and sump pump, and pour new concrete. We will need to replace the tile.

Service/Social Ministry: Lutheran Volunteer Corps is still trying to find someone for us for the year.

Support/Stewardship: 1st Quarter Giving Statement are out.

Worship: Continuing Online, Outdoors when weather permits. In person draft document for down the road when the time comes to resume in-person indoors worship. Hymn selection group will meet on Thursday, April 22.

Unfinished Business: Synod Assembly - voting member - Janet will attend.

New Business: none

Announcements: Donna will prepare a prayer for next month.

Adjournment: The Council meeting closed in prayer and adjourned at 8:40pm.

Respectfully Submitted, Amanda Vazquez, Secretary

Worship Update in the Covid-19 Pandemic

Your Councils want to keep you up-to-date on the status of getting back to in-sanctuary worship (remember, we have had no shortage of in-person opportunities over the last year in our outdoor sanctuary!). The patience you have all had over this past year has been much appreciated, as it has not been easy to stay the course to try to keep us all safe and healthy. Many of Grace and St. Luke's folks have been vaccinated or have access to the vaccine (a good thing!), but, on the other hand, the number of cases continues to show signs of increase again.

Though we have started making plans and procedures for our re-opening, we will only be ready to open our doors when the "rolling daily average" is at a safer threshold. You can follow those numbers along with us at the [Douglas County COVID Dashboard](#). Recently, Nebraska Synod, Bishop Maas reminded us to follow the directives of our health authorities. A year ago, we felt it was best to wait until this number was below 10 and closer to 5.

During this pandemic, it has become apparent that we have all established different perspectives, different levels of comfortability with the virus, and different personal timelines of integrating back into the community. We have learned that one person's comfort zone is not always the same as our neighbor's, relative's, or friend's comfort zone. While many are ready to shower folks with hugs or socialize, many others are not. Balancing these points of view has been very difficult as we try to make sure we are providing a safe and comfortable environment for everyone to worship--no matter your comfort or vaccination level.

We have so appreciated those who have kept us in their prayers and have continued to support Grace and St. Luke's financially. We are one day closer to the end than we were yesterday, and we pray we will be together in the sanctuary soon! Until then, we will make efforts to gather outdoors, weather permitting.

Pastor Laaker

If you want a good laugh, *Google* the old YouTube video of Johnny Carson, as a preacher, giving the eulogy at the funeral of the editor and publisher of the *Thesaurus*. Just *Google* "Johnny Carson *Thesaurus*."

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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
David Nange
Marilyn Van Ormer



Andrew Edwards
Susan Miller
Amber Morlan
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



Please PRAY for those affected by COVID-19



Stewardship



Soon we will hear the Acts 2 vision, "All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need." An Acts 2 church needs to be about people helping people. Each week, a group of volunteers receive the food donations and make them ready to hand out on Monday mornings. Many have brought in peanut butter and jelly. These staple items help individuals and families who are in need of good wholesome nutrition. We are making every attempt to model generosity.

A few years ago, Presiding Bishop Eaton reminded us to BE THE CHURCH: One of the most important things a church can do to sustain stewardship is to continue to serve the Lord and to love its neighbors. Your support of one another and of the ministry we share in Christ is vital to this effort. Thank You!



**Lutheran
World
Relief**

Neighbors in crisis need the essential items found in a Personal Care Kit now more than ever to help protect vulnerable families from Covid-19. The Lutheran World Relief warehouse shelves are nearly empty, and it is a challenge trying to keep up with demands. All congregations are invited to make LWR Personal Care Kits!

Our goal in collecting items for the Personal Care Kits during the Lenten Season have been fruitful! Donated items are enough to assemble 75 complete kits for Lutheran World Relief for individuals in need globally.

Before the Personal Care Kits are sent to the main warehouse in Minneapolis, volunteers are needed, willing to gather at Grace and assemble items into the Personal Care Kits, and pack boxes on Sunday, May 16th following the worship service.

Please speak with Brenda or Pastor Laaker if you would like to participate with this joyous task of sharing God's Love through support to Lutheran World Relief.

Omaha Together One Community

12th Annual Spring Fundraiser

Celebrating Community

Omaha Design Center
1502 Cuming St, Omaha

Tickets: \$25 (\$30 at the door)
Tickets available in May

Silent Auction Cash Bar
Appetizers Dessert
Live Music

Sunday, June 13, 2021
4:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Virtual Auction June 6-13

If you have any questions, please call the OTOC office at 402-344-4401 or speak with Vicki Cox, 402-333-5980.



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

Happy Birthday in faith and blessings be upon you! On your birthday, remember that you were wonderfully made by God and rejoice in his love. You are so blessed to be you and to share the amazing love of Jesus on your birthday! May God bless this day with more love than your heart can hold.



Friends

A friend is someone we turn to when our spirits need a lift.
A friend is someone we treasure, for our friendship is a gift.
A friend is someone who fills our lives with beauty, joy, and grace.
And makes the whole world we live in a better and happier place.

~ Jean Kyler McManue
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All are invited to wear something red in recognition of Pentecost Sunday, May 23rd.



Grace Lutheran Church has some additional ways that you could contribute without spending any out of pocket funds.

Take a few moments of your time to download the app for TAGG - Together A Greater Good; they partner with several community business. Take a snapshot of your receipt and that some businesses will donate 5% to a charity of your choice (Grace Lutheran).

While shopping online at smile.amazon.com you can designate Grace Lutheran Church as your charity of choice and Amazon will donate a percentage of your purchase to Grace.

Register your Bakers Plus card with Kroger and choose Grace Lutheran as your charitable choice!

Saving your Family Fare, Bag & Save, No Frills, Fresh Market and SunMart receipts will benefit Project Hope. For every \$150,000 in receipts collected, Project Hope receives \$1,000 to use for dairy products. Receipts will be mailed to Project Hope monthly.



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

Lutheran Disaster Response brings God's hope, healing and renewal to people whose lives have been disrupted by disasters in the United States and around the world. When the dust settles and the headlines change, we stay to provide ongoing assistance to those in need.

The Lutheran Disaster Team has been present during the tornado recovery efforts in Alabama, California wildfires, AMMPARO Advocacy, Monsoon rains in India, South Sudan Relief, the explosions that rocked Beirut, and the list goes on....

Your donation to the Lutheran Disaster Team helps to continue their efforts to provide God's hope, healing and renewal to all those in need.

Prayers and donations for those impacted are always needed.

Donations made to Grace Lutheran Church with the memo line indicating "Lutheran Disaster Response" will be forwarded to the Nebraska Synod office in support of the many efforts ongoing right now.

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, paper sacks and egg cartons to continue this community service, if you are able to donate please call the church office 402-341-7730.

Do you know of a family or individual in need of food assistance? Please share the Pantry information with them.

**Spread the Love by donating
Peanut Butter and Jelly.**



FACE MASK
REQUIRED

Protect the
volunteers,
yourself and
your family!



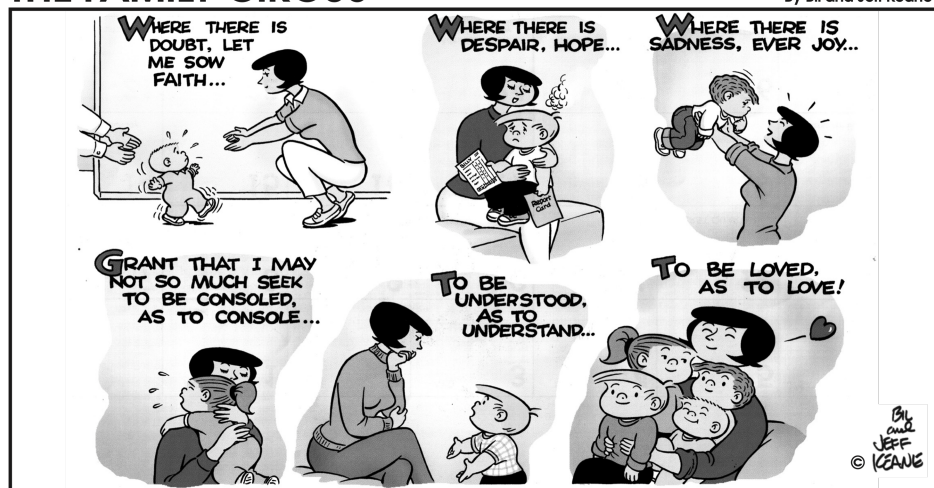
**Lutheran South Pantry
4401 South 23rd Street
402-502-7070**

Items that clients cannot purchase with their food stamps are always appreciated: Dish Soap, Kleenex, Bar Soap, Deodorant, Toothbrush and toothpaste, Feminine hygiene products, Hair products (combs, brushes, picks), Bathroom tissue, Shampoo, Dry Laundry Soap, Hand Sanitizer, Sunscreen, Bug Repellent, Band-aids Diaper wipers, and Diapers, especially sizes 6 and pull-ups.

We always need paper or plastic bags.

THE FAMILY CIRCUS

By Bil and Jeff Keane



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Happy
Mother's Day

PHILLIP'S FLOCK

By Doc Goodwin



from JoyfulNoiseletter.com
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THE FAMILY CIRCUS

By Bil and Jeff Keane



"If so many people get hurt in war, why do they keep playin' it?"

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1. ____ Eve
2. ____ Sarah
3. ____ Rebekah
4. ____ Zipporah
5. ____ Ruth
6. ____ Bathsheba
7. ____ Naomi
8. ____ Hannah
9. ____ Elizabeth
10. ____ Mary
11. ____ Eunice
12. ____ Salome

- A. Solomon (2 Sam 12:24)
- B. Mahlon & Chilion (Ruth 1:2)
- C. Samuel (1 Sam 1:20)
- D. John the Baptist (Luke 1:57)
- E. Isaac (Gen 17:19)
- F. Timothy (2 Tim 1)
- G. Obed (Ruth 4: 16-17)
- H. Abel (Gen 4: 1-2)
- I. Yeshua (Mat 1:16)
- J. Gershom (Ex 2: 21-22)
- K. Jacob (Gen 25:28)
- L. James and John



A young boy called the pastor of a local church and asked him to come by to pray for his mother, who was very ill with the flu.

The pastor knew the family and was aware they were members of another church down the road. So the pastor asked, "Shouldn't you be asking Pastor Simon at your church to come by to pray with your mom?"

The young boy replied, "Yeah, but we didn't want to take the chance that he might catch whatever it is that Mom has."

~ via Rev. Dr. Karl R. Kraft, Dover DE