

Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church  
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Omaha, NE 68105-2380  
402-341-7730

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**JULY SUNDAY EVENTS**  
9:30 a.m. Indoor Worship Service

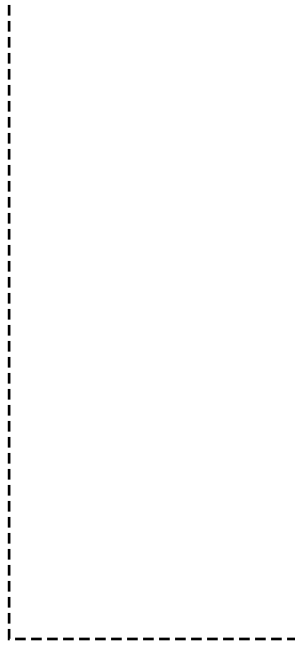
Pastor - Rev. Dr. Damon D. Laaker  
Editor/Church Secretary - Brenda Spahr  
Organist - Colleen Jeffrey  
Sexton - Alma Lopez

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# THE GRACE MESSENGER

1889 - 2021

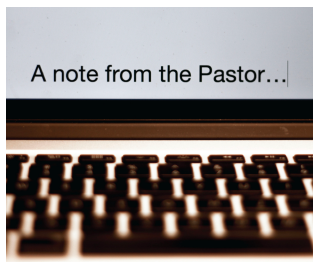


# August



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](http://graceluth.com)**



Some thoughts as we prepare to hear the Scripture readings throughout this month. We have just begun with a reading from John that features Jesus' feeding of the 5000. Take note that Jesus distributes the bread and the fish to all the guests gathered. A compassionate touch for each to receive more than enough to satisfy.

On Sunday August 1, apparently not satisfied by Jesus' feeding of the crowd, some who were there press him for a sign of his power, perhaps it is daily manna they want. Jesus, however, offers himself as the bread come down from heaven to give life to the world. He calls us to come to him and believe in him, and through that relationship to know the one who sent him.

On Sunday, August 8, Jesus says that the bread he gives for the life of the world is his flesh, and whoever eats this bread has life eternal now and will be raised on the last day. We are to live in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us. The whole purpose of life is giving yourself for the other.

On Sunday, August 15, we will observe the special recognition of Mary, Mother of our Lord. Mary's role is not limited to giving birth to Jesus and mothering him in his childhood. In John's gospel, she is among the women standing near the cross. In Acts, she among the disciples awaiting the gift of the Spirit. She continues to see how God was at work through her son.

On Sunday, August 22, we return to John's gospel where the people are taking offense at Jesus' invitation to eat his flesh and drink his blood. Some disciples leave the group. In the midst of this, Peter asks, "To whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life." May we be bold ambassadors for the good news of the gospel.

On Sunday, August 29, Jesus will critique those who elevate human customs above divine law thus ignoring God's law. True uncleanness comes not from external things, but from the intentions of the human heart. May God create in us clean hearts.

This is only a brief summary of some of the things we will encounter in the Gospel readings there is more to shared and learned in the other readings from the Old Testament, the Psalms and the New Testament lessons. These are rich for spiritual formation and foundation.

*Continued.....*

Speaking of formation and foundation, I will be conducting confirmation classes online again this year. If you have someone in your family that would like to participate, please let me know so that they can be included. Day and time will likely be on Wednesday in the evening.

I would also like to offer early communion classes for children that would like to participate in receiving communion. I am looking at offering the classes for three weeks following the morning worship September 12, 19, 26. Let me know if you have children that would like to participate. Parents are invited to attend with their children.

Pastor Laaker



### Stewardship

*"Each one of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." – 2 Corinthians 9:7*

While some of us may have heard the last five words of this verse weaponized as a way of increasing participation, reading it in full offers a better—and broader—vision for stewardship. There's something going on here beyond tithe checks or offering plates and envelopes. There's a culture described in these lines—one that's operating out of something other than scarcity or fear.

Although we see some examples to the contrary (*looking at you, Ananias and Sapphira*), so much of the early church was known for—and sustained by—its generosity. Have we maintained that? We still believe that God will meet our needs, but the culture seems to have shifted. Maybe it isn't as easy to trust as it once was. When we do talk about giving, we might even feel reluctant.

The Spirit of Christ invites us to trust God's generosity in all things. Our giving can grow in frequency and amount recognizing that we can't outgive God. Let's give generously and with a cheerful heart.



## 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 July 13th. Council members shared prayer concerns for health conditions of members and friends, and a quick reconnection to power for those individuals still without power.

Devotions: Devotions were led by Pastor Laaker, reading the selected verses in the “Daily Texts” from Psalm 3:2-3 and Luke 1:49. The first tells us that the Psalmist has faith even during traumatic times, much like Job. The second tells us that when we are faced with uncertainty, we can still have great faith in God.

Visions for Ministry: The Postscript highlights that this is a life-long process of maturity that we should intentionally give thought before any actions in order to utilize these skills in our own lives.

Pastor passed out “The Scourge of White Privilege” by A’Jamal-Rashad Byndon, please read the article for next month’s group discussion.

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

Christian Education, Service/Social Ministry, Support/Stewardship, and New Business: None.

Evangelism/Outreach: Delightful conversation with a potential individual for the LVC placement; however so far there has been no response. Recently two individuals have inquired to becoming a part of our faith community; nice surprise!

Finance: We are experiencing a concerning shortfall. After a discussion of possible options, a motion was made to move Memorial Funds to the General Operating Funds to cover the payroll which will need to take place by the 15th. The motion was seconded and all agreed.

*Continued...*

Endowment Board met on June 29th and the Council ratified the intent of the Board for distribution of funds.

A donation of \$895.00 from Morning Star Lutheran was made in support of Grace Reads. Pastor sent a Thank You letter in response.

Property: Graffiti was discovered on the window sill under the front office. The Omaha Police Graffiti Abatement Team has been notified.

Worship: The Council concurred with St. Luke’s to continue the joint service for the next two months, that the service time would be 9:30 am, that we would post a new sign on the doors that reads “If you are fully vaccinated, please use your own judgment on wearing a mask” and that we would meet at Grace in August and St. Luke’s in September.

August 8 - Pastor will be out of town. Pastor Omar Vila from San Andres will conduct the service.

Announcements: Pastor will be taking a vacation from August 3-8, visiting family in California.  
Ralph will prepare the closing prayer for the August meeting.

Adjournment: The Council meeting closed in prayer and adjourned at 8:45pm.

Respectfully Submitted, Brenda Spahr



Raising Spirits at Campus Lutheran  
Saturday, September 18, 2021,  
5:00 - 7:00 p.m.  
2715 9th Avenue, Kearney, NE

A fundraiser for the Ministry of Campus Lutheran. Come raise your spirits as we build up our ministry! Evening will include silent and live auctions, hors d’oeuvres, wine tasting provided by The Alley Rose with an exploration of the spirituality of wine with Pastor Elisabeth, and live music by local band, The Shockitanos / Mike & Diane Sciacchitano Duo.

\$50/person online in advance: [givebutter.com/raisingspirits](https://givebutter.com/raisingspirits)  
\$55/person at the door

Any questions, please call the office at 308-234-1828.



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  
David Nange  
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  
Rev. Terry Nielsen - The Meriwether



Terry enjoys receiving mail, if you would like to brighten his day, please call the church office for his current address. Blessings!

# The Collective for HOPE

## Ted E. Bear Hojlow



Address:  
7811 Farnam Drive  
Omaha, NE 68114  
402-502-2773



It may be summer break, but we are still here for you and those you love. Please take a peek at our upcoming groups and events and as always, reach out with any questions at all.

**HEALing Embrace (Pregnancy & Infant Loss)** This support group is open to individuals grieving a pregnancy or infant loss (infants up to the age of one.) This group meets from 6:30 - 8:00 p.m. on the second and fourth Thursdays of every month. Meetings, in August are the 12th and 26th.

**Monthly Family Bereavement Support Groups** These sessions start at 10:30 a.m. and run to 11:30 a.m. on the second Saturdays of every month. Join us on Saturday, August 14th! ZOOM groups will be held for adults, teens, and preteens. Children ages 5-9 will be provided special links/activities but won't meet concurrently. Please email [monthly@thecollectiveforhope.org](mailto:monthly@thecollectiveforhope.org) with any questions or to discuss special needs.

**Adults Helping Adults (AHA)** Adults Helping Adults meets the 1st and 3rd Thursdays of every month. It runs from 6:30 - 8:00 p.m. and, like the name sounds, is only open to those aged 19 or above. The next session will be August 5th. Please email Anica at [amarcum@thecollectiveforhope.org](mailto:amarcum@thecollectiveforhope.org) if you have any questions.

**To Register** for any or all programs, or to read additional information, please go online at: [thecollectiveforhope.org](http://thecollectiveforhope.org) or call 402-502-2773 for any questions.





## AMERICAN INDIAN ALASKA NATIVE LUTHERAN ASSOCIATION

Greetings in the name of our Creator, in the name of Jesus, Savior of all. We speak to you all today on behalf of the Indigenous people throughout North Americas. We come with sad hearts at the news of 215+ children of the Kamloops Residential School whose remains were recently found in a mass grave and of the children of the Rosebud Sioux whose bodies were returned to their homeland this past week. They are being remembered by many by the color orange.

The color orange is symbolic and came from the inspiration of a survivor of that era, Phyllis Webstad, who stated that when she was a 6-year-old girl arriving at a residential boarding school, she was stripped of her clothes which included a new orange t-shirt her grandmother had gifted her and was never given back. The orange shirt/color now symbolizes how the church and the schools they administered took away the Indigenous identity of the children in their care.

In honor and memory of the children of the First Nations people and of our Native children who never made it home, and for those still living the nightmare imposed on them as children of Canada and the United States we humbly ask our brothers and sisters of the church to hang an orange banner in the sanctuaries of your churches for 225 days. In remembrance and lament of each child that was thrown into those graves, and those yet to be discovered we honor each of their lives.

Please grieve with us and remember us as the Indigenous people of this land who are going through a very sad and heartbreaking time in our collective psyche. We invite all our Christian brothers and sisters, in solidarity with us, to honor all our First Nations and our Native children that never made it out of residential schools by hanging an orange banner for 225 days.

We now call on the Church to acknowledge and confess its complicity in all the atrocities committed against the Indigenous peoples of North America and throughout the world where western Christianity colonized Indigenous peoples. Please stand in partnership with us for the children.

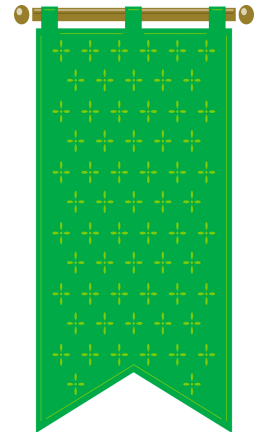
The true history of the western church in America has been participation in acts of ethnic cleansing, genocide through warfare including biological and chemical, sterilization, depletion of our main food source, the taking of land and resources for personal gains. We ask you, the ELCA Church and Bishops Church leaders and congregations to support our people in remembering the children.

*Continued.....*

Many Tribal nations have had church groups offer apologies on behalf of their ancestors, which is well and good, but that only serves to assuage any feelings of guilt or shame for them and does not bring about true repentance. So in light of these past gestures we call upon the churches serving in the United States to advocate the U.S. Government to fully acknowledge all the atrocities it has committed against the indigenous peoples of this land now known as the United States of America and for the future of Christianity in Indian Country.

Wopila In Christ,

Pr.Joann Conroy, President  
Pr.Manuel Ratamoza, Vice President  
Pr.Will Voss, Treasurer  
Kelly Sherman-Conroy Ph.D. Candidate, Secretary  
Pr .Larry Thiele, Incorporator  
Patterson Yazzie  
Loni Whitford  
Vicar Jonathan Old Horse  
Pr. Jack Russel  
Amanda Straw  
Lisa Whitford  
Teri Arlene Watkins



2 – Vicki Cox  
3 – Bobbi Jo Pankaj  
Joseph Everitt  
13 – Barisila Koka  
23 – Charles Emery  
26 – Kirstin Pafford

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.





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.



The Durham Museum is bringing back the "5 after 5" on Tuesdays to encourage guests to visit the museum this summer. Now through August 31st admission for

all ages will be just \$5 after 5pm every Tuesday and will stay open until 8pm. Take this opportunity to visit the exhibits and invite a friend!

### A Morning Prayer

*Let me today do something that will take a little sadness from the world's vast store, and may I be so favored as to make of joys too scant spread a little more.*

*"However meager be my worldly wealth, let me give something that shall aid my kind - a word of courage, or a thought of health dropped as I pass for troubled hearts to find."*

*"Let me tonight look back, and to my conscience say - because of some good act to beast or man - 'The world is better that I lived today.'"*

~ Ella Wheeler Wilcox

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## 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.



FACE MASK  
REQUIRED

Protect the  
volunteers,  
yourself and  
your family!



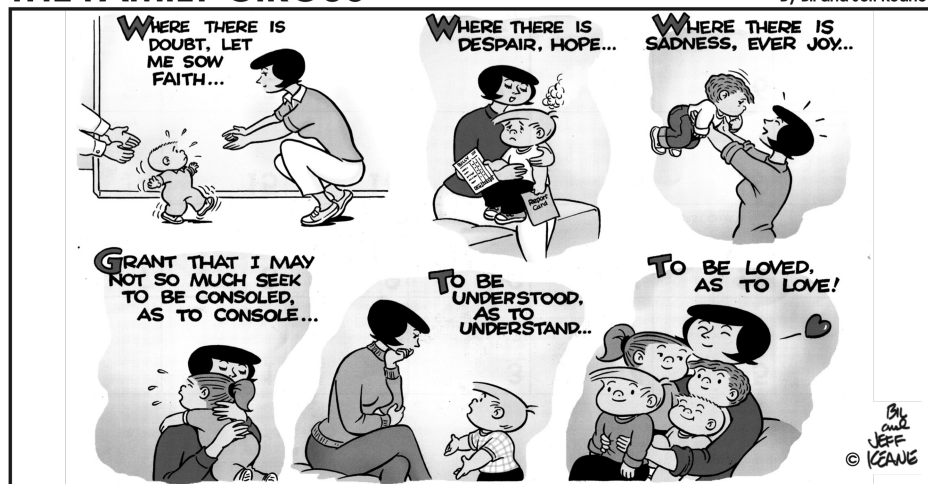
**Lutheran South Pantry**  
4401 South 23rd Street  
402-502-7070

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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## Signs and Wonders

Sign outside Mansfield, OH, church:

"Too hot to keep changing sign. Sin bad. Jesus good. Details inside."

~ via Rev. Paul Lintern, Oakland Lutheran Church, Mansfield, OH

Sign outside church in Edmond, OK:

"God so loved the world that He did not send a committee."

~ via Rev. Bill Park

Sign outside United Methodist Church in Cheswold, DE:

"Sin burn is prevented by Son screen."

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

Church sign seen in central Wisconsin:

"Exercise daily. Walk with Jesus!"

~ via Ann Reusch, Wisconsin Rapids, WI

Sign outside a church:

"In a world when you can be anything, be kind."

~ via Paul Kurlowicz, St. Michael's Lutheran Church, Portage, MI

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
L	S	U	P	P	O	S	E	I	R	O	C	Y	D	W
G	A	L	I	L	E	E	H	E	N	E	L	L	I	O
I	H	E	A	R	D	L	A	R	P	I	U	L	S	R
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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:

<http://biblewordgames.com>

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"Welcome aboard 'Anointed Airlines,' Pastors!  
What say we begin by testing your faith  
right away?! Please join us in celebrating  
our captain's birthday...She's 104 today!!"

**Summer  
WORSHIP  
SCHEDULE**

## Worship Update

During the month of August  
worship services will be held  
here at Grace. Service begins  
at 9:30 a.m. Hope to see you!