

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

SEPTEMBER SUNDAY EVENTS

9:30 a.m. Indoor Worship Service
St. Luke's Lutheran, 2315 "T" St.

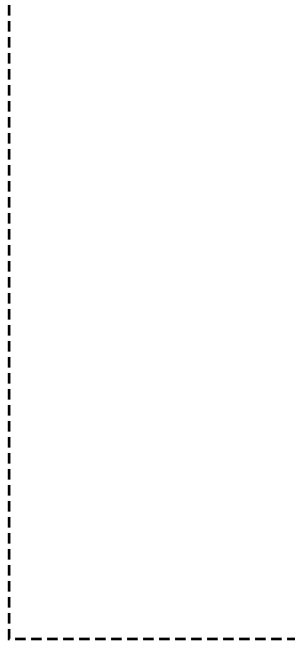
Pastor - Rev. Dr. Damon D. Laaker
Editor/Church Secretary - Brenda Spahr
Organist - Colleen Jeffrey
Sexton - Alma Lopez

Delivered to the Post Office August 27



Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Omaha NE
Permit No. 39

Return Service Requested
Dated Material



THE GRACE MESSENGER

1889 - 2021

September



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...

The summer months have flown by in a hurry once again. Soon fall will be here and then winter. No surprise, I am sure.



I have been thinking about Christian education, or as it is often referred to now, Faith Formation.

The pandemic put an end to our efforts to provide in-person Sunday School. The uncertainty of safely gathering together continues to be an obstacle to providing children the opportunity to learn many of the stories of the faith we espouse. I am grateful for the capacity to use electronic means to gather students for confirmation study. I would like to do that with adults, too.

I will be gathering children and parents wishing to participate in communion for an early communion class, Sundays, September 12, 19 and 26, immediately following worship on those days. We will meet in-person from 10:45-11:30 am.

I would be willing to offer a virtual adult Bible Study class. We could do something in the afternoon or evening. If this is something you would be willing to participate in, drop me a note, give me a call, or speak to me after worship on Sunday.

Encouraging and supporting one another in faith development is a vital element for deepening our relationship with Christ. As we read in the New Testament stories, there were many who gathered around Jesus to learn from him, ask him questions and seeking to model their lives on his example.

A good definition of faith is “a living, daring confidence in God’s grace.” When we talk about faith, we are talking about the relationship God’s Holy Spirit creates in us. It is a relationship where God’s steadfast love and mercy in Jesus opens us to a life of bold trust in God and joyful, generous service to everyone we know and meet in daily life.

Continued.....

It is important to find ways to deepen this relationship. In addition to Bible Study, finding a daily devotional resource that includes a reading from Scripture, a reflection and a prayer is valuable. Practicing daily prayers that include thanksgivings, recognition of our brokenness, intercessions on behalf of others and praise for God is a good faith development exercise.

Pastor Laaker



Covid Pandemic Update

I know we are all tired of this ongoing, up and down, pandemic. I was hopeful that following the roll out of the vaccines, we were on a pathway that would lead to fewer mandates and fewer restrictions.

Our leadership had begun to entertain ideas on ways to resume some fellowship opportunities. However, now that will all have to wait. The rise in Covid infections and the fact that this new variant is more contagious means that we must resume some of our protective efforts such as mask wearing while indoors, good hand hygiene and more frequent disinfection protocols.

Our desire is to protect one another. I believe that no one wants to get sick and I sure don’t want to be reason someone does get sick, so I will do what is in the best interest of us all.

Please, please get vaccinated if you have not. Please make your decisions about what to do using Paul’s admonition to the Philippians, “Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.”

Please stay safe.



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 August 10th. Prayer requests were shared for friends suffering with cancer, a member in need, a family member, students and staff who will be starting school this week and next.

Devotions: Devotions were led by Pastor Laaker, reading the selected verses in the “Daily Texts” from Job 21:22 and Romans 12:16. The first asks if anyone can teach God knowledge that God doesn’t already have. The second tells us to live in harmony with one another.

Visions for Ministry: We discussed the article “The Scourge of White Privilege” by A’Jamal-Rashad Byndon.

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

Christian Education: Confirmation - adding an additional person from Norfolk who is a family member of St. Luke’s.
Early Communion Class - will take place in September.

Evangelism/Outreach: Grace Reads - will likely take place over zoom.

Finance: Conversation was shared on suggestions for meeting our financial needs.
Immanuel Vision Foundation - new project ideas are due by September 30th.

Property: Rain Storm - We had some water damage in the children’s room downstairs.
Riding Mower - Battery needed replacement.
Clean out storage room in basement - need volunteers.
Thanks to Loren for putting metal on the front of the Little Library to hopefully prevent future damage.

Continued...

Service/Social Ministry: God’s Work Our Hands - “Together We Make the Perfect Pear” collecting cans of fruit the first 2 weeks of September.

Support/Stewardship: Fearless Generosity: Story topics are living, service, sowing, giving.

Worship: Ongoing plans
150th Anniversary of Nebraska Synod begins on the last Sunday of August.

Announcements: Amanda will prepare a prayer for next month.

Adjournment: The Council meeting closed in prayer and adjourned at 8:43pm.

Respectfully Submitted, Amanda Vazquez, Secretary



Project Hope
6201 N 60th St., Omaha, NE 68104
projecthopeomaha.org

Project Hope’s “Bread for Life” event is scheduled on Sunday, September 26th at noon. This event is being held at the Omaha Scottish Rite Masonic Center. This is a celebration of Project Hope’s first 35 years of serving Omaha and the surrounding communities. Celebration event will include a wonderful brunch, program, and auctions. Rev. Dr. James McDaniels who served at Hope Lutheran Church when Project Hope started in the 1980s will be giving the keynote address.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Project Hope is now accepting clothing donations. Please deliver your gently used clothing to our pantry on Tuesday or Thursday between 11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. Remember, we do not distribute stained, ripped, or otherwise damaged clothing items. Please do not donate clothing items that are damaged.

If you have any questions, please call Project Hope office at 402-453-7649.



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.

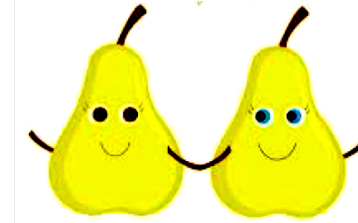
Pray for our Shut-in and Nursing Home resident:

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!

Together
We Make the *Perfect* Pear



Grace and St. Luke's

God's Work. Our Hands.
Sunday, September 12, 2021

In partnership, St. Luke's and Grace will collect canned fruit which will be donated to the Loaves and Fishes Pantry at Grace.

Our goal is to collect 75 cans of fruit.

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 Perfect Pear Project.

Please bring your canned fruit donation to church on
September 5 and September 12



God's work.
Our hands.

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.

Stewardship The Offering as Worship



This reflection was shared by Rev. Dr. Mark Allan Powell.

When I was a child, my mother used to pack us all in the station wagon and drive us to church on Sunday morning. She would say, "We are going to worship God! Six days a week, God blesses us, and on Sunday, we go to give thanks!"

Why I Go To Church

I have continued going to church most of my life and have found a lot of reasons to go. Sometimes the sermons are helpful; sometimes the music is inspiring; sometimes the people are friendly; sometimes, I get a lot out of it. The thing is...I don't *always* get a lot out of it. One thing I have discovered as a lifelong church-goer is that there is hardly ever a Sunday when I cannot find something to complain about...but then I remember what my mother said...and I wonder if maybe it's not about me.

Every day of the week, God blesses us...and on Sunday we go and give thanks...we worship God...and give thanks because God is so good to us. And nothing can stop God's goodness from happening—not even boring sermons, bad hymns, or annoying pew mates. We can always worship God. We can always give thanks to God for being so good to us.

Why We Have Offerings

Eventually, I discovered something else: There is no better way to give thanks than with a gift. When someone does something nice we often give them a gift to say thank you. When you love someone, you want to give them things: gifts that say, "I love you."

Continued.....

Did you know that this is why we have offerings during the church service? I didn't know that for a long time. I used to think it was because the church needed to collect some money to pay its bills...so, every Sunday, we'd take a little break from worship and pass the plates around.

The church does need to pay its bills, of course, but it doesn't have to take up an offering on Sunday mornings to do that. People can mail in their money or set up an electronic transfer with their bank. The reason we have an offering on Sunday morning is to give people a chance to say "Thank you" to God...or to offer a gift that says, "I love you."

In ancient Israel people would bring sacrifices of wheat or animals to the altar. They didn't do this because the temple or tabernacle needed their crops or flock—the wheat and the animals were simply consumed in flames. They did it to worship God, to show their gratitude and love by giving up something of value to them.

. . . If you ever think the service is going to be too long, we could cut out one of the hymns or cut part of pastor's sermon. But don't you ever cut out the offering! That's what I'm here for! To worship God and to give God a gift because I am so thankful to God for being so good!

"Bring Your Own Lunch"

Lutheran Women of Omaha will meet on Tuesday, September 14, 2021 at Noon. The meeting will be held at Christ the King Lutheran Church, 7308 S. 42nd Street, Bellevue, NE.

The Program will center around the discussion: After the Pandemic, what's next? Tangible offering of socks will be accepted for (YES) Youth Emergency Services.

Call Mardelle Gocek at 402-292-1328 before Sunday, September 12th to reserve your spot!

Drinks and dessert will be provided.





Food Truck World Tour
Sunday, September 26, 2021
11:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Stinson Park, Aksarben Village
2285 S 67th Street

Food Truck World Tour raises critical funding to support Immigrant Legal Center's life-changing work for countless immigrant families in Nebraska and southwest Iowa.

This year, Immigrant Legal Center will honor all living former Omaha Central High School principals for their collective work welcoming immigrants in our community.

Immigrant children often have different educational needs, and Central High has played, and continues to play, a critical role in the lives of immigrant children and their families.

There will be entertainment, tequila tasting, and activities for kids. Purchase tickets to experience the "all you can eat" from Omaha's favorite food trucks! Must be 21 or older for the tequila tasting.

To purchase tickets or a sponsorship online:
immigrantlc.org/foodtruck

As Nebraska and southwest Iowa's largest nonprofit immigration legal services provider, Immigrant Legal Center is focused on empowering immigrants to live with confidence and free from fear.

Through legal services, education, and advocacy, ILC is unique in our ability to meet the ever-changing needs of immigrant communities because of our people, our partners, and our promise to never turn any family away due to inability to pay.

"Happiness is a skill that can be learned. The essential factor whether or not you will live a happy life is based less on external factors such as wealth, success and fame, and more on your attitude toward life, toward yourself, toward other people, and toward events and situations. Regardless of your attitudes in the past, you have the ability to change and become a master of happiness."

~ Rabbi Zelig Pliskin, via Apple Seeds



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

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.



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 Sciachitano Duo.

\$50/person online in advance: givebutter.com/raisingspirits
\$55/person at the door

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

Worship Update

September Sunday Worship Services
will be held at
St. Luke's Lutheran Church,
2315 "I" Street.
Service begins at 9:30 a.m.
See you there!





150 Years as the Nebraska Synod: Built of Living Stones A (very) Short History

The very first Lutherans in the Territory of Nebraska were among the waves of homesteaders of the 1840s and 50s who the U.S. government settled here on indigenous land. But these lay Lutherans preceded the church; no Lutheran churches or pastors were here in Nebraska until the missionary Pastor Henry Kuhns arrived in the late 1850s to organize the Lutheran settlers he found already living here. Preaching points slowly became congregations and the church members eventually constructed their own church buildings.

The Nebraska Synod as a governing body was first established in 1871 as a conference of the larger General Synod, the Lutheran denomination on the east coast dating back to the colonial period. However, throughout the 19th and 20th century, there were many different and evolving denominations of Lutherans in America (many represented within the Nebraska state border), divided along lines of national origin and language. In addition, these Lutherans held different convictions on doctrine, worship practices, and spirituality which resulted in yet more denominational splits. The congregations of the Nebraska Synod, ELCA today are descended from many of these antecedent Lutheran bodies.

Beginning in the late 19th century, the various ethnic Lutheran denominations established academic and social welfare institutions here in Nebraska. The (English and German speaking) General Synod founded Midland College and Western Theological Seminary which eventually located to Fremont. The (German speaking) Midwest Synod (formerly German Nebraska Conference) founded Martin Luther Seminary in Lincoln. The Swedish Augustana Synod founded Luther College in Wahoo and the Immanuel Deaconess Institute in Omaha as well as Bethphage Mission in Axtell. The "Inner Mission" Danes founded Trinity Seminary/Dana College as well as a Danish language printing press in Blair Nebraska. This is by no means an exhaustive list of Lutheran institutions; but these historic examples of Lutheran energy for education and social services are still in evidence today in our ongoing support for the Nebraska Synod serving arms and the larger work of the ELCA.

The early 20th century for Lutherans in Nebraska proved to be a deeply painful and challenging time. When the United States entered WWI, the government launched an anti-German propaganda campaign. As a result,

Continued.....

German-speaking people, and indeed, many other non-English speaking people, were persecuted by the government as well as harassed by their neighbors. This pressured Lutheran congregations in Nebraska to quickly move towards English-only worship services and religious education. In addition, as younger generations of Lutherans became "Americanized" the previous divisions between Lutheran bodies seemed less formidable by degrees. As a result, Lutheran denominations started merging.

By the 1970s the three Lutheran bodies that would eventually join together to form the ELCA were the Lutheran Church in America, The American Lutheran Church, and the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches (having separated earlier from the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod). The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America was born in 1988. At that time, there were about 276 congregations in the new Nebraska Synod, ELCA. Its first bishop was Dennis Anderson.

-written by Rev. Kristen Van Stee

Footnote: • The term "Synod" was used (very confusingly) by different Lutheran bodies in different ways at different times: a synod might refer to a separate denomination and sometimes to refer to a subsidiary body within a denomination. This remains true today as the ELCA calls the subsidiary bodies within it "synods" while the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod is its own separate denomination.

Grandfather in the Ark?

My sister's eldest boy liked nothing better than to sit on his grandfather's knee and have stories read to him. One day after a story about Noah's ark, and how Noah led pairs of animals to the safety of the ark. The little boy asked, 'Granddad, you are very old, were you in Noah's ark?' Gosh no', said Granddad.' In that case, how come you didn't drown when the flood came?'





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 so 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.

A devastating 7.2 magnitude earthquake struck southwest Haiti on Aug. 14. Over 1,400 people were killed, and that number is expected to increase as search-and-rescue efforts continue. Blocked roads are delaying the delivery of vital supplies to hospitals, which are overwhelmed with more than 6,900 injured people. At least 26,000 homes were damaged or destroyed, but the full extent of damage is still unknown. Haiti is also suffering through a political crisis and was hit by Tropical Storm Grace on Monday night, which caused severe flooding in communities already damaged by the earthquake.

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.



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.

An 89 year old man, who was smoking a cigarette while driving, was stopped by police around 2 a.m. and was asked where he was going at that time of night.

The man replied, "I'm on my way to a lecture about alcohol abuse and the effects it has on the human body, as well as smoking and staying out late."

The officer asked, "Really? Who's giving a lecture at this time of night?"

The man replied, "That would be my wife."

~ via Peggy Goldtrap, Ormond-by-the-Sea, FL

Marriage counselor: "Your wife says you never buy her flowers. Is that true?"



Husband: "To be honest, I never knew she sold flowers."

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

Actual court transcript written down word for word by a court reporter during a trial:

ATTORNEY: "Doctor, before you performed the autopsy, did you check for a pulse?" WITNESS: "No"

ATTORNEY: "Did you check for blood pressure?" WITNESS: "No"

ATTORNEY: "Did you check for any breathing?" WITNESS: "No"

ATTORNEY: "So, then is it possible that the patient was alive when you began the autopsy?" WITNESS: "No"

ATTORNEY: "How can you be so sure, Doctor?"
WITNESS: "Because his brain was sitting on my desk in a jar."

ATTORNEY: "I see, but could the patient have still been alive, nevertheless?"
WITNESS: "Yes, it is possible that he could have been alive and practicing law."

~ via Risa Samra, Saginaw, MI

Jokes on this page shared by JoyfulNoiseletter.com

Bible Wordsearch



John the Baptist

Wordsearch 255

Matt 11:4-17

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

AHEAD	BAPTIST
CROWD	BLESSED
CURED	CALLING
DANCE	CHILDREN
DESERT	CLOTHES
DIRGE	DRESSED
ELIJAH	FORCEFUL
FLUTE	GREATER
JESUS	HEAVEN
JOHN	KINGDOM
MOURN	PALACES
PLAYED	PREPARE
RAISED	PROPHET
REPORT	RECEIVE
RISEN	REPLIED
SIGHT	SWAYED
SPEAK	WILLING
TRUTH	WOMEN
WRITTEN	

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>

COPYRIGHT 2016

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

Signs and Wonders

Sign seen in Kalamazoo, MI:

"Never be afraid to try something new. Remember, amateurs built the Ark; Professionals built the Titanic."

~ via Prof. John Geisler, Kalamazoo, MI

Sign outside St. John's Episcopal Church, Kingsville, MD:

"Jesus is tougher than nails."

~ Lorene Irving, Lutherville Timonium, MD