

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/gracelutheranoma

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

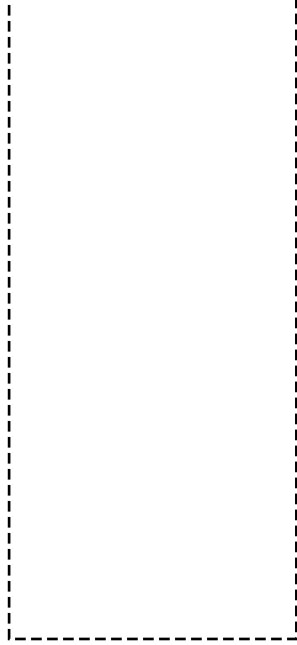
Pastor - Rev. Dr. Damon D. Laaker
Editor/Church Secretary - Brenda Spahr
Organist - Colleen Jeffrey
Sexton - Alma Lopez

Delivered to the Post Office November 2



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THE GRACE MESSENGER

1889 - 2021

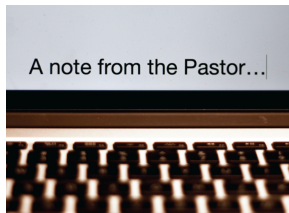


November



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



I have just spent the last four days with other clergy colleagues in conversation about the way we function in these highly anxious times. I am encouraged by their thoughtfulness and their commitment to be the best they can be as leaders.

I had the responsibility to present my thoughts about the perplexity of ministry in these polarized times. I shared some of the stories around events that have happened in the last 20 months. Things that cause me to take a step back and ask how do I respond to this. I thought I had done a fair job of trying to be present and connected and not allowing the anxiety to overload my capacity to be thoughtful. At least, that is what I hoped. I recognize now that I could have responded differently in a couple of the situations.

I think the value of participating in these gatherings is that it helps me get a better handle on how I want to function in my leadership role. There is much that requires a thoughtful steady presence in this time. I want to do my best to be that type of presence.

We are soon entering into our stewardship emphasis for 2022. Our theme is "Fearless Generosity." So much of our culture is crippled by fear in this time. Will we survive? What will the future be like? There is probably a myriad of these questions that come to mind.

I am convinced that God is far more generous and grace filled than we can imagine. Can we lean into this generous gift from God that enables us to think positively about where God calls us to be engaged as the body of Christ? Can we be willing to support this ministry that seeks to be present and active in this time? I trust we can. I hope you will join with one another to support the ministry of Christ through our congregation efforts.

Pastor Laaker



2021 Council Members

Donna Adrian	Tom Emery	Arlone Farber
Ralph Fittle	Janet Hula	Sandy Nielsen
Brenda Spahr	Amanda Vazquez	

Pastor Laaker

Officers Serving the Congregation:

Financial Secretary: Janet Hula Treasurer: Ralph Fittle

The regular meeting of the Council was held on October 12th. Council members shared prayer concerns for individuals who are experiencing health problems.

Devotions: Devotions were led by Pastor Laaker, reading the selected verses in the "Daily Texts" from Daniel 9:18 and Ephesians 3:12. The first tells us that God is merciful whether we are deserving or not. The second tells us that we are all connected to God through our faith, always.

Visions for Ministry: We discussed Chapter 7, "Triangles Are Not Just in Geometry Class" from the book "Clear, Calm, and Connected" by Paul E. Walters and Robert F. Holley. Council discussed how triangles in life are present everywhere, both positive and negative situations. The chapter gives insight how we can recognize and resolve situations in a calm matter. After discussion, it was decided that this will be the 2022 book Council will read!

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

Christian Education: None.

Evangelism/Outreach: Grace Reads - reading begins tomorrow at Liberty Elementary.

Crossroads - Pastor received an email from Vicki Cox regarding the opportunity to host a service and meal on Sunday, November 28th. Council decided to wait for a future opportunity.

Finance: Health Care Coverage Choice – Council decided to support Pastor's recommendation to enroll with the choice of Silver + with Level A Health Savings Account.

Property: Pastor is donating a TV to the church for a larger screen for viewing purposes. A TV stand will need to be purchased for mobility ease. Pastor will order the TV Stand for \$70.

Continued...

Property continued: With recent activity in the alley, Cpt. Belcastro of the Southeast Precinct suggested that we install a small security camera to be mounted on the building to record any future activity in the alley. Council agreed. Pastor suggested a Wyze Camera with a SD Card for \$73, Council agreed.

Service/Social Ministry: There was a nice response shared by all in gathering cans of fruit for God's Work, Our Hands Sunday. Candy collection for Halloween continues to be a blessing for Loaves and Fishes Pantry. Pastor asked for thoughts regarding purchasing whole chickens for the pantry for Thanksgiving using Thrivent Action Grant money. Council agreed this is a great and very useful purchase for the pantry.

Support/Stewardship: Fall Emphasis - Fearless Generosity: Opportunity for testimony in the following story topics: living, service, sowing, giving.

Worship: - We will try something new, providing Communion on trays up front for individuals to walk up and receive their Communion.

NE Synod will be sharing a Thanksgiving Eve Service online.

Christmas Eve Service will be shared at both Grace and St. Luke's provided Covid numbers are significantly lower.

Reformation Sunday, October 31st would like to provide the opportunity for fellowship outside with coffee and hot chocolate, weather permitting.

Everyone thought this was a good plan, Janet suggested maybe having a cookie with coffee and/or hot chocolate. Please pray for continued good weather!

Unfinished Business: Pastor presented a draft letter which will be mailed to Mr. Jessen. Council proof read the letter and Pastor will print on letterhead with room and opportunity for Council Members to sign the letter.

New Business: Thoughts on a Nominating Committee.

Announcements: Pastor will attend the Synod Re: Formation online event, October 18-20;

Pastor will attend the Chaplain Training on October 21st;

Pastor will be in Racine, WI attending the Voyagers Conference the week of October 25-29th.

Brenda will prepare a prayer for next month.

Adjournment: The Council meeting closed in prayer and adjourned at 8:37pm.

Respectfully Submitted, Brenda Spahr

Stewardship

Fearless Generosity – Thoughts from David Loleng

I wonder, what spiritual practices cultivate generosity and Christ-centered stewardship in our church communities? Here, I suggest two spiritual practices that have helped guide my stewardship of time, talents, and resources.

Living with Simplicity: The first is the spiritual discipline of simplicity. Simplicity helps us let go of our inordinate attachment to things (possessions, experiences, and achievements) and our insatiable desire for more. Simplicity embraces the uncluttering of our lives of excess and practicing things like frugality, contentment, thankfulness, sustainability, integrity, and generosity.

Christian theologian Richard Foster describes the importance of simplicity in his book "Freedom of Simplicity: Finding Harmony in a Complex World," writing: The complexity of rushing to achieve and accumulate more and more threatens frequently to overwhelm us. ... Christian simplicity ... brings sanity to our compulsive extravagance, and peace to our frantic spirit. ... It allows us to see material things for what they are — goods to enhance life not to oppress life. People once again become more important than possessions. ... It is the Spiritual Discipline of simplicity that gives us ... a strategy of action that can address this (poverty and hunger) and many other social inequities.

Simplicity helps us to re-calibrate our lives back toward God and God's will. It frees us to be more generous and mission focused.

Creating Margin: The second spiritual practice is closely related to simplicity. It is to create margin in our lives. Creating margin makes space in our lives. As Richard Swenson, a physician researcher, and author, describes in his book "A Minute of Margin," it is like the margins on a piece of paper: there is no text on the top, bottom, and sides, just empty space. As theology professor James Bryan Smith explains, Swenson "believes our lives are like that. We add so much to our schedules that we have no 'margin,' no space for leisure and rest and family and God and health."

Continued....

Just as simplicity addresses the insatiable desire for more things, creating “margin” addresses what some have called the great enemy of our spiritual lives, which is “hurry.” Hurry is symptomatic of a culture that, as Smith states, “rewards busyness and overextension as a sign of importance.”

Creating “margin” means uncluttering our schedules, our time, and our lives. When we have more “margin” in our lives, we can be more generous with our time and talents. Creating margin affects our relationship with God and others, our health, and our ability to join in Christ’s mission to improve our communities and world.

The spiritual disciplines of simplicity and margin not only help cultivate a culture of generosity, they also help support people in our churches who are growing as generous disciples of Jesus Christ. It is these individuals — these transformed lives — who will form the foundation of movements to inspire cultures of generosity.

GIVE THANKS AND GIVE BACK

November food shelf challenge
GENEROSITY STARTS HERE!



With the holidays approaching, the Thrivent Member Network - Nebraska Region is hosting a November Food Shelf Challenge.

Calling and inviting everyone!

We encourage all to **safely** partner with one another in collecting over 500 non-perishable food items by the end of November. When we collect over 500 items, the food drive will be supplemented with a Generosity Multiplier Gift of \$500.00 courtesy of the Thrivent Member Network - Nebraska Region. The gift will be directed to the Loaves and Fishes Fresh Food Pantry at Grace.

Please bring your donated non-perishable food items to the church by November 28th in support of the Loaves and Fishes Fresh Food Pantry this holiday season!

Please call the office, 402-341-7730, to make sure someone is present or if you have any questions. Please do not leave food items outside.

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
June Hilmer
Susan Miller
David Nange
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
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!



We invite you to worship this Thanksgiving Eve with the Nebraska Synod.

The worship service includes Scripture, hymns, and a message focused on the theme of thankfulness.

The virtual service begins Wednesday, November 24 at 7:00 p.m. on Facebook Live.

Lutheran Women of Omaha
Tuesday, November 9, 2021
12:00 noon

The November luncheon will be held at St. Matthew Lutheran Church, 1725 S. 60th Street. Masks are required.

The program focus will be Omaha Street School and the guest speaker will be Linda Reimer.

"Bring Your Own Lunch" luncheon cost is \$3.00, drinks and dessert will be provided. The free will offering will benefit the Omaha Street School.

Please call Mardelle Gocsek at 402-292-1328 by Sunday, November 7th to reserve your spot!



2 – Michael Brown
6 – Jan Monico
9 – Mickey Andersen
11 – Margie Sutej
18 – Charlotte Palczynski
20 – Pastor Laaker
26 – Greg Hula
Ralph Fitle
28 – Elena Blenderman
29 – Ron Adrian



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.



Upcoming Retreats at Carol Joy Holling Camp:

Middle School Retreat. November 12-14th. Come back to camp for the weekend. Come and enjoy classic camp activities such as High Ropes, Creative Arts, and Campfires!

Mother & Tween Daughter Retreat. November 20-21st. Fall is a time where life seems like a giant to-do list. Join us for a weekend to be present, try new things, grow together, and have fun!

Visit CJHCenter.org to learn more and register!

Mental Health Civic Academy
November 11, 2021
6:00 p.m. on Zoom



Come and learn from the OTOC Mental Health Action Team as they present on Omaha's mental health emergency responses; how we can organize together to improve them; and potential solutions and allies! Please register for this Virtual ZOOM event at: <http://bit.ly/OTOCMentalHealthCA> and a link will be emailed to you!

If you have any questions, please call the OTOC office at 402-344-4401.



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.

Lutheran Disaster Response strives to help the church continue to be church in the midst of disaster — following Christ's call to bring hope and healing to our neighbor in need. Some key areas of work include:

- Providing emotional and spiritual care for people who have been affected by a disaster and for leaders who respond to a disaster
- Coordinating volunteers through our local affiliates
- Assisting refugees in a holistic way by meeting the varied needs of the community
- Promoting disaster risk-reduction by helping communities build their assets thereby reducing the effects of likely disasters
- Providing long-term recovery efforts by addressing the unmet needs months or even years after a disaster strikes

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.



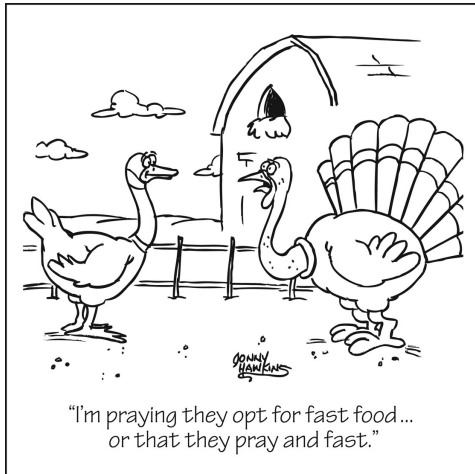
Protect the
volunteers,
yourself and
your family!



**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.



Thanksgiving Potpourri

"Why did the turkey cross the road before Thanksgiving?"

"He was hoping people would think he was a chicken."

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

Jokes reprinted with permission
from JoyfulNoiseletter.com

Horn of Plenty

When a music student brought his French horn to my shop for repair, he complained that the instrument "felt stuffy" and he couldn't blow air through it. It's not unusual to find partial blockages in brass instruments if small items get lodged in the tubing, but when I tested the instrument, the horn was completely blocked. After much probing and prodding, a small tangerine dropped out of the bell.



"Oh," said the musician when I handed him the fruit. See the bewildered look on my face, he explained, "My mom used the horn for a cornucopia in a Thanksgiving centerpiece."

Shared by Mark L. Madden, rd.com



November 7th!



In hopes of spreading a little happiness, donated Halloween candy was collected and prepared to give out to pantry participants on Monday, October 25th. Thank you to all who donated candy, money and time!



Thanksgiving Word Search

Challenging



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

CELEBRATION
FALL
GOBBLE
HOME
NOVEMBER
PILGRIM
STUFFING
TRADITION
WISHBONE

CORN
FAMILY
GRATITUDE
LEAVES
PECAN
PLYMOUTH
THANKFULNESS
TURKEY

CRANBERRIES
FEAST
HOLIDAY
MAYFLOWER
PIE
PUMPKIN
THANKSGIVING
VOYAGE



WORSHIP
with us

Worship Update

November 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!