

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

FEBRUARY SUNDAY EVENTS
9:30 a.m. Worship Service

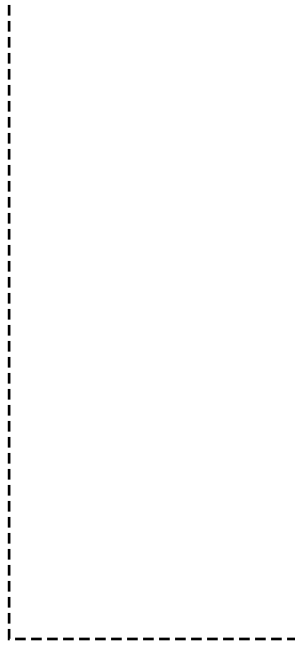
Pastor - Rev. Dr. Damon D. Laaker
Editor/Church Secretary - Brenda Spahr
Organist - Colleen Jeffrey
Sexton - Alma Lopez

Delivered to the Post Office March 29



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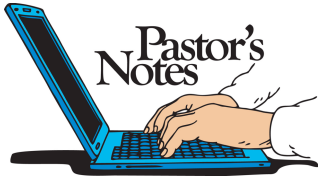
THE GRACE MESSENGER

1889 - 2022



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 a few days we will be entering the pinnacle of Christian worship: Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Vigil. The events of these days stand not only at the very heart of our faith but also represent some of the richest and most profound rituals of any Christian liturgy. These liturgies are without question some of the most powerful and meaningful services of the year.

It is here in these three days that we arrive at a climatic conclusion to the baptismal themes that encompassed the season of Lent. The remembrance and celebration of the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is our own passage through the baptismal waters to life.

The Easter season is the foil to Lent. If Lent teaches us to prepare for the resurrection, Easter teaches us how to live in a post-resurrection world. How might we live in a post-pandemic, post-resurrection world? Will we emerge from this time to live lives modeled on Jesus? Will we seek to be welcoming? Will we seek justice? Will we exhibit compassion and love?

I invite you to come and celebrate this special gift we receive in Christ through his resurrection and then go as his church to love and serve in the name of Christ.

Service times are as follows:

April 14, Maundy Thursday, 6:30 pm at Grace Lutheran

April 15, Good Friday, 6:30 pm at Trinity Lutheran, 6340 N 30 St.

April 17, Easter Morning, 6:30 am at Grace Lutheran, 9 am at St. Luke's Lutheran

Pr. Laaker



Stewardship as Selfless Thanksgiving

Consider two texts, each capable of bringing stewardship to focus and fruition:

First, consider the opening verse of Psalm 24: “The earth is the Lord’s and all that is in it, the world and those who live in it.” All faithful stewardship begins in that affirmation. All that we have, all that we are, all that is — all belongs to God. Whatever comes into our hands does so as a trust from God. We live in a God-given world.



The second verse to consider as a starting point is John 3:16: “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.” All creation is not only God-given, it is God-loved — a love made clear in God’s own selfless act of giving.

Christian stewardship simply, yet profoundly, imitates God’s example of giving. Stewardship is our love taking form, as God’s love took form, through the giving of ourselves. Stewardship is nothing more and nothing less. Taken together, these two verses provide stewardship’s most enduring starting point — stewardship as an act of selfless thanksgiving.

Stewardship evoked by the starting point of God’s sovereignty and love challenges each person to maximal efforts. To affirm that the earth belongs to God draws boundaries between what is “mine” and what is God’s. Faithful stewardship is more than what I do with 5, 10 or 20 percent of my possessions, time or skill. It encompasses the whole of my life, spiritually, and materially. To confess that God manifested love for the world in the gift of Christ calls forth sacrificial giving.

What I do with “what I can spare” has little to do with stewardship. What I do with those things that matter most to me is how I strive to imitate God’s giving. When we embrace God’s sovereignty and love as stewardship’s starting point, we will always have a reason to offer thanksgiving, a foundation for our faith and a motivation to love.

Pr. Laaker



2022 Council Members

Ron Adrian	Andrew Edwards	Sarah Emery
Ralph Fitle	Greg Hula	Janet Hula
Eva Martin	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 March 8th. Council members shared prayer concerns for the Andersen family, for a family member of Greg Hula, for a friend of Donna Adrian, the victims of the Iowa Tornadoes this past weekend, and for individuals facing the ongoing war crisis in Ukraine.

Devotions: Devotions were led by Pastor Laaker, reading the selected verses in the “Daily Texts” from 1 Samuel 2:2 and 1 Corinthians 3:11. The first reminds us that God is our rock and foundation, solid and strong. The second reminds us that when we build our lives on the foundation of Christ we are headed in the right direction, Christ continues to lift us up.

Visions for Ministry: The author discussed “the good old days”. Many shared thoughts of what each considered “good old days”. One thought: sharing the gospel may not literally mean sharing the story of Christ but rather spending intentional time with neighbors building friendships, helping one another, building a stronger community and living out the gospel by example. Maybe one way is to simply ask “Who may we pray for?” to the people that visit the pantry on Monday mornings. Read Chapter 4 for next month.

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

Mission Share: The monthly Mission Share contribution and the San Andres contribution were both made in February – ending with 100% of our pledge for both.

Christian Education: The Lenten Bible Study begins March 9.

Evangelism/Outreach: LVC Interviews have been scheduled for April, hopefully we will find a match.

OTOC’s Spring Fundraiser, Celebrating Community, will be Sunday, April 3rd. Grace has donated a themed basket to be auctioned. Vicki Cox continues to be our connection to OTOC.

Finance: The Council received the Endowment Board Report: A motion was unanimously passed to ratify the Disney Endowment distributions.

Property: The security camera that was placed in the alley has been destroyed, two additional cameras have been purchased and placed in different locations. The office computer has had numerous issues and Pastor has exhausted several attempts at fixing the issues. Council agreed to replace the computer.

Service/Social Ministry: Pantry Gathering – donations are now being collected to fulfill the requests for “Baking Essentials” which include; sugar, flour, cooking oil and masa (corn masa flour).

Habitat for Humanity is gearing up for the 2022 build. The city has given Habitat land in the area of 52nd & Redick which will be enough room to build 83 homes in the next couple of years.

Support/Stewardship: ELCA Annual Report has been completed and submitted for 2021.

Worship: Worship Plans: Holy Week: discussion around holding Maundy Thursday in person with the possibility of a shared meal before the service. Pastor is willing to conduct separate Worship Services on Easter morning. Pastor will seek St. Luke’s ideas for Holy Week and Easter and will create a plan.

Unfinished Business: Our next Joint Council meeting is on Thursday, April 28th at 5pm at Grace to continue conversation around the future of our churches. Guest for this meeting will include Pastor Juliet Focken from the Nebraska Synod.

New Business: Greg raised a question regarding a recent conversation with David Nangé who is experiencing eyesight issues. Discussion concluded there may be many issues surrounding David’s eyes and additional conversations are needed.

Announcements: Pastor will be attending the Voyagers Conference in Washington DC the week of March 21st. Pastor attended Pastor Stromer’s funeral and shared a picture and wonderful stories. Sarah will prepare a prayer for next month.

Adjournment: The Council meeting closed in prayer and adjourned at 9:02pm.

Respectfully Submitted, Brenda Spahr.

Continued...



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
Carolyn Matson
Sue Mize
Pam Reents
Urbano Vasquez
The family of Mickey Andersen



Andrew Edwards
Samuel Mantzaris
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.

Pray for our Shut-in and Nursing Home resident:

Barbara Nelson - Life Care Center, Elkhorn
Rev. Terry Nielsen - Echo Hills

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



Personal Care Kits Lenten Ministries



This Lenten season, congregations are invited to reach out and offer comfort and care to those who need it most.

Often, when natural disasters strike or when war drives families from their homes, our hearts ache with compassion, but we don't know how to help. Making Lutheran World Relief Kits is a simple, fun and tangible way to offer comfort to those suffering and express love to our neighbors in need.

LWR Kits are specifically designed to help people coping with poverty, disaster, conflict and more. Whether a kit helps someone to maintain good hygiene, care well for a newborn baby, keep education going during a crisis or learn a new vocation, LWR Kits provide dignity and hope in the direst situations.

Listed below are the items included in each Personal Care Kit:

Bar of soap (each kit will need 2 bars)
Bath Towel (between 20"x40" and 52"x27"),
dark colors are recommended
Toothbrushes, Combs, and Nail Clippers

Due to the wonderful generosity of donated items in the past years we have collected PLENTY of toothbrushes and combs. For 2022 lets focus on the remaining items needed for each Care Kit; Soap, Nail Clippers and Towels. Below is a breakdown of each item and numbers already collected:

Toothbrushes - 98	Bars of soap - 33
Combs - 78	Towels - 10
	Nail Clippers - 1

To fulfill our goal of 40 kits we will need to collect:

47 Bars of soap
30 Towels and
39 Nail Clippers

Please bring your donated items each Sunday during this season of Lent. Personal Care Kits will be assembled at a date later to be determined. If you have any questions, please speak with Brenda.



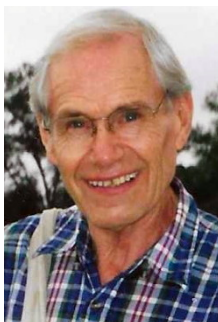


For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Ephesians 2:10

- ✝ Thank you Mary and Amanda for your weekly dedication running the recording equipment every Sunday during worship service.
- ✝ Thank you Ron, Donna and Brenda for taking care of the altar, and preparing communion.
- ✝ Thank you Mary, Janet, Donna, Ron, Eva, and John, for your dedication and help in assembling the monthly Grace Messenger!
- ✝ Thank you to the Grace Reads Volunteers who go out and read to second graders at Liberty Elementary School on the second Wednesday every month.
- ✝ Thank you Alma for keeping both Grace and St. Luke's clean and looking so welcoming to everyone who enters.
- ✝ Thank you to all Loaves and Fishes Pantry Volunteers; for delivering food items on Sunday mornings, unloading and putting foods items away until Monday mornings, getting everything ready for Mondays and in greeting and serving all with smiles, care and love!

Pastor Paul Konig passed away on March 17, 2022, Marcella Konig passed away in June 2021. Pastor Konig served as Pastor here at Grace from 1973 to 1976. To honor the Konigs could mean taking a walk in nature, which both enjoyed nature, smiling even when things are hard, appreciating a good joke, and share a memorable story of the Konigs. Paul and Marcella supported many different organizations, so a charitable fund with Lincoln Community Foundation (LCF) has been established. Donations can be made payable to LCF at 215 Centennial Mall South, Suite 100, Lincoln, NE 68508, with instructions to deposit to the Konig's fund. Additional details and information can be found at aspenaftercare.com/obituary/paul-herman-konig.



April Birthdays

- 1 – Sarah Emery**
- Eva Martin**
- 5 – Emily Bauer**
- 7 – Linda Helm**
- 8 – Elizabeth Koka**
- 14 – Thomas Emery**
- 16 – Daven Everitt**



This summer's theme is Boundless at Carol Joy Holling Camp. Campers will explore the hopeful and saving story of God and God's people. They will experience the good news of God's generous and merciful power in their lives. Just as God was loving and faithful at the time of creation, in the life of Israel, and through Jesus Christ, so God continues to be in this world now. God's love for all is truly **boundless**.

Brochures for Carol Joy Holling Camp 2022 can be found on the back table in the sanctuary. You can read additional information online at CarolJoyHolling.org and may register online.

Lutheran Women of Omaha
Tuesday, April 12, 2022 - 12:00 Noon

Join us at Augustana Lutheran Church, 3847 Lafayette.
Program focus will be Hannah Wyble with Restoring Dignity.

Cost: \$7.00 Lunch is provided.

Free Will Offering will support Restoring Dignity.

Call Mardelle Gocek at 402-292-1328 by Sunday, April 10th to reserve your seat.





March 19th was **National Quilting Day!** A special e-mail was received at Grace Lutheran on March 19th to share a unique experience:

An overseas quilt distribution is an event unlike any I've ever witnessed.

Staff often start working early in the morning – unloading boxes, setting up stations, making sure everyone knows the process so that each person is treated fairly and with respect.

Families line up, children underfoot, sometimes in the hot sun with no shade. They wait, patiently, to reach their place at the front of the line. And after all necessary information has been given and verified, an item is placed in their hands. It's heavy. Sturdy. Soft.

It's an LWR Mission Quilt – assembled with love by caring people like you.

The reaction families have to their newly acquired quilts is priceless. It's as if they've just been given a rare antique. And in so many ways, it is every bit as valuable to them.

Quilts can be used in so many ways – as a soft place to sleep, to wrap little ones, or as a partition for a bit of privacy in a crowded displacement camp. More than once I've heard someone say their quilt was the most beautiful thing they own.

But nothing quite beats the moment they realize that not only are they receiving a special gift, but that someone actually made it for them. Someone they don't know, and will never meet, cared and was thinking of them, halfway around the world.

For the countless hours you gather together – piecing, sewing, pinning, tying, backing. For the love and care you put into every, single step of the process. And for the prayers you send with every beautiful, handmade quilt – we give thanks for you.

Happy National Quilting Day, on behalf of our global Lutheran World Relief family.



OTOC's Celebrating Community 2022

Sunday, April 3, 2022 4:00 - 7:30 pm
Omaha Design Center, 15th & Cuming



We will be following Covid safety practices as this event and everyone attending must wear a mask except when eating.

Silent Auction Registration and Event Ticket Sales Open March 1
Go to <http://bidpal.net/otocaucaution2022>

If you participated in the OTOC Virtual Auction in 2021 you may already be registered and may not need to register again. You will need your password to log in or you can reset it. **You can purchase tickets for yourself and guests. You can also purchase tickets to be donated to someone that OTOC selects. You will have to enter your credit card number to purchase tickets.** Please feel free to share this link with family or friends who may want to attend the event or bid on the silent auction.

Please contact Carol Beaty 402-332-8215 if you have trouble registering, purchasing tickets or have an auction item to donate.

Bidding on auction items are now open and will close at 6:30 on April 3rd, the night of the event.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Vicki Cox at 402-333-5980.

Worship Update

April Sunday Worship Services will be held here at Grace Lutheran Church.
Service begins at 9:30 a.m.
Easter Sunrise Service 6:30 a.m.
at Grace Lutheran and at
9:00 a.m. at St. Luke's Lutheran

Hope to see you there!





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 - 11:00 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.



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



face masks
are encouraged

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.



Usable Glasses Give New Life

Refractive errors can be easily corrected with eyeglasses, yet millions living in low and middle income countries lack access to basic eye care services. Lions Club have recognized the urgent need for corrective lenses and collect usable glasses in their communities to support the Lions Recycle For Sight Program.

If you have a set or two of previous wearable glasses no longer in need, please bring them to the church office and help individuals to see their world a little more clearly. A box is located in the back of the sanctuary to place them.

Have You Included
Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church
Endowment Fund
in Your Will?



A current, Remember the Church in Your Will, brochures are currently available upon request. Please pick up a free copy during your next worship time and consider Grace Lutheran a place for remembrance.



Project Hope, Inc.
6201 N 60th Street

Are you cleaning out closet space? Ready to donate a few clothing items? Consider donating to Project Hope, they continue to provide winter clothing and outer wear for those in need. Please check out their website at www.projecthopeomaha.org for suggested items in need. If you have any questions, please call Project Hope's office at 402-453-7649.

We are called to feed and clothe God's people in need. We believe nutritious food contributes to good health. We value people with love, hope, compassion and dignity.

The Easter Story



Jesus came to compensate, for all the wrongs we do.
He came to earth to die for us, so we'd be born anew.

"This bitter cup, let it pass from me," He cried, in a plaintive voice;
"Yet not My will, but Thine be done;" He said, in His faithful choice.

The Judas kiss would seal his fate; He faced a hostile crowd;
The governor, Pilate, saw through it all; Jesus' guilt he disavowed.

"I wash my hands of all of this," Said Pilate, "Let Him be."
But the crowd yelled "Crucify him now, and set Barabbas free!"

Pilate yielded to their wish; and Jesus was led away.
The soldiers beat him, and mocked Him, too, yet He continued to obey.

A crown of thorns lay on His head, as His sentence was carried out;
His hands and feet were pierced with nails,
but He did not scream or shout.

"Father, forgive them for this crime; they know not what they do."
He said this despite His torment, because,
He was thinking of me and you.

"It is finished," he sighed in His anguish and pain,
as His body gave up to death.
The curtain tore, and darkness fell, after He took His last breath.

The best of the story is the very last part;
It's why on Easter we're filled with pleasure:
Death could not our Savior hold; His power is beyond all measure.

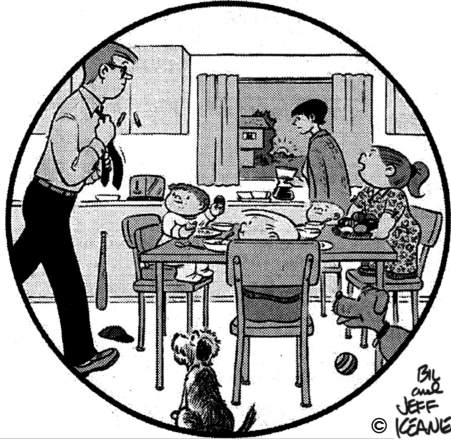
He rose from the grave, and was seen all around;
Ever since, He's inspired devotion,
And we'll be with Him for eternity,
When we get our heavenly promotion.



That's why Easter is a major event: He suffered and died in our place.
He rose and forgave us and loves us still,
Our Savior of matchless grace.

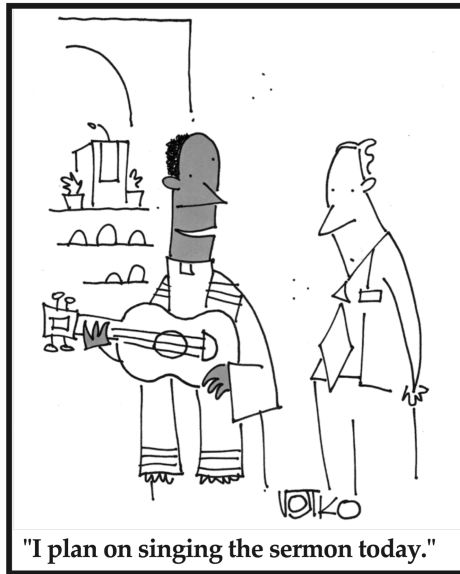
By Joanna Fuchs, poemsource.com

THE FAMILY CIRCUS By Bil and Jeff Keane



"How do you want your egg done this Easter morning, Daddy? Purple? Green? Yellow? ..."

from JoyfulNoiseletter.com
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Reprinted with permission



"I plan on singing the sermon today."

from JoyfulNoiseletter.com
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Jokes reprinted with permission from JoyfulNoiseletter.com

Humor for the hard times

A pastor was preoccupied with thoughts of how he was going to ask the congregation for more money to repair the roof of the church building. Because the regular organist was sick, a substitute had been brought in at the last minute for the Sunday service. The substitute organist wanted to know what to play.

"After I make the announcement about the church finances, you'll have to think of something to play," the pastor replied.

During the service, the pastor announced: "We are in great difficulty. The roof repairs cost twice as much as we expected, and we need \$4,000 more. Any of you who can pledge \$100 or more, please stand up."

At that moment, the substitute organist played "The Star Spangled Banner."

And that is how the substitute organist became the regular organist.

~ via Mrs. Donna Benson, Albuquerque, NM



Easter Story

Word Search

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

APOSTLES
BETRAYAL
CAVE
CHURCH
CROSS
CROWN
CRUCIFIXION
DISCIPLES
FAITH
GOOD FRIDAY

JESUS CHRIST
JUDAS
LAMB
LAST SUPPER
LENT
MARY
MIRACLE
PASSOVER
PENANCE
PENTECOST

PRAYER
REDEMPTION
REJOICE
RESURRECTION
RISEN
SAVIOR
SON
THORNS
TOMB

