

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

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Web Site: www.graceluth.com
Like us on Facebook at:
www.facebook.com/gracelutheranomaha

MAY SUNDAY EVENTS
9:30 am. Worship Service

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

Delivered to the Post Office April 27



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Permit No. 39

Return Service Requested
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THE GRACE MESSENGER

1889 - 2023

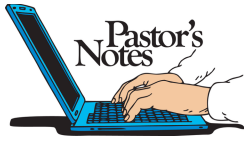


HAPPY
Mother's
DAY



Inspired By Christ, it is our mission
to share God's Word and Love in
care and service to all.

Connect with us on the web: graceluth.com



Today, April 20, I attended a gathering of individuals organized by Nebraskans for Peace and Nebraska Poor People's Campaign to request that Governor Pillen not sign into law LB77. Yesterday, the Legislature passed LB77 which will allow Nebraskans 21 and older to carry concealed weapons without a permit.

Speakers that addressed the small crowd on this cold and windy day began by saying we are tired. Tired of the heartbreak of the news of another mass shooting that takes the lives of children and adults. Tired of trying to encourage lawmakers to take steps to limit the availability of weapons that can be used in mass shootings. Tired of the "thoughts and prayers" that are requested for those whose lives have been taken and for those families that now have the grief and pain of burying their loved ones.

One of the speakers was the mother of grade school child who attends the school where the child brought the gun to school to shoot the teacher. When the mother asked her child what she would like to say to the Governor and the Legislature members, she said, "It's stupid. Tell them to stop."

Another speaker told of a ten-year-old boy who said, "If I am killed in a school shooting, take my body and put it on the steps of the capital so that they can see what they have refused to do."

My heart is broken and I, too, am tired. I have written to my elected State Senator, my Congressman and my Senators, asking them to take steps to address the gun violence, limit the access to weapons and work to prevent this horrible shift in our country toward a return to the days of the wild, wild west.



Continued.....

However, regardless of how tired I am, like the speakers at the event said, "we will not give up on trying to make it safer for families, children and individuals." I will continue to write and call my elected legislators. I will ask them to be bold enough to place people first. I will attend events, as I am able, to indicate my willingness to stand with people who desire different outcomes for the safety of our communities and families.

I am convinced that my faith compels me to act on behalf of others seeking justice for all.

Pastor Laaker



Pentecost Sunday is May 28th, all are invited to wear red in remembrance of the Holy Spirit coming into the lives of the disciples and welcoming the Holy Spirit into our lives!

During Worship service we will be celebrating three young people who have completed their confirmation classes and will be confirmed. Our Confirmands are: Thomas Emery, Eli Retzlaff, and Trina Rodriguez.

Following Worship service we will have a reception in honor of our most recent Confirmands and an opportunity to extend Congratulations to Thomas, Eli, and Trina!



God's children say and do the most funniest things....

On a trip to Italy, a little girl accompanied her parents to St. Peter's Basilica, the world's second largest church. The tour guide explained, "This church is so large that no one on earth could hit a baseball from one end to the other - not Babe Ruth, Lou Gehrig, or Miguel Cabrera." "You mean," the girl asked, "they actually let them hit baseballs in here?"

*~ via Rev. Dr. Karl R. Kraft, Dover, DE
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2023 Council Members

Ron Adrian	Sarah Emery	Arlone Farber
Ralph Fitle	Greg Hula	Eva Martin
Brenda Spahr	Pastor Laaker	

Officers Serving the Congregation:		
Financial Secretary: Janet Hula		Treasurer: Ralph Fitle

Council Meeting Notes - April 11, 2023

Call to Order Sarah called the meeting to order at 6:58 p.m.

Gathering of Prayers Prayers were requested for family members and work colleagues, for all the dedicated work to save Lake Wakanda from burning, seeking peace for all the global conflicts especially between Israel and Palestine and the Ukraine, for all storm victims and praying for a little more rain that is needed.

Devotions Devotions were led by Pastor Laaker, reading the selected verses in the “Daily Texts” from Psalm 91:9 and 2 Corinthians 1:5. The first reminds us to lean on Christ during times of pain and struggle. The second tells us that as we may share in the sufferings of Christ, we too also share in the joy and praises of Christ.

Visions for Ministry Do I Stay Christian? by Brian McLaren
Council discussed Chapters 5 & 6 where once again we agree that challenges toward changing acceptance and equality on a larger scale (including but not limited to: minority, poverty, LGBTQ+, gun control, and leadership) can be very daunting and can make one wonder about staying or leaving. Council looks forward to reading and discussing chapters 7 and 8 for next month’s meeting.

Minutes The minutes of the regular March 2023 meeting of the council were approved as printed.

Financial Secretary’s Report The report of the Financial Secretary, Janet Hula, was presented and accepted by motion.

Treasurer’s Report The report of the Treasurer, Ralph Fitle, was presented and accepted by motion.

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

Committee Reports

Christian Education Council was invited to start thinking about Vacation Bible School for this summer.

Evangelism/Outreach OTOC Spring Fundraiser raised \$16,000 from the silent auction. OTOC sent a thank you for the donated basket prepared by Arlone, Vicki, Amanda and Mary.

Finance Offering envelopes arrived the next day after the March meeting. Pastor discussed with Council of seeking out another company for next year, Council agreed.

Property A box of new tile has been purchased to replace basement tile that had been damaged.

The boiler has been repaired by Leo’s Boiler.

SOS notified Pastor that units will be in, however they are waiting for parts for the furnaces and hope to have them before summer is over.

Service/Social Ministry None.

Support/Stewardship None.

Worship Those in attendance shared good reviews to both the Maundy Thursday Service at St. Luke’s and the Good Friday Service at Augustana Lutheran Church.

Unfinished Business None.

New Business Grace Council will be meeting with St. Luke’s Council and Pastor Heidi Wallace following a service in May.

Announcements Greg will prepare a prayer for next month.

Adjournment The Council meeting closed in prayer and adjourned at 8:18 pm.

Respectfully Submitted, Brenda Spahr, Secretary

Continued...



And in their prayers for you their hearts will go out to you, because of the surpassing grace God has given you.

2 Corinthians 9:14

Please keep in your prayers the individuals listed below who have health issues and concerns:

Vicki Cox
Samuel Mantzaris
Pam Reents
Urbano Vasquez



June Hilmer
Carolyn Matson
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 Scott Johnson, Nebraska Synod
Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, ELCA Bishop

Pray for the Sudanese community in general. Charles Tuw is the elder for the Sudanese Worshiping Community.

Let's encourage each other as we see God's hand in answering our prayers.

Pray for our Shut-ins and Nursing Home residents:

Vicki Cox - Home
Barbara Nelson - Life Care Center, Elkhorn
Rev. Terry Nielsen - Echo Hills
Marilyn Van Ormer - Home



All of our homebound enjoy receiving mail, if you would like to brighten their day, please call the church office for any addresses you need. Blessings!

Stewardship - Abundance

Thoughts from Grace Duddy Pomroy

What do we mean when we say we serve a God of abundance? In a world where so few people have so much and so many people have so little, can we truly claim an abundant God? Various forms of the word "abundance" appear 146 times in the NRSV Bible, depicting a God who shares. However, the Bible also describes the abundance of humanity, which can be used for good or for ill.

Who is this God of abundance? The psalms and the prophets sing and shout of God's abundant character. First and foremost, God abounds in steadfast love for God's creation (Psalm 5:7). This powerful love — with no beginning and no end — is the foundation of the relationship between God and God's people. God is love, and through the lens of God's love we see the rest of God's character. God is abundant in power (Psalm 147:5), forgiveness (Isaiah 55:7), mercy (Psalm 51:1) and goodness (Psalm 145:7).

God provides for God's people, lavishly sharing God's abundance with creation. The psalmist celebrates how God richly supplies food and water to Israelites wandering the wilderness (Psalm 105:40). God showers the earth with rain, watering the earth and giving growth to the seeds (Psalm 65:10). God offers salvation, wisdom, knowledge, and the promise of abundant life (Isaiah 33:6, John 10:10).

However, we cannot ignore that God also blesses many people with wealth and prosperity. Sometimes this promise of prosperity is connected with the people's relationship with God (Deuteronomy 30:9).

God provides to each person different skills and possessions to be shared and used for the good of the whole world. As individuals, we may not have enough, but together we have more than enough. Gathered together as a community to share our time, talents, and treasures, we experience the gift of God's abundance.

Pr. Laaker





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 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, and Eva, for your faithful dedication in helping assemble 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 third 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!



Community Relay is a free, online directory to help you find services and support in your local community.

Starting with your zip code, you can search for local programs and services for things like food, housing, job placement, transportation, legal services and more. Community Relay is searchable in over 100 different languages and more than 155,000 organizations participate nationwide! Community Relay is a free resource presented by the Nebraska Health Network. Please visit - communityrelay.com and see if you and someone you know can benefit from this helpful website!

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



Happy Birthday in faith! May blessings be upon you! On your birthday, remember that you were wonderfully made by God and rejoice in God's 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.

Lutheran Women of Omaha
Tuesday, May 9, 2023 - 12:00 Noon

Join us at Kountze Memorial Lutheran Church,
2650 Farnam



Cost: \$3.00

Bring your own lunch, drinks and dessert will be provided.

Guest speaker is Pastor Shari Duminy on Holden Village, the Lutheran camp in Chelan, WA. Free will offering will benefit Kountze Pantry.

Call Mardelle Gocek at 402-292-1328 by Sunday, May 7th to reserve your seat.

The LWO Board Meeting will be held following the regular meeting.

Dear Pastor Damon & Grace Lutheran Endowment,

Thank you for your continuing support of Table Grace Ministries! We are deeply grateful for your gift of \$5,000 toward our Gala fundraising efforts. This will help support and nourish the community in the coming year!

Blessings, Simoné, Matt, and the Table Grace Ministry Team



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.



1611 1/2 Farnam Street
Omaha, NE 68102

New Hours for Breakfast and Lunch
Mon, Tues, Thur, Fri & Sat. from 7 - 2
Closed: Wed and Sun

Specialty Coffee, Pastries, Bagels, Pizza, Soup, Salad, Daily Specials!
No set prices. Community Cafe - donate instead of pay.
Eat here - feed the Community.

Ways you can donate: Paypal nhbs.cc/paypal * Text the word "NOURISHING" to 44-321 * Come to Table Grace for a meal and give * Attend a Food Truck lunch and give * Send a check to Table Grace (address above) * Book an Event nhbs.cc/book.



Lutheran Disaster Response brings God's hope, healing and renewal to people whose lives have been disrupted by disasters in the United States and

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. Clients of the Loaves and Fishes Pantry are asked to park along Poppleton Street. They are then directed through the alley to pick up prepared sacks and bags of much needed food items. **The Pantry is in need of clean plastic grocery bags and paper grocery bags!** Please continue to keep the Pantry and all the work that is done in your prayers.



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



face masks
are encouraged

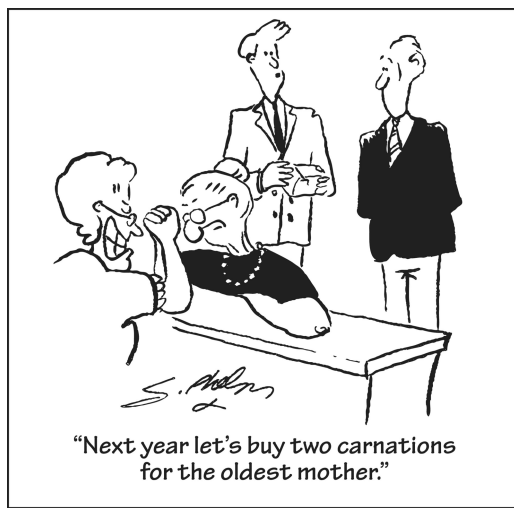
Lutheran South Pantry
4401 South 23rd Street
402-502-7070



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, Diaper wipes, and Diapers, especially sizes 6 and pull-ups.

We always need paper or plastic bags.

Mountain Mover
Official
Teacher
Helper
Encourager
Revered



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A teenage boy had just passed his driving test and asked his father when they could discuss his use of the car.

His father said he'd make a deal with his son: "You bring your grades up from a C to a B average, study your Bible a little, and get your hair cut. Then we'll talk about the car."

The boy thought about that for a moment, decided he'd settle for the offer, and they agreed on it.

After about six weeks, his father said, "Son, you've brought your grades up and I've observed that you have been studying your Bible, but I'm disappointed you haven't had your hair cut."

The boy said, "You know, Dad, I've been thinking about that, and I've noticed in my studies of the Bible that Samson had long hair; Moses had long hair... and there's even strong evidence that Jesus had long hair."

His father replied, "Did you also notice they all walked everywhere they went?"



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

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The Sacrament of Confirmation

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

Christian
anointing
Courage
Holy Spirit
Renewal
sacred oil

Baptismal promises
Apostles
fruits
Knowledge
Reverence
Understanding

Confirmation
Christians
graces
Pentecost
Right Judgement
Wisdom

JN consulting editor Rev. Barbara Bartholomew, pastor of Grace Lutheran Church in Wadsworth, OH, was at home one afternoon when her husband, Chris, came in and said "Here's the mail," plopping down one piece at a time.

He plopped down the most recent issue of *The Joyful Noiseletter*, saying "Something joyful," immediately followed by his wife's VISA statement, to which he added, "And something not."

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