

Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church  
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**JUNE SUNDAY EVENTS**  
9:30 am. Worship Service  
@ St. Luke's Lutheran, 2315 I Street

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

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# THE GRACE MESSENGER

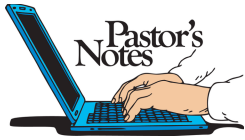
1889 - 2023



June Worship Services  
will be held at St. Luke's  
Lutheran, 2315 I Street

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

**Connect with us on the web: [graceluth.com](http://graceluth.com)**



Laurel A. Dykstra wrote the following under the title “Slapstick Comedy.”

“Justo González, Cuban-born theologian and promoter of Latino theological education, claims that humor is one way the author of Luke-Acts engages in “moderate subversion” of an early church that was becoming increasingly exclusive in its models of leadership. Jesus’ ascension, as it is described in the first chapter of Acts, is one of the funnier biblical narratives—practically slapstick.

“In a final, over-the-top demonstration of “not getting it,” an unspecified group of apostles demand of the resurrected Jesus, “Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?” (Acts 1:6). My crude paraphrase is: “Great, you’re not dead. *Now* are we going to kick some Roman butt and take our rightful place as kings?”

“In response, Jesus promises an entirely different kind of power and then promptly disappears into a cloud, as though in exasperation. I imagine later there was a fair amount of forehead-slapping among his followers, with them saying, “I can’t believe that was the last thing we said to him.”

“So, the stooges are standing gawking up at the place where Jesus has disappeared when two men appear and ask why. The scene is parallel to Luke 24, where two men in dazzling clothes chasten the women at the empty tomb for seeking Jesus in the wrong place. The men’s appearance is sudden but not necessarily supernatural—they may simply have walked up on the distracted cloud-gazers. “Why do you stand looking up toward heaven?” they said (Acts 1:11). I expect the unrecorded response from the disciples was, “Agh! Where did you come from?”

“Many of us are looking for Jesus in the wrong places; our faith lives consist too much of standing and looking up. We could use a poke in the eye, a ride on a banana peel, or a pie in the face to get us to look at the world around us and those who are standing next to us.”

*Continued.....*

I can’t help but wonder if we, as the people of God in this place, aren’t standing around wondering if God is going to do something about . . . Who do we need to appear to us and ask, “Why are you standing around looking awkwardly?” Can we begin to see and bear witness to the amazing grace of God in Christ? Can we recognize and champion the work being done through our ELCA World Hunger Appeal, our Lutheran World Relief efforts, our Lutheran Disaster response right here in Nebraska? Hopefully, we can see and say yes with support and encouragement.

Pastor Laaker

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Administrative Staff Retirement

Rose Marie Lad has been the Administrative Staff in the office for St. Luke’s Lutheran since May of 2002. Her dedication and focus have been exemplary. She has provided consistency during transitions of Pastoral Leadership. She has supported all of the ministries of St. Luke’s with care and love. She will be retiring from this important position on June 30.

The Council of St. Luke’s is planning a brunch to celebrate Rose Marie’s ministry among us. The brunch will follow worship on Sunday, June 25. All are invited to attend. Please come and show your appreciation for this dear servant of Christ over these twenty-one years. We wish her the very best and thank her for all that she has provided in service to the congregation and community.





## 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 ~ May 9, 2023

**Call to Order** Pastor called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

**Gathering of Prayers** We asked for prayers for friends who are experiencing health issues, for the youth currently working long hours in the meat packing industry, better decisions surrounding the government debt limit, seeking peace for all the global conflicts especially between Israel and Palestine, the civil war in Sudan, and the Ukraine, for an end to the violence in mass shootings, 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 Daniel 2:44 and Luke 22:29-30. The first reminds us to lean on Christ and hope during times of hopeless situations. The second tells us that hope is something bigger than what we are currently experiencing.

**Visions for Ministry** Do I Stay Christian? by Brian McLaren  
Council discussed Chapters 7 & 8 which included the possibility of what it might look like to us if we built relationships outside of the building. Maybe it’s not about inviting people into the church but bringing the church out to the people. For one example, physically holding VBS away from the church completely and conduct VBS in a completely different location. Council looks forward to reading and discussing chapters 9 and 10 for next month’s meeting.

**Minutes** The minutes of the regular April 2023 meeting of the council were accepted 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 April – ending with 100% of our pledge for both.

*Continued...*

## Committee Reports

**Christian Education** Council made the difficult decision to not have Vacation Bible School for this summer.

Sunday, May 28th we will celebrate confirmation for Tommy Emery, Eli Retzlaff, and Trina Rodriguez.

Pastor received a request from Moses and will meet with Charles Tuw, Moses Loda, and Barnabas Dyedi to explore learning and evangelization with the Sudanese congregation and beyond.

**Evangelism/Outreach** Next week will be our last *Grace Reads* at Liberty Elementary School for this school year.

**Finance** Mission Investment Fund CD has matured, we agreed to reinvest in the 4-year CD at 4.25%.

**Property** SOS continues their wait for a/c unit parts. We are grateful everything is currently working.

David from the pantry has a friend name Mark who has constructed a beautiful bi-lingual new door to the little library in the parking lot. Pastor intends to speak with Mark about the prospect of building a new little library structure. Pastor has asked Greg if he and Joel would remove the 125th Celebration Banner on the east side of the church, the banner has faded, and we are well past our 125th year.

**Service/Social Ministry** Mobile Grace food truck is once again able to use the parking lot as storage in-between uses.

**Support/Stewardship and Worship** No new report.

**Unfinished Business** Grace and St. Luke’s meeting with Pastor Heidi Wallace went well and we look forward to inviting members of the congregations to engage in an opportunity to experience a guided tour of each space. Joint Council members will meet with Pastor Heidi following worship service on June 4th.

**New Business** None.

**Announcements** Ralph will prepare a closing prayer for next month.

**Adjournment** The Council meeting closed in prayer and adjourned at 8:31 pm.

Respectfully Submitted, Brenda Spahr, Secretary



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 Worshipping 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

Do you remember the last hand-written note you received? Writing notes used to be standard practice, but today we turn to email, text, and social media to thank and communicate with others. We email newsletters chock-full of information, send reminders via text (often with acronyms and poor grammar), and point people to websites with calendars and electronic forms. More and more we are sharing lessons and news through video, audio, and photos online to communicate with one another and promote our mission. We have more communication channels than ever before, but is something lost in all the options? In my experience, people engage with church where they feel like they have a real and authentic connection. Certainly, we are in the business of building relationships with Jesus Christ, but one of the ways we do that is through authentic relationships with fellow church members. We have fellowship gatherings, and encourage prayer, for instance, to help build those bonds, but how do we build or maintain those relationships through our communications? Hand-written notes!

Cut through the technological clutter with a simple, yet meaningful handwritten note that tells the other person you care enough about them to slow down long enough to share your appreciation. This simple act of giving thanks via a hand-written note will endear the recipient to you and will strengthen your relationship. A member of Grace sends notes to many persons for birthdays, anniversaries and events. A wonderful delight is experienced in receiving such a note.

Have you tried such an activity? Not sure what to write? Thank them for something you have noticed about them (their voice, their smile). If you can't come up with something specific, then thank them for being part of the church. The notes do not need to be long, but push yourself to be as specific and genuine as possible.

May the joy and wonder of sharing notes bring delight to all.

Pastor 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



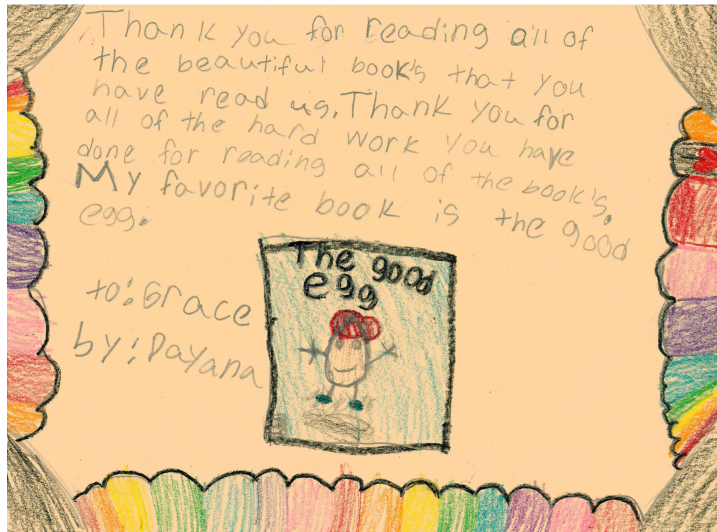
Thank you Mary for your weekly dedication running the recording equipment every Sunday during worship service.

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 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!



To All Grace Readers from one of many appreciative students!

Have a Great Summer!



2 – Samantha Trejo  
9 – Jason Bauer  
10 – Trina Rodriguez  
11 – Micah Laaker  
14 – Benjamin Laaker  
15 – Madelyn Moyer  
20 – Anthony Rodriguez  
22 – Amanda Vazquez  
25 – Scott Adrian  
28 – Solomon Lewa



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.

**Did we miss your birthday? Please contact the church office and let us know!**



As our congregations have conversations with the Synod, we continue to be thoughtful around all questions raised by you. Both councils have determined that while the Synod works through the property comparisons, our congregations also ought to be familiar with the entirety of both properties. Therefore, we will be conducting tours of both churches, and encourage all to participate. We will intend to facilitate these tours after the regular church services; in July for Grace, and in August for St. Luke's. Please consider attending!



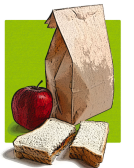
Lutheran Women of Omaha  
Tuesday, June 13, 2023 - 12:00 Noon

Join us at Bethel Lutheran Church, 1312 S. 45th Street

Cost: \$7.00

Guest speaker is Dan Kohler on the importance of Fitness, Strength, and Mobility for Seniors. Free will offering will benefit downtown YMCA.

Call Mardelle Gocsek at 402-292-1328 by Sunday, June 11th to reserve your seat.



# *Splish, Splash* Let's Help Kids Have A Blast!

Please join us in collecting swim suits which will be donated to the



The Kroc Center is in need of new or gently used one-piece swimsuits for girls and adult women and swim trunks for boys and adult men.

**Please bring your swim suit donation to church during June.**

If you would like to make a monetary donation to the Splish, Splash donation drive, please see a member of the Social Ministry Team. The Team will shop for swim suits with the donations.

## Help Us Help Kids Be Healthy!



Celebration of Pentecost and Confirmation Sunday

We gathered together in celebration of Pentecost and witnessing the confirmation of Trina, Tommy, and Eli pictured above with Pastor Laaker.

Following service all were invited to stay and continue the celebration which included refreshments and fellowship.

Pictured below are: Trina, Eli, Tommy and Pastor Laaker. May God bless, guide and inspire Trina, Eli and Tommy!



## What is Juneteenth?

Juneteenth celebrates the ending of slavery in the United States. President Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation on June 1, 1863. Although the Emancipation Proclamation was signed on June 1st, Juneteenth is celebrated on June 19th because it was on that very day Texas, the last state agreed to end slavery.

## History of Slavery in Nebraska

Nebraska became a territory in 1854, and during that year, the "Kansas-Nebraska Act allowed the Nebraska Territorial Legislature to decide whether slavery should be legal in the Territory." The Nebraskan Legislature decided to legalize slavery until 1862 when they then reconsidered and placed a ban on slavery, one year before the President signed the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863.

Nebraska was admitted as a state to the Union in 1867 after they discarded a clause set in the State Constitution that limited suffrage to only "free white males." Then in 1875, Nebraska included a formal ban on their State Constitution, which banned "slavery and involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for a crime." Here is the direct passage from the Nebraska State Constitution:

*"There shall be neither slavery nor involuntary servitude in this state, otherwise than for punishment of crime, whereof the party shall have been duly convicted."*

Nebraska State Constitution, Article, Section 2 (1875)

shared by [Freedomtainment.com](http://Freedomtainment.com)



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](http://communityrelay.com) and see if you and someone you know can benefit from this helpful website!



Omaha Police Department is hosting the 20th Annual SAFE (Safety Awareness Fitness & Education) Event  
Saturday, June 10, 2023

1:00-4:00 pm

Turner Park - 32nd & Farnam St.



Free Garage parking first 3 hours with retailer validation. \$1 per hour - without validation.

Estacionamiento Gratuito las primeras 3 horas con validación de los negocios locales. \$1 por hora sin validación.

Bring a chair, join the Police for a FREE EVENT at the park!

There will be...  
Police, Fire & other exhibits  
Music, Clowns, Games,  
Face painting,  
Information booths & FREE raffles!

FREE BIKE helmets to the  
First 150 kids!

Traiga su silla y conviva con sus Policias para un evento GRATUITO!

Habrará...  
Exhibiciones: Policias, Bomberos  
y otros, pinta caritas  
Música, Payaso, Juegos  
Puestos y rifas GRATUITAS!

GRATIS - cascos de bicicletas a los  
primeros 150 niños!

We invite you to participate so our community can see up close some of the Omaha Police Department's units such as: Mounted Patrol, Canine unit, MERV, ERU bomb robot and CrimeStoppers and the Omaha Fire Department engine and smokehouse.

Sponsors include:



**SCHEELS**



**FAMILY FARE.**  
KEEPING IT REAL



**MIDTOWN CROSSING**





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.

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](https://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.

## *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.



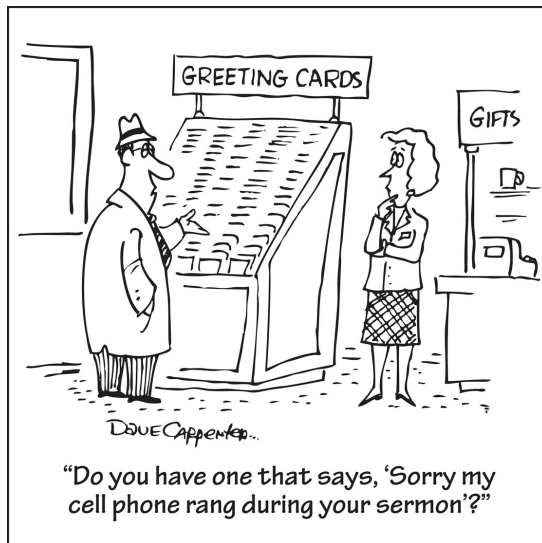
face masks  
are encouraged

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

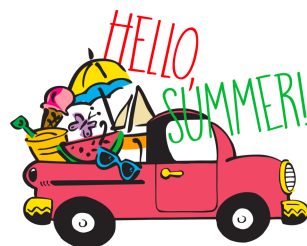


Items that clients cannot purchase with their food stamps are always appreciated: Dish Soap, Kleenex, Bar Soap, Deodorant, Toothbrush and toothpaste, Feminine hygiene products, Hair products (combs, brushes, picks), Bathroom tissue, Shampoo, Dry Laundry Soap, Hand Sanitizer, Diaper wipes, and Diapers, especially sizes 6 and pull-ups.

**We always need paper or plastic bags.**



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**HAPPY  
FATHER'S  
DAY!**

## Father's Day Word Search

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

## Corny Dad Jokes

Why do cows have hooves and not feet? ~ **They lactose.**

Why can't a nose be 12 inches long? ~ **Because then it would be a foot.**

Why did the scarecrow win an award? ~ **Because he was outstanding in his field.**

Why do seagulls fly over the sea? ~ **If they flew over the bay, they would be bagels.**

What did one wall say to the other? ~ **"I'll meet you at the corner."**

What would bears be without bees? ~ **Ears.**

What is Forrest Gump's password? ~ **1forrest1.**

What has more lives than a cat? ~ **A frog, because it croaks every day.**

What did the triangle say to the circle? ~ **You're pointless.**

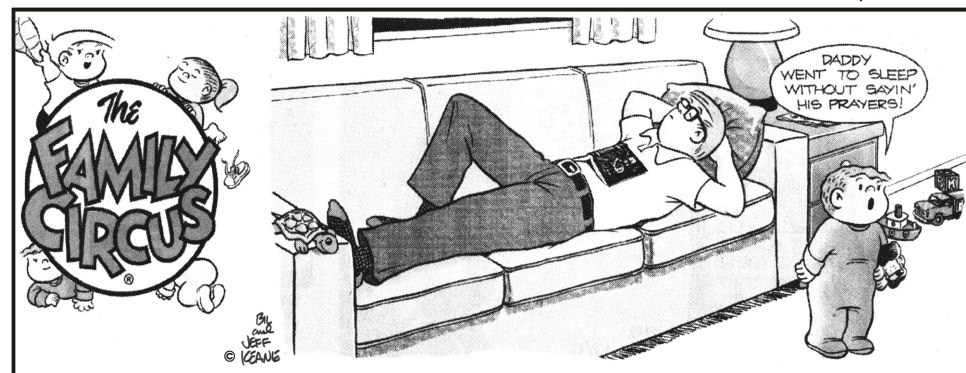
Why was Cinderella so bad at soccer? ~ **She kept running away from the ball!**

shared by goodhousekeeping.com

BBQ	FATHER	HOLIDAY	LAUGHTER	SPECIAL
BRAVE	FISHING	HOME	LOVE	SPORTS
CARING	FOOTBALL	HONOR	MEMORIES	STRONG
CHILDREN	FUNNY	HUGS	NURTURE	SWEET
DADDY	GIFTS	JOKES	PARENT	THOUGHTFUL
DEVOTED	GIVING	JUNE	PROTECT	TIE
FAMILY	HEART	KISSES	RESPECT	TOOLS

## THE FAMILY CIRCUS

By Bill and Jeff Keane



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