

Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church
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www.facebook.com/stlukesomaha

JUNE SUNDAY EVENTS
9:30 am. Worship Service
St. Luke's Lutheran, 2315 "I" Street

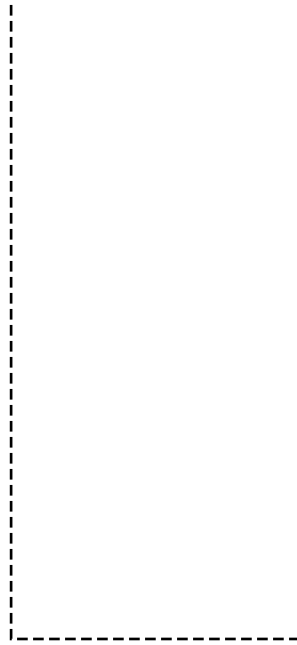
Pastor - Rev. Dr. Damon D. Laaker
Editor/Church Secretary Grace - Brenda Spahr
Editor/Church Secretary St. Luke's - Nancy Klusaw
Sexton - Alma Lopez

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THE GRACE MESSENGER

1889 - 2025

St. Luke's
Echo

1905 - 2025

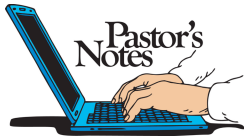


June Worship Services will be
held at St. Luke's Lutheran,
2315 I Street



Grow, Love, Serve

Connect with us on the web: graceluth.com
stlukesomaha.org



Your transition leadership team and I are reading “I Am A Follower, The Way, Truth and Live of Following Jesus” by Leonard Sweet. In the portion of the book we read for this month, Mr Sweet summarizes five characteristics of courageous followers which were identified in a book by Ira Chaleff.

1. *The courage to assume responsibility.* This means we enter into true partnership and community. We own the mission more than merely participating in the mission as if it is the possession or responsibility of someone else. This makes we wonder if we are willing to take responsibility for the mission as it has been offered as “Grow, Love and Serve.”
2. *The courage to serve.* The Jesus enterprise is a followership culture marked by servant followers. Jesus said he sends us out to serve as he served in love. Are we willing to be known by serving?
3. *The courage to challenge.* When we fail to stand up to those with stronger personalities or higher rank, we fail to stand up to the truth, at least as we perceive it at the time. When this happens, the overall mission suffers. It loses counsel, respect, and confidence. Are we willing to challenge those ways and things that diminish the mission?
4. *The courage to participate in transformation.* Leadership-centric cultures tend to create protective force fields around top dogs. Their attitudes and character, unseen from the pulpit and concealed in the foyer, are off limits to underlings. But in a follower culture everyone is expected to have the courage to participate in the ongoing process of transformation into the image of Christ.
5. *The courage to take moral action.* Most everyone has both witnesses and heard stories ad nauseam of clergy and Christian leaders who behave disrespectfully at best, abusively, or downright un-Christlike at worst toward others. Courageous followers take moral action – not in the form of mutiny or maligning but as accords with the situation and in a Jesus way.

How might we as followers of Jesus function with courage in this time? I welcome your thinking and actions.

Pastor Laaker

Stewardship

Using Your Talents

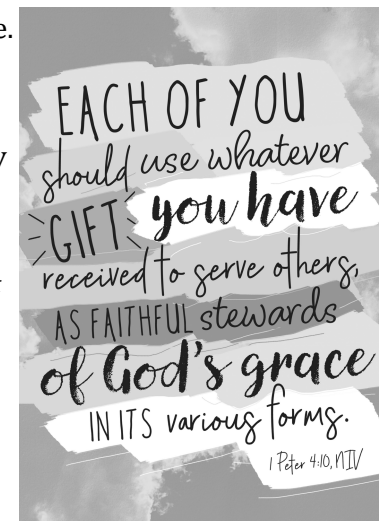
In Akron, Ohio there is a medical doctor, Charles Casto, who embodies his faith. Dr. Casto began manifesting his faith in life through pro bono work in Bolivia. Taking two of his children with him, he participated in medical missionary work with other medical personnel among the indigenous Bolivians.

What is particularly remarkable is the fact that Dr. Casto himself is severely handicapped through two major physical problems: first, when a young boy, he played in a pick-up sandlot softball game and during the game injured his hip. He received medical attention for the injury, but the cure was worse than the affliction. His hip never properly healed, and by the time proper medical attention was given to it, the damage was irreparable.

Second, when on a hunting expedition in Canada with a group of other physicians, Dr. Casto was caught unawares in his hunting blind by a cow moose who trampled him and damaged his good leg. He had the good fortune of being among doctors - the only thing that saved his life - but he then was crippled in his other leg.

Recently, with his hips and knees replaced by plastic and steel, Dr. Casto undertook medical mission work in Central America. The site was a two hour walk up a mountain trail, a trip he couldn't undertake on foot, and even mule-back travel was impossible because he couldn't sit on the animal. The villagers fashioned a sedan chair from an old wooden dining room chair and two two-by-fours wrapped with padding and carried him to the work site. Even with that accommodation, Dr. Casto was drenched with sweat and in pain. Still, he spent the next week from dawn to dusk dealing with medical situations brought on by neglect and lack of available health care.

Why does he expose himself to this pain and labor? In his words, *I'm a Christian and I can't imagine not using my skills in the service of others.*





2025 Transition Team

Vicki Cox	Frank Durham	Sarah Emery
Vicki Hall	Janet Hula	Nancy Klusaw
John Kolb	Andrea Spahr	Brenda Spahr
Connie Tefft	Pastor Laaker	

Officers Serving the Congregation:
Financial Secretary: Janet Hula Treasurer: Nancy Klusaw

Grace / St. Luke's Lutheran Transition Team Notes - May 13, 2025

The meeting opened at 5:30 p.m. with a gathering of prayers for individuals & communities.

Devotions were shared from the Daily Texts.

From the "I am a follower" book - discussions were shared around a number of questions. What is a great leader? Having courage to challenge others without fear. Courage to assume responsibility and accept outcomes. Live by example, and be a true follower of Christ. Let's read pages 63-85 for next month.

Financial Secretary and Treasurer reports were received.

Did not work on The Readiness Inventory.

Shared future considerations:

*New Name / Same Name - Grace in St Lukes; first name opposite of location. Strong feelings that they don't want to lose the name, so keep it in some format. 2nd Lutheran Church? Radically different ideas, brand new name? Name generally is related to core group of folks, or something special to them. Perhaps the name changes down the road once feelings quiet down. Or, will a new name invigorate more or new energy?

One / Two locations
Outreach programs
Property Condition / upkeep
Visibility vs neighborhood
Parking lots
Endowments
Real Estate & associated costs

Continued...

Mission Words:

Grow - Read over prayer request cards from Cinco de Mayo parade

Love - OTOC solidarity event. Discussed gift for Nenshi Ika to get her vehicle registered, motion carried. Endowment Report from Grace shared from April 2025. Review info shared by Protect my Public Media Team.

Serve - Crossroads Community worship & meal well received. Vicki will ask for calendar for next time. Cinco De Mayo parade, handed out water to 120 & popcorn to 75. The concert on 4/30 for Bobby Jo Valentine had 30 folks. Neighborhood clean-up this weekend, Saturday 9-2. School Reading programs end tomorrow - many thank you notes from kids. Spring Lake teacher appreciation - we brought Orsi's pizza for 128 staff.

Watch for board books, bibles, bilingual dictionaries!

Meeting was closed in prayer at 7 p.m.

JOIN US FOR: STORIES FROM THE HOLY LAND WITH PASTORS ADAM AND JORDAN MILLER-STUBBENDICK

Pastors Jordan and Adam share stories of the life-changing work of the ELCJHL, the realities of life in Palestine, and ways that the people of the ELCA can help fellow Christians in the Holy Land. Their presentation takes the often overwhelming issue of the relationship between Palestine and Israel and humanizes it by sharing pictures and accessible stories of the real people who live and work in Palestine.

Saturday, June 14th, 2:00 pm
Luther Memorial Lutheran Church, 1031 Sunset Trail, Omaha, NE 68132
Event is FREE and open to the public

Pastor Adam Miller-Stubbendick is a native Nebraskan from Avoca, Nebraska. Together with his wife, Jordan they served as coordinators for the ELCA's Young Adults in Global Mission program in Jerusalem and the West Bank from 2022-2023. With their two children, they lived in Jerusalem for a year and a half, accompanying the Palestinian people of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Jordan and the Holy Land. They were evacuated back to the United States due to intensifying violence against the people of Gaza in October 2023. As they said goodbye to Palestinian friends in October, one friend implored them with the following words. "Tell your country what is really happening in Palestine."

For more information, contact Gretchen at 404-583-4591 or
gretchen@nebraskasynod.org.

This event is sponsored by generous donations from Luther Memorial's Trust Fund and The Nebraska Synod Holy Land Accompaniment Team.



Yet give attention to your servant's prayer and his plea for mercy, Lord my God. Hear the cry and the prayer that your servant is praying in your presence this day.

1 Kings 8:28

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

Marcia Beck
June Hilmer
Samuel Mantzaris
Ed Nodean
Marilyn Van Ormer



Vicki Cox
Richard Krambeck
Carolyn Matson
Pam Reents



Pray for wisdom for your Church Council at Grace and St. Luke's 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 and St. Luke's Lutheran Church
Bishop Scott Johnson, Nebraska Synod
Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, ELCA Bishop

Pray for the Sudanese community in general. Charles Tuw, Moses Loda, John Boato, Barnaba Dyedi and Nenchi Ilka are the elders 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:

Dolores Castro - Home
Vicki Cox - Home
Richard Krambeck - Trinity Villiage, Papillion
Dee Nielsen - Peyton, CO
Rev. Terry Nielsen - Echo Hills
Marilyn Van Ormer - Home
Doris Westman - Hillcrest Estates



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 Jean, Miriam, Rod, and Robin for sharing your music ministry with us and providing such beautiful music during worship services.

Thank you Donna, Ron, and Brenda for taking care of the altar, and preparing communion.

Thank you Deb, Frank, Arlone, and Cindy for participating in the readings during worship services in May.

Thank you Greg, Janet and Ron for your weekly dedication for greeting people at the door, entering the sanctuary, and ushering during worship service.

Thank you Sara for your dedication in preparing the Bible Study and sharing your ministry every month in the Newsletter.

Thank you Janet, Rose Marie, John, Bob, Connie, Donna, and Ron for your faithful dedication in helping assemble the monthly newsletter!

Thank you for all the wonderful food that was prepared and shared following worship service on Mother's Day.

Thank you to all those that help keep both church grounds neat by picking up trash around the churches.

Thank you Alma for keeping both Grace and St. Luke's clean and 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!



BIBLE STUDY

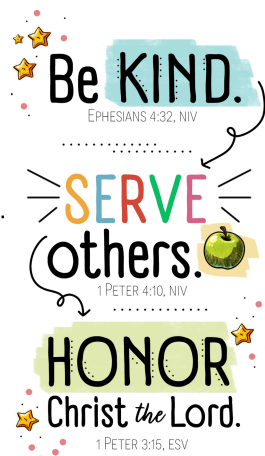
Reading Part I of Zechariah may seem like reading the Book of Revelation, as it is full of visions and symbols. How many symbols can you find in Zechariah's visions? (Go on, count them up before you read any further.) I found that, first, there were angels, then four horsemen on red, sorrell, black, and white mounts. The prophet saw horns, smiths, a man with a measuring line, Joshua's investiture in splendid robes and a clean turban, gold lampstands, and two olive trees - symbols of fertility, fruitfulness, and perhaps a healthy relationship with the land. Zechariah saw a vision of Zerubbabel, finding the keystone of the Temple, then laying the Temple's foundations. There is a huge flying scroll, a woman in a pot, four chariots coming from mountains of bronze, and the making of a crown of silver and gold, with which to crown Joshua, the high priest. These are mostly symbols of power and of good to come for the people who return from exile. Certainly, rebuilding the Temple is an important theme here, but I think that more is bubbling below the surface.

As I wrote last month, Zechariah points to a new age of union with the Lord, of hope and wholeness. That continues. The prophet saw a vision of Zerubbabel finding the keystone, but, for us Christians, the keystone is always Christ Jesus. And, yes, they were rebuilding the Temple, but, after long years of exile, they needed also to rebuild the identity of the people, restoring them to a sense of the community we are all called to be under God. They worked, too, on building a life of moral purity in obedience to God. That work is never done. It can devolve into a pharasee-like fixation on concrete details, without a broader love, warmth, and dedication to the Lord as its foundation, but it can be wonderful if it doesn't fall off the tracks. As God said, "These are the things that you must do.

Speak the truth to one another;
Let the judgements at your gates be such as conduce to peace;
Do not secretly plot evil against one another;
Do not love false oaths;
since all this is what I hate."
Zechariah 8:16-17 (JB)

Sara welcomes discussion, by text or phone,
at: (402) 686-1693.

Grace has recently received thank you letters from:
Together Food Housing Advocacy; CIRA, Center for
Immigrant & Refugee Advancement; and Micah House
Shelter & Support ~ for donations recently made to
the above mentioned organizations in support of their
ongoing efforts in serving individuals in need.



SAFE 2025

JUNE 7TH 1-4PM

GENE LEAHY MALL
1001 DOUGLAS STREET

The Southeast Precinct is excited to invite you to participate and/or volunteer in the kick off a **SAFE** summer at our **22nd annual S.A.F.E. 2025** (Safety Awareness Fitness and Education) event. Join us for this fun and informational event on **Saturday, June 7th from 1 - 4pm at Gene Leahy Mall on 1001 Douglas St.**

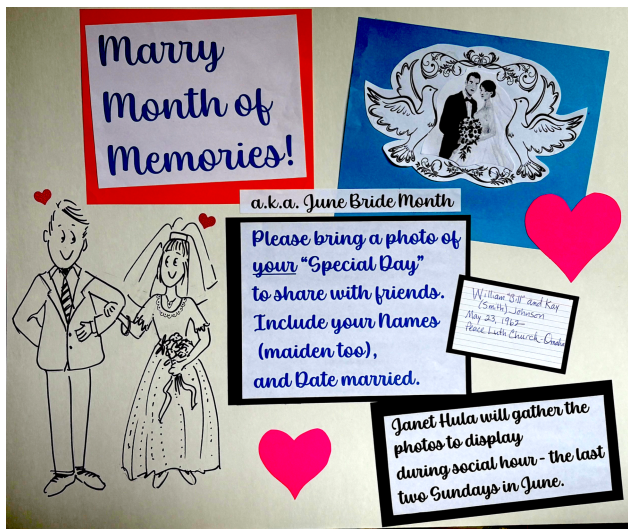
S.A.F.E. 2025 is a **FREE**, fun, family oriented community event. There will be demos from Omaha Police Department: ABLE One, Mounted Patrol, Bike patrol, ERU, the Omaha Fire Department's Smoke House and fire engine, Nebraska State Patrol, and more. There will be important agency booths, bike safety information, clowns, face painting, games, music, hotdogs and free raffles.

S.A.F.E. 2025 offers an opportunity for families to collect valuable information, learn about safety, staying healthy and a great way to spend a nice afternoon with family, friends and your friendly officers. Please help us spread the word about this event and if you would like to volunteer, please contact me at your earliest convenience at Ofelia.robles@cityofomaha.org.

Cinco de Mayo Parade was held Saturday, May 10.
It was a beautiful morning to hand out free
popcorn bags and bottle of water! We collected
several prayer requests that Pastor read during
Worship Service Sunday, May 11th.

Thank you to everyone who was present; to watch
the parade, pass out bottled water, popcorn bags
and collect prayer requests.





June is a popular month for weddings, often referred to as the “June bride” month, due to several factors including pleasant weather, the availability of fresh flowers, and a historical association with the Roman goddess Juno, who was the protector of marriage.

Just For Fun... We are asking you to share a portrait or photo of you and your spouse on your wedding day. We plan to display the pictures during coffee hour the last two Sundays in June. Please bring your photo to St. Luke’s on Sunday, June 1st, 8th, or 15th. Include your names and date of your marriage. Come and share a favorite memory from your special day!

Your picture will be returned to you the following month. See Janet Hula with questions.



St. Luke’s Mary Circle will not gather in June, meetings will resume once again on Thursday, July 10th. Brenda Spahr will have devotions, Terri Durham will lead the lesson and Karen Chapman will serve as hostess. Everyone is welcome to come join in the learning, conversation and refreshments.



**LUTHERAN
WORLD RELIEF**

Looking for ways to help your fellow Americans who have lost everything to disaster?

In southern California, you’re supporting local partners to provide: Support for local churches on the front lines; tarps and essential supplies; direct cash assistance; LWR Quilts & Kits; Ongoing support as fires rage on.

Our incredible donors are always quick to help when disaster strikes, anywhere in the world. This time, those disasters hit very close to home. It’s ONLY because of you that we can help at all - let alone mobilize quickly, help in multiple places at once and have the greatest impact possible!

Thank you for putting your love into action. You embody what it means to love thy neighbor, whether that person lives in your neighborhood or halfway around the world... until your love reaches every neighbor.



27416 Ranch Road
Ashland, NE 68003



Join us at the 37th Annual Quilt Auction - Saturday, July 26th

The day promises competitive bidding, good food, great fun, and lots of beautiful quilts donated by friends of camp. Rain or shine, the day will go on! Bring your friends and family. Admission is FREE!

Bidding will open for the Silent Auction Friday, July 25th at 9:00 a.m. and close Saturday, July 26th at 1:30 p.m. Silent Auction is available both in person and online. Silent Auction items will be available for pick up after 3:00 p.m.

Lunch will be served from 11:30 a.m. until 1:30 p.m., cost is \$8 for adults, \$4 for kids (4-12), and free for children 3 and under. Vegetarian and gluten-free options are available upon request.

To view the schedule and preview quilts, visit NLom.org/quilt-auction.

If you have any questions, contact Allison Blatchford at ablatchford@nlom.org or 402-944-2544.



Loaves and Fishes Pantry

Grace Lutheran Church
1326 South 26th Street
402-341-7730

**Pantry is Open 10:00 - 11:00 am
Every Monday ~ Even Holidays!**

Variety of fresh foods donated by
Trader Joe's and Whole Foods.

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. Participants 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 sacks!** Please continue to keep the Pantry and all the work that is done in your prayers. *All are served with love and care.*

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

There is a variety of volunteer opportunities for anyone interested.
Call the church office for additional information.

Path Assist, connects you to the resources you need to be healthy and improve the quality of your life. The Path Assist program is designed to help you confidently navigate local health and social service resources and advocate for your needs. The goal of Path Assist is to help you address issues like housing, food, transportation, access to medicine, isolation, and more before they become serious problems. Path Assist is a free program, you can sign up on their website at: www.path-assist.com/gethelp or call 402-265-6551.

PATH ASSIST



Grace Lutheran and St. Luke's have some additional ways that you could contribute without spending any out of pocket funds.

Register your **Bakers Plus card** with Kroger and choose Grace or St. Luke's as your charitable choice!

Ronald McDonald House: Save your pop tabs. They use the proceeds to pay the utilities. A box is provided in the back of the sanctuary for the tabs. Our most recent contribution of pop tabs brings our total to 129,000.

Eye Glasses. Do you have old eye glasses that you no longer use? A box is located in the back of the sanctuary to place them. They will be given to the Lion's Club to be used for individuals in need.



1611 1/2 Farnam Street, Omaha, NE 68102

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.

Visit their website at: tablegracecafe.com for additional information and to learn the many different ways you can donate.

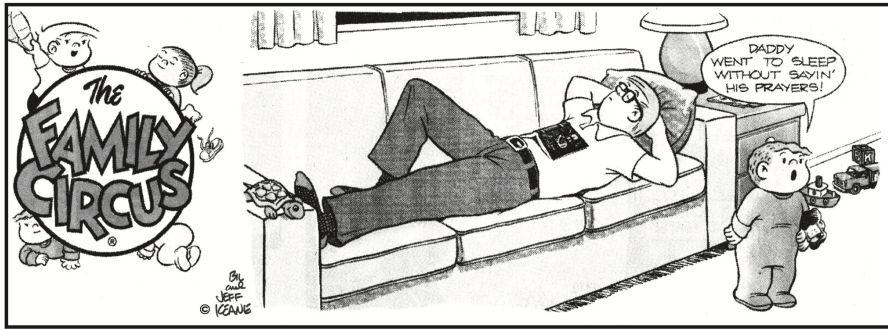
Help us Give more than a Meal.

Meals that Matter

The power of 77 resembles our drive to nourish hungry bodies and sould, and in honor of this, we are raising \$77,000 around the 3 key areas of Table Grace.

Our goal is to raise \$231,000 total for meals, food truck, and 10 day training scholarships.





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Father's Day Jokes ~ boyslife.org

Johnny's father: Let me see your report card.

Johnny: I don't have it.

Johnny's father: Why not?

Johnny: My friend just borrowed it. He wants to scare his parents.

~ submitted by Tyler H., Blacklick, Ohio

At a wedding ceremony, the pastor said that if anyone had anything to say concerning the union of the bride and groom, it was their time to stand up and talk, or forever hold their peace.

The moment of utter silence was broken by a beautiful young woman carrying a baby. She started walking toward the pastor slowly. Everything quickly turned to chaos. The bride slapped the groom. The groom's mother fainted. The groosman started giving each other looks and wondering how best to help save the situation.

The pastor asked the woman, "Can you tell us why you came forward? What do you have to say?"

The woman replied, "We can't hear in the back."

With 
this Ring...

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

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FATHER'S DAY WORD SEARCH



Celebrate	Gift	Home	Caring	Honor	Daughter
Relaxation	Son	Hugs	Holiday	Hero	Gentleman
Inspiration	Wise	Sunday	Giving	Daddy	Children
Appreciate	Laugh	Happy	Love	Loyal	Encourager
Grandfather	Kiss	Fun	Family	Friend	Provider
Devoted	Card	Cake	Strong	Father	Greatest

