

St. Luke's Lutheran Church  
2315 "I" Street  
Omaha, NE 68107-1814  
402-733-5881

Email: [stlukes@stlukesomaha.org](mailto:stlukes@stlukesomaha.org)  
[graceluth@graceluth.com](mailto:graceluth@graceluth.com)  
Web Site: [www.stlukesomaha.org](http://www.stlukesomaha.org)  
[www.graceluth.com](http://www.graceluth.com)  
Like us on Facebook at:  
[www.facebook.com/stlukesomaha](http://www.facebook.com/stlukesomaha)  
[www.facebook.com/gracelutheranomaha](http://www.facebook.com/gracelutheranomaha)

**MAY SUNDAY EVENTS**  
9:30 am. Worship Service  
Grace Lutheran, 1326 S 26th Street

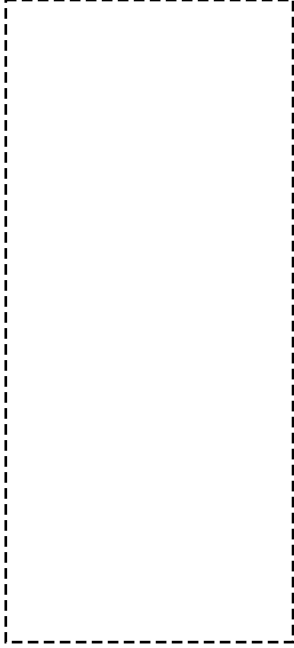
Pastor - Rev. Dr. Damon D. Laaker  
Editor/Church Secretary St. Luke's - Nancy Klusaw  
Editor/Church Secretary Grace - Brenda Spahr  
Sexton - Alma Lopez

Delivered to the Post Office June 26



Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Omaha NE  
Permit No. 442

Return Service Requested  
Dated Material



St. Luke's  
**Echo**

1905 - 2025

THE GRACE  
MESSENGER

1889 - 2025



July Worship Services will be held at  
Grace Lutheran, 1326 S. 26th Street

Grow, Love, Serve

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



I wish to continue sharing a few thoughts from the book that your transition team and I are reading.

Leonard Sweet writes in the section Via: the Way. "People often called Jesus a rabbi. But in his ministry, we discover major contrasts to the rabbinical method. Jesus was a new breed of rabbi. Three distinct differences stand out in the way Jesus went about his role as rabbi.

First, he did the inviting. The other rabbis typically waited for young men to approach them, asking permission to sit under the rabbi's teaching. . . . But Jesus went out looking for followers and issued the summons himself.

Second, women were prominently featured in the troupe of his followers. This was one of the many ways Jesus went against the religious grain and norms of his day.

Third, Jesus didn't invite his followers to merely learn his teachings. He wanted them to learn him.

Jesus is summoning you: "Come, follow me. Come, be with me, and I will do more than teach you the way to live your one and only life. I will give you life. In fact, this hanging together will not be for a limited time. We will do life together from now on.

It is significant that the Greek words for "come after" and "follow" are different. "Come after" means to line up behind or line up after in lockstep fashion. In contrast, "follow" means to "walk alongside" or "journey beside."

The first followers of Jesus were known as those who belonged to "the Way." What a curious moniker for the newly formed band of disciples. They had a way about them. . . . These people had a way about how they went about their lives, a way of being that had not been witnessed before.

I wonder if this is part of our Christian confusion today. Is there anything different about us as followers of Jesus? Do we have a way of being that hasn't been seen before? If not, maybe this is why our numbers continue to decline across the Christian traditions.

*Continued....*

What might our way of being different look like? Would there be certain actions that are unusual in this culture? How might we begin to look like followers of "the Way"?

Thoughts? I'd love to hear them.

Pastor Laaker

In the United States millions of children receive breakfast and lunch at school throughout the academic year. However, when school is out for the summer, there is a critical gap in nutrition assistance for school-aged children.



Only 11 out of every 100 children who receive school lunches during the school year also have nutrition support during the summer. This means that as many as 89% of children and their families in the U.S. who need nutrition support in the summer aren't getting it.

Your gifts to ELCA World Hunger are already at work in ministries and projects all over the United States to meet the needs of their congregations and communities.

Help a child in the United States get the nutrition they need this summer with a gift to ELCA World Hunger today. Your generosity extends God's warm hospitality with food on the table.

Can we count on you to give a meal and help feed children in need this summer?

ELCA World Hunger Envelopes are available on a table in the back of the sanctuary! Thank you.

This is the first generation in all of recorded history that can do something about the scourge of poverty. We have the means to do it. We can banish hunger from the face of the earth.

~ Hubert Humphrey

Hunger is not an issue of charity. It is an issue of justice.

~ Jacques Diouf

*[hungerhike.org](http://hungerhike.org)*



## 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

---

**St. Luke's/Grace Lutheran**

**Transition Team Notes - June 10, 2025**

The meeting opened at 5:28 p.m. with a gathering of prayers for individuals, communities and summer travel. Heavy hearts tonight while we prayed for so many struggling with fear and isolation taking place in our community.

Devotions were shared from the Daily Texts. And a song of Lament from Psalm 31.

Heartland Workers Center & CIRA - offering documentation & materials to assist those in need. Coordination of efforts with OTOC to have a response group to be available to offer help and support.

Watched a video from Presiding Bishop Eaton, speaking about the changing church environment with new beginnings coming from new soil.

Financial Secretary and Treasurer reports were received but not discussed.

Did not work on The Readiness Inventory.

### Shared future considerations:

We struggled with conversation around how to be a Good Christian, and a good steward of our dollars, with continued financial needs. Double duty in many areas, with two locations to manage. Thoughts seemed to gravitate toward Grace as church location, and St Luke's as a place of outreach. What groups, organizations might be interested in this space? How could we continue? How could we continue our outreach and expand it!?

*Continued...*

Grow - Prayer requests – how might we best share these needs?

Love – The following were shared. Planned Father's Day brunch, San Andres Internship and San Andres tent ministry.

Serve – We would like to begin gathering Cereal for the Loaves and Fishes pantry.

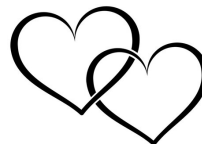
Announcements: Doris Westman's funeral will be Monday, June 30 at St. Luke's, noon.

Pastor will be on vacation June 20 – June 26.

Meeting was closed in prayer at 6:45 p.m.

---

Thank you to all who shared wonderful food for the Father's Day Brunch, the day was a great celebration sharing a meal and sharing stories of the fathers and father figures in our lives!



Thank you to everyone who brought and shared their wedding pictures! It was very enjoyable seeing all the pictures of friends and sharing stories of their special days.

Janet will be returning all wedding photos by the middle of July. If you have any questions, please speak with Janet.



*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  
The family of Doris Westman



Vicki Cox  
Richard Krambeck  
Carolyn Matson  
Pam Reents



**Pray for wisdom for your Church Transition Team at St. Luke's and 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, St. Luke's and Grace Lutheran Churches  
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 Worshiping Community.

**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



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 Deb and Vicki for taking care of the altar, and preparing communion.

Thank you Rod, Jean, Robin and Miriam for sharing your music ministry with us and providing beautiful music during worship services!

Thank you Janice, Vicki, Greg, Chris and Mary for reading during worship services in June. It is greatly appreciated.

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

Thank you Bob for greeting everyone who enters the door before worship services every Sunday morning during the month of June. It is a welcoming way to begin the Sunday morning arrival every week.

Thanks to everyone that helped with worship services during the month of June. It is greatly appreciated.

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

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!





## Let's Eat! Cereal-ously

We are all a bunch of Flakes! Friendly, Loving, Awesome, Kind, Energetic!

Grace and St. Luke's members are our Lucky Charms!

If we combed the world we would not find better church members!

St. Luke's and Grace will collect boxes of cereal to be donated to the Loaves and Fishes Pantry at Grace.

A monetary donation can will be available for those unable to shop. Together we can fill the empty cereal shelves that have been more noticeable in recent months.

Please bring your cereal donation to church throughout the month of July.

-----  
As we get ready to celebrate Independence Day, many of us plan to attend fireworks displays, a backyard picnic, or perhaps enjoy fun at the beach. The American Red Cross offers these tips so you can enjoy a fun-packed, safe holiday.

### FIREWORKS SAFETY

The safest way to enjoy fireworks is to attend a public firework show put on by professionals. Stay at least 500 feet away from the show. Many states outlaw most fireworks. Leave any area immediately where untrained amateurs are using fireworks, If you are setting fireworks off at home, follow these safety steps:

Never give fireworks to small children, and never throw or point a firework toward people, animals, vehicles, structures or flammable materials. Always follow the instructions on the packaging.

Keep a supply of water close by as a precaution.

Make sure the person lighting fireworks always wears eye protection.

Light only one firework at a time and never attempt to relight a "dud."

Store fireworks in a cool, dry place away from children and pets.

*redcross.org*

**BIBLE STUDY** This month we say goodbye to the prophets for a while, and we turn to other things - like the cross. This is NOT one of my favorite topics to discuss. I dislike pain, loss, disappointment, and suffering of any kind - all that negative stuff. I prefer to run away from it. I haven't seen a dentist in a couple of years, 'cuz I'm scared of pain. I am not a saint or a hero. I believe that Jesus died on a cross to free all of us from sin, and to bring us back to the Holy One. Thank-you, Jesus! I will be grateful always, always, and I am willing to live for you the best that I can. I have a problem, tho', with this: "Then to all [Jesus] said, "If anyone wants to be a follower of mine, let him renounce himself and take up his cross everyday and follow me." Luke 9:23 That's mighty hard to get around. I do want to know Jesus; I do! And I've suffered : breast cancer, dislocated knee, Covid (twice), arthritis, injustices, romantic break-ups, rejections, why, I've given birth four times, for Pete's sake! But all that is not a cross, a preacher once told us - that's the human condition that we all share. The Cross, he told us, is suffering borne for the sake of the Gospel.

"Mr. Perfect", also known as Saul of Tarsus, later Paul, had a few things to say about the cross. In 1 Cor. 10:13, he talked about our sufferings and how God gives us strength to bear them. In Gal. 2:19 " I have been crucified with Christ, and I live now not with my own life, but with the life of Christ who lives in me." And then there's Gal. 6:14 "...the only thing I can boast about is the Cross of Our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world." This is heady, mystical stuff - and somehow it gets distilled down to our children in Sunday School singing:

"The one way to peace is the Rock of the Cross -  
His banner over me is Love."

Meanwhile, about five million Americans last month participated in a "No Kings in America" protest, families in Gaza continued to starve, and ICE forces hunted down the immigrants among us (to deport them) - God, have mercy on us all!

This feels unsatisfying as an ending, certainly a tension unresolved. And unresolved tension is, all too often, part of living the faith in the real world. Maybe the best that I can do at the moment is point towards St. Paul's wonderful prayer in Ephesians 3:14-21. Maybe that's what a person comes to if they can pick up their cross and follow Jesus.

Sara welcomes comments and questions at: 402-686-1693.







St. Luke's Mary Circle will meet on Thursday, July 10, 2025 at 9:30 am in the Educational Unit for fellowship and Bible Study. Brenda Spahr will have devotions, Terri Durham the lesson and Karen Chapman will serve as hostess. Everyone is welcome to come join in the learning, conversation and refreshments.



Heartland Pride Parade  
Saturday, July 12, 2025 - 9:30 am

Parade route will begin at 16th and Capital Avenue, going east on Capital Avenue to 10th Street then turning north on 10th Street, past CHI Health Center and finish at Meca Drive.

This year's Pride Parade is presented by Heartland Center for Reproductive Medicine.

For additional information visit the website at:  
[heartlandpride.org](http://heartlandpride.org)



Path Assist, now available in your area, 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](http://www.path-assist.com/gethelp) or call 402-265-6551.



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](http://NLOM.org/quilt-auction).

If you have any questions, contact Allison Blatchford at [ablatchford@nlom.org](mailto:ablatchford@nlom.org) or 402-944-2544.

### "I" - Liners

I asked my daughter to give me the phone book. She laughed at me, called me a dinosaur and lent me her iPhone. So the spider is dead, the iPhone is broken, and my daughter is furious!

I didn't make it to the gym today, for the fifth straight year.

The biggest lie I tell myself is, "I don't have to write that down; I'll remember it."

I couldn't believe it today, when I came home and was told by my wife that my 5-year-old son wasn't actually mine..... She says that I need to pay more attention when picking him up from school.

Last year I joined a support group for procrastinators. We haven't met yet.

*Reprinted and shared with permission from JoyfulNoiseletter.com*



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? Please give your old eye glasses to Janice Fulmer. They will be given to the Lion's Club to be used for individuals in need.



"988" The Nation's Mental Health Hotline

"988" has been activated as the new three-digit mental health program hotline. Anyone who needs help with their mental health, particularly people in crisis or those struggling with mental health issues, should call this number. Operators speak both English and Spanish and have access to interpreters with over 150 languages.

When people call, text, or chat 988, they will be connected to trained counselors that are part of the existing National Suicide Prevention Lifeline network. These trained counselors will listen, understand how their problems are affecting them, provide support, and connect them to resources if necessary.

The current Lifeline phone number (1-800-273-8255) will always remain available to people in emotional distress or suicidal crisis, even after 988 is launched nationally.

Website: [suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://suicidepreventionlifeline.org) and [988lifeline.org](http://988lifeline.org)



*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, paper grocery sacks and egg cartons!** 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.



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](http://www.projecthopeomaha.org) for suggested items in need. If you have any questions, please call Project Hope's office at 402-453-7649. Clothing Pantry Hours are Tuesday and Thursday, 11:00 am - 2:00 pm.

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.

A mom texts, "Hi son, what does IDK, LY, and TTYL mean?"

He replies, "I Don't Know, Love You, Talk to You Later."

The mom texts back, "It's okay, don't worry about it.  
I'll ask your sister. Love you too!"



- Laughter is what happens when your body smiles.
- Laughter is smiling out loud.
- Laughter is the music a smile makes.
- Laughter is what happens when a smile sings.
- Laughter is a smile's soundtrack.
- Laughter is music created by a smile.
- Laughter is the sound that occurs when a smile overflows.

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

*Jokes and poems reprinted with permission from JoyfulNoiseletter.com*

One day a six-year-old boy told his father, "I'm going outside and play ball with God."

"So how do you play ball with God?" the father asked?

"Oh, it's not hard at all," the boy replied. "I just throw the ball up, and God throws it back down to me."

A little boy opened the big, old family Bible with fascination, and looked at the old pages as he turned them. Suddenly, something fell out of the Bible, and he picked it up and looked at it closely. It was an old leaf from a tree that had been pressed in between the pages.

"Momma, look what I found," the boy called out.

"What have you got there, dear?" his mother asked.

With astonishment in the young boy's voice, he answered: "I think it's Adam's suit!"

*joke shared by christiansunite.com*

## 50 US STATES WORD SEARCH



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

ALABAMA

ALASKA

ARIZONA

ARKANSAS

CALIFORNIA

COLORADO

CONNECTICUT

DELAWARE

FLORIDA

GEORGIA

HAWAII

IDAHO

ILLINOIS

INDIANA

IOWA

KANSAS

KENTUCKY

LOUISIANA

MAINE

MARYLAND

MASSACHUSETTS

MICHIGAN

MINNESOTA

MISSISSIPPI

MISSOURI

MONTANA

NEBRASKA

NEVADA

NEW HAMPSHIRE

NEW JERSEY

NEW MEXICO

NEW YORK

NORTH CAROLINA

NORTH DAKOTA

OHIO

OKLAHOMA

OREGON

PENNSYLVANIA

RHODE ISLAND

SOUTH CAROLINA

SOUTH DAKOTA

TENNESSEE

TEXAS

UTAH

VERMONT

VIRGINIA

WASHINGTON

WEST VIRGINIA

WISCONSIN

WYOMING