

St. Luke's Lutheran Church
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402-733-5881

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www.graceluth.com
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www.facebook.com/stlukesomaha
www.facebook.com/gracelutheranomaha

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

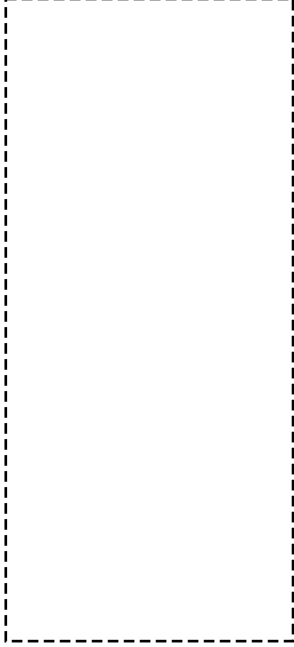
Pastor - Rev. Dr. Damon D. Laaker
Editor/Church Secretary St. Luke's - Nancy Klusaw
Editor/Church Secretary Grace - Brenda Spahr
Sexton - Alma Lopez

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St. Luke's
Echo

1905 - 2025

THE GRACE
MESSENGER

1889 - 2025



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

Grow, Love, Serve

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



I read the following on Social Media and since we observe Reformation Sunday, October 26, this year, I couldn't help but wonder how we have gotten so far removed from the theology of Grace Alone that Martin Luther espoused in his efforts

to reform the Christian response of his day. Take a look.

God Does Not Need Saving: A Theological Response to Political Claims of Divine Rescue by Rev. Dr. David P. Gushee.

“In a moment of political fervor, Eric Trump declared, “We saved Christianity. We saved God.” The statement, whether rhetorical or sincere, demands theological reflection—not for partisan rebuttal, but for the sake of truth, humility, and the integrity of Christian witness.

“At the heart of Christian theology is the confession that God is the one who saves. Scripture is unequivocal:

- “I, even I, am the Lord, and apart from me there is no savior.” (Isaiah 43:11)
- “Our God is a God who saves; from the Sovereign Lord comes escape from death.” (Psalm 68:20)
- “For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.” (Luke 19:10)

“To claim that a political movement or family has “saved God” is not merely a theological misstep—it is a reversal of divine order. It suggests that human power can rescue the eternal, that the Creator is somehow dependent on the creature. This is not only biblically unfounded; it is spiritually dangerous.

“Such language echoes the temptation of idolatry: to fashion God in our image, to tether the divine to our political victories, cultural anxieties, or institutional survival. It risks turning Christianity into a brand, a weapon, or a tribal badge—rather than a living faith rooted in grace, humility, and the cross.

“The Lutheran tradition, shaped by the Reformation cry of sola gratia (grace alone), reminds us that salvation is not earned, defended, or preserved by human effort. It is a gift. And God—eternal, sovereign, and unchanging—does not need saving. What God desires is not rescue, but relationship. Not defense, but discipleship.

“When political figures claim to “save Christianity,” we must ask: Which Christianity? The one that feeds the hungry and welcomes the stranger? Or the one that props up power and excludes dissent? The one that kneels in prayer or the one that demands allegiance?

“In times of cultural anxiety, it is tempting to conflate faith with nationalism, to imagine that God’s survival depends on our political success. But the Gospel resists such captivity. Jesus did not come to be preserved—He came to be poured out. He did not seek protection—He offered Himself in vulnerability, love, and truth.

“As spiritual leaders, we are called not to save God, but to bear witness to the God who saves. To proclaim grace in a graceless age. To embody humility in a time of hubris. To remind our communities that God is not a brand to be rescued, but a mystery to be worshiped.

“Let us reject the impulse to defend God as if He were fragile. Instead, let us follow the One who, in strength and mercy, saves us all.”

In our confirmation class, we just revisited the focus of the Sola’s (Alone) championed by Martin Luther; Sola Scriptura (Scripture alone), Solus Christus (Christ alone), Sola Gratia (grace alone), Sola Fide (faith alone), and Soli Deo Gloria (the glory of God alone).

Pastor Laaker

Continued.....





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 - October 14, 2025

The meeting opened at 5:30 p.m. with a gathering of prayers for individuals and communities. Some personal requests, ongoing struggles in the world and folks dealing with fear and uncertainty.

Devotions were shared from the Daily Texts; Psalm 116 & Luke 8.

From the "I Am A Follower" book – discussions were shared around the main question: What was your main take-away from the section titled The Way. **Please continue to reflect.** Read pages 139-160 for next month.

Financial Secretary and Treasurer reports were received and accepted.

Shared future considerations:

Transition team discussed many ideas on the best way for our congregation to take next steps. Most feel as though merger is done. Focus now on suggestions for names, then the constitution, then legal steps to correct titles and locations under 1 entity. This was followed by discussions around funds.

Reports:

Ministry Sites - all physical issues currently resolved.

Grow –

1. Continuing Bible Study on the book of Acts.
2. Fall Stewardship Emphasis - We Say Yes!

Continued...

Love –

1. Doug & Vicki Hall are willing to help with Pantry delivery.
2. May still need help with Orsi bread pickup.
3. God's Work Our Hands – we will now go to Nursing home for deliver the prepared items.
4. Personal Care Kits - UPDATED to 10/26 to take advantage of free shipping!
5. Thrivent Food Shelf - When we get 500 items, Thrivent will match with \$500.

Serve –

1. Immanuel Vision Grant - Our community's current food needs; rice, oatmeal, baking mix, matza, etc. Will connect with Pastor Omar.

Announcements

Pastor will be attending the Voyagers gathering, Nov 3-7.
 Thanksgiving Eve will be at St Matthews Lutheran, 6:30 pm.
 Blue Christmas service will be announced next month.

Meeting was closed in prayer at 7:14 p.m.



OTOC Issues Conference

Sunday, November 16, 2025 2:00 - 4:00 pm
 First United Methodist Church
 7020 Cass Street, Door 4

In preparation to meet with candidates for the 2026 midterm elections, OTOC is conducting research in 4 areas based on concerns raised in a number of house meeting conversations held citywide:

- Status of Immigrants and Refugees
- Affordable and Habitable Housing
- Educational Supports in Public Education
- Safety Net Programs for Hunger and Healthcare

Of you or someone you care about has experienced any one of these pressures, please join us to:

- learn what initial research reveals
- imagine and plan what we can do **IF WE ARE ORGANIZED!!**

Visit the link below or scan this code to register:
https://www.otoc.org/2025_issues_conference





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 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 Yehiel Curry, 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.

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
Richard Krambeck - Trinity Villiage, Papillion
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 Pastor Laaker for leading the Bible Study group in October and November. Learning about the book of Acts has been very interesting and we have all learned new history!

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 Greg, Chris, Mary and Deb for reading during worship services in October. It is greatly appreciated.

Thank you Steve and Tommy for acolyting during worship services in October. 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, Frank and Dan for your weekly dedication for greeting everyone who enters both the entryway and sanctuary before worship services, ushering during worship service and communion assistant.

Thank you Connie, Donna, Janet, Rose Marie, Bob, Ron, and John, 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!



Stewardship

Stewards of God's mysteries

When Sam's parents asked if he felt ready to take care of his very own dog, he replied with an enthusiastic, "Yes!" As he hugged his furry new friend, he fully expected his parents to deliver one of their typical lectures about how caring for an animal is a major responsibility. He had endured many such lectures before. Yet now that the long-awaited moment had arrived, his parents simply smiled at him. "He's all yours," said Sam's dad. Sam knew that his father's words were a statement of trust. And though caring for his very own dog certainly involved many responsibilities, Sam felt that being a pet owner was more of a privilege than a burden. He felt able to take on the task because his parents had spent the past months thoroughly instructing him about all that caring for a pet entailed.

This year, our congregation's stewardship theme will center around the ways that we say "Yes" to God. The apostle Paul described Christians as "stewards of God's mysteries" (1 Corinthians 4:1). He reminds us that "it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy" (1 Corinthians 4:2). God has entrusted us with the task of sharing Christ's

love with others. Indeed, that is an enormous task. Yet God never asks us to do something without first providing us with the means to accomplish it. We might even say that responsibility is the ability to respond affirmatively. We say "Yes" to God because our Savior enables us to do so.

Please begin to consider the ways you will say "Yes" to God's call to support this ministry in 2026.

BIBLE STUDY

Imagine this: It's Sunday, and we have worshipped together, including a friendly newcomer whom you have never before met. Now, sitting together over coffee, we chat. The newcomer sits at your table and asks, "So, tell me, what is God like?" How would you answer? Where would you look for clues? The Psalms, the life and actions of Jesus (= the Gospels), the life and actions of Christian believers, your own time in prayer?

Much of the Lutheran way of Christian faith seems to be rooted in Paul's letter to the church in Rome. Let's look there - specifically, at Romans 5:1-11. We see at once that God justifies us and brings us peace. God is someone who reaches out and makes the first move. God gives us hope. And God is someone who loves us so much as to die for us. That's a lot of giving!

"Okay...", responds our new friend. "What's it like to be with God?" Hmmm, I think, I'm always saying to Jesus, "I want to be with you!" Jesus, though, is Immanuel, God-with-us. In fact, as verse five states, God's love is poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, with us since Baptism. Being with God is never lonely, I think, but trying to quiet an active, noisy, "monkey" mind in order to be open to God can feel like a long, deep dive alone - scary, really. And every day is a little different, just as every day we are each a little different.

Ultimately, being with God can be very peaceful, filled with joyful trust. But the only way to know this, in reality, is to try it, to go and pray. So - go pray!

Sara welcomes questions and comments, by phone or text, at: 402-686-1693.



The most common reason people think about praying:

- We pray for help and guidance.
- We pray to spend time with God.
- We pray to thank God and praise Him.
- We pray to confess and to grow (repentance)
- We pray to strengthen our faith.
- We pray because God asks us to.

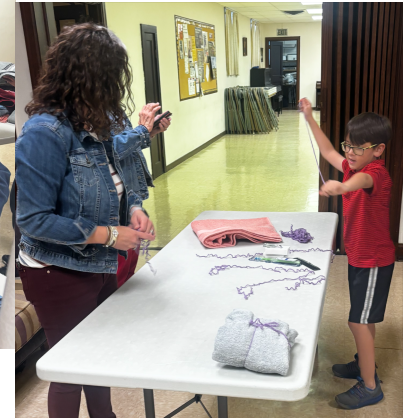


God's Work
Our Hands
Sept. 28th



Personal Care Kit
Assembly
Oct. 26th

91 Personal Care
Kits were
assembled.
Ready to ship to
Minneapolis



GIVE THANKS AND GIVE BACK

November food shelf challenge

GENEROSITY STARTS HERE!

With an increased need for food security, the Thrivent Member Network - Nebraska Region is hosting a Fall Food Shelf Challenge.

Calling and inviting everyone!



We encourage all to partner with one another in collecting over 500 non-perishable food items between October 12th through November 12th. When we collect over 500 items, the food drive will be supplemented with a Generosity Multiplier Gift of \$500.00 courtesy of the Thrivent Member Network - Nebraska Region. The gift will be directed to the Loaves and Fishes Food Pantry.

Please bring your donated non-perishable food items to the church by November 12th in support of the Loaves and Fishes Food Pantry!

Do you know a family in need of diapers and experiencing financial needs? The church office has flyers available upon request for you to share with anyone who is facing this specific need. The flyer is sponsored by nebraskadiaperbank.org



Mary's



St. Luke's Mary Circle will meet on Thursday, November 13, 2025 at 9:30 am in the Educational Unit for fellowship and Bible Study. Karen Chapman will have devotions, Deb Ludwig will give the lesson and Janet Hula will serve as hostess. Everyone is welcome to come join in the learning, conversation and refreshments.

Update



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

Giving Tuesday, December 2, 2025

Goal is \$65,000 for Meals that Matter

Donation Impact:

A \$1,000 donation will empower Table Grace to invest in One Job Experience Trainee through to graduation and assist in finding them employment.

A \$500 donation will empower Table Grace to bless a community with a Food Truck experience.

A \$250 donation will empower Table Grace to serve 25 meals that matter for people who volunteer for their meal at the cafe.

A \$20 donation will empower Table Grace to serve 2 meals that matter for people who volunteer for their meals at the cafe.

If you can't make it in, you can scan the QR code to make a donation. Or you can mail one to:

Table Grace
1617 Farnam Street
PO Box 38
Omaha, NE 68101



PATH ASSIST 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 or call 402-265-6551.

Thanksgiving Eve Service
November 26, 2025
6:30 pm
St. Matthew's Lutheran Church
1725 S. 60th Street



Grace and St. Luke's has the opportunity to join with congregations from St. Matthew's, Augustana and Bethel for a Thanksgiving Eve Service.

Enjoy an evening in Thanksgiving Eve Worship Service, center and surround yourself with the peace, love and mercy in the word of God before the hustle and bustle of Thanksgiving Day and the holiday weekend.



LINCOLN LUTHERAN CHOIR TO PERFORM
Kountze Memorial Lutheran Church
2650 Farnam Street
November 9, 2025 - 3:00 pm

The Lincoln Lutheran Choir, under the direction of Artistic Director Jon Marquez and Accompanist Kayla Wombacher, will perform in concert at **Kountze Memorial Lutheran Church at 3:00 pm on November 9.** The 35-voice choir has a 40+ year history of singing sacred music in Lincoln and throughout Eastern Nebraska. The Choir will sing a wide variety of Christian music, including works in Latin and Russian, as well as a capella anthems and traditional spirituals. There is no admission charge, but a free-will offering will be gathered. The public is enthusiastically invited!

Bob Marshall,
Lincoln Lutheran Choir President



27416 Ranch Road
Ashland, NE 68003

Greetings, partners in ministry! We are grateful to have had the opportunity to share the love of Christ and discuss the unexpected ways God appears in our lives with 1,365 campers at Carol Joy Holling and Sullivans Hills Camps this summer.

We all know how faith comes alive when we step outside of our day-to-day routines and explore faith conversations with our peers at camp. We have listed opportunities to get back to camp this fall and winter.

Middle School Retreat; November 7-9. Join us for a weekend filled with adventure, faith, and fun! Through outdoor challenges, creative projects, and moments of reflection, this retreat is a chance to unplug, recharge, and experience God in a new way. (Grades 6th - 8th; Cost \$100.)

Mother Daughter Retreat; November 15-16. Strengthen the special bond between mother and daughter. Together, you'll enjoy hands-on activities, outdoor adventures, and reflective devotionals that celebrate your unique relationship while deepening your faith. (Ages 10-13; Cost \$160 per pair)

For questions and program cost checks, please contact Laura, Youth Programs Specialist at LStalder@NLOM.org or call 402-944-2544.

UFO (Unfinished Objects) Retreat; December 5-8. These retreats are for crafters of any kind. Bring your own projects and use this time away to get caught up or do new projects! It's a great time to meet new friends, learn new skills, and be inspired by others' creativity. Come stay in a beautiful place with high-comfort facilities and great food – you'll leave refreshed and ready to start other project.

For more information, contact Jessica, our Adult Programs Specialist, at JWeltz@NLOM.org or 402-944-2544.





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.

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.



Home fires claim seven lives every day, but together we can help change that.

Smoke Alarms Save Lives

Did you know? If a fire starts in your home, you may have just two minutes to escape. The best way to keep your family safe from home fires is to have working smoke alarms.

We are offering free home fire safety information and smoke alarm installations. Appointments take less than 30 minutes.

To schedule your FREE smoke alarm installation, visit redcross.org/smokealarmNE or call 1-833-422-1751.



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.*

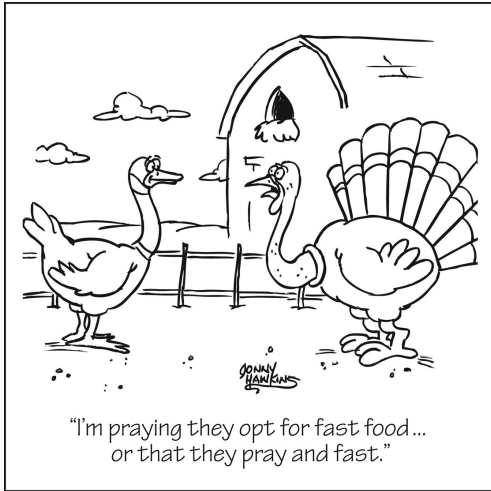
- Do you know of a family or individual in need of food assistance? Please share the Pantry information with them.
- There is a variety of volunteer opportunities for anyone interested. Call the church office for additional information.



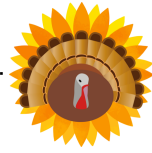
Project Hope, Inc.
6201 N 60th Street

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 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.



"I'm praying they opt for fast food...
or that they pray and fast."



Thanksgiving Potpourri

"Why did the turkey cross the
road before Thanksgiving?"

"He was hoping people would
think he was a chicken."

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

Thank you for...

...the mess to clear up after a party, because it means I have been
surrounded by friends.

...a lawn that needs mowing, windows that need cleaning, and gutters
that need fixing, because it means I have a home.

...the taxes I pay, because it means I have an income.

...the alarm that goes off in the morning, because it means that I'm alive.

~ via Rev. Felix A. Lorenz, Jr., Northville, MI



Horn of Plenty

When a music student brought his French horn to my
shop for repair, he complained that the instrument "felt
stuffy" and he couldn't blow air through it. It's not unusual to
find partial blockages in brass instruments if small items get lodged in
the tubing, but when I tested the instrument, the horn was completely
blocked. After much probing and prodding, a small tangerine dropped
out of the bell.

"Oh," said the musician when I handed him the fruit. See the bewildered
look on my face, he explained, "My mom used the horn for a cornucopia
in a Thanksgiving centerpiece."

Shared by Mark L. Madden, rd.com

Jokes and poems reprinted with permission from JoyfulNoiseletter.com

My Thanksgiving List

Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give
thanks to him and praise his name. Psalm 100:4 (NIV)



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

FOOD	FRIENDS	FAMILY	FLOWERS	HAPPINESS
SUNSHINE	PRAYER	HOUSE	SCHOOLS	BIBLE
COUNTRY	CLOTHES	RAIN	HEALTH	LOVE
CHURCH	PEACE	FREEDOM	TEACHERS	PETS
MUSIC	PARENTS	SALVATION	TREES	JESUS



Fall back, not behind!
CHANGE YOUR CLOCKS and
join us on time for worship.

Friendly reminder to set your clocks back
one hour next Saturday before going to
sleep. If you arrive Sunday morning and
you are the first, don't worry, just make
coffee for the day!