

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

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

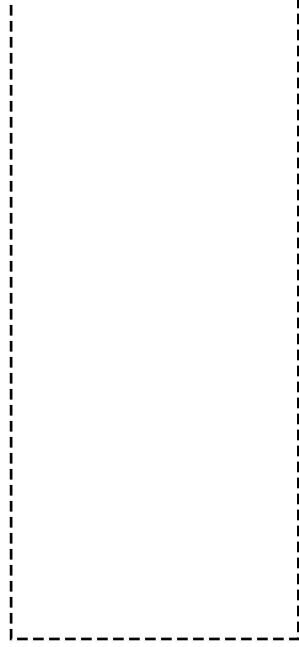
Pastor - Rev. Dr. Damon D. Laaker
Editor/Church Secretary Grace - Brenda Spahr
Editor/Church Secretary St. Luke's - Nancy Klusaw
Sexton - Alma Lopez

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*THE GRACE
MESSENGER*
1889 - 2026

St. Luke's
Echo
1905 - 2026



June Worship Services will be held at Grace Lutheran, 1326 South 26th Street



Worship Together

Grow, Love, Serve

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



On this past Monday, we Americans observed Memorial Day. There were a variety of public and private rituals and ceremonies that took place to keep alive a memory. We set aside a day to prevent past experiences, people and

moments in history from being forgotten. We are called to honor and remember those who have given their lives in order that the soil of our nation remains FREE. We are to remember the sacrifice made by others that freedom's holy light keeps burning in our hearts and our national conscience.

In many towns and villages, Memorial Day is known as "Decoration Day." I remember as a young boy going with my parents to mark the graves of family.

I recall some of those, Memorial Days--fireworks, high school marching bands decked out in colorful uniforms marching in unison down Main Street playing John Phillip Sousa's musical pieces. There are speakers and politicians everywhere, flowers on graves, flags waving and flapping in the air, family picnics, fried chicken, softball games, joy, laughter, tears. This is the obvious and visible side of Memorial Day.

There is also a not so obvious side. I can see a gray haired woman with a scarf around her head, old skirt, and worn sneakers kneeling by a grave side with tears running down her cheeks. She is still mourning the loss of her sons in a war in a foreign land thousands of miles away. She wears the medals on her tattered blouse--the medals given by a thankful nation for the lives of her sons' sacrifice. The blouse is tattered, but it was the blouse she had on the day her sons went to basic training. She talks to the crosses herself and slowly walks to the car to go home, where she works in the yard all day with her flowers. These flowers are placed periodically on the graves of her boys. Her husband reads the newspaper all day--he hurts too much to go anywhere that day.

Freedom also can be as quiet as a whisper inside a cabin door in 1863, "Mr. Lincoln said we are free."

Continued.....

Our past is vital. It provides identity and the dreams that have guided us individually as a nation, and as a faith community.

I hope we have not forgotten what has guided us. May those sacrifices remind us to exercise our political will and regularly participate in our civic life.

Pastor Laaker

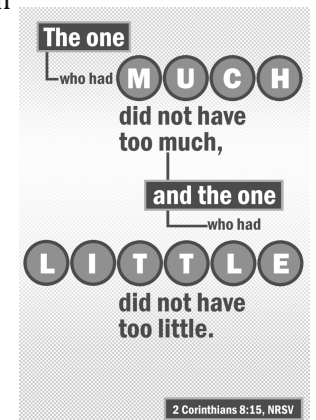
Stewardship

Generosity

Before we even begin to imagine that we can be givers of generosity, we must recognize that we are first and foremost receivers. Generosity does not begin with us—it begins with God, the author of everything good and perfect and beautiful. We possess nothing to give that has not already been given to us. "What do you have that you have not received?" asks the Apostle Paul in 1 Cor. 4:7. We never gift; we only re-gift.

Generosity is cultivated when we meditate regularly on the generosity of God in Christ. We need to let ourselves be overwhelmed at God's generosity: in the beauty and abundance of creation; in the gift of life; in the love of friends and family; in the blessings of grace and forgiveness and eternal life. Only then, will our increased gratitude lead to giving that is offered as it was originally intended: as an act of worship to this loving, gracious, radically generous God. Paul explains in 2 Cor. 8 that the Macedonian Christians experienced the grace of God and in return gave themselves "first to Him"—and they expressed that worshipful devotion in the practical act of sacrificial generosity.

Pr. Laaker





2026 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 12, 2026

The meeting opened at 5:34 p.m. with a gathering of prayers for individuals and communities. Prayers of care, healing and strength for members, friends, and families grieving. Prayers for ending World struggles.

Devotions were shared from the Daily Texts.

From the "I Am A Follower" book – Discussion centered on being aware of individuals that may appear invisible from our normalcy, and the feelings we experience when engaging in like conversations. Life does not have a secure blueprint to follow, sometimes we make it up as we live life. Remember, engaging in our communities, of all types - is how we live our faith. Please continue to read, 240-253 for next month.

Minutes were received & accepted as printed.

Financial Secretary, and Treasurer reports were received and accepted through a motion.

Shared future considerations:

Since primaries are over, we hope for a response from the Secretary of State regarding securing the new name soon. Form is prepared and ready. Motion received and accepted to send in the Request for a New Name.

Reports:

Ministry Sites - Grace has opened a new general fund bank account, the old account will be closed after the last transaction. All donations are now going through the new account. Individuals who used Vanco in the past have now closed out their automatic transactions; therefore, there will be no additional monthly fees.

Pastor and Frank met with Mr. Garcia of Canopy South, a copy of the Articles of Agreement was reviewed. Motion to present the Agreement to Canopy South was approved.

Pastor, Steve Braun, and Bob Klusaw trimmed trees at Grace and St. Luke's. They look fantastic!

Blankman Services replaced a leaky valve on the AC unit.

Grow –

Love –

Serve –

1. Cinco de Mayo May 16, individuals were asked to consider helping Janet & Nancy hand out popcorn & water.
2. 24th St. Clean-Up May 23, 9-12.
3. Thank you to the additional acolyte helpers!
4. 65 "Let's Get Crackin" bags were handed out to pantry participants.

Announcements

Pastor Laaker and Brenda will be attending the NE Synod Assembly May 29-31 in Kearney.

Pastor & Mary are going to California June 2nd to help celebrate their grandson, Jonah's graduation!

God's Work Our Hands on Sunday, Sept 13. Ideas for service welcomed. New Coffee Shop will open in the Workforce Solution building within the next 6 months. It will be open seven days a week.

Meeting was closed in prayer at 6:42 p.m.

Continued...



Prayer LIST

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
Pr. Edgar Jimenez
Carolyn Matson
Pam Reents
Marilyn Van Ormer



Vicki Cox
Samuel Mantzaris
Ed Nodean
Ken Sukraw



Pray for wisdom for your Church Transition Team at St. Luke's and Grace Lutheran. 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 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 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
Rev. Terry Nielsen - Ovation Heartwood
Charlotte Palczynski - Home
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 Rod, Robin, Jean, and Miriam for sharing your music ministry with us and providing such beautiful music during worship services.

Thank you Jaydn for sharing your talent in playing beautiful music during worship service on Pentecost Sunday.

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

Thank you Greg, Chris, Mary, Deb and Theresa for participating in the readings during worship services in May.

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

Thank you Bob, Frank, Dan, and Steve 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 Tommy, Jady, Jackson and Madison for acolyting during worship services in May. It is greatly appreciated.

Thank you Rose Marie, Connie, Bob, Janet, 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 all who enter.

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!

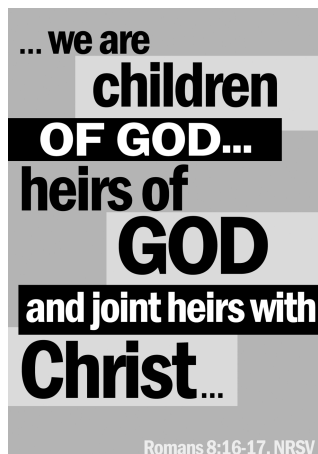
BIBLE STUDY Over the next three months, we will study Romans 8, verses 14-39, a portion of Scripture filled to bursting with hope. It's too much for one sitting, so today we must content ourselves with verses 14-23. It is also a section that reads as something very different in different versions. It begins by affirming our status as true children and heirs of God. What a magnificent gift!

Now look at verse 17. In the Inclusive New Testament (INT), published by Priests For Equality, we see that "...we are coheirs with Christ, sharing in Christ's suffering and sharing in Christ's glory." The Revised Standard Version (RSV) says "... heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him." Does this mean that, if we do not suffer with him, we cannot be glorified with him? In the Jerusalem Bible (JB), which I use in my private prayer, the verse reads "...coheirs with Christ, sharing his sufferings so as to share his glory." This question is beyond my level of theology, so I suggest that anyone troubled by it talk to Pastor Damon or another ELCA pastor.

Today, I want to focus on the next paragraph of the reading, which tells us that all of creation waits eagerly for God's revelation of God's sons (and daughters!) Creation, like us, waits to be set free from the power of sin. Paul called this (in the RSV) "...groaning in travail until now", but it is also translated, in the INT and JB, "... groaning in one great act of giving birth." As a mother, I find this much more relatable and, frankly, promising. Yes, giving birth was the hardest work that I have ever done, but what a result! And, if all of creation is with us in labor, the eventual result must be beyond anything that we can possibly imagine!

When I am bogged down by current sufferings in this world - can you imagine digging through rubble with your bare hands, searching for your small child's body, as some Palestinians must? - if I can only remember Romans 8, how it lifts the heart!

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



St. Luke's Evangelical Lutheran Church
Endowment Fund Scholarship Program
For the 2026-2027 School Year



The Endowment Fund's Scholarship Program assists in achieving educational goals by providing scholarships. If you will be attending college during the 2026-2027 school year, now is the time to apply!

In an email to stlukes@stlukesomaha.org please provide the following information:

1. Your Name
2. University, College, Conservatory, or other institution you will be attending
3. Evidence that you have been accepted for enrollment by that school (i.e. upload a picture of your acceptance letter, or college schedule)
4. What your degree or study program you are pursuing
5. Short paragraph about your previous schooling (previous college year or senior year of high school year)

Please send your email by August 16, 2026. We look forward to hearing from you!

Mary's



St. Luke's Mary Circle will meet on Thursday, June 11, 2026 at 9:30 am in the Educational Unit for fellowship and Bible Study. Wanda Rhode will have devotions, Terri Durham will give the lesson and Deb Ludwig will serve as hostess. Everyone is welcome to come join in the learning, conversation and refreshments.

My son said to me, "Dad, today I watched someone do 50 push-ups; do you think you could do that?" I said, "Of course, son; I don't want to brag, but I could probably watch someone do 50 push-ups."

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Cinco de Mayo Parade was held Saturday, May 16. It was a wonderful morning watching the parade. Such beautiful colors were seen in the costumes and parade goers. We collected prayer requests that Pastor read during Worship Service Sunday, May 17.

Thank you to everyone who was present, while watching the parade handing out bottled water, popcorn bags and collecting prayer requests.

900 S 74th Plaza
Omaha, NE 68114
402-444-6617
M - F 8:30 am - 4:30 pm
director@vas-nebraska.org



Homestead exemptions provide relief from property taxes by exempting all or a portion of the valuation of a home from taxation. The State of Nebraska reimburses the counties and governmental subdivisions for taxes lost due to homestead exemptions. The percentage of relief is based on the applicant's income level and home valuation. To determine eligibility, a property owner must complete and submit the Nebraska Homestead Exemption application and Income Statement to your county's Assessor Office between February 2nd and June 30th. A list of Date, Times, and Locations is available upon request at the church office. Volunteers will Assist you in completing the necessary forms. Please call 402-444-6617 to schedule your appointment.



**We're Updating
Our Church Directory**

The new non-pictorial directory is currently under construction! The directory will be available by the end of summer for individuals who are currently active in worshiping and/or contributing. Contact information will be needed from all who would like to be included in the directory. Contact forms are currently available and have been distributed to many individuals. You can help make this project a success by filling out your form with any of your contact information you would like to provide for print; name, address, phone number and email address. Please watch the weekly bulletin and monthly newsletter for additional information!

Service Fridays
Every Friday
June 19th - July 31st

9:00 am - 4:00 pm
Meet at Kountze Memorial
2650 Farnam Street



Service Fridays are quickly approaching and we are getting ready to put our energy into giving back in our community.

We will meet every Friday beginning June 19th and concluding on July 31st, with the exception of July 3rd.

Service Fridays are open to students going into grades 7th - 9th only.

Students are asked to gather at Kountze Church starting at 9:00 am. We will conclude at 4:00 pm.

Snacks, sunscreen, and bug spray are provided. Students are asked to bring a sack lunch and water bottle.

Wear clothes you don't mind getting dirty along with closed toe shoes. Some of our work will be messy.

We will be giving our time to the Food Bank of the Heartland, YES House, community gardens, deFreese Manor, and more.

A release form, with emergency contacts and other pertinent information will be provided. Parent/guardians are expected to have that completed for their child to participate.

Activities are being planned now and an activity timeline will be coming soon.

You can find the sign up at: <http://www.signupgenius.com/go/5080F4EA8A629AOF49-62993973-service#/>

We would love your help! Adult volunteers/chaperones can sign up through the link provided as well.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Kristin Bob at Kristin@kmlchurch.org.



Loaves and Fishes Pantry

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

**Pantry is Open Every Monday morning 10:00 - 11:00 am
~ 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.

Well Water Jar Campaign

The ELCA encourages congregations and individuals to support access to safe, clean water as a vital expression of our faith and love for neighbor. Through initiatives like ELCA World Hunger and partnerships with local and global organizations, Lutherans help build wells and provide water purification, improving health and opportunity for communities in need. This work reflects our call to steward God's creation and serve others, remembering that water is both a gift and a symbol of new life in Christ.



Please look for the Water Campaign Jar at the back of the sanctuary to place your donation, thank you!



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



We are truly grateful for your faithful donations in 2025! What an incredible year! Table Grace offers a safe haven for people who are hungry, lonely, isolated and in need of dignity and community.

Gospel Brunch! New 2026! Table Grace is offering a Gospel brunch once per month on Sundays! June 14th will be our next Gospel Brunch, come by between 10:00 am - 2:00 pm for delicious food, Gospel music, and a community of faith filled with grace.

Table Grace the Musical won Outstanding Premiere of a New, Original Local Script through the Omaha Entertainment Awards! The Loft performance is available to purchase and download at www.tablegracethemusical.com. Our documentary of the Making of the Musical is coming together!

Senility Prayer

"Dear God: Grant me the senility to forget the people I never liked, the good fortune to run into the ones I do, and the eyesight to tell the difference."

~ via Rev. Harry Mahoney, Dedham, MA



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For Fathers.....

I would rather be a nobody in the world but be a somebody to my kids.
~ Patrick Morley

The father used to sing his little children to sleep until he overheard the four-year-old tell the three-year-old, "If you pretend you're asleep, he stops."
~ unknown

"He didn't tell me how to live; he lived, and let me watch him do it."
~ Clarence Budington-Kelland

"My father used to play with my brother and me in the yard. Mother would come out and say, 'You're tearing up the grass.' 'We're not raising grass,' Dad would reply. 'We're raising boys.'"
~ Harmon Killebrew

Dads are most ordinary men turned by love into heroes, adventurers, story-tellers, and singers.
~ Pam Brown

What a father says to his children is not heard by the world, but it will be heard by posterity.
~ Jean Paul Richter

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Puzzle!

A Father's Love

Directions: Match the biblical children to their father, using the clues by the father's name. Then write the corresponding letter on the lines to complete the Bible verse below.

- | | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Shem, Ham & Japheth = M | John the Baptist = N |
| Solomon = O | Jacob & Esau = A |
| Jonathan = I | Cain, Abel & Seth = O |
| Jesus = C | Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, |
| Rachel & Leah = S | Zebulun, Joseph, Benjamin, Dan, Gad, |
| Isaac & Ishmael = P | Naphtali, Asher & Dinah = S |

- God: "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." _____
- Adam: God gave him another son because the older killed the younger. _____
- Noah: His sons were blessed and told to multiply and replenish the earth. _____
- Abraham: God promised he would be a father of many nations. The Jews and Arabs descend from these two sons. _____
- Isaac: His older son sold his birthright, and his younger son tricked Isaac and received the blessings for the firstborn. _____
- Laban: He had two daughters; the older was tender-eyed and the younger was very beautiful. Both married Jacob. _____
- Jacob: Two wives and two handmaids gave him 12 sons and a daughter. _____
- Saul: His son was David's best friend. _____
- David: He had many children, but one was known for his wisdom, for having many wives and for building God's temple. _____
- Zechariah: His son, a cousin of Jesus, was born to be a messenger of repentance. _____

As a father has _____
on his children, so the LORD has
_____ on those who
fear him. *Psalm 103:13, NIV*



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THANK YOU,
dads

God loves your children through you. If you are not available, how can He love them?
~ Josh McDowell