

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

Email: stlukes@stlukesomaha.org
graceluth@graceluth.com
Web Site: www.stlukesomaha.org
www.graceluth.com
Like us on Facebook at:
www.facebook.com/stlukesomaha
www.facebook.com/gracelutheranomaha

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

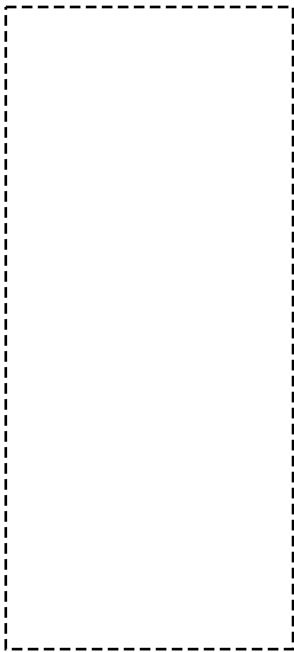
Pastor - Rev. Dr. Damon D. Laaker
Editor/Church Secretary St. Luke's - Nancy Klusaw
Editor/Church Secretary Grace - Brenda Spahr
Sexton - Alma Lopez

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St. Luke's
Echo

1905 - 2026

THE GRACE
MESSENGER

1889 - 2026

SEPTEMBER 2026 

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



Worship
Together

Grow, Love, Serve

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



Isaiah 51:1 Listen to me, you who pursue righteousness, you who seek the LORD. Look to the rock from which you were hewn, and to the quarry from which you were dug.

- 2 Look to Abraham your father and to Sarah who bore you; for he was but one when I called him, but I blessed him and made him many.
- 3 For the LORD will comfort Zion; he will comfort all her waste places, and will make her wilderness like Eden, her desert like the garden of the LORD; joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and the voice of song.
- 4 Listen to me, my people, and give heed to me, my nation; for a teaching will go out from me, and my justice for a light to the peoples.
- 5 I will bring near my deliverance swiftly, my salvation has gone out and my arms will rule the peoples; the coastlands wait for me, and for my arm they hope.
- 6 Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look at the earth beneath; for the heavens will vanish like smoke, the earth will wear out like a garment, and those who live on it will die like gnats; but my salvation will be forever, and my deliverance will never be ended. (NRSVUE)

In the middle of August this passage of Isaiah was chosen for the first reading on Sunday, August 23. I don't know why it has struck a cord within me, but it has. Pastor Mark R. Peterson offered this simple devotional reflection: We are swirling in a sea of voices asking for consideration—information overload, news fatigue, bubbles of information, lives lived in silos, endless breaking news. Is that something new? Isaiah asks repeatedly for a hearing, to get God's good word into the distracted ears of a people. That is a very contemporary problem. Isaiah proclaims that God's Word will give justice, life, joy, and gladness.

Continued.....

Listen, he pleads, for here is a positive caring and just vision of hope for all nations! Yet Isaiah raises the question: Why does he even have to ask for a listen and look? Are we distracted by those other voices? How can God get a word in edgewise? Read Isaiah and then think of this 1964 quote from Eric Sevareid, "The biggest big business in America is not steel, automobiles, or television. It is the manufacture, refinement, and distribution of anxiety." Now, listen again to Isaiah with fresh 2026 ears.

What might Isaiah be saying to us in this confusing and difficult time?

Pastor Laaker

Stewardship

In God's Economy is a six-week stewardship emphasis. We will journey through the Exodus story with an invitation to move from isolation to connection, from scarcity to abundance, and from extraction to shared calling. Exodus names two competing economies: the economy of Egypt, built on fear and domination, and the economy of God, where gifts are uncovered, burdens are shared, and grace is not scarce.



Through the courage of women who refuse to cooperate with the old way, Moses' complicated calling and identity, God's daily provision in the wilderness, and the wisdom of shared leadership, this series reframes stewardship as participation in God's liberating work. It is not about doing more, giving more, or proving our worth, but about noticing what God has already placed among us: hidden talents, abundant resources, and beautiful community. Rooted in worship, scripture, spiritual practice, and community connection, this 6 week series invites us to ask not "What do we lack?" but "What has God already given - and how are we called to share it together?"

We will begin our journey in mid-September.



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 - August 11, 2026

The meeting opened at 5:29 p.m. with a gathering of prayers for individuals and communities. Folks displaced from natural disasters. Prayers for students and teachers as school resumes, including those that are reading to our partner classrooms. Prayer for all of those struggling with the heat, here and around the world. Continued prayers for peace in the Middle East, and for those that are continuing to be affected by immigration issues here at home. Prayer for those who continue to struggle with food insecurity.

Devotions were shared from the Daily Texts.

The follow up conclusion of the "I Am A Follower" book – Discussion centered on each person's individual feelings about what touched them from the reading.

Minutes were received & accepted as printed.

Financial Secretary, and Treasurer reports were received and accepted through motions.

Shared future considerations:

Conversation with Chief of Police about the St Luke's parking lot & the house to the South led to a conversation and suggestions from Captain Paul Hanson from the Southeast Precinct. He suggested that we consider authorizing "Closed Property" with the city. This would give the Police Dept the ability to arrest / fine an individual who would be found on the lot during the Closed hours. Cost for the signs is less than \$100 and registration happens each year by December 31. We may consider it for 2027. In the meantime, we plan to lock the gate on 23rd Street once the fence is repaired.

Continued...

OPPD put up a new light fixture on the south parking lot pole.

Material received from Reconciling Works – we will review.

The Nebraska Synod is aware of our consolidation efforts. A Special Congregational Meeting will bring forward the proposal to consolidate the congregations into one congregation.

Actions needed to file the Articles of Incorporation: Corporate individual to be named, a couple of incorporators. The congregation will be organized as a religious organization.

Reports:

Grow – Bible Study using the Gospel of 1 Corinthians. Monday evenings at 5:30.

Confirmation Class will resume in September.

Caleb Noah is a nurse at Methodist, and would like to be able to come and present a variety of health information.

Fall Stewardship theme will be "In God's Economy."

Love – OTOC event coming up; Accountability Session.

School Reading Programs will be continuing with Liberty & Spring Lake Schools.

Immanuel Vision Grant – thoughts for a new grant request?

Serve – Crossroads Community – August 16.

CIRA Event Back to School Drive was a huge success.

God's Work Our Hands; blankets, snack kits - Stephens Center & YES.

Announcements: Durhams were awarded the Quilt of Valor!

Meeting was closed in prayer at 7:08 p.m.

Fall Bible Study: Luther Seminary has graciously provided A Guided Study of 1 Corinthians. First Corinthians is part of an ongoing correspondence between Paul and the church in Corinth. We can only guess—in more or less educated ways—at what exactly happened in Corinth and what sort of relationship Paul had over time with believers there.



Fall Bible Study will begin October 5th at ? at St. Luke's Lutheran Church, 2315 I Street and continue each Monday through October and conclude in November. Please speak with Pastor Laaker to insure the correct number of materials will be on hand.

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
The family of LaVonne Fleer



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, 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 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
Charlotte Palczynski - Home
Marilyn Van Ormer - Pathfinder Senior Living, Fremont



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 Donna, Ron, and Brenda 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 Cindy, Arlone, Vicki, Greg and Chris for reading during worship services in August. It is greatly appreciated.

Thank you Madison, Tommy, Jadyn and Jackson for acolyting during worship services in August. 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 Greg, Janet, Ron, Steve and Dan for your weekly dedication greeting everyone who enters both the entryway and sanctuary before worship services, ushering during worship service and communion assistant.

Thank you Connie, Bob, Greg, Janet, Rose Marie, and Andrea, 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 Alma for planting flowers at St. Luke's, they are beautiful.

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!

Thank you Steve for purchasing bundles of paper sacks for the Loaves and Fishes Pantry, it is greatly appreciated!

BIBLE STUDY

This month, we begin a new series of thoughts about faith. Faith is a Big, Wide subject, and we will only touch upon it here and there. We begin with the word "faith" and what its letters might represent:

Father's (Mother's) Love
Action
Initiative
Trust
Healing



Each word across merits some time for musing and wondering. We will look at them in turn, eventually reaching "healing", which occurred often in the ministry of Jesus. In fact, if we look at the Gospels by Matthew, Mark, and Luke, healings are a staple of his ministry. In John, not as much.

For today, a few suggestions about faith in general, some questions (always!), and a few recommended readings. What does faith mean to you? It must be more than simple belief in the statements of the Apostles' Creed, which we recite in worship. And it is! To me, faith is a relationship, but with whom? Jesus? the Holy One? Does faith change? Does it grow? Yes, of course! Faith is not static, because an adult could never make it through all the challenges of life on a school child's faith. Faith asks something of us, not just an answer to a question, but a lived response - action! And initiative - who's? What is the role of trust in faith? Finally, why did Jesus heal people? Suggested readings:

John's Gospel, 3:16 and 3:35, 14:1-11

Matthew 3:13-17, 14:33-36

Mark 1:32-34, 4:41

Luke 5:12-14, 7:1-10

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

33 Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

34 When they had crossed over, they landed at Gennesaret. 35 And when the men of that place recognized Jesus, they sent word to all the surrounding country. People brought all their sick to him 36 and begged him to let the sick just touch the edge of his cloak, and all who touched it were healed. ~ Matthew 14:33-36

2026 ELCA God's Work Our Hands September 6, 13 & 20



Fleece Throw Blankets

Fleece throw blankets should be 50" x 60" in size, made from light weight fleece or micro fiber material.



Snack Kits

Snack kits can include any individual sized wrapped items such as:
crackers, cookies, meat sticks, chips



Please join us in the fellowship hall on September 20
to assemble the snack kits.



Fleece Throw Blankets and
Snack Kits will be donated to the
Stephen Center and
Youth Emergency Services.

Please place your donations on the shelf unit at the back of the sanctuary. Following worship service on September 20th, everyone is welcome to stay and help assemble the snack kits. If you have any questions, please speak with Cindy, Janet, Nancy or Brenda.





27416 Ranch Road
Ashland, NE 68003

The best adventures don't end with summer. Discover new trails, deepen your faith, make lifelong friends, and create memories worth writing home about. Your next great camp adventure is waiting; find your retreat and join us this fall!

Family Campout - September 18-20, 2026

Join us for a fun-filled weekend at our Family Campground! You'll enjoy quality time together, classic camp activities, and nights under the stars—there is something for everyone. Reconnect, relax and make lasting memories!

Fall Festival - October 3, 2026

Join us for a Fall Festival at camp! Soar down the biplane, share a meal together, and close the evening with a campfire worship. Whether you're here for family fun or a trip down memory lane, it's the perfect way to celebrate fall at camp!

Fall Kinect Retreat - November 6-8, 2026

Ages 5 through 4th Grade with Special Adult

Fall KINnect is a great weekend for campers to spend time at camp with mom, dad, grandparent, godparent, a favorite aunt or uncle, or any special adult in their life. Come spend time having fun and worshipping together.

Middle School Retreat - November 13-15, or December 4-5, 2026 **Grades 6th through 8th**

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.

Mother Daughter Retreat - November 21-22, 2026

Daughter's ages 10 through 13

Join us to 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.

If you have any questions, contact Laura at lstalder@nlom.org or 402-944-2544.



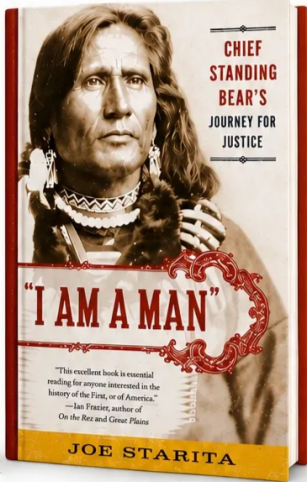
FREE OF CHARGE
ALL ARE WELCOME!

JOIN US FOR AN AFTERNOON WITH
AWARD-WINNING AUTHOR
JOE STARITA

*Investigative Reporter. Acclaimed Author.
Powerful Storyteller.*

Joe Starita is a two-time Pulitzer Prize nominee and the author of three acclaimed books on Native Americans.

His story of Chief Standing Bear, *I Am a Man*, is being made into a full-length feature film.



CHIEF STANDING BEAR'S JOURNEY FOR JUSTICE

"I AM A MAN"

JOE STARITA

TRUTH. JUSTICE. NATIVE STORIES.

Voices That Matter.



SUNDAY
SEPTEMBER 27, 2025



3:00 PM



MORNING STAR LUTHERAN CHURCH
331 S. 85th Ave.
Omaha, NE 68114
www.MorningStarOmaha.org

Refreshments will be served following presentation.



**Center for Immigrant
and Refugee Advancement**

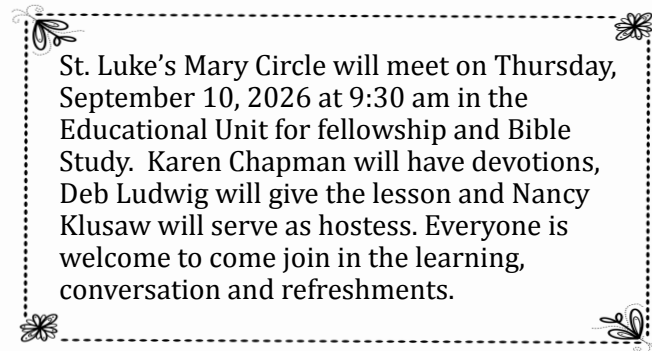
**4223 Center Street
402-898-1349**

On behalf of the entire CIRA team and the families we serve, thank you for your generous donation. Your gift of school supplies will help a student walk into the classroom confident and ready to learn.

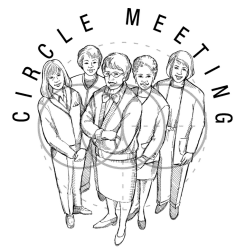
Gifts like these are meaningful to the immigrant and refugee families in our community. Many of the children we serve do not have the essential items needed to start the year strong. By donating school supplies and backpacks, you're offering them a lifeline to education and empowerment. Your support not only helps these families adapt and integrate but also provides their children with the tools they need to build a brighter future.

Below is the final list and count of our collective efforts!

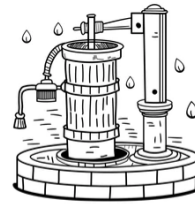
Backpacks - 68	Highlighters - 161	Pens - 133
Binders - 28	Index Cards - 24	Pocket Folders - 65
Calculators - 19	(100 packs)	Protractors - 61
Colored Pencils - 33	Loose leaf paper - 57	Rulers - 72
Crayons - 54	Mechanical Pencils - 122	Scissors - 45
Erasers - 33	Pencils - 717	
Geometry Sets - 13	Pencil cases	
Glue Sticks - 148	Pouch - 10	
1 bottle of glue	Plastic - 14	



Mary's



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!

1611 1/2 Farnam Street, Omaha, NE 68102

Hours for Breakfast and Lunch
Mon, Tues, Thur, Fri & Sat. from 7 - 2
Monthly Gospel Brunch Every
Second Sunday 10:00 am - 2:00 pm

TABLE GRACE CAFE
Nourishing Hungry Bodies and Souls

Gospel Brunch! Table Grace is offering a Gospel brunch once per month on Sundays! September 13th 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.





Glacial Till Cider House & Tasting Room
1419 Silver Street,
Ashland, NE
Sunday, September 27, 2026
2:00 - 4:00 pm.

Sip, Support, and Celebrate Mission Field Nebraska

You're invited to a special Open House at Glacial Till Winery! Join us for an inspiring afternoon in downtown Historic Ashland, Nebraska, as we raise awareness and support for the life-changing ministries of Mission Field Nebraska.

Date: Sunday, September 27, 2026

Time: 2:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Location: Glacial Till Cider House & Tasting Room | Ashland, NE

Admission: \$30 per ticket (includes 1 free beverage and hors d'oeuvre)

What to Expect

- Meet the People Behind the Mission
Hear firsthand how Mission Field Nebraska ministries are transforming lives and communities across our state.
- Enjoy Wine & Hospitality
Savor the beauty of Glacial Till Winery while mingling with others who care about meaningful ministry in Nebraska. Live music will be provided by local musicians.
- Basket & Silent Auction
Bid on unique baskets and items, all in support of ministries that serve in some of the most needed places in our synod. Want to donate a basket or item? Email us at office@nebraskasynod.org

Mission Field Nebraska Ministries

Your support helps fund these vital ministries:

- **Seeking the Spirit Within**
- **Sudanese Outreach Ministries**
- **Followers of Christ Prison Ministry**
- **Iglesia Luterana San Andres**
- **Lakota Lutheran Center & Chapel**

Sunday, September 20th
First United Methodist Church
7020 Cass Street
2:00 - 4:00 pm



Candidate Accountability Session, a great opportunity to see your candidates running for office and how they stand with the issues presented by OTOC. The Accountability Sessions is a platform for OTOC to discover how each Candidate stands on the issues. It is vital that there is a great presence before all the Candidates to show a united solidarity group of concerned citizens during this Session.

OTOC is a 33-year-old, broad-based organization made up of over 30 member congregations and community organizations. OTOC members work to identify, develop, and organize leaders around their common interests. As a non-partisan organization, OTOC never endorses a candidate, but seeks to develop public relationships with elected officials, and organize enough power to be able to advance the solutions they seek. OTOC's accountability session does not follow the typical town hall or debate format. Instead, OTOC asks all the candidates for specific commitments to work with OTOC on their agenda of issues.

If you are interested in being a representative from Grace/St. Luke's, please speak with Brenda to find out additional details for the Candidate Accountability Session.



**We're Updating
Our Church Directory**



The new non-pictorial directory is almost ready to print! Thank you to everyone who assisted in the process of making this new directory! Please watch the weekly bulletin for additional information!

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.



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.



**American
Red Cross**



Changing Diapers Changing Lives

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



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, egg cartons and the small berry or cherry tomato containers!** 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.

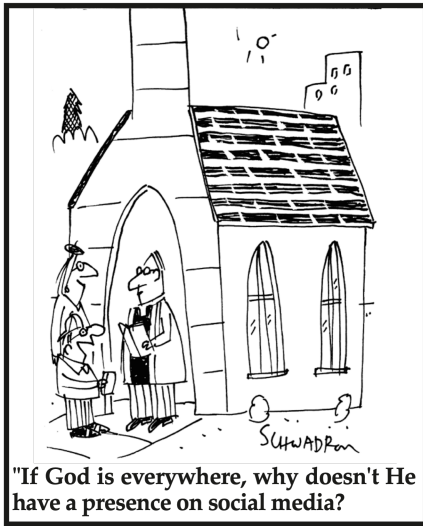
Grace Lutheran and St. Luke's have some additional ways that you could contribute without spending any out of pocket funds.



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.



"If God is everywhere, why doesn't He have a presence on social media?"

from JoyfulNoiseletter.com
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"The curious learn most;
the cheerful give most;
the patient teach most;
the courageous live most."

~William Arthur Ward
via Apple Seeds

"Choose to love - rather than hate.
Choose to smile - rather than frown.
Choose to build - rather than destroy.
Choose to persevere - rather than quit.
Choose to praise - rather than gossip.
Choose to heal - rather than wound.
Choose to give - rather than grasp.
Choose to act - rather than delay.
Choose to pray - rather than despair.
Choose to forgive - rather than curse."

~ Author unknown via Apple Seeds



Signs and Wonders

Sign outside Wesley Chapel United Methodist Church:
"Be the kind of person your pet thinks you are."
~via Rev. Harry Mahoney, Dedham, MA

Sign outside Lititz (PA) Moravian Congregation:
"ASAP - Always say a prayer"
~via Rev. Dean R. Jurgen

God's Work - Our Hands

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

Relationships	Evangelism	Friendship	Arlington
Community	Neighbors	Garbage	Service
Litter	Shirts	Yellow	Faith
Bahia	Water	Care	Dogs
Love	Park		



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