

Inspired By Christ, it is our mission  
to share God's Word and Love in care  
and in service to all.

# THE GRACE MESSENGER



March 2007

Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church  
1326 South 26 Street  
Omaha, NE 68105-2380

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Web Site: [www.graceluth.com](http://www.graceluth.com)

## REGULAR SUNDAY EVENTS

9:00 A.M. Christian Education

10:30 A.M. Worship Service

Pastor - Rev. Dr. Damon D. Laaker

Editor/Church Secretary – Pam Reents

Sudanese Ministries - John Ivo Mounto

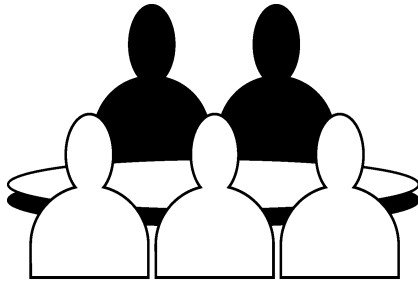
Youth Ministries - Brenda Spahr

Organist - Cody Talarico

Sexton - Ambros Lado/Jason Bauer

Interfaith Health Ministries - Virginia McGill

Faith in Action - Julie Chytil



## COUNCIL MEETING

Ron Adrian  
June Hilmer  
Ernest Olson  
Pastor Laaker

### 2007 Council Members

Andrew Edwards  
David Hufford  
Brenda Spahr  
John Ivo Mouto

Sarah Emery  
Greg Hula

\*\*\*\*\*

Officers Serving the Congregation but not on Council:

Financial Secretary: Janet Hula

Treasurer: Margie Sutej

The regular meeting of the Council was held February 13. The Council members shared their prayer concerns: Care for those in need of healing – Darlene Spahr, Jim Horwath, David Jacobs, Bernard Jacobs, Fran Peterson, Cheryl Brown's grandson, Luke, a desire for positive changes in Iraq, continued safety for Ivo Mouto, care for those within the Grace family that they continue to heal and for safety of all of our military personnel. Pastor led devotions from Genesis 17:9 and Romans 14:22; which spoke about God's strength and salvation and the blessings of great things that God works in our lives.

Visions for Ministry: Council began sharing in discussion of "One Body One Spirit", which included the differences of multiracial, multicultural and multiethnic around us.

Reports were received from the Financial Secretary and the Treasurer. Please continue to give generously.

Christian Education had no new report.

Evangelism/Outreach reported the Sudanese Women's ESL program had 18 women and 8 children this past Saturday and has opened to include Latino women.

Finance Endowment Board approved \$5,000.00 donation to Lutheran Family Services to support the Antioch Project.

Property had no new report.

Service/Social Ministry had no new report.

Support/Stewardship had no new report.

Worship Pastor has been busy getting everything set for Pastor Neal Von Seggern during his Sabbatical.

Unfinished Business: None.

New Business: Identify an individual for the open position on church council.

Announcements: The next joint meeting with St. Luke's and Cristo Rey councils will be Thursday, February 22, 6 p.m.



Thank you! Thank you for the trust you display in your pastor. I am deeply honored and truly appreciative. I am writing this before I leave on Sabbatical. You will read it after I am gone. Please know that I am not “gone” only taking a leave to renew, restore and regenerate so that I can continue to serve effectively as your pastor.

I remember with some fear and trepidation the preparations for my first Sabbatical, now some ten years ago. I knew I needed some down time. I was tired. I was grouchy. I couldn't see clearly what I felt God wanted us to be about here at Grace Church. You were fearful. You thought I was being sneaky and using this time to check out a different congregation somewhere else. Boy were you surprised when I came back and now I've stayed another decade. Maybe this time you are secretly hoping that I would look elsewhere? No, I'm not serious. You have made it clear that you continue to appreciate my leadership and I hope I have made it clear how much I love serving you and God's people in this place.

Sabbaticals are gaining in popularity in congregational settings, however, there continues to be much confusion about their purpose. In our sabbatical leave policy for Grace Church we begin with some information. It reads like this: “Sabbatical = a leave of absence for rest, travel or research (Webster's).

“A sabbatical is a period of time (usually three months) during which rostered ministers set aside their normal responsibilities at congregations for the purpose of renewal. For a number of years the ELCA has encouraged its congregations to offer sabbaticals to its pastors. Congregational sabbaticals focus on the total person, the pastor's physical, emotional, spiritual and intellectual needs. The concept of sabbatical is grounded on the biblical idea of Sabbath rest. The example of Jesus, who frequently sought out a quiet place where he could meditate and pray, away from the constant demands of the crowds, is a strong model for a sabbatical.”

I have found that I love a very complex and demanding ministry setting. I suspect this is part of the reason that I love serving in the city. The addition of the responsibilities as Assistant to the Bishop of the Nebraska Synod only expands that complexity. I thoroughly love the work that I am called to do. I know I don't always do it the best I should but I guess that is the tradeoff for multitasking and multiple demands. One thing for sure, it requires a great deal of energy. Thankfully, God has given me plenty of energy for this work, however, I have come to a point, once again, where I need some down time to recharge my batteries.

I plan to shut off my phone, hang up my keys, stop attending meetings, travel a bit and hopefully do some personal reading for enjoyment. I will miss seeing you for these next two months. I will miss hearing about your life. I will miss leading worship. I will miss celebrating with you the great mysteries of our faith through Lent and Easter. However, I will only be gone two months and then I will return.

I would like you to pray for me. Pray that I might get the rest and renewal I need. Pray that God will give me a vision of what God wants us to embark on, together, in the next four years. Pray that God will not only help me see but will also prepare the way for all of us to serve in love and care.

Please welcome and extend your wonderful care to Pastor Neal Von Seggern, and his wife Ardis, as he leads worship during my time apart.

*Pastor Laaker*



**Next Grace Lutheran  
Men in Mission Breakfast  
Saturday,  
March 17, 2007  
8:00 a.m.**

**W/ELCA Board Meeting**

**March 5, 2007.  
1:00 p.m.**

Hostess  
Marilyn Van Ormer

**W/ELCA Circle Meeting**

**March 17, 2007  
1:00 p.m.**

Bible Study Leader  
Gertrude Hufford

Hostess  
Marilyn Van Ormer



*Women of the Evangelical  
Lutheran Church in America*

I Choose Joy!

"Joy is free, but it doesn't come cheaply.  
It's based on who I am, not what I have,  
where I'm headed, or where I've been.  
It's a biblical choice, and it's the best option—  
Every single second of the day."

Barbara Johnson from "Overjoyed"  
Women of Faith series



**Lutheran Women of Omaha Luncheon  
Kountze Memorial Lutheran Church  
2650 Farnam  
March 13, 2007**

**Program** Christian Heritage Children's Home  
Speaker, Dave Stakebake  
**Project** Monetary to Christian Heritage Children's Home

**Reservation Required by March 11**  
Call Lorraine Palma at 455-4342  
Cost is \$5.00 per person

# Lenten Worship Schedule

Wednesday Nights  
6:00 p.m. Lenten Supper  
7:15 p.m. Lenten Service

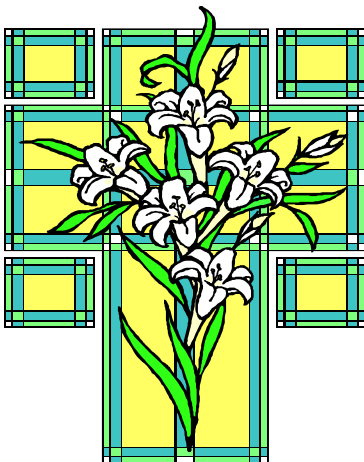
April 1  
9:00 a.m. Sunday School.  
10:30 Worship Service.



Maundy Thursday Service

Thursday, April 5  
6:00 p.m. Lenten Supper.  
7:15 p.m. Maundy Thursday Service.

Good Friday, April 6  
No Supper.  
7:15 p.m. Good Friday Service.



April 8  
6:30 a.m. Easter Sunrise Service  
7:30 a.m. Easter Breakfast served by the Moyer family.  
9:00 a.m. Sunday School and Confirmation Class.  
10:30 a.m. Worship with Communion.

Easter!  
He is Risen!

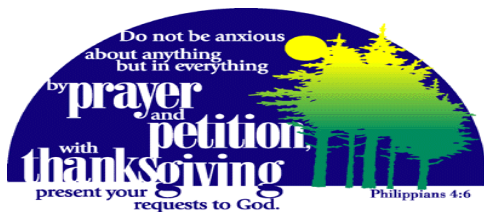
**2007 Grace Lutheran  
Lenten Dinner and Speaker Series**

"Ministry Together with the Love of Christ."



LORD: CREATE IN OUR NEIGHBORHOOD A  
COMMUNITY OF JUSTICE AND PEACE WHERE  
YOUR WILL MAY BE DONE. AMEN

February 28	Dinner: 6:00 p.m. Lutheran Men In Mission  7:15 p.m. Speaker: Vanessa Hernandez & Jessica Reinart	Project: Church Maintenance Supplies  Representing Lutheran Service Corps
March 7	Dinner: 6:00 p.m. <b>OPEN</b>  7:15 p.m. Speaker: LT Barry DeJong	Project: <b>OPEN</b>  Representing Omaha Police Department
March 14	Dinner: 6:00 p.m. Greg and Janet Hula  7:15 p.m. Speaker: Rev B. William Barth Director	Project: TBA  Representing Prison Ministries, NE Synod
March 21	Dinner: 6:00 p.m. Brenda Spahr and Kids At Work  7:15 p.m. Speaker: Ben Fulton	Project: Kids at Work  Representing NE Lutheran Outdoor Ministry
March 28	Dinner: 6:00 p.m. <b>OPEN</b>  7:15 p.m. Speaker: Roger Kruger	Project: <b>OPEN</b>  Representing Partners in Caring, Lutheran Family Services



## Prayer Concerns from Family and Friends

- ◆ Thelma Harrahill - Hospitalized for pneumonia. (member)
- ◆ Flo Alsager - Hospice Care. Pray that she will make it to her 101st birthday on March 18th. (member)
- ◆ Andrew Edwards - Doing dialysis a couple times a week until a kidney can be found. (member)
- ◆ Rex Olson - for healing as he deals with cancer. (Don and Norma Olson)
- ◆ Rose Hamilton - Healing for her cancer. (Aunt of members, Andrew and Christi Edwards)
- ◆ Frances Campsey - Health concerns. (member)
- ◆ Linda Whitney - Struggling with on-going cancer. (Friend of LaVonne Moss)
- ◆ Dan Reents - Because his immune system is low, he is very vulnerable to infection. **Praise item:** He is feeling a bit stronger. (Brother-in-law of Pam Reents, Church Secretary)
- ◆ Ernie Olson - On-going therapy after his stroke. (member)
- ◆ Alice Friedlander - Healing for a back injury. **Praise item:** She is slowly gaining strength and is able to be out and about. (member)
- ◆ Darlene Spahr - COPD, Slowly recovery. In rehab to gain strength to go home. **Praise item:** More good days than bad days. (member, Brenda Spahr's mother-in-law.)
- ◆ Evelyn Reimer - Health issues in the nursing home. (member)
- ◆ Harlan Morter - Recovering at home after being hospitalized. (member)
- ◆ Betty Coniglio - Continued recovery from heart issues . (member)
- ◆ Ron Andersen - Tests being done for tremors. (member)
- ◆ Mae Lane - Recovering at daughter's after being hospitalized. (member)
- ◆ Ana Lopez - Teen with long term medical needs. (Family involved in ESL food basket project)
- ◆ Ambros Lado - Long term rehab ahead for recovery from a stroke. **Praise item** - Came for worship in a wheelchair but took a short walk with the Pastor at the church! (member)
- ◆ David Jacobs - Recovery from major surgery on his back. (Brother of member, June Hilmer)
- ◆ Seth Goodman - Guidance and strength to overcome his addiction in rehab.  
(Nephew of Pam Reents, Church Secretary.)

Pray for strength and spiritual wisdom for the leaders in the local church and the Nebraska Synod:

Pastor Laaker (on sabbatical leave)

Bishop David deFreese, Nebraska Synod

Bishop Mark Hanson, ELCA Bishop, United States

Pray for wisdom for your Church Council here Grace Church.

### Sudanese Church Requests

- ◆ Please pray that John Ivo Mounto returns home safely from his trip to Sudan. **Praise item:** Ivo contacted Pastor Laaker via phone. He is in Juba waiting to go to Addis Ababa to fly home. He says there is much fighting in the Mabaan region where his mother lives. Pray for peace.
- ◆ Pray for the Sudanese women in our Survival English for Sudanese Women class. **Praise item:** New students are coming to the class each week. The ladies are spreading the word that the class here at Grace is fun and very helpful.
- ◆ An opportunity has come for the Sudanese women to connect with African American women from a church here in Omaha. Pray that a bridge of trust and friendship can be formed for the Sudanese women to be mentored. **Praise item:** A gathering with both African American and Sudanese women was very successful! More gatherings are planned. Pray for unity!
- ◆ Pray for the Sudanese community in general. Pray that the elders in the church community will have wisdom in their counsel.

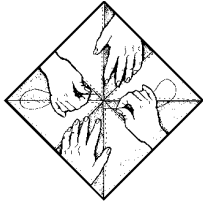
**4:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.  
Monday thru Thursday**

**Games, Crafts, and Fun  
Geared for Elementary Kids!**

*Remember, if OPS is out,  
there is no Afterschool program.*

**Free!**

Director, Brenda Spahr



**Quilting on Mondays!  
at 9:00 a.m.**

If you have the morning free, drop by and help cut squares and tie quilt tops on to the backs. Coffee break is at 10:00 a.m.

**Kids At Work 2007**



Kids At Work 2007

Just a hop,  
a skip  
and a jump away!

It's a new year, but the same question – How about being a team leader for Kids At Work?

It involves little more than two hours a day, Tuesday and Wednesdays from 9:45 a.m. to noon.  
starting in June

Would you like to support kids in a good start by learning how to save money and develop good work skills?

Come on, hop to it! Skip up! Jump forward and volunteer!

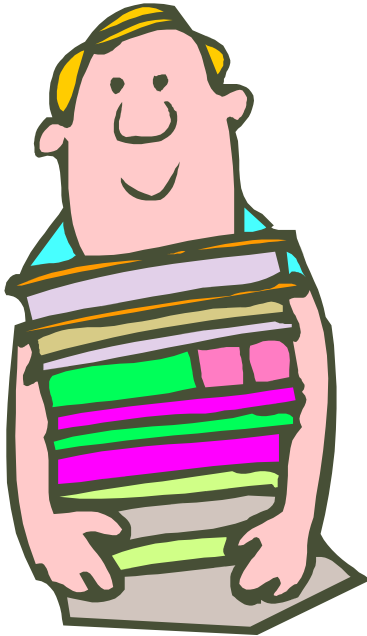
Any questions? give me a call, at 551- 4347.  
Brenda Spahr, Director of Kids At Work

**Kids At Work to sponsor March 21 Lenten Dinner**

Brenda, Eva Martin, and the Kids At Work Kids will be hosting the Lenten Dinner on March 21st. The dinner will feature kid friendly food. Invite your friends and anyone who might be interested in joining the summer program. All proceeds will go toward Kids At Work supplies and salaries.



# Happening in the Library!



## New In the Library *Just Kidding!*



- "How to Write Large Books" by Warren Peace
- "The Lion Attacked" by Claude Yarmoff
- "The Art of Archery" by Beau N. Arrow
- "Songs for Children" by Barbara Blacksheep
- "Irish Heart Surgery" by Angie O'Plasty
- "Desert Crossing" by I. Rhoda Camel
- "School Truancy" by Marcus Absent
- "I Was a Cloakroom Attendant" by Mahatma Coate
- "I Lost My Balance" by Eileen Dover and Phil Down
- "Mystery in the Barnyard" by Hu Flung Dung
- "Positive Reinforcement" by Wade Ago
- "Shhh!" by Danielle Soloud
- "The Philippine Post Office" by Imelda Letter
- "Things to Do at a Party" by Bob Frapples
- "Stop Arguing" by Xavier Breath
- "Raising Mosquitos" by I. Itch
- "Mountain Climbing" by Hugo First

## Lent Book Sale

The Library Board is collecting used books, videos, CD's and cassettes in good condition as a fund-raiser for the Library during Lent. A sale table has been set up in the Upper Fellowship Hall.

Place your donated items in the box in the library.

Be sure to stop by the table each week and see what's new for purchase! Last year, we had a popular book that was purchased, donated again, purchased and donated again. Several people all read the book and had fun discussing it.

*Most good judgment  
comes from experience.  
Most experience  
comes from bad judgment.*

*Show our neighbors that*  
**"We Are One In Spirit!"**  
Fundraiser for the Church Library

## Order Your Shirt Today

*Verse on shirt:*  
*"For by Grace we are  
saved through faith."*  
*Eph 2:8*



**T-shirts \$9.95**  
**Sweatshirts \$14.95**  
**Polos \$24.95**  
**Sizes - S-XXXL**

T's and Sweats are Gray  
with black and red print.

Polos are available in  
choice of 2 colors:  
Red or Gray  
with black Print



A Poster with Color Pictures of the Shirts and the  
Order form is located on the Church Library Door.  
Deadline for Orders is April 13th!



# "Helping Hands"

Working Together in God's service

## Project Hope The Theme for March Dried Beans, Rice or Soup Mix.

These are things our clients can not  
purchase with their food stamps.

Diapers

Deodorant

Mouthwash (without alcohol)

Hair products (combs, brushes, picks)

Razors

Kleenex

Dish soap, Laundry Soap, Bar soap

Toothbrush and toothpaste

Feminine hygiene products

Shaving Cream

Bathroom tissue

We need paper bags.



On Sunday, February 4th, Super Bowl Sunday,  
we collected \$183.00 for the Lutheran Pantry  
during our Souper Bowl of Caring drive!

## American Cancer Society's Daffodil Days. March 11, 2007

Grace Lutheran is participating in the ACS's Daffodil Day again this year.  
The daffodils will be displayed in the sanctuary on "Daffodil Sunday" March 11, 2007.  
Donors are welcome to enjoy them at home after the service.

Special thanks to our daffodil sponsors:

Greg and Janet Hula  
Louise Alsager  
David Hufford  
Charlotte Palczynski  
Alice Friedlander  
Margie Sutej

Bob and LaVonne Moss  
Cody and Jen Talarico  
Ken and June Hilmer  
Sharon Irwin  
Jerry and Marilyn Van Ormer  
James Harrahill



# Community News



## *Columbus Park Neighborhood Association*

Next Meeting - March 17,  
2005 7:00 p.m.  
Grace Lutheran Church - 1326 S 26 St.  
Topic - **Neighborhood Spring Clean Up  
Coming up in the Spring.**  
**More details in the next newsletter!**

**Membership dues are only  
\$5.00 a year per household!**

CPNA  
1326 S 26 Street  
Omaha, NE 68105

Call 341-7730 for more information.

Anxious? Sad? Stressed? Marriage difficulties? Family Troubles?

Free or reduced rate Counseling is Available.

If you would like more information or to set up an appointment, please call Allyson Campbell at South High at 557-3675 or St. Luke's Evangelical Lutheran Church at 733-0172.

Allyson is the counselor for the South Omaha area. The service is made available to members of the community through the support from the Nebraska Methodist Hospital Foundation.

Other Community Counselors are available and serve other parts of the metro. For a complete list of sites and service, check the church bulletin board or call the church office mornings at 341-7730.



## Project Hope News

Holy Moly Chili Challenge!  
Mark your Calendars and save the date!  
April 21, 2007



### Matching Funds Available

to feed the hungry

For every food item or \$1.00 given during Lent, the Feinstein Foundation is offering to match each \$1.00 in a grant to Project Hope. If you decide to participate in this project, mark your check "Project Hope/Feinstein" in the memo line and drop it in the offering. Project Hope serves an average of 490 families a month or 1,205 individuals.



### Senior Center Activities

2101 S 42 Street  
Phone 553-5300 for more information.

Open Monday - Friday  
9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Lunch served at noon (\$2.50)

Transportation offered for nominal fee.

Exercise classes, bingo, crafts, speakers, parties and day outings.

Every Monday, a nurse is available to help with general issues such as checking blood pressures, clip toe nails, organize meds, etc.

Call ahead to make an appt at 552-7478

Where to Find Help 24 hours a day!

Call "211"



By contacting 2-1-1, you can access the following types of services:

**Basic Human Needs Resources:** food banks, clothing closets, shelters, rent assistance, utility assistance.

**Physical and Mental Health Resources:** health insurance programs, Medicaid and Medicare, maternal health, Children's Health Insurance Program, medical information lines, crisis intervention services, support groups, counseling, drug and alcohol intervention and rehabilitation.

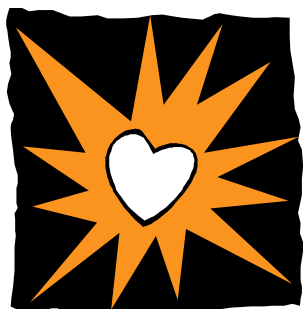
**Employment Support:** financial assistance, job training, transportation assistance, education programs.

**Support for Older Americans and Persons with Disabilities:** adult day care, congregate meals, Meals on Wheels, respite care, home health care, transportation, homemaker services.

**Support for Children, Youth and Families:** child care, after-school programs, Head Start, family resource centers, summer camps and recreation programs, mentoring, tutoring, protective services.

**Volunteer Opportunities and Donations:** community involvement, volunteer bureaus, disaster relief.

Additional information is available at the 211 Website at [www.ne211.org](http://www.ne211.org)



*"A Neighbor's Independence Depends on You"*

**FAITH  
IN ACTION**

As March comes in like a lion and out like a lamb, so has the *Faith in Action* of Interfaith Health Service program been busy spreading the word about the program. Olga and I have begun reaching out to more churches and community organizations in the area to share the mission of *Faith in Action*. Simply put, *Faith in Action* is neighbors helping neighbors to remain independent in their homes as long as possible.

It has been several months since we have included the interest form where you can indicate where you might be able to volunteer or where you, or someone you know, might need some assistance. Look at the list again. Is there something you can do to help out? Or, is there something that the *Faith in Action* program can help you with in order to remain independent? We welcome inquiries about the program so please feel free to give us a call with any questions.

God Bless!

Julie Chytil, Program Coordinator [faithinaction2005@hotmail.com](mailto:faithinaction2005@hotmail.com) (English)

Olga Jaimes, Outreach Worker [faithinactionofihs@hotmail.com](mailto:faithinactionofihs@hotmail.com) (Spanish)

660-2652

Check out the newly updated website at: [www.fiavolunteers.org](http://www.fiavolunteers.org)

# Faith in Action/Fe en Acción



**FAITH**  
**IN ACTION**

## I WOULD LIKE:

- \_\_\_\_\_ A Friendly Visitor
- \_\_\_\_\_ A weekly phone call
- \_\_\_\_\_ Someone to assist me with grocery shopping
- \_\_\_\_\_ Someone to assist me with making meals
- \_\_\_\_\_ Help with:
  - \_\_\_\_\_ letter/card writing
  - \_\_\_\_\_ paperwork
  - \_\_\_\_\_ filling out forms
- \_\_\_\_\_ Someone to read to me
- \_\_\_\_\_ To have small chores or light cleaning done
- \_\_\_\_\_ Help with yard work or minor house repairs
- \_\_\_\_\_ I am taking care of someone homebound or disabled and would like a few hours of relief
- \_\_\_\_\_ A ride to services or an appointment
- \_\_\_\_\_ Help with mending clothing
- \_\_\_\_\_ I currently receive many of the services listed above

## I CAN:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Be a friendly visitor
- \_\_\_\_\_ Make a weekly phone call
- \_\_\_\_\_ Assist someone with grocery shopping
- \_\_\_\_\_ Assist someone with making meals
- \_\_\_\_\_ Assist someone with
  - \_\_\_\_\_ letter/card writing
  - \_\_\_\_\_ paperwork
  - \_\_\_\_\_ filling out forms
- \_\_\_\_\_ Read to someone
- \_\_\_\_\_ Help someone with small chores or light house cleaning
- \_\_\_\_\_ Help someone with yard work or minor household repairs
- \_\_\_\_\_ Tend to someone who is homebound or disabled for a few hours
- \_\_\_\_\_ Drive someone to services or to an appointment
- \_\_\_\_\_ Assist with mending clothing
- \_\_\_\_\_ I am already providing some of the services listed

\_\_\_\_\_ I am willing to volunteer 1-3 hours per week as a group leader, matching up volunteers to those in need

\_\_\_\_\_ Do you know someone who is in need of assistance?  
If so, we will contact you directly for more information

\_\_\_\_\_ My family is willing to volunteer for this project

\_\_\_\_\_ I can't volunteer, but could possibly donate stamps, cards or other program supplies

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

Julie Chytil, Program Coordinator

E-mail address: [faithinaction2005@hotmail.com](mailto:faithinaction2005@hotmail.com)

Phone: 660-2652

Fax: (402) 341-7731 (please call 341-7730 before faxing)

# News from the Families of Grace Lutheran Church

## Three Leaf Clover By Don L. Olson

*Long time Member here at Grace Lutheran Church*

Now I'm looking over,  
A three leaf clover,  
That I just walked over before.

One leaf, The Father, creator of large and small.  
One leaf, The Son, the Savior of all.  
One leaf, The Spirit, leading to leading to Heavens hall.

Faith, the leaf, to know what is true.  
Faith, the leaf, that grown inside you.  
Faith, the leaf, that daily is new.

Hope, the leaf, for what we can't see.  
Hope, the leaf, that excites you and me.  
Hope, the leaf, of things yet to be.

Love, the leaf, everyone should share.  
Love the leaf, that shows we do care.  
Love, the leaf, that is not hard to wear.

The three leaf clover grows all around.  
The three leaf clover is easily found.  
The three leaf clover shows God's love is sound.

*Grace Lutheran Church Organist*

**Cody Talarico**

invites you to

***"Let Music Surround You"***

*Presented by*

*The Nebraska Choral Arts Society*

### ***Free Choral Concert***

Sunday, March 4th,  
3:00 p.m.

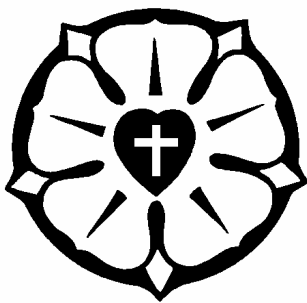
Calvary Christian Church  
10100 Cedar Island Rd. Bellevue, NE.

Five of the eight Nebraska Choral Arts  
Choirs will be performing.

- ◆ Ragazzi Children's Choir
- ◆ Ragazzi Youth Choir
- ◆ Cantori Choir
- ◆ CAST Teen Choir
- ◆ Masterworks Adult Choir

Cody directs the two Ragazzi choirs.  
If you have never been to a Nebraska  
Choral Arts Concert, take this opportunity  
to go! These choirs are made up of  
gifted children, youth and adults.

*No cost to attend but a free-will offering  
will be taken. Seats fill fast so  
come early.*



For more information about this  
class, contact David Hufford  
through the church office at 341-  
7730

## **"On Being Lutheran" Study**

### **"Reflections on Church, Theology, and Faith"**

*Understanding the words of Martin Luther  
and applying them today.*

Selected Tuesday Evenings 7:00 p.m.  
In the Upper Fellowship Hall

Come to one session or all of them! **Drop-in's Welcome!**

#### Session Topics:

*March 6 - "Judgment on Careless Belief"*

*March 20 - "Claiming our Catholic Heritage"*



## From the Editor

# The Letter

I just re-read a great letter from a old friend. I was feeling a little overwhelmed about all the things that had to be accomplished. I stumbled back across a letter written many years ago. The friend began by encouraging me in my spiritual life. He encouraged me to stop and take stock in what God has been doing in my life. He reminded me that everything that I am trying to do for God is not MY doing but all part of God's plan.

I've been working on some "new stuff" for God's people. I thought about how original my idea was. Maybe there was a little self congratulations in it. My friend reminded me in his letter that God had everything about me and what I'd do in mind long before I was born. So much for my NEW idea. It was His idea all along. My focus was all wrong. No wonder the work made me tired.

He planned for me to be free...free from everything that could trip me up and keep me from living an abundant life. My friend reminded me that by the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, God has provided for EVERY need. God has a plan for every situation I find myself in. I quote from the letter, "*Long before we first heard of Christ and got our hopes up, he had his eye on us, had designs on us for glorious living, part of the overall purpose he is working out in everything and everyone.*"

I must confess the words, "glorious living" haven't been the way I've been feeling about life. Stressed...out of control...overwhelmed...exhausted. These aren't words that compute with **glorious living**. His letter continues.. "*That's why, when I heard of the solid trust you have in the Master Jesus and your outpouring of love to all the followers of Jesus, I couldn't stop thanking God for you—every time I prayed, I'd think of you and give thanks. But I do more than thank. I ask—ask the God of our Master, Jesus Christ, the God of glory—to make you intelligent and discerning in knowing him personally, your eyes focused and clear, so that you can see exactly what it is he is calling you to do, grasp the immensity of this glorious way of life he has for his followers, oh, the utter extravagance of his work in us who trust him—endless energy, boundless strength!*"

I don't know about what you might want for yourself but I would love to feel the "utter extravagance of his work" in me. I want "endless energy and boundless strength" to do the work I feel God has called me to do. According to the letter, all I have to do is refocus my heart and faith in the direction of God's ability to do what HE had planned before the beginning of the world. My only responsibility is to turn toward God, deliberately listen to His plan and open my hands and heart to do what He asks. I have no cause to brag about what God is using me for. It's His plan. I'm just the way He will implement that plan...if I'm willing.

So as I continue to do the work that God has set before me, I want to remember one last thing from the letter. My friend writes, "*God can do anything, you know—far more than you could ever imagine or guess or request in your wildest dreams! He does it not by pushing us around but by working within us, his Spirit deeply and gently within us.*"

It may take some time to unlearn my bad habits but I really want God to do whatever He has planned for me to do THROUGH me. I want the Holy Spirit to fill me with that "endless energy and boundless strength."

I am so glad I found my friend's letter. You have a copy, too. The writer's name is Paul and the letter he wrote is Ephesians.

(*"The Message"* copyright 2002)

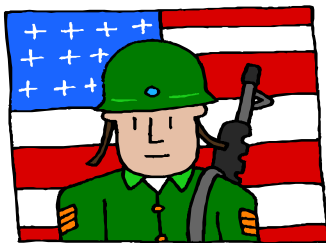
By Pam Reents, Editor





## Special Days at Grace Lutheran Church

March 5 - Grace W/ELCA Board Meeting.  
 March 6 - On Being Lutheran Study.  
 March 7 - Dinner and Lent Worship.  
 March 10 - Daylight Savings begins! Spring Ahead!  
 March 13 - Church Council Meeting.  
 March 14 - Dinner and Lent Worship.  
 March 17 - Lutheran Men's Prayer Breakfast.  
 March 16 & 17 - Joint Confirmation Class at First Lutheran.  
 March 20 - Ruth Dorcas Circle Meeting.  
 March 21 - Dinner and Lent Worship.  
 March 28 - Dinner and Lent Worship.  
 April 1 - Palm Sunday



One of my husband's duties as a novice drill instructor at Fort Jackson, S.C., was to escort new recruits to the mess hall. After everyone had made it through the chow line, he sat them down and told them, "There are three rules in this mess hall: Shut up! Eat up! Get up!"

Checking to see that he had everyone's attention, he asked, "What is the first rule?"

Much to the amusement of the other instructors, 60 privates yelled in unison, "Shut up, Drill Sergeant!"  
<http://www.gcfl.net>

## March is

Foot Health Month  
 Humorists Are Artist Month  
 National Furniture Refinishing Month  
 National Frozen Food Month  
 National Noodle Month  
 National Peanut Month

### Irish Toast

A guy raises his glass and toasts his blonde girlfriend.

"May you be in Heaven a half-hour before the devil knows you're dead!"

"What's that mean?"

"That is an authentic Irish toast."

"Oh. In that case, here's to bread, eggs and cinnamon."

"Bread, eggs and cinnamon? What's that?"

"That's French toast."

*Hmmm.....*

**I am nobody...**  
**nobody is perfect...**  
**I must be perfect then.**

## Three Rules





St. Patrick is the patron saint of Ireland. Interestingly, St. Patrick was not an Irish man. It is believed that he was born in England. St. Patrick was a missionary of the Catholic church. He believed God was calling him to go to the Irish people and convert them to the Christian faith. At the time of St. Patrick, the Irish people were still living in the Iron Age. St. Patrick went among the Irish people for thirty or forty years. It has been recorded that he used the shamrock as an example of the trinity. March 17 marks the date of his death. Many Irish people today attend church services and parades on St. Patrick's Day in honour of their patron saint.

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

## WORD LIST

BRAVE  
CHRISTIAN  
CHURCH  
GAELIC  
HARP  
HOPE  
IRELAND  
MAN  
MISSIONARY  
SAINT  
SHAMROCK  
SINCERE  
ST. PATRICK  
TRINITY

[www.squiglyplayhouse.com/PencilPuzzles/StPatricks/](http://www.squiglyplayhouse.com/PencilPuzzles/StPatricks/)



## Irish Job Interview

A young man named Murphy applied for an engineering position at an Irish firm based in Dublin. An American also applied for the same job. Both applicants had the same qualifications were asked to take a test by the Department manager.

Upon completion of the test, both men had only missed one of the questions.

The manager went to Murphy and said, "Thank you for your interest, but we've decided to give the American the job."

Murphy said, "And why would you be doing that? We both got 9 questions correct. This being Ireland and me being Irish I should get the job!"

We have made our decision not on the correct answers, but on the question you missed," replied the manager.

And just how would one incorrect answer be better than the other?"

The manager said, "It's simple. The American answered 'I don't know' to question #5. You put down 'Neither do I.'"