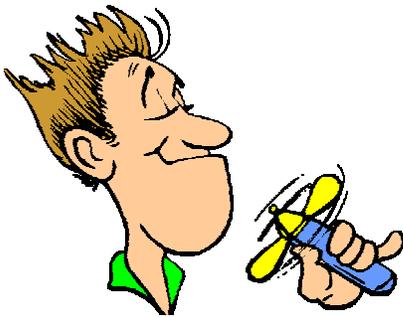


Inspired By Christ, it is our mission  
to share God's Word and Love in care  
and in service to all.

# THE GRACE MESSENGER

July 2006



**Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church**

1326 South 26th Street  
Omaha, NE 68105-2380

Return Service Requested  
Dated Material

Phone: (402) 341-7730

Email: [graceluth@graceluth.com](mailto:graceluth@graceluth.com)

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

Interfaith Health Ministries - Virginia McGill

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Omaha NE  
Permit No. 39

2006 Council Members		
Frances Campsey	Andrew Edwards	Arlone Farber
David Hufford	Greg Hula	Ernest Olson
Barbara Nelson	Marsha Moyer	Brenda Spahr
Pastor Laaker	Ivo Mounto	
*****		
Officers Serving the Congregation but not on Council:		
Financial Secretary: Janet Hula	Treasurer: Margie Sutej	



The Council met on Tuesday, June 13, 2006.

Prayer concerns included Thelma Harrahill, Norene Fitle, Frances Campsey, Ernie Olson, Jim Costello, LaVonne Moss, Doug Farber, Mary Kay Lee, Wanda Black, Ruthie Spoonmore, Fay Gillett, travel for family reunions and College World Series, guidance for conversations with sister churches Cristo Rey and St. Luke's, thanksgiving for David Hufford's friend who finished his book, care for those harmed in the Indonesian earthquake and a desire for a mild hurricane season.

Devotions focused on scripture from 2 Kings 13:23 which encourages the hearers with assurance that God has not abandoned God's people and Romans 11:2 where Paul reminds his hearers that God accepts all of God's people.

Visions for Ministry engaged a conversation around chapter 3 of "Becoming a Blessed Church." Conversation was lively and focused on the concept of discernment.

Financial Reports were received from the Financial Secretary and Treasurer.

Christian Education: Reports were received from Christian Education concerning the plans for Vacation Bible School.

Evangelism/Outreach reported on the beginning of the summer program "Kids at Work."

Finance reported that a large memorial gift was received from Richard Settgest's estate.

Property reported that the storage shed had been successfully reopened and that plans are underway to repaint the children's room across from the kitchen in the basement.

Worship reported on the recent outdoor worship service.

**"Laughter is carbonated holiness!"**

Seen on the bulletin board of Napoleon United Methodist Church , Napoleon, Ohio

"Our mouths were filled with laughter,  
 our tongues with songs of joy.  
 Then it was said among the nations,  
 "The LORD has done great things for them."

Psalm 126:6



The Church Council has been reading and discussing the book *Becoming a Blessed Church* by N. Graham Standish. In the second section of the book he says, “the modern church has succumbed to treating God as a theological ideal, as an abstract concept, rather than as an experience, an encounter, an embrace of the One with whom we can have a deep and transforming relationship.” I find this to be a fascinating observation.

I have been in groups where a presenter has asked if the participants would be willing to share their experience of God. Many times the persons were unable to even name a time they had “an experience, an encounter, or an embrace with this One that we call God.” Now, the same participants were quite able to describe God from a theological perspective. Thus, I find Standish’s observation to be accurate. However, I also find it disturbing.

Standish offers this reflection, “Too many churches never emphasize the encounter with God that leads to an experience of God, but instead emphasize a knowledge of God that leads to – well, where does it lead?” I wonder is this what we have been doing. Is this part of the dynamic that keeps Grace from experiencing growth? Have we become so good at having a knowledge of God but no experience of God that we are going nowhere? I also wonder if this plays into a part of our lowest quality characteristic, loving relationships.

It is interesting that Standish goes on to describe this disconnect by using the doctrine of the Trinity. Christian Schwarz uses the Trinity to anchor the concepts of Natural Church Development. Schwarz says, “It is essential to the Christian view of God that God is not simply reduced to a ‘notion’ or a ‘power.’ The biblical understanding is that God is a person. If God were merely a philosophical category, the most suitable way to get to know him would be intellectual reflection. But if God is a person, the only possible way of knowledge suitable to the object of our search is a personal encounter with this person.”

It would seem that our efforts need to be directed toward helping all of us experience God in a more personal way. In doing so, we may become truly a blessed church and a blessed people. I invite you to consider how you might help us experience God.

*Pastor Laaker*

### **Oh, I Want To Know You More**

Oh, I want to know you more,  
deep within my soul I want to know you,  
oh I want to know you.  
To feel your heart and know your mind.  
Looking in your eyes stirs up within me cries that say I want to know you.  
Oh I want to know you more.

The full supply I find as I move closer to the heart of God,  
To strengthen me, to nourish me, and to fill my mind with Him.  
I've truly grown, but even so my hunger hasn't gone away  
Still I long, still I thirst, to know Him more each day.

Words and music by Steve Fry

# Kids At Work 2006



Enrolled this year are:

Taylor Adams	Alexandria Jindra
Bradley Collett	Shaban Lado
Brianna Collett	Shedu Lado
Alexandra Everitt	Danny Quandt
Angela Everitt	Jacob Quandt
Nick Fredrickson	Julia Traynor
Alexa Harsin	Samantha Trejo

During the first two weeks of the Kids At Work Summer Program for 2006 I have seen and heard really awesome things going on around us.

Through Lutheran Family Services, we found a connection with the Temme House. The Temme House is part of Heartland Refugee of America. They are in the process of setting up a food pantry and clothing room to help where they can. During our first week with the Temme House, the youth helped set up the food pantry. The room is now organized and items are easily found thanks to the wonderful artwork of Nick, Angela, Samantha, Alexa and Julia. Thanks also to the exuberant organizational skills of Taylor and Danny! They rounded out the help needed to complete the design of the food pantry room.

Also, through the Temme House, a group has assisted with cleaning and setting up an apartment for a refugee family new to Omaha. Under the wonderful leadership of Linda and Connie, both Linda and Julia washed and dried dishes for not one but two apartments. Angela, Bradley and Nick worked very hard at cleaning the apartment for the new family.

Here at Grace, with the awesome leadership of Lois, Alexandria and Julia helped to bring the clothing room through a seasonal transition from winter to summer. Lois was quoted saying the work done in two hours would have taken a couple of weeks on her own.

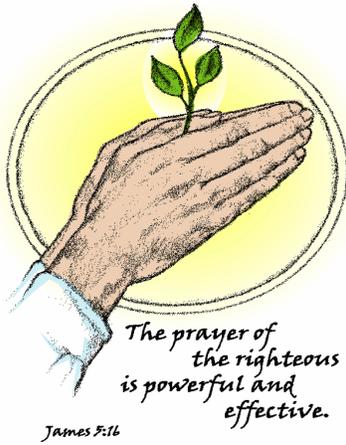
At Precious Memories Day Care, Danny was the first to step forward with assistance in folding a huge pile of laundry. Samantha assisted with taking the toddlers outside to play in their little backyard. Inside with the four and five year olds, Taylor, Alexa and Alexandra started various games including Ring-A-Round the Rosie and helped with craft projects.

Now that the youth have been paid for the first time this summer, parents, please don't forget to encourage your youth to deposit some or all of their earnings into their bank accounts. The ultimate goal is for the youth to have a minimum of \$100.00 so that they can be eligible for the Super Saver Bonus Award of \$15.00 at the end of the summer program. Remember, previous balances in the account will not count toward the summer's goal of saving at least \$100.00.

## **Keep up the good work!**

See you Sunday mornings at 10:30 a.m. for worship and weekly registration.

*Brenda Spahr,  
Director of Kids At Work  
(402) 341-7730*



## Prayer Concerns from Family and Friends

“Prayer is when you talk to God;  
meditation is when you listen to God.”

*Unknown*

- ◆ Thelma Harrahill - Recovery from on going illness and that she could come home soon. (member)
- ◆ Jim Costello - Healing for leg so that his knee surgery can be done. (member)
- ◆ LaVonne Moss - Recovery after Cataract surgery. (member)
- ◆ Paul and Virginia McGill - That their new son, Nick in Guatemala , will be released for adoption and be able to come home to America and be a part of the McGill family soon. (Associate staff)
- ◆ Francine Wise - ongoing health issues. (Pastor 's office person at Lutheran Metro Ministries)
- ◆ Jeanette Mendoza - Direction for her life. (attender)
- ◆ Norene Fitle - Pray for strength, especially at the end of each week. (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 Andrew and Christi Edwards)
- ◆ Frances Campsey - Health concerns. (member)
- ◆ Linda Whitney - Struggling with on-going cancer. (Friend of LaVonne Moss)
- ◆ Dan Reents - Undergoing chemo for cancer. (Brother-in-law of Pam Reents)
- ◆ Ernie Olson - Ongoing therapy after his stroke. (member)

### Sudanese Church Requests

- Pray for John Mounto. He has applied to go to Sudan for two weeks this summer through a community program. His desire is to visit his mother who he has not seen in 18 years.
- ◆ Pray for the Sudanese Sunday School.
- ◆ Pray for the newcomers who have recently arrived as they adjust to live in America.
- ◆ Pray for the Sudanese leaders in the city as they work to grow the city's African churches.
  - For the leaders as they pursue more Christian education.
  - For creativity and energy to do the things God is asking of them.
  - For boldness as they educate the Sudanese families in the ways of God.

Pray for the Kids At Work Program this summer.

For the Director, Brenda Spahr, for strength and wisdom as she works with the youth.  
For the youth and families involved, that they would learn much this summer.  
For more team leaders to help.

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

Pastor Laaker, Grace Lutheran Church  
Bishop David deFreese, Nebraska Synod  
Bishop Mark Hanson, ELCA Bishop, United States

Pray for wisdom for your Church Council and the NCD Team as they lead Grace Church.

# Summer Vacation Bible School Fiesta!

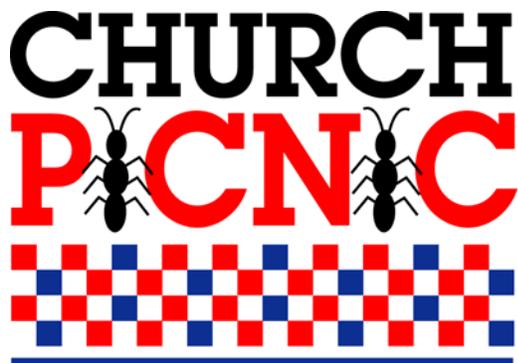
Where kids get fired up for Jesus!  
Grace Lutheran Church  
1326 South 26th Street  
July 17-21



Kids, come for FREE supper at 5:30 p.m.  
VBS activities - 6:15 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

Children are invited to attend our VBS program. Kids will meet friends, explore Bible stories, do fun activities, sing great songs, make crafts, play games, eat snacks and more! Either fill out and mail in the registration form on the next page or call the church office at 341-7730.

Every child is welcome regardless of church affiliation!  
There is no cost to attend.



Mark Your Calendars  
Tuesday, August 15, 2006

Look for more details in upcoming bulletins and the August issue of the Grace Messenger.

Come as you are  
Bring a blanket, lawn chair  
or sit in on of our chairs.

Sunday, July 9, 2006  
10:30 a.m.  
&  
Sunday, August 13, 2006

Worship out on the front lawn under  
the shade of our gorgeous old tree.



## Outdoor Worship



## We Can't Have a Fiesta without YOU!!

If you can help with one of these opportunities, contact the Church Office at 341-7730 or sign up on the sheet hanging on the upper fellowship hall bulletin board.

### We Are Looking for....

### Volunteers to work with Vacation Bible School Kids

#### Opportunities

Flyer Distribution in the neighborhood

Food - Prepare and Serve one of the Nightly Suppers.  
Make Cookies/Treats for Snack Time.  
Serve Snacks during Snack Time.

Vacation Bible School Teacher  
Assistant Teacher/Helper

Drama - skits during opening exercise.

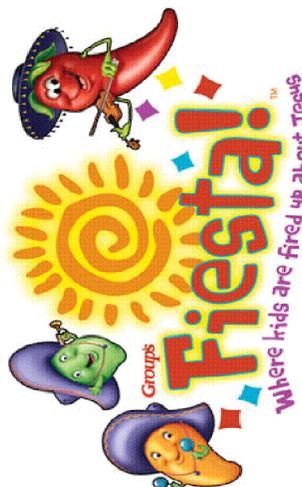
Music - play the piano/ an instrument for opening.

Artwork - creating, constructing, and setting up props.

Crafts - Supervise or help with Kid's Craft Time.

Game Time - Supervise/Help organize the kids for games.

If you have questions,  
Contact Grace Traynor - 731-3930  
Director of this year's VBS Program.



## July 17 - July 21

### Vacation Bible School Registration Form

**No Charge to attend!**

Turn in form to the church office.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Guardian's Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_  
Grade (Fall 2005) \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_  
Boy \_\_\_ Girl \_\_\_

Grace Lutheran Church  
1326 South 27 Street  
Omaha, NE 68105 341-7730

# "Helping Hands"

Working Together in God's service



## Pantry Needs

Project Hope  
4205 Boyd St  
Omaha, NE 68111

Project Hope  
The Theme for July is  
Back to School items

Project Hope always needs boxes of zip lock bags in quart or gallon size, soup, peanut butter, macaroni and cheese dinners, pasta, rice, diapers, bathroom tissue and feminine hygiene items.

### Hospice Volunteers Needed

Hospice Volunteers are needed to provide companionship and support for individuals living with terminal illnesses and their families. Volunteers choose the hours they are able to serve and determine the geographical location in metro Omaha/Council Bluffs and surrounding area or at Hospice House. Volunteers must attend four training classes on July 6, July 8 July 10 and August 7. Please call Cindy Calhoun at VNA Hospice at 930-4261

"When you become detached mentally from yourself and concentrate on helping other people with their difficulties, you will be able to cope with your own more effectively. Somehow, the act of self-giving is a personal power-releasing factor."

- Norman Vincent Peale



### Neighbors South Coalition Habitat For Humanity

Build Site: 3020 W Street

Volunteers are needed to help with building this home. Even if you don't have experience, you are welcome. Construction experience is not a requirement! People are needed as helpers, "go fors" and food service.

Volunteer forms are available at the back of the sanctuary or through the church office by calling 341-7730.

### Good With Wood?

Lutheran Student Center's  
3rd Annual Woodworking Auction  
*Sponsored by Thrivent for Lutherans*

September 24, 2006  
UNL Campus  
535 N 16 Street  
Lincoln, NE

New handmade wooden items are needed for the 3rd annual Woodworking Auction. All entry forms are due August 1st. More information and entry forms are posted on the bulletin board.

The money raised will be used for the Lutheran Student Center, an ELCA Campus ministry.

It is in the shelter of each other  
that the people live.

- Irish proverb

# Community News



OneWorld Community Health Centers located at 4920 South 30th Street, Suite 103.is offering low cost school physicals for \$45.00.

Please call 734-4110 to schedule an appointment.

## *Columbus Park Neighborhood Association*



*Next Meeting  
July 20, 2006 7:00 p.m.  
Here at Grace Church.*



Need Some Help with Your Life?

**Free Counseling is available  
through the Community Counseling Program**

Allyson Campbell, CMSW, LMHP is available to offer confidential counseling to everyone regardless of their ability to pay. Her office is at St Luke's Lutheran Church, 2315 I Street.

Call 733-0172 to set up an appointment.

## Do You Like...

- Playing Cards?
- Playing bingo?
- Laughing?
- Meeting fun people?
- Good treats?

Come to

First Lutheran Church's Welcome Center  
**Seniors Thursday**  
**Every Thursday at 9:00 a.m.**  
(Entrance at the back door on the west side)

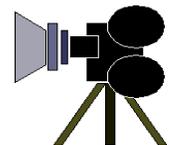
**First Lutheran Church**  
**542 South 31 Street**  
**Omaha, NE 68105**

**No cost to come!**  
**Everyone is welcome!**

**Bring a sack lunch.**  
Call Ruth Ann at 345-7506 for more info.

## Let's Go To The Movies

Senior Health Foundation in partnership with Douglas Theaters and First National Bank offers



**Special Showings  
at Reduced Rates**

**Just for Seniors 50 +**

The movies are offered on the first and third Thursdays of the month.

**General Admission \$4**

**SHF Members \$3**

**Assisted Living &  
Nursing Home Residents \$1**

**20 Grand Theater**  
**14304 West Maple**  
**1:30 p.m.**

Call 827-6001 for information.

## News from the Families of Grace Lutheran Church

T  
h  
a  
n  
k  
s

- ◇ To the people who have so faithfully been planning and working on the restoration of the children's room in the basement: Jack Williams, Bob Moss, Luann Matthies, Janet Hula and Virginia McGill, to name just a few. More details and thanks to come as the project continues.
- ◇ To the Kids At Work Youth for helping to put the sanctuary in order each week. (Pew pads filled, pencils sharpened, pew envelopes replenished.)
- ◇ To the fellas who have been working on front yard this summer, mowing, edging, trimming, fertilizing and "fighting" :-)) with the sprinklers: Bob Moss, Ken Hilmer, and Jerry Van Ormer.
- ◇ To the quilters who have taken a summer break from meeting each Monday this summer but who continue to cut squares and piece quilt tops in anticipation of resuming in the fall.
- ◇ To the folks who are willing to help with Vacation Bible School but haven't signed up yet :-)) (Grace Traynor would love to hear from you soon!)
- ◇ To the women from Interfaith and Douglas County Health Department involved with the Latinas in Action exercise class meeting on Fridays here at Grace Church. It's so fun to watch them provide great organized activities for the children to do out on the front lawn of the church. Stop by some Friday morning and check it out. It's inspiring to watch.
- ◇ To KAW Director, Brenda Spahr and all the team leaders for their willingness to spend some time with the Kids At Work youth on Tuesday and Wednesday mornings: Linda Pafford, Louise Alsager, Julia Fredrickson, Elizabeth Haskill, Connie with the Temme House, Kim Adams, Urbano Vasquez, Kate Reents, and Lois Hooge.
- ◇ To everyone participating in the Take a Hike Summer Reading Club through the church library. Keep on reading!

*Our Sudanese Ministry Leader, John Ivo Mounto was asked to address a group of retired Lutheran pastors and their spouses on June 10th at Dana College. He was a part of a panel of three, called to share information about several of the Multicultural ministries here in Nebraska. Here is the letter John received:*

Dear Pastor Mounto,

I write to offer my profound thanks for your excellent presentation at our meeting. Your presentation was the heart and soul of our gathering. Thank you for sharing your pain and the pain of your people with us. We were all deeply moved.

The Sunday worship offering amounted to about \$1,000. This money will be sent to the Nebraska Synod designated for their work with Sudanese immigrants. We have asked them to use this gift over and above their budgeted amount for this ministry.

May God continue to bless you, good friend, as you continue to serve your Lord Jesus Christ by serving the people of your native land.

In Christ,  
Dr Richard A. Jensen  
Carlson Professor of Homiletics, emeritus



Virginia McGill  
Director, (402) 660-6689

Gabriella Ortiz, Assistant  
(402) 660-1035  
Douglas County Health Department  
Se habla español.

## INTERFAITH CHILDREN IN ACTION SUMMER PROGRAM TAKES OFF

According to the United States Surgeon General's recent report, Childhood obesity and lack of exercise are changing the course of history. For the first time in 100 years, children may now have life spans that are shorter than their parents. In South Omaha, where access to parks, walking trails, and exercise space and equipment is limited, the Women in Action Programs, sponsored by Interfaith and Douglas County Health Department, promotes activity, education and a safe space for women and children to come together, share stories and support one another in maintaining health.

Summer is always a busy time of year for our exercise and educational classes. With children out of school for several months, we see an increase in children who pass through our doors. In the past, we have had a challenging time figuring out ways to keep the children busy and engaged while their mother's exercise.

This year, we are offering a new program, Children in Action, to the children of all of our exercise participants and children in our Interfaith neighborhoods. So far, we have 35 boys and girls enrolled in the program. These participants like to refer to the program as "The Super Kids Club". Thanks in large part to Patty, Emily and Theresa of the Douglas County Health Department who are on site every day with me and Gaby, we are able to pilot the program for the entire summer for 5-12 year olds. Based upon the current interest and success levels, we are hopeful we can obtain funding to continue additional programs in the future.

The Children in Action program combines physical activities along with team sports and group activities which allow the children to get to know one another better. One such activity is enlisting the entire group to help think of "nick-names" for each other utilizing a positive adjective with the first letter in each child's first name. For instance, our group has named "Active" Anna, "Jumping" Jesus (Gaby's son!), "Mighty" Mike, "Joker" Jackie, "Angelic" Angelia, "Running" Rita, "Strong" Salvador, "Curious" Carolina, "Running" Robert, "Athletic" Andrea (a member of Grace Lutheran church and one of our fastest runners!), and many, many others including "Versatile" Virginia.

Our team leaders have mentioned each day after the program concludes that the Children in Action group is an extraordinary group. The participants are eager to be part of the team and also eager to lend support to the leaders or "Coaches". They have no problem bringing their own ideas to the groups each day at Grace, St. Luke's or Wheeler. Last week, Active Anna suggested that the group play freeze tag to finish out the day. Everyone joined in following Anna's lead and her game evolved into a wonderful freeze tag frenzy. Groups are held outside in front of the various Interfaith church locations, and we hope the participants and leaders are visible examples to our neighbors of working together to help one another get involved and stay active throughout the summer months.

## INTERFAITH GRANT ANNOUNCEMENT

After over a year of planning and meetings, Interfaith Health Services and Douglas County have received a grant that we jointly submitted to Alegent Health (Community Benefits Trust) in May, 2006. The grant is for \$120,000 per year, renewable for 3 years.

The grant has provisions for an additional Community Outreach Worker (to work with Gaby) and an additional Supervisor to work within the congregations. We will also be contracting with a part-time Registered Nurse from Douglas County to help us develop a tool for analysis of programs and participants. We will continue partnering with Creighton and Methodist Nursing students to assist in gathering data for reporting our successes, while building up our yoga, exercise and educational classes, as well as developing additional community outreach and referrals.

At our last Interfaith Board meeting, Juana, a well-respected leader within the South Omaha community for over 28 years, expressed her gratitude to Interfaith for caring enough about its neighbors to develop programs for women and children who need programs for exercise and education. Juana talked about the positive witness of Cristo Rey, Grace Lutheran, Grace United Methodist, St. Luke's, and Wheeler in opening their doors to the community and welcoming their neighbors. She expressed hope that other leaders in South Omaha would follow the example of Interfaith and join together to touch even more people in the community.

As the Coordinator of Interfaith, I want to express my thanks, as well. Thanks to all of you as congregation members, pastors and staff not only for supporting Interfaith, but for your prayers and kindness in helping participants, volunteers and staff feel welcomed and at home within Interfaith Health Services.

*Virginia*

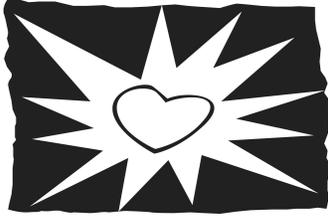


### Daily Health Task List

Just like brushing your teeth, healthy habits should be cultivated on a daily basis. The following is a guide to daily tasks:

1. Activity should be a daily occurrence. Walk, run or jump for a minimum total of 20 minutes a day.
2. Protect your skin. Sun block should be applied on face, neck, arms and hands even in the dead of winter. It protects against climatic toxins too. Moisturize skin daily.
3. Eat fruits, vegetables, grains, low-fat dairy products and small amounts of protein. Avoid sweets and other processed foods.
4. Meditate or spend a minimum of five minutes daily in quiet time.
5. Find your spiritual self. Discover what inspires you, raises your level of consciousness, motivates you, and satisfies your soul.
6. Exercise your brain. Read, study, solve problems, and learn new skills. As does the body, the brain atrophies with lack of use.
7. Hug somebody.

<http://www.health-fitness-tips.com>



**FAITH  
IN ACTION**

“Love thy neighbor as thyself”

Greetings from Faith in Action!

Faith in Action’s motto is, “A neighbor’s independence depends on you”. What a powerful statement and how fitting for the upcoming month of July as we celebrate our nations independence. Our country was built by communities and neighbors coming together to help one another. Faith in Action continues that tradition today.

Our office is beginning to receive requests from members of our churches that would like assistance through the Faith in Action program. We are looking for neighbors to help those members of our congregations remain independent as long as possible.

Do you have about one hour a week or a couple of hours a month to help a fellow member of the church?

*This is also a great program for families to volunteer together!*

If you or someone you know might benefit from the services of Faith in Action

**OR**

if you are able to help with any of the following, please call our office or call your church office.

\* A weekly telephone call

\* Grocery shopping

\* Meal preparation

Have a safe and enjoyable summer!

Julie Chytil

**Faith in Action: 660-2652 or call your church office (341-7730) for more information.**

[faithinaction2005@hotmail.com](mailto:faithinaction2005@hotmail.com)

*Response forms with more ideas on how **YOU** can help or what kind of help is available for you or your loved one are available through the church office.*



## From the Editor

# Let There be Light

As I write this, the Confirmation Kids are heading out to Camp Carol Joy Holling in Ashland, Nebraska. Camp CJH is a great place. Even though I never attended CJH as a child, I've been there a couple of times for different ladies retreats. If you've never been out there, go! There are lots of events going on this summer and fall.

My own Bible camp experience comes from attending Rivercrest Bible Camp in Fremont, Nebraska. The camp is about a half-mile from the Platte River. On the last night of camp, we would all hike down to the river for a riverside campfire and testimony time. Each person would take a stick, share a spiritual experience or decision we had made during the week and add our stick to the growing bonfire. It was the highlight of each camp year for me. I made many decisions and learned so much about my Lord during those times. This particular year, the counselor and my companions started our trek through the wooded area toward the river. We were instructed to stay together but...as usual, some of my friends and I weren't paying attention. We were goofing off and did not notice as our counselor and some of the "goodie goodie girls" disappeared into the darkness. Somehow, we got off the footpath and were wondering around in the woods without a flashlight, panicking and weeping, sure that the boogie man or some wild lion, tiger or bear (Oh, My) would come out and eat us! Fortunately (and unfortunately) a cabin of boys came upon us, heard our crying and decided to "help" (and scare) us by hiding behind trees and jumping out as we passed by. I can still feel the terror ... and the extreme irritation with the boys and their counselor as they "rescued" us, teasing us as they led us to the light of the fire.

Recently, as I was surfing the web, I came upon the Dayspring website. Dayspring specializes in Christian greeting cards. I was delighted to find a page of *free* "movies" which are Bible verses put to music in a theme. I clicked on the title, "God is Light" and watched as pictures of lighthouses, gorgeous shots of the ocean, the sky filled with color, and soothing music, filled the screen. I was stuck by one of the verses I had learned as a child. "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path." Psalm 119:105. I began to think about that time in the darkness when I had lost my way. I wasn't paying attention to the one in charge. I was off doing my own thing and stopped looking for the one who was holding the light and could lead the way through the darkness.

How often is that the case with me even now, I pondered? I get preoccupied, doing my own thing and forget to look to God, the author of light and the only one who knows the way I should go. The verse says that His Word is a light to my path. How much time do I invest in study of His Words? How often do I end up on a path different that He would have me...struggling to find my way out of the darkness and back to the fellowship of the "fire," the Holy Spirit and God's people in whom the Spirit lives?

*"Oh Heavenly Father, make my desire to be that I stay with you, the holder of the light. Remind me constantly to stay on the path with you, never looking away toward the things of the world that will cast me into darkness. If I am afraid, let me think of you guiding me out in front, holding the light, so that my feet do not slip. Thank you for rescuing me when I go astray. Keep me close. Amen."*

*Pam Reents, Editor*

*(The site with the movie I liked is <http://www.dayspring.com/movies>. Beautiful!)*



## **ELCA International Disaster Response offers relief after earthquake in Central Indonesia**

The death toll stands has surpassed 6,200 people with thousands more injured following the powerful earthquake that hit the Indonesian island of Java on May 27.

The quake, measuring 6.2, flattened buildings in a densely-populated area south of the city of Jogjakarta, also known as Yogyakarta, near the southern coast of Java. The quake struck just after dawn and was the third major tremor to devastate Indonesia in 18 months, the worst being the quake on Dec. 26, 2004 and its resulting tsunami which left some 170,000 people dead or missing in northern Sumatra.

At least 30,000 people have been injured and more than 105,000 homes destroyed or damaged, leaving hundreds of thousands of people displaced.

Relief and rescue crews and medical teams -- geared up to provide relief from a major volcano eruption and alert to natural disaster response after the deadly tsunami -- raced to help the victims of the strong earthquake.

### **The greatest needs are medical supplies and shelter.**

Medical and relief teams in Indonesia engaged in continued tsunami recovery efforts were able to rush to the epicenter of the earthquake near Jogjarkarta (Yogyakarta) and offer immediate help.

ELCA International Disaster Response (IDR) committed an initial \$50,000 to help provide needed food, medicine, drinking water, emergency shelter, and other relief supplies. Learn more at [www.elca.org/disaster](http://www.elca.org/disaster)

Your prayers and donations are life-saving gifts. Please pray for those who live with grief and loss following the earthquake that they may find refuge, strength, and help in their trouble. Pray for those engaged in relief and recovery efforts. Pray for a generous response to our neighbors in need. All—100 percent—of the donations designated for this disaster response will be used to fund its immediate relief and long-term recovery efforts.

How can I help?

- ◇ Pray diligently that God would raise people to go and provide help and comfort to those affected.
- ◇ Give generously through Grace Lutheran Church by marking your envelope “Earthquake, Indonesia.” and dropping it in the offering plate or at the church office. If you wish to give by credit card, call 1-800-368-3522 or log on at [www.elca.org/disaster/giving](http://www.elca.org/disaster/giving) and click on the *How You Can Help* button.

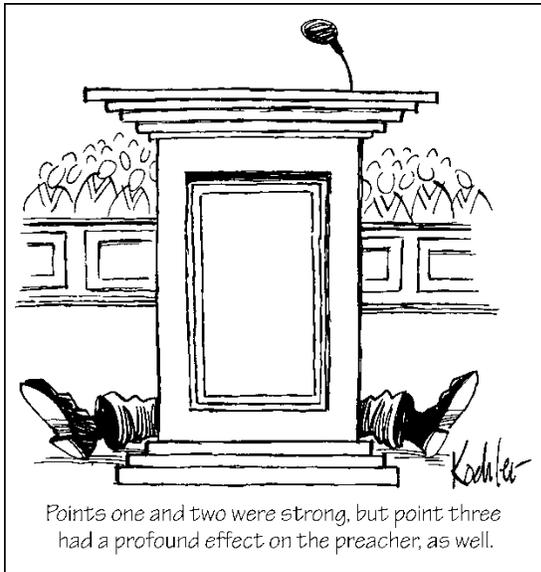
**God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change, though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea.... (Psalm 46:1–2)**

July is...

National Baked Beans Month  
National Ice Cream Month  
National Tennis Month  
Read A N A Im anac Month  
Anti-Boredom Month  
Hitchhiking Month

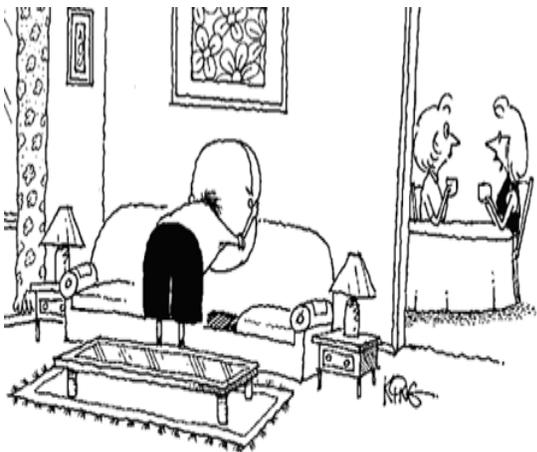


**My mechanic told me,  
"I couldn't repair your brakes, so I  
made your horn louder."**



Points one and two were strong, but point three had a profound effect on the preacher, as well.

Life is not measured by the number of breathes we take, but by the number of moments that take our breath away.



The doctor said he needed more activity. So I hide his T.V. remote three times a week.

There was a painter by the name of Jock, who was very interested in making a penny where he could, so he often would thin his paint to make it go further.

As it happened, he got away with this for some time, but eventually the Church decided to do a big restoration job that involved the painting of one of its biggest churches. Jock put in a bid, and because his price was so low, he got the job.

He went about erecting the trestles and setting up the planks, and buying the paint and, yes, thinning it down with the turpentine. Jock was up on the scaffolding, painting away with the job nearly completed, when suddenly there was a horrendous clap of thunder, and the sky opened.

The torrential rain washed the thinned paint off the church and knocked Jock off the scaffold and on to the lawn, among the gravestones, surrounded by telltale puddles of the thinned and useless paint.

Jock was no fool. He knew this was a judgment from the Almighty, so he got on his knees and cried: "Oh, God! Forgive me! What should I do?"

And from the thunder, a mighty voice spoke...  
(You'll love this!)



Repaint! Repaint!  
And thin no more!

## John, Chapter 4

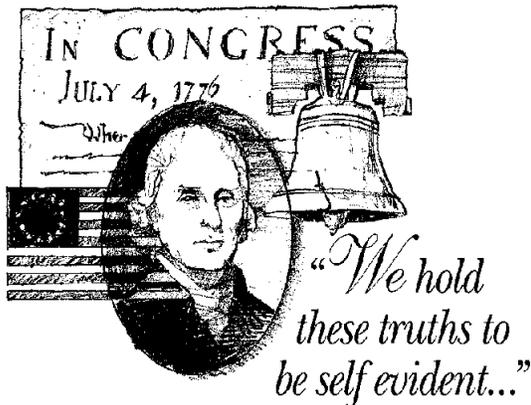
### WORD LIST

beg	Savior
believe	seek
benefits	sick
deep	testimony
disciples	thirst
drink	truth
eternal life	wages
explain	water
Father	well
fields	word
food	work
gift	world
harvest	worship
heal	
husband	
Jew	
journey	
labor	
live	
Messiah	
miracle	
prophet	
Rabbi	
Samaritan	

n v b e b m f j a x g l c r z  
d x c s d l e i f h u g o f w  
b g i f t w p x a e m b k b y  
g c b t u i e r p a a s n h a  
k f b e h d v l z l e h i c j  
z y a s n e i v l f a a r q f  
t n r t s e l p i c s i d p e  
y o t t h p f l m k y s n j e  
w m g e b e l i e v e s a e r  
o i s a m a r i t a n e b w t  
r t p i n a o h d s r m s r r  
l s f r c k i n e d u f u m u  
d e e l v r v g p r o p h e t  
c t e s s o a z f o j c l x h  
e r e t a w s q d w n w u c i

Copyright 2003 by Christian Ministry Resources, PO Box 2301, Matthews, NC 28106, 800-222-1840, www.churchsecretarytoday.com.

Only churches or organizations with a current active subscription to Church Secretary Today are authorized to copy this page.



"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

**The Declaration of Independence**  
 July 4, 1776

"The Constitution only gives people the right to pursue happiness. You have to catch it yourself."

~Benjamin Franklin~

What joy for the nation  
 whose God is the Lord.

Psalm 22:12



Happy 4th of July!  
 Celebrate Safely