

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

THE GRACE MESSENGER



November - December 2006

Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church

1326 South 26th Street
Omaha, NE 68105-2380

Return Service Requested

Phone: (402) 341-7730

Email: graceluth@graceluth.com

Web Site: 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

Faith in Action - Julie Chytil

Non-Profit Org.
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2006 Council Members

Frances Campsey
David Hufford
Barbara Nelson
Pastor Laaker

Andrew Edwards
Greg Hula
Marsha Moyer
John Ivo Mounto

Arlone Farber
Ernest Olson
Brenda Spahr

Officers Serving the Congregation but not on Council:

Financial Secretary: Janet Hula

Treasurer: Margie Sutej

Council Notes

The regular meeting of the Council was held November 14. The Council members shared their prayer concerns: Care for those in need of healing – Ambros Lado, Darlene Spahr, a desire to find a lasting peace in Dafur, positive changes in Iraq, safety for Ivo Mounto's trip to the Sudan, safety for the kidnapped educators in Iraq, care for those within the Grace family that they continue to heal, thankfulness for David Hufford's honorable mention on a poem and for safety of all of our military personnel. Pastor led devotions from Psalm 11:7 and Ephesians 5:9 which spoke about God's righteousness and the fruit of light.

Visions for Ministry: Council discussed the final chapter of "Becoming a Blessed Church." Reflections were that this has been a very helpful look at leadership within the life of the church.

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

Christian Education reported that the adult class is a blessing.

Evangelism/Outreach had no new report.

Finance had no new report.

Property reported that the boiler replacement was finished. Some plumbing work had to be done following the boiler replacement. The roof work is yet to begin.

Service/Social Ministry reported that the Halloween Party was a "smashing" success. Thanks to all who helped.

The Council decided to hold a Soup Dinner for support of the Lado family. It will be Friday, December 8, 5-7 pm.

Support/Stewardship reported that the fall stewardship program, "This is the Day," is in full swing.

Worship reported that the Rejoice Lutheran Choir will be present on Sunday, December 10. Invite friends to hear this special music in worship.

The Children will present their Christmas program on Sunday, December 17. Christmas Eve services will be on Sunday, December 24, regular Advent worship in the morning and Christmas Eve worship at 11 pm.

Unfinished Business: None.

New Business: None.

Announcements: The next joint meeting with St. Luke's and Cristo Rey councils will be Thursday, November 16, 6 pm. There will be no meeting of this group in December.

An Advent Message From the Pastor

The End and The Beginning

No, this is not the title of a new book. It is a declaration of the change in seasons of the church year. On Sunday, November 26, we will celebrate Christ the King. The green season of summer and the ingathering of autumn are completed. The church year ends not with a whimper but with an explosion of praise to the “one who was, who is, and who will be.” We rejoice with the psalmist who writes, “My heart, therefore, is glad, and my spirit rejoices; my body also shall rest in hope.” We rest in hope because we know that endings with God are really beginnings.

So we begin with Advent on December 3. The time of Advent is a threshold, a gateway, a bridge. On the last Sunday, Christ the King, we heard the words from the Revelation of St. John: “I am the Alpha and the Omega, ...” Now, as Advent begins, we will hear words about the “coming days.” We will hear about a God that breaks into history long ago but also today.

Advent is not simply a time of waiting for Jesus to be born. It is a period of weeks infused with the import of God’s future now. The coming of Advent is not some past event nostalgically remembered that we then pretend to wish for now. It is the real in-breaking of God’s future into the present here and now.

Advent means “coming.” This one that loves humankind so intensely comes to be in and among us. Truly we watch, we wait, but more than that we act on this stirring of God. We become the holy participants in God’s unfolding drama of bringing peace and justice to our world.

I invite you to consider this Advent time as The End of those things you wish to change and The Beginning of a new spiritual journey to become God’s holy people in this time and place.

Pastor Laaker



The Advent of
our God
shall be our theme
for prayer;
Come, let us meet
him on the road and
place for him prepare.

Before the
dawning day
let sin be put
to flight;
No longer let the law
hold sway but walk in
freedom’s light.

All glory to
the Son
Who comes to
set us free,
with Father, Spirit,
ever one
through all eternity.



Lutheran Women of Omaha Luncheon

December 12, 2006 at Noon.

Iglesia Cristo Rey
4440 S 25th Street

Program: John Ingram

A Musical Christmas

Project for the Day: An offering will be taken for the
Gift of God Orphanage

Cost: \$5.00 for the Luncheon

Reservations due by December 10th

Call Lorraine Palma at 455-4342

Or Mardelle Gockel at 292-1328

W/ELCA Board Meeting

December 4 at the church.

1:00 p.m.

Hostess: Barb Nelson



*Women of the Evangelical
Lutheran Church in America*



Grace Women's Christmas Luncheon

December 19, 2006

Piccolo Pete's Restaurant

2202 South 20 Street

1:00 p.m.

Please bring a \$5.00 gift to exchange.

Please sign up by December 18th so that we can prepare.

Invite your girlfriends to come.

A Christmas tree will stand in the upper fellowship hall soon. The tree is called the Mitten Tree. As the season of Christmas progresses, the tree becomes gaily decorated with warm winter accessories.

Each year, people from Grace Lutheran Church bring donations of mittens, gloves, scarves, and other warm items and place them on the tree. These gifts of warmth are donated to area shelters.

Winter items are needed in all sizes. Just bring your donations and place them on the tree.



Prayer Concerns from Family and Friends



- ◆ Thelma Harrahill - Recovery at home from on going illness. (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 - In Remission, Pray for continued healing. (Brother-in-law Pam Reents)
- ◆ Ernie Olson - Ongoing therapy after his stroke. (member)
- ◆ Alice Friedlander - Healing for a back injury. (member)
- ◆ Darlene Spahr - Back surgery and healing for lungs. (member, Brenda Spahr's mother-in-law.)
- ◆ David Hufford - Recovery from surgery for blood clot in his shoulder. (member)
- ◆ Evelyn Reimer - Recovery after her lower leg had to be amputated. (member)
- ◆ Harlan Morter - Recovering at home after being hospitalized. (member)
- ◆ Betty Coniglio - Recovery at home after being hospitalized. (member)
- ◆ Ron Andersen - Tests being done for tremors. (member)
- ◆ Carolyn Matson - Recovery from knee replacement surgery. (Daughter of Ferne Matson, member)

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.

Pray for the 2007 Stewardship Program that God would lead his people to be faithful in their giving.

Sudanese Church Requests

- ◆ Ivo Mounto - Praise God! Ivo left for Southern Sudan on November 15th. Pray for wisdom for Ivo. Ivo has been asked by the Southern Sudanese government to help with the enormous task of helping to settle disputes for some of the returning Christian refugees. There is a possibility that there may be some danger in his negotiations. He is still planning to see his mother. The journey will be long and it is during rainy season. Pray for safety and passable roads. He is prepared to walk the 371 miles one way to see his mom but is hoping to find transportation for part of the trip. Pray for his wife and child, Regina and Telly as they wait for his return and cope with daily life with out him. Ivo is due back to Omaha in mid December.
- ◆ Titus Duli - Titus is filling in for Ivo with the Sudanese church at Grace during Ivo's trip. Pray for wisdom for Titus and the other elders of the church as they continue to minister to the Sudanese immigrants here in the city. As the immigrants become accustomed to the culture, some of them are experimenting with gambling and other addictions. Pray that the elders would be wise in their council and in their attempts to help the families touched by these problems.
- ◆ Ambros Lado and family - In mid November, Ambros suffered a severe stroke. Ambros has been a blessing to the people of Grace Church and has acted as the church custodian. Ambros faces a long rehabilitation. Ambros was the sole provider for his wife and five children. Grace Church is planning a soup dinner of December 8, from 5 :00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. to raise funds to help the family financially. Thrivent Financial for Lutherans has promised to match a percentage of the money received with funds. Please consider providing soup, bread or desserts to help us feed the many people expected. Pray that God will lead the metro community to give generously.



HERE at Grace Lutheran Church
 Sunday, December 10, 2006
 During morning Worship at 10:30 a.m.
 Invite your friends

The 40 member Senior Choir of Rejoice! Lutheran Church will present an Advent Cantata at Grace Lutheran on Sunday, December 10 during morning worship. The choir, under the direction of Ray Swartz and accompanied by Nancy Riley, will sing a variety of traditional and contemporary selections by various composers that reflect the sounds of the season.

A cookie and coffee reception is planned following the service. If you can provide cookies, please sign up on the bulletin board.

Use this music-filled event to invite your neighbors to experience God's wonderful gift of his Son, Jesus Christ.



Join the Choir for Christmas

December 3 - Warm up after Sunday School.
 Sing during morning worship.
 Rehearsal at 11:30 a.m.

December 10 - Short Rehearsal at 11:30 a.m.

December 17 - Rehearsal after worship at 11:30 a.m.

Christmas Eve - Sing for morning worship at 10:30 a.m.

Sing at the 11:00 p.m. Candlelight Service.



The Grace Choir is practicing every Sunday after worship in order to prepare music for Advent and Christmas. People are needed to sing all parts. Meet up in the choir loft after worship or contact David Hufford at 614-0735.

“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:

December 5 - “Steadfast in the Word”

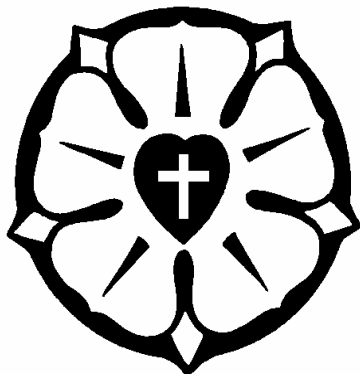
The Word of God in all its forms-- incarnate, proclaimed and written alone gives life to the believer and the church in any age.

December 19 - “The Restless Word”

What is the ELCA's specific view on the authority of Scripture?

January 16 - “Yardstick of Faith”

Helping us to remember what we believe through the Apostles', Nicene and Athanasian Creeds.





JOIN US AFTER SCHOOL

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

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

Free!

Director, Brenda Spahr

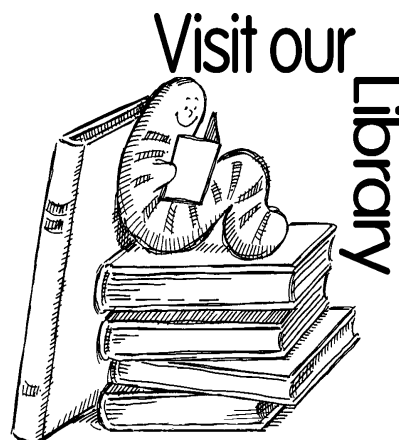
There will be no After School Program during winter break.
The last day in December will be Thursday, December 21st. The program will resume on January 8th, 2007.

Happy Holidays from Brenda and the Kids of
the AfterSchool Program!

Stop by the Church Library!
(Open after every church service)

Check out the great selection of books.
Many new ones!

Take a short "reading vacation."
De-stress, relax and enjoy!



Jesus Christ: Portrait of God

Adult Sunday School - New Quarter and New Theme.
December 2006 through February 2007



Every Sunday Morning
Upper Fellowship Hall
9:00 a.m.

Have you ever been captivated by a painting or been mesmerized by a portrait of a beautiful landscape? God calls us to engage in a deeper look at the image of Himself through studying Jesus.

Sessions 1-5 will guide us through the Advent and Christmas Seasons answering the questions such as "Who is Jesus Christ?" and "What does God say about Jesus?" Sessions 6-9 will offer opportunity to gain a fuller understanding by listening to what Christ said about himself. Session 10-13 will invite us to experience Jesus as the Good Shepherd, the resurrection and life, the way, the truth and the life and the true vine from which we receive life and sustenance.

POINSETTIAS

Cost:

\$8.00 each

A Sign Up sheet
has been posted on the Bulletin Board

Be sure to designate whether you would like to take your flowers home after the holiday or donate them to the church for shut-ins or staff.

Deadline: December 3, 2006



2007 Flower Chart

The 2007 Flower Chart is posted on the bulletin board outside the church office.



The Flower Chart sign-up is your opportunity to sponsor flowers for a special Sunday in honor of an important event in your family's life or in memory of someone dear to you. The cost to sponsor flowers for a Sunday is \$12.00.

Hurry!

The chart fills up fast.

Prayer Service

December 13, 2006

7:00 p.m.

Grace Lutheran Church

1326 S 26 St.

People of all Faiths Welcome!

Come for a quiet time of Meditation,

Soft lighting, Gentle Music

Prayer and Anointing for Healing.

Leave your holiday hustle and bustle behind.

Take the chance to sit quietly and listen to God speak as you prepare for the celebration of His birth!



"Father, I love our intimate conversations. You use symbols that we can identify with that help us understand you better. Draw to yourself those who haven't experienced your unspeakable, everlasting, abiding joy. Amen." *Thelma Wells*

From the book, "Overjoyed - Devotions to Tickle your Fancy and Strengthen Your Faith, Women of Faith Series 1999

Rejoice Glory

IN THE OF CHRISTMAS

Sunday, December 17

10:30 a.m.

During Morning Worship

Attention Parents and Guardians!

All rehearsals for the Christmas program will be held during the Sunday School hour on Sunday mornings. Please be sure to bring your children to Sunday School on time each week.

A dress rehearsal will be held on Saturday, December 16th at 1:00 p.m. If you are willing to help with props, prompting or promoting, contact Grace Traynor.



Children's Christmas Program



Join us for
Sunday Morning worship on
December 24
10:30 a.m.
&
Candle Light Service
11:00 p.m.

Adult Choir
Candles
Carols
Readings
Scripture

"Good Christian Friends, rejoice!
Christ is born today!"

HALLOWEEN PARTY THANK YOU!

With preparation for Thanksgiving, Advent and Christmas on our minds, Halloween seems so long gone by, but it's not to be forgotten! Our party on October 27th was, as usual, a HUGE success. About 120 children and adults attended, including party volunteers. Thanks to *everyone* who helped! We had some new activities this year, Pin-the-Nose-on-Jack, Mummy Wrap, Pumpkin Alley Bowling, and the Candy Dash. From the comments received in the suggestion can, the Pop Bottle Ring Toss, Candy Dash and Mummy Wrap were favorites.

None of this could be possible without the generous donations from Grace members and friends. We received 76 bottles of pop for the Ring Toss, 20-some cakes for the Cake walk, and "tons" of candy for the Candy Dash. The Bingo prize table was well stocked with "recyclable" treasures. Monetary gifts were used to purchase Halloween costume contest prizes, raffle prizes, game prizes, beverages, popcorn, paper goods and miscellaneous. Cookies, popcorn, hot apple cider, coffee and punch were enjoyed by all. Excess candy and toilet paper (from the mummy wrap) were taken to Project Hope afterwards to be shared with others.

Thanks to everyone who donated items for this popular, delightful event. Special thanks to my volunteers, who planned for, set up, worked (had fun) during, and cleaned up after the party. It couldn't have happened without the help of so many.

Janet Hula, Party Chair

Grace Lutheran ESL Holiday Gift Basket Project

The Grace ESL women are planning to prepare Holiday Gift Baskets for our fifteen Sudanese families. We are asking for donations, see list below. Please put your items in the designated box in the front entryway, or give them directly to Mary Laaker, Vicki Cox, Janet Hula or Pam Reents in the church office.



Monetary contributions will be used to purchase grocery store gift certificates for each family. There will be a donation can in the back of the church beginning Sunday, November 26th. We will collect items through December 15th to assemble and deliver the baskets on Saturday, December 16th.

HOLIDAY BASKETS

Items for baskets:

- Rice
- Paper Towels
- Pasta
- Toilet Paper
- Cereal (hot or cold)
- Kleenex tissue
- Dry beans
- Cleaning Supplies
- Canned Fruits
- Laundry supplies

- Canned Vegetables
- Pancake mix
- Flour
- Sugar
- Cake mix
- Peanut Butter
- Jelly
- Syrup
- Powdered Milk
- Coffee



"Helping Hands"

Working Together in God's service

Project Hope

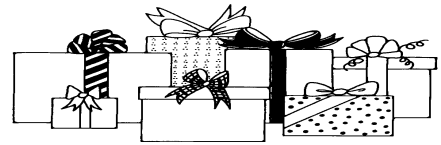
The Theme for December is Canned Soup or Stew.

Book Bank

Project Hope is developing an ongoing book bank where people can take and keep a book or two for themselves or their children. Many of us have books that we've read or our children have outgrown that could be donated to Project Hope. Items of interest are children's books of all levels, inspirational, devotional or religious books, National Geographic magazines, Guideposts and the Lutheran Witness. Please label donations "Project Hope Book Bank."

Grace Quilters Send Quilts Around the World

The women of the Grace Quilters completed many beautiful quilts and lap robes to be distributed around the globe as part of the Lutheran World Relief Ingathering in November. 28 full size quilts recycled from polyester clothing were sent to LWR. 19 lap robes were also sent to various nursing homes around the city to provide warmth to the elderly.



Get involved!
Come on Mondays and help!
People needed to cut out
squares or tie quilts.
No Experience Necessary!

Please consider a gift to these projects during your holiday giving!

Use a Pew envelope or a World Hunger envelope and
list the project you desire your gift to be given to.

ELCA World Hunger

Your gifts to the ELCA World Hunger Appeal help families around the world strengthen their lives and their futures. Sixty percent of all World Hunger Appeal funds go directly to our key partners LWR and the LWF. Your gifts help families and communities build skills and develop resources necessary to lead sustainable lives.

Lutheran Pantry in Omaha

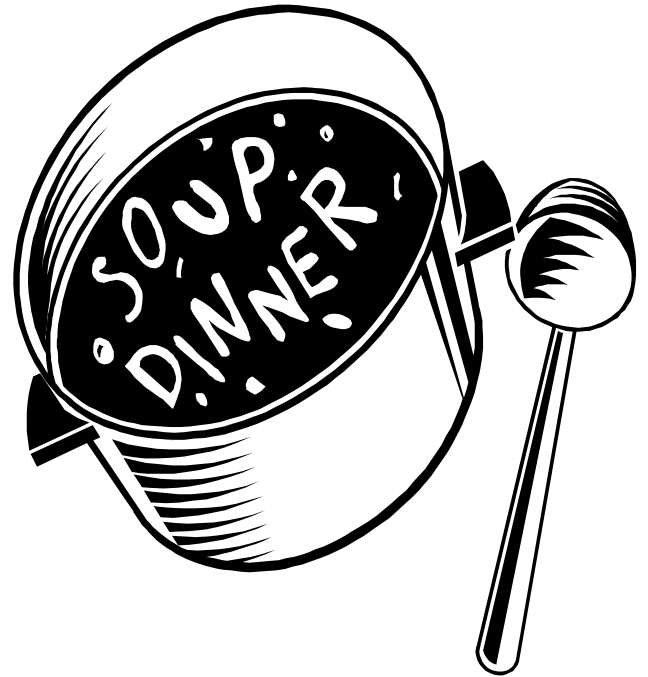
The Lutheran Pantry is supported by congregations, individuals, and grants. It is used to provide food for needy families throughout the Omaha area and is the largest denominational system in the city.

In addition we also work to provide support to Together Emergency Relief Services, the ecumenical pantry system.



Soup Dinner In Support
of the
Ambros Lado Family

Friday, December 8, 2006
5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.



Grace Lutheran Church
1326 South 26th Street
Omaha, NE 68105

Cost: Free-Will Offering
(Suggested donation: \$5.00 for adults)

For more information call
the church at 341-7730

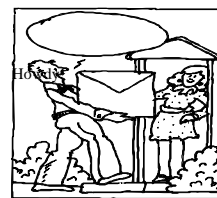
**Thrivent Matching Funds
will apply.**

Help us support the family of Ambros Lado, a Sudanese immigrant with a wife and five children, who has suffered a severe stroke and faces a long rehabilitation.

After Ambros and his children were baptized at Grace Lutheran, he has been a spiritual inspiration to all. He also serves as custodian at Grace and as a leader within the Sudanese community. God has blessed many through Ambros.



Community News



Columbus Park Neighborhood Association

No Meeting for December.
Have a Safe and Blessed Holiday Season!

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

CPNA
1326 S 26 Street
Omaha, NE 68105

Call 341-7730 for more information.

Celebrate Christmas in Omaha at these Free Events!



Holiday Lights Display

Gene Leahy Mall
5:00 p.m. - 1:00 a.m. every night
through January 7th.

Sounds of the Season: Free Concerts

Saturday Evenings through December 23rd from
7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.
Gene Leahy Mall

ConAgra Ice Sculpture Display

Artists working December 15-16
8:00 a.m. - 10:00 p.m.
Display complete December 17.

Free Family Festival

December 17 from 1:00 p.m. 5:00 p.m.
Free trolley rides and
free admission to special attractions.

Ice Sculpture Display

Children's Museum

Downtown Library

Joslyn Museum

Durham Western Heritage Museum

Henry Doorly Zoo (Holiday Wildlight exhibit)

ConAgra's Fire Works Display

December 31, 2006
7:15 p.m.

*More info on these events and more at
www.holidaylightsfestival.com*

ADVENT SERVICE

Conducted in the GERMAN language



SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2006
Service begins at 2:00 P.M.

Preacher/Liturgist

REV. EDMUND SCHAFER of Ascension Lutheran Church, Marianna, Florida

Organist

LYNN EIFERT

Choir

German-American Society Singers

German-American Society, Omaha

Choir Director

DON SCHULER

Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church

5529 Leavenworth St.

Omaha, NE 68106

After the worship you are invited to partake in refreshments served by the Mt. Calvary Ladies Guild.

Parking is available in the parking lot on Leavenworth St. and on the South side only of Leavenworth Street from 55th Street to 57th Street. The parking lot behind the church, on Marcy Street from 55th Street to 57th Street is also available. All are welcome!

Jesus is Better than Santa Claus

Santa lives at the North Pole.
JESUS is everywhere.

Santa rides in a sleigh
JESUS rides on the wind and walks on the water.

Santa comes but once a year
JESUS is an ever present help.

Santa fills your stockings with goodies
JESUS supplies all your needs.

Santa comes down your chimney uninvited
JESUS stands at your door and knocks..
and then enters your heart.

You have to stand in line to see Santa J
JESUS is as close as the mention of His name.

Santa lets you sit on his lap
JESUS lets you rest in His arms.

Santa doesn't know your name, all he can say is "Hi little boy or girl, What's your name?"
JESUS knew our name before we did.

Not only does He know our name, He knows our address too. He knows our history and future and He even knows how many hairs are on our heads.

Santa has a belly like a bowl full of jelly
JESUS has a heart full of love.

All Santa can offer is HO HO HO
JESUS offers health, help and hope.

Santa says "You better not cry"
JESUS says "Cast all your cares on me for I care for you.

Santa's little helpers make toys
JESUS makes new life, mends wounded hearts,
repairs broken homes and builds mansions.

Santa may make you chuckle but
JESUS gives you joy that is your strength.

While Santa puts gifts under your tree
JESUS became our gift and died on the tree.

It's obvious there is really no comparison.
We need to remember WHO Christmas is all about.
We need to put Christ back in Christmas.
Jesus is still the reason for the season.
Yes, Jesus is better,
he is even better than Santa Claus!

<http://jokes.christiansunite.com/Christmas/>



Swedish Smorgasbord

Bethel Lutheran Church
1312 S 45th Street
Omaha, NE

Date: Sunday, December 10, 2006
Time: First Serving time at 12:30 p.m.
Second Serving time at 3:00 p.m.

Advance Tickets Preferred

Cost : \$11.00 Adult

\$ 5.00 Children

Children 3 and under are free.

For ticket information, contact one of the following:

Pat Shalberg - 572-7621

Lois Ryan - 556-5871

Ellen Schroeder - 551-7586



Holiday Mission Fest

Do your holiday shopping close to home!

Saturday, December 2
from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Westminster Presbyterian Church
3416 Woolworth Ave

Bake Sale

Raffle

Homemade Soup Luncheon

Arts and Crafts for Sale

Live Demo of hot Glass Work

Homemade Cinnamon Rolls

& Cheesecakes

(Orders taken)

Donation Booth for Gently Used Clothes &
Non-Perishable Food items.

Free Van Service for those who need it.
Babysitting while you shop.

All proceeds help support missions, youth mission trips and the White Christmas Project, providing food, clothing and gifts for local needy families.

For info call 556-6209

News from the Families of Grace Lutheran Church

- Thanks the men who have been preparing the church grounds for winter: Jerry Van Ormer, Bob Moss, Ken Hilmer and James Harrahill.
- Thanks to Eva Martin and Brenda Spahr for their help stuffing and mailing our Stewardship materials for 2007.
- Thanks to Janet Hula and the gang who hosted the great Halloween Party at the end of October!
- Thanks to all the folks who have donated clothing and other items to the Clothing Room and to Pam Reents' mom, Lois, for her work in organizing and straightening the room every few weeks.
- Thanks to Jason Bauer for helping "pinch hit" for Ambros Lado by cleaning the church at such short notice.
- Thanks Grace Traynor and the other people working on the Sunday School Program for December 17th.
- Thanks to the members who bought Community Day Coupons in Support of Lutheran Pantry. Remember the needy and hungry during this holiday season!



To my Dear friends At Grace,

Thank you, dear friends, for sharing in my 98th birthday celebration. It was a highlight in my life! Thanks you for your beautiful cards and their wonderful messages. I am so happy you are my friends.

In Christian love,
Gertrude Hufford

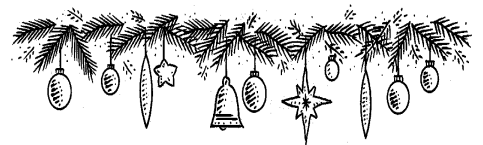
Several friends from Grace Church have been to see Ambros Lado at the hospital. After suffering a severe stroke and surviving bleeding in his brain, Ambros has recovered a little bit of function of his left side. He is out of Intensive Care and on the 4th floor for rehabilitation at Methodist Hospital. His wife and children have been working as a team to overcome this crisis.

Ambros recognizes family and friends. He is able to talk and is understandable if you listen closely. His attitude is astonishing. He does not complain but always responds that he is doing well. He was touched deeply when he heard that members of Grace Church and other people in the Christian Community were praying for him. His faith is strong through out this difficult time.

Continue praying for the Lado family during this trying time. Ambros seems confident that God will provide for their needs. Remember to attend the Soup Dinner Fundraiser on December 8th. Our prayers and our participation are the best way we can help this lovely family.

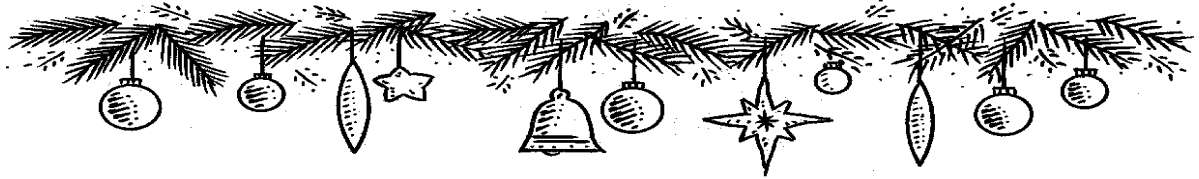
Quick Update! Praise God!

John Ivo Mouto has arrived in Sudan safely. He sent word back to Titus, the lay person serving the Sudanese Church at Grace. He is currently in Juba but expects to go to Khar-toum in the next few weeks.





Merry Christmas!
Feliz Navidad!
From Your Interfaith Director
and Staff.



As we close 2006 and look forward to what 2007 has to bring, I want to thank all of you for your support of the *Faith in Action* program. It was a pleasure meeting and getting to know so many of you throughout the year. I'm looking forward to meeting more of you next year and growing the *Faith in Action* program.

Below are some national statistics about the *Faith in Action* program that I thought would be interesting to share as we bring a close to 2006:



FAITH
IN ACTION

Faith in Action has hundreds of **programs** nationwide, with about **40,000 volunteers** serving approximately **60,000 care recipients**. Each volunteer contributes about **3 hours** per week or 150 hours per year.

The value of these services is nearly **\$100 million** annually.

Of all *Faith in Action* care recipients:

- 79 percent are physically disabled
- 64 percent are 65-years-of-age or older
- 46 percent live alone and have difficulty with daily activities
- 22 percent are totally homebound.

Denominations represented in *Faith in Action* programs include:

- Methodist (14 percent)
- Catholic (13 percent)
- Baptist (13 percent)
- Lutheran (10 percent)
- Presbyterian (8 percent)
- Episcopal (6 percent)
- Jewish (4 percent)
- AME (1 percent)
- Other* (31 percent).

Baha'i, Buddhist, Christian Scientist, Church of Christ, Church of God, Disciples of Christ, Eastern Orthodox, Hindu, Islam, Latter Day Saints, Mennonite, Native American, Salvation Army, Seventh Day Adventist, Unitarian Universalist, \and Unity Fellowship.

Merry Christmas and Best Wishes for a Healthy and Happy New Year!

Julie Chytil, *Faith in Action* of Interfaith Health Service
660-2652

From The Editor



I had an interesting phone call at the church the week before Thanksgiving. A pastor called to chat with Pastor Laaker but had to leave a message because Pastor Laaker was on the other line. The caller, Pastor John, asked me if I was really busy this week. I replied that it was a very intense time with quite a few things to get done before the holiday. Spontaneously, Pastor John prayed for me by saying something like, “Father, be with this woman as she does her work. Send the Holy Spirit to give her wisdom and strength.” I interrupted his prayer by saying that I needed to know what to write for the newsletter. He continued his short prayer by saying, “Holy Spirit, talk through her and give her the right message to tell.” I thanked him for his words. I told him that he had blessed me with his prayer for me, that God had sent him to speak to me by “divine appointment.” I became more aware of the Holy Spirit’s power working through me as the day progressed. Pastor John’s intercession for me was answered.

As I began to write, Isaiah 11:2, a verse I had pondered on earlier in the month came back to my attention.

“And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him—the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of reverential and obedient fear of the Lord—And shall make Him of quick understanding, and His delight shall be in the reverential and obedient fear of the Lord.” (Amplified Bible)

Just as the Holy Spirit is part of the Godhead, He is part of me if I have yielded my life. The Holy Spirit protects me in ways I can’t understand. He gives me knowledge and wisdom that can only come from God. Isaiah says that wisdom and understanding are “on” me if the Spirit of knowledge is part of me. What He has revealed to me evokes reverence and obedience in awe of the great God I serve. It says that the Holy Spirit will “make me quick of understanding.” Because I have the Holy Spirit living in me, I can understand and know what I am to do for God. The Holy Spirit can help me see with clear eyes and hear with open ears; so that I look for His loving guidance and encouragement. My choices and the judgments I make will be different because I am actively listening for the Spirit’s voice.

The knowledge that God gives me is not the kind that leads me to tell the future. His knowledge gives me a light on the path I walk...just enough light for next step. As I go about my daily chores, the Spirit wants to give me understanding about the situations I find myself in and the wisdom to make the right choice.

The only way I can truly hear the Spirit is to ponder the Word of God. As a child, I was required to memorize verses for Sunday School, VBS and Bible camp. At the time, I thought it was just for memory awards and badges but now I realize the real prize is how God uses them as I grow older, to speak to me in situations. Daily time in His Word keeps the messages fresh. God shows me new things as I read.

Does the Holy Spirit rest on you through your yielded life? The promise is delightful; that you will have a reverential awe of Him and a deep desire for obedience. If you truly desire knowledge and wisdom, willingness to listen as the Spirit speaks will yield God’s great power in your life.

Pam Reents, Editor



December is

Hi Neighbor Month
National Stress Free Family
Holiday Month
Bingo's Birthday Month
Read A New Book Month
(There's a bunch of new
ones in the church library!)

Special Days at Grace

December 5 - On Being Lutheran Study
December 8 - Lado Fund Raiser
December 10 - Rejoice Lutheran
Choir Cantata
December 13 - Prayer Service
December 17 - Sunday School Program

December 24 - Morning Worship
at 10:30 a.m.

Christmas Eve Service 11:00 p.m.

The Gift



Thanks for the electric guitar you gave me for Christmas," little Chris Cody said to his uncle the first time he saw him after the holidays. "It's the best present I ever got."

"That's great," said his uncle. "Do you know how to play it?"

"Oh, I don't play it," the little fellow said. "My mom gives me a dollar a day not to play it during the day and my dad gives me five dollars a week not to play it at night."

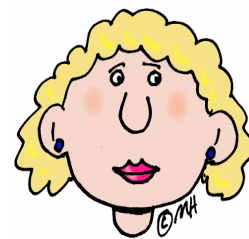


A man went to his psychiatrist and said,
"What's wrong with me? I'm afraid of Santa."

The psychiatrist said,
"You must be Claustrofobic."



"It's not worth it!
Let's just give him our noses and let him go!"



There were two blondes who went deep into the frozen woods searching for a Christmas tree.

After hours of subzero temperatures a few close calls with hungry wolves, one blonde turned to the other and said,

"I'm chopping down the next tree I see. I don't care whether it's decorated or not!"



Christmas Carol Quiz

Get out your Dictionary!

1. The apartment of 2 psychiatrists.
2. The lad is a diminutive percussionist.
3. Festoon the entryways with colorful decorations.
4. Sir Lancelot with laryngitis.
5. A B C D E F G H I J K M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y X Z
6. Present me naughty but dual incisors for this festive Yuletide.
7. The event transpired when a smogless bewitching hour arrived.
8. Exuberation to this orb.
9. 288 Yuletide hours.
10. Do you perceive the same longitudinal pressure which stimulates my auditory sense organs?
11. The red-suited pa is due in this burg.
12. Stepping on the pad cover.
13. Uncouth dolt has his beezers in the booze and thinks he is Dark Cloud's boyfriend.
14. Far back in a hay bin.
15. Leave and do an elevated broadcast.
16. That exiguous hamlet south of the holy city.
17. Behold! I envisioned a trio of nautical vessels.
18. Listen, the winged heavenly messengers are proclaiming tunefully.
19. A joyful song relative to hollow metallic vessels which vibrate and bring forth a ringing sound when struck.
20. As the guardians of little woolly animals protected their charges in the shadows of the earth.

Answers:

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 sp hSeerhT wa SI. 71
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 potfooRehTn Op U 21
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