

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

THE GRACE MESSENGER



February 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 - Regina Ivo
Interfaith Health Ministries - Virginia McGill

Non-Profit Org.
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2006 Council Members		
Frances Campsey	Andrew Edwards	Arlone Farber
David Hufford	Greg Hula	Ernest Olson
Barbara Nelson	Richard Sett gast	Brenda Spahr
Pastor Laaker	Ivo Mounto	

Officers Serving the Congregation but not on Council:		
Financial Secretary: Janet Hula	Treasurer: Margie Sutej	



The regular meeting of the Council was held January 16. The Council members shared their prayer concerns: Care for those in need of healing – Richard Sett gast, Norene Fitle, Frances Campsey, Thelma Harrahill, for our troops deployed, for the joint worship planned at Wheeler Presbyterian Church and for our Sudanese brothers and sisters. Pastor led devotions from Isaiah 51:7 and Luke 12:4 which spoke about reproach and our need to cast out fear.

Visions for Ministry: Council continued a discussion of “What would a South Omaha Parish look like?” “Don’t know where it might lead but God is doing something!” Reports were received from the Financial Secretary and the Treasurer. Please continue to give generously.

Christian Education had no new report.

Evangelism/Outreach had no new report.

Finance reported on the proposed Budget for 2006. Council accepted the budget and voted to present it at the Annual Meeting for adoption.

Property reported that cabling had been run to provide connection to the internet in the sanctuary.

Service/Social Ministry had no new report.

Support/Stewardship had no new report.

Worship reported on the planned joint worship with our Ecumenical partners in South Omaha on Sunday, January 22.

Unfinished Business: None.

New Business: The nominating committee presented the names of Greg Hula, David Hufford and Brenda Spahr for election to the church council. The Endowment Board presented the name of Donna Adrian for a second term on the Endowment Board. The Council nominated Donna Adrian for the position.

Announcements: Pastor and Mary invited the council to dinner on Monday, January 30, 2006 at Malaras. The Urban Cluster Assembly is Saturday, February 18, 10 a.m. at Kountze. The Council is invited to a Heart to Heart Conversation with Bishop deFreese on Thursday, February 16. The Annual Meeting will be held on Sunday, January 29. Dinner will be provided by the Moore family in celebration of Richard and Gloria’s 60th Wedding Anniversary.

Job Opening

Nebraska Lutheran Outdoor Ministries has an employment opportunity in the Guest Services area. This position is available immediately for a diligent people-oriented individual and includes kitchen, housekeeping and hosting components. The right candidate must be able to work independently as well as function as part of a team. This position may range from part-time to full-time, depending upon the right applicant. The hours will be flexible, but will include some weekends. Salary and benefits to be negotiated. Replies and resumes to Pat Boone c/o Nebraska Lutheran Outdoor Ministries, 27416 Ranch Road, Ashland, NE. 68003. Phone 888-656-6254



One of the monthly newsletters that I receive is entitled “Stewardship.” It often has helpful thoughts, encouragements, and reflections on the role of stewardship in one’s life. In the February 2006 issue, the lead article is an interesting and important reflection. This reflection seems appropriate since we have just completed our Annual Report and one of the statistics that stood out was that 25% of our adult confirmed members do not practice intentional financial stewardship. I invite you to reflect with me on what this article says.

“For Where Your Treasure Is, There Will Your Heart Be Also. Amen. A big city church in the east was having its Sunday morning service. Many hundreds were crowded into the stately sanctuary on this wintry, blustery day, evidenced by heavy coats and boots everywhere.

“The young pastor called the ushers to the pulpit area in preparation for the offering. As hundreds sat with bowed heads and the choir completed a short offertory it was suddenly very quiet. The handsome young pastor paused dramatically and prayed, ‘For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also, Amen.’

“As the majority dug and reached for their envelopes, with some digging through heavy clothing in rapid search, a few had given no previous consideration to the offering until that moment. In a rear row, a solitary figure, a middle-aged man in a gray business suit found himself in a quickly developing dilemma; a fast check of his wallet revealed a five dollar bill and a fifty dollar bill. For many this would pose no problem as the old five dollar bill philosophy has been with many church-goers for years...too many years. Our well-dressed man however was not your average dollar donor. His training and his religious heritage had developed more along lines of \$20, though he had long felt he should return more, as God had indeed prospered him. But \$50? He heard the ushers working their way back as he again hastily viewed the two bills in his wallet. Which one, his heart was saying, which one, as his mind was closing in on the five dollar bill as a practical decision.

“The young pastor’s words resounded in his mind...treasure, heart...treasure, heart. Out of somewhere, as the usher now had reached his row, perhaps from beyond, he sensed his hand on the fifty, as his heart tripped more heavily, there, now it was done!

“But why? He had never acted so impulsively in church before, having carried his accountant’s training and logic with him to church in the past. Now his heart really started to beat rapidly, but with a new sense of excitement accompanied by a warm feeling of dedication quite unfamiliar to him. Somewhere under his heavy coat he felt a trickle of perspiration, then a tear formed in his eye, but what really surprised him was the tingle he felt in his heart.

“As he worked his way to the young pastor’s outstretched hand at the door, he felt an inner peace he never knew before and a sense of commitment taking over. He tried to pass it off as a brief and minor emotional event, yet a glowing warmth remained with him for days, and he noted an improved attitude and feeling toward sharing and giving.

“Strange you think and maybe not really significant at all? Perhaps, but remember the young pastor’s words, from Luke 12:34 ‘For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.’ It is spiritually significant that when you return a proportionate share of your possessions to Christ, you are returning a significant portion of yourself. Christ wants this faithfulness from you, and he will make a difference in your life as a result.”

Pastor Laaker



**Next Grace Lutheran
Men in Mission Breakfast
Saturday,
February 18, 2006
8:00 a.m.**

W/ELCA Board Meeting

**February 6, 2006.
1:00 p.m.**

Hostess
Barb Nelson

W/ELCA Circle Meeting

**February 21, 2006
1:00 p.m.**

Bible Study Leader
Marilyn Van Ormer

Hostess
Barb Narducci



*Women of the Evangelical
Lutheran Church in America*

**Volunteers are Needed to
Serve and Prepare
Lenten Dinners**

Hosts and Hostesses are needed to prepare and serve the Wednesday Night Lenten Supper. If you are willing to help, a sign up sheet has been posted on the bulletin board.

Mitten Tree Project Brings Winter Warmth to Needy

The Mitten Tree Project concluded in January, bringing in over 133 gloves, scarves, hats and other winter accessories. All the items collected have been donated to Project Hope. Thank you to all the people of the congregation who donated items to help keep others warm. Many items were handmade.

May God bless the hands of his people for their generosity.

1 scarf
1 scarf & hat set
2 hat & glove set
65 hats

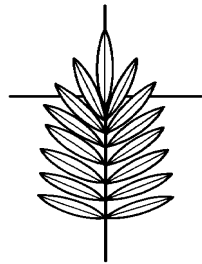
13 pairs of slippers
15 pairs of mittens
29 pairs of gloves
6 pairs of socks





**Come and
Examine Your Relationship with God.**

Ash Wednesday, March 1
6:00 p.m. Lenten Supper
7:15 p.m. Ash Wednesday Service



ASH WEDNESDAY

Lent begins with Ash Wednesday (Aschermittwoch) and ends on Easter Eve. It commemorates the forty days of fasting and prayer by which Jesus prepared himself for his ministry. (St. [Matthew 4:1-11](#).) Since the 7th Century it has been the beginning of a period of Christian fasting and prayer. It is called Ash Wednesday because, if they wished, penitents could have ashes placed onto their foreheads at the communion rail.

Wednesday Nights beginning with March 8 and ending on April 6.

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



The word LENT (Lenz) is actually the old Anglo-Saxon word for "Spring." The "40 days of Lent" is a period of preparation leading up to the Feast of the Resurrection of Christ.



**MAUNDY
Thursday**

Thursday, April 13
6:00 p.m. Lenten Supper
7:15 p.m. Maundy Thursday Service

Maundy Thursday is the day when Jesus had his last meal with his disciples, was arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane, and put on trial through the night. The word 'Maundy' comes from the latin word 'Mandatum' meaning commandment and Christians remember Jesus' famous commandment to his disciples to "Love one another as I have loved you." John 15:12



Good Friday, April 14
7:15 p.m. Good Friday Service

The Friday before Easter is known as Good Friday or Dark Friday. In this day we remember the cruel death of Jesus Christ on the Cross. He loved us so much that he was willing to take on the sin of the world and die for us, so whom ever believes in Him can have eternal life. Jesus was Crucified on Good Friday and died on the Cross for the Sin of the World. He rose from dead on Easter Sunday.



Lenten Dinners



During the season of Lent, guests, friends, family and members of Grace Lutheran church are invited to eat together and fellowship before the service at our Lenten dinners. There is no cost to attend but an opportunity to donate to various projects will be available. The dinners begin at 6:00 p.m. with the worship service at 7:15 p.m.

Suppers	Hosts/Hostesses	Donations for
March 1 Ash Wednesday	Sunday School	Sunday School Supplies
March 8	Lutheran Men in Mission	To be announced
March 15	Ruth Dorcas Women's Circle	To be announced
March 22	OPEN	To be announced
March 29	OPEN	To be announced
April 5	OPEN	To be announced
April 13 Maundy Thursday	OPEN	To be announced

Shop Wednesdays and Sundays through Lent

Donate your used books to raise funds for the Church Library.



Used Book Sale

Do you have some books on your shelves at home that you are finished with? The Library Board is collecting good used books for resale to benefit the church library. A box has been placed in the library for your donations.

The books do not have to be spiritual in nature, just in good condition with wholesome storylines. We welcome any kind of used book, including children's books, clean romance novels, mysteries, fiction and non-fiction. We will also accept children's videos, CD's, or cassettes. Some of your donations that are suitable may be added to our church library.

Each week, members of the Library Board will have new books out on a table in the upper fellowship hall. Stop by and browse through the books. The book table will be self-serve with a place to deposit your money should you decide to purchase any items.

All proceeds will go to buy more books for our church library. The used book sale will begin on March 1, Ash Wednesday. If you have books to donate, look for the box in the church library. If you have questions, contact Marsha Moyer, Library Board Chairwoman.

Help support your church library.

- ◆ Willie Aponick - for God's guidance in his life.
 - ◆ (Grandson of Frances Campsey)
 - ◆ Janice Beno - for her health. (Sister of Frances Campsey)
 - ◆ Jim Beno - Health concerns. (Francis Campsey)
 - ◆ Dawn Fusselman - for child's health concerns.
 - ◆ (Granddaughter of Frances Campsey)
 - ◆ Rachel Moss - for health concerns. (Bob and LaVonne Moss)
 - ◆ Ryan Shomers - for on going health concerns for this child.
 - ◆ (Ron and Donna Adrian)
 - ◆ Rex Olson - for healing as he deals with cancer.
 - ◆ (Don and Norma Olson)
 - ◆ Jeanette Mendoza - Back problems. (Attender)
 - ◆ Norene Fitle - Pray for strength, especially at the end of each week.
 - ◆ Dean Bauer - Health Concerns. (Father of Jason & Kym Bauer)
 - ◆ Richard Sett gast - Strength as he undergoes chemo for lymphoma.
 - ◆ Callie Meyers - Suffered a stroke. (Friend of Frances Campsey)
 - ◆ Andrew Edwards - Doing dialysis a couple times a week until a kidney can be found. (member)
 - ◆ Rose Hamilton - Underwent surgery for cancer. (Aunt of Andrew and Christi Edwards)
 - ◆ Thelma Harrahill - Health concerns. (member)
 - ◆ Frances Campsey - Health concerns. (member)
 - ◆ Louise Alsager - Health concerns. (member)
 - ◆ Linda Whitney - Struggling with on-going cancer. (Friend of LaVonne Moss)
- ◆ Pray for Brenda Spahr as she directs After School Program and for Frances Campsey, her assistant. Pray for the word to get out about the program and for the children to come to this safe, fun environment. Brenda is also organizing a youth group.



Sudanese Church Requests

- ◆ Pray for the Sudanese Sunday School. Regina Ivo is leading the children and needs more volunteers. Pray that God would raise up leaders to help with the Bible education of their children. The Sudanese church is trying to organize a children's choir as well.
- ◆ Pray for the newcomers who have recently arrived as they adjust to live in America. Pray for Doto and her family who have just arrived in the US. They are overwhelmed and homesick.
- ◆ Pray for the ELCA Sudanese leaders across the country as they dialog and make plans to increase God's work.
- ◆ Pray for Pam Reents as she begins the hunt for Bibles and songbooks in the Nuer and Dinka languages. Churches in the area and around the country are desperate for God's Word in their native language.

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 new Church Council and the NCD Team as they lead Grace Church in 2006.

“A Christian fellowship lives and exists by the intercession of its members for one another, or it collapses. I can no longer condemn or hate a brother for whom I pray, no matter how much trouble he causes me.”

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

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

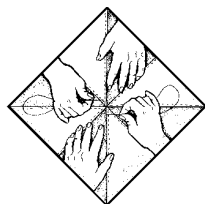
Games, Crafts, and Fun
Geared for Elementary Kids!

Free!

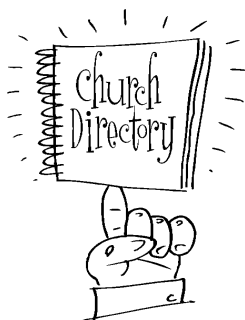
Director, Brenda Spahr
Assistant, Frances Campsey



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.



In February, we will be working on a new church directory. If you have any changes to the information listed in last year's directory, please contact the church office as soon as possible. A copy of the new directory will be posted on the bulletin board. Please take a moment to look over your information for accuracy.

We are planning to have the new directories ready for distribution around the first part of March.

Copies of the new Phone Chain list will be ready for distribution at the end of February. Everyone who attends Grace Church will be put on the list so that we will have a way to communicate to each person. If you do NOT want to be on the list, please contact Pam in the church office as soon as possible.



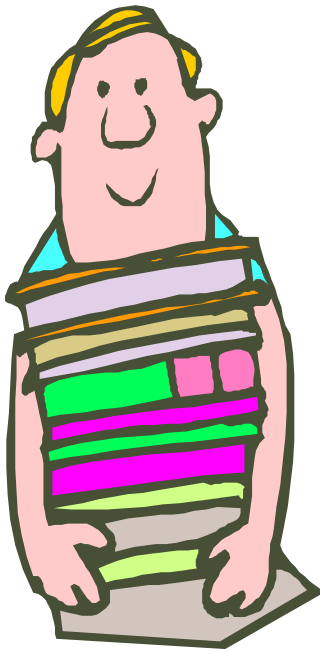
Raisin Sour Cream Bars

2 cups raisins
1 cup white sugar
3 eggs
2 1/2 tablespoons cornstarch
1 1/2 cups sour cream
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1 cup packed brown sugar
1 3/4 cups rolled oats
1 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 3/4 cups all-purpose flour
1 cup butter, softened

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Grease and flour 9 x 13 inch pan.
2. Cook first six ingredients over low heat until well blended. Set aside to cool.
3. In a separate bowl, mix together brown sugar, oatmeal, baking soda, butter, flour and salt until crumbly. Press half of mixture into pan.
4. Pour cooked mixture over crust and crumble the other half of crust over the top.
5. Bake for 20 minutes.

Yield 30 bars
Very moist filled bars.

Happening in the Library!



- ◆ Many new books have been added. Several more books of the popular series have added. We also have some great new children's books with CD's so the children can read along.

Titles:

Awesome God by Stephen Elkins

God is in Control by Stephen Elkins

I've Just Seen Jesus by Stephen Elkins

Thank You by Stephen Elkins

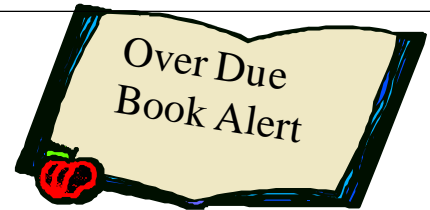
These books are based on songs that have won the Dove Award.

- ◆ Look for the Used Book Sale during Lent. Donate used books to the library. See the page in this newsletter on the Lenten Dinners for more information
- ◆ We still have calendars for sale. The cost is \$6.00. These are beautiful scripture calendars. See Marsha Moyer, Brenda Spahr or Barb Nelson to purchase yours.

We need Some A.R.'s!

What is an A.R. you ask? An A.R. is an anonymous reader who is willing to answer a few questions or write a short little sentence about the book he or she read from the church library. Just fill out a form in the library and drop it in the book return box. Let us know if you liked the book!

Several books have been checked out for a long time. If you have a church library book at home, would you please return it so that others can enjoy it?



Daffodil Days

Daffodil Sunday: March 12, 2006



The Douglas and Sarpy County Units of the American Cancer Society will bring a welcome touch of Spring with its annual Daffodil Celebration. Sunday, March 12, 2006 has been designated as Daffodil Sunday. Members of the congregation are invited to place fresh cut daffodils on the altar or in their home as a memorial to the loved ones who have lost the battles, or as a tribute to those who have survived.

Several new options for your tributes are offered this year. The "Bear and a Bunch" is a bouquet sold with a limited edition Daffodil Days Boyds Bear for \$25.00. The "Cheer Bouquet" package includes a bouquet with a screen printed vase with the words, "Give Daffodil - Give Hope." Individual daffodil bouquets are available for a donation of \$10.00 per bouquet (10 daffodils per bouquet). A sign up sheet has been placed on the bulletin board.

The order deadline is February 17, 2006.

Make your check payable to the American Cancer Society and drop it off at the church office.



"Helping Hands"

Working Together in God's service

Project Hope

The Theme for February is Can Openers and Soup or Stew

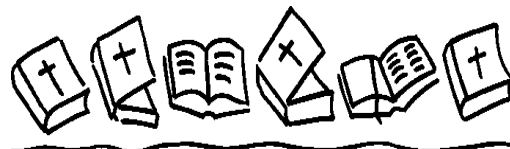
These are things our clients can not purchase with their food stamps.

Diapers	Dish soap	Bar soap
Deodorant	Toothbrush and toothpaste	
Mouthwash (without alcohol)	Feminine hygiene products	
Hair products (combs, brushes, picks)	Shaving Cream	
Razors	Dry Laundry Soap	Bathroom tissue
Kleenex		

A special thanks to the folks who have been bringing in the peanut butter! Peanut Butter is always in high demand because it is high in protein. Besides that, most kids love it!

Bibles for Sudanese Immigrants

*Search is on for Arabic, Madi, Dinka, Nuer, and English
Pam Reents, Bible Project*



God has been talking to me again about Bibles for more of the Sudanese tribes living in America. After a summit meeting of ELCA Sudanese leaders in December here at Grace, I have had requests for Bibles in the Nuer language, the Dinka language, the Madi language, Arabic and English. Each request has also included requests for songbooks in their language as well.

I am beginning the hunt for these materials. So far, I have leads on the Nuer Bibles and songbooks. The Nuer Bibles will cost approximately \$15.00 to \$20.00 each by the time I pay for shipping. I have requests for 200 copies. I am praying that God will provide the songbooks at a very low cost. A printing company here in Omaha may be willing to print them for us and donate them to the ministry. Pray that God will lead this company to do this ministry for our Sudanese friends.

I have no leads yet for the Dinka or Madi materials. Several of the tribes asked for Arabic. I have not yet researched the cost of these but I am confident that I will be able to find Arabic. I also have requests for English Bibles as well.

I also have a burden for the Sudanese children. Since many of them are learning English in school, I would love to provide them with English children's and youth Bibles. I have requests for about 150 of them. I plan to look at the various versions in the local Christian bookstores. For the very young children, I would like to provide a Bible storybook. I would like to provide easy reader Bibles for the elementary age children and a youth version similar to the Bible Grace Lutheran awards youth when they enter 5th grade.

Would you pray with me about this project? The task God has set before me seems difficult but I know that God is just asking for a willing heart. If you would like to be a part of the search or help with sponsoring materials, contact me, (Pam Reents) at the church office mornings at 341-7730.



Our youth will hold soup pots at church doors on Souper Bowl Sunday, February 5, 2006. They will join young people in churches all across the country to collect money for those who are hungry and hurting. All of the money collected is donated to a charity selected by the participant. None of the money is sent to Souper Bowl headquarters. Organizers only ask that each participant report their collection so national totals can be determined and announced. Our church will donate the Souper Bowl collection to the Lutheran Pantry. Since the Souper Bowl of Caring became a national grassroots event in 1993, more than \$24 million has

gone to help those in need. Please support the youth of our church in this effort to “love our neighbors” by dropping your dollar in the soup pot on February 5, 2006.

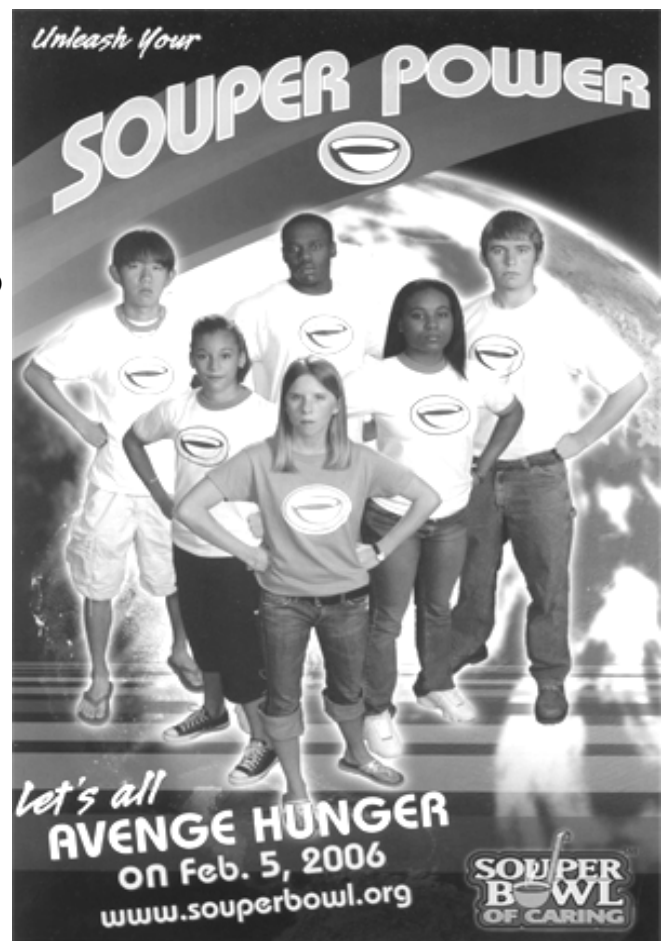
**Sunday
February 5, 2006**

Bring your \$ donations to worship and place them in the soup pot.

Canned goods are welcome, too

All the money given that Sunday STAYS in our community and will be given to the Lutheran Pantry.

This is your chance to help your neighbors in the metropolitan area.

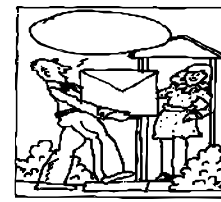


How can people in the United States be Hungry?

Causes of hunger cited in order of frequency include low-paying jobs, high housing costs, medical or health costs, homelessness, poverty or lack of income, substance abuse, mental health problems, reduced public benefits, child care costs, limited life skills, downturn or weakening of the economy, transportation expenses or lack of transportation, lack of information about food stamps, lack of nutritional education and an increase in senior population.

Resource levels declined in 43% of the cities. All cities reported emergency providers were used both for emergencies and as a steady source of food over long periods of time. www.elca.org

Community News



Columbus Park Neighborhood Association

Next Meeting - February 17, 2005 7:00 p.m.
Vote on New Officers
Get updates on the Spring Clean-up.
Grace Lutheran Church - 1326 S 26 St.

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

CPNA
1326 S 26 Street
Omaha, NE 68105
Call 341-7730 for more information.

Community Dance

Benefit for
Omaha Habitat for Humanity

Saturday, February 18, 2006
First United Methodist Church
7020 Cass in Cary Hall
7:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.

Live Music by
Rivertown String Band

Squares, reels, waltzes
No experience necessary

Eric Manley, Caller
\$5.00 per person
Refreshments served.

Spiritual MARDI GRAS 2006

Hanscom Park United Methodist Church
4444 Frances Street, Omaha
One Block South of 45th & Center Streets

**Sunday, February 26, 2005
4:00 p.m.**

*Supper after the Service
in the Fellowship Hall*

Share the Warmth!

Music Festival & Communion Service...
...To Warm Your Spirit!

Ham & Bean, Chili and Chicken Noodle Soup...
...To Warm Your Tummy!

Habitat for Humanity Project...
...To Warm a Home!

Freewill Donation

Mission Project - **Habitat for Humanity**
South Omaha Neighbors Coalition

Please invite your friends and family who live in the Omaha area to join you at the church for the service and to stay for the supper featuring specialty chili recipes, ham and bean soup and chicken noodle soup!

No Reservations Are Needed!

A Faith Community Workshop
Developing Skills for Spiritual Support
Working with Families of the Elderly

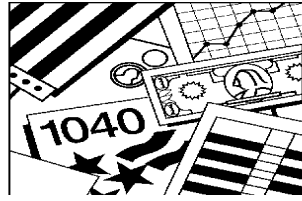
Tuesday, February 28, 2006
St Jon Lutheran Church
633 Willow Ave
Council Bluff, IA
1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

This workshop will assist the faith community as they work with family members and caregivers of the elderly and individuals with dementia.

Registration: \$15.00 per person by Feb 18th
For more information, call (402) 502-4300.

A brochure has been posted on the bulletin board outside the church office.

Free Income Tax Help



Here are a few locations in Omaha offering free income-tax service to low-income taxpayers.
For more sites, visit www.omaha.com and click on Business or call 211 for more information.

AARP Information Center, 1941 S. 42nd St., Suite 220, Omaha; 2/1/06 to 4/17/06, Monday-Friday 10 a.m.-3 p.m.; (402)398-9582.

Benson Public Library, 2918 N. 60th St., Omaha; 2/1/06 to 4/17/06, Thursday and Saturday 10 a.m.-3 p.m.; (402)398-9582.

Bethany Lutheran Church, 5151 NW Radial Hwy., Omaha; 2/1/06 to 4/17/06, Thursday and Friday 10 a.m.-3 p.m.; (402)398-9582.

Charles Washington Library, 2868 Ames Ave., Omaha; 2/1/06 to 4/17/06, Monday and Wednesday 10 a.m.-3 p.m.; (402)398-9582.

Chicano Awareness Center, 4821 S. 24th St., Omaha; 2/1/06 to 4/17/06, Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday 10 a.m.-3 p.m.; (402)733-2720.

Dietz Church-Slugo Computer Class, 1423 S 10th St., Omaha; 2/8/06 to 4/15/06, Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

Family Services, 2102 S. 42nd St., Omaha; 2/1/06 to 4/15/06, Monday-Friday 10 a.m.-3 p.m.; (402)398-9582.

Girls, Inc., 2811 N. 45th St., Omaha; 2/4/06, Saturday 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

Goodwill Industries, 1111 S. 41st St., Omaha; 1/28/06 to 4/22/06, Saturday 1 p.m.-4 p.m.

Greater Omaha Community Action, 2406 Fowler, Omaha; 1/13/06 to 4/12/06; Monday-Friday 8 a.m.-3 p.m.; (402)453-5656.

Greater Omaha Community Action, 5002 S. 24th St., Suite 203, Omaha; 1/13/06 to 4/10/06, Monday-Friday 1 a.m.-4 p.m.; (402)731-1154.

Iglesia Cristo Lutheran Church, 4440 S. 25th St., Omaha; 2/1/06 to 4/17/06, Tuesday and Thursday 10 a.m.-3 p.m.; (402)398-9582.

Liberty Elementary School, 2021 St. Marys Ave., Omaha; 2/11/06, Saturday 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

North Christ Child Center, 2111 Emmet, Omaha; 2/7/06 to 4/11/06, Tuesday 5 p.m.-7 p.m., Saturday 10 a.m.-noon.

Omaha OIC, 2724 N. 24th St., Omaha; 2/1/06 to 4/17/06, (by appointment only) Tuesday and Thursday 10 a.m.-3 p.m.; (402)398-9582.

Sons of Italy, 1238 S. 10th St., Omaha; 1/29/06 to 4/2/06, Sunday 1 p.m.-4 p.m.

South Omaha Public Library, 2302 M St., Omaha; 2/1/06 to 4/15/06, Monday, Wednesday and Friday 10 a.m.-3 p.m.; (402)398-9582.

News from the Families of Grace Lutheran Church



- ◆ To all the folks who turned in their portions of the Annual Report in a timely manner. The “Lickety Split” Award goes to Barbara Narducci for turning her report in first!
- ◆ To Jack Williams for all his meticulous editing of the Annual Report. The report wouldn’t look so professional without you, Jack!
- ◆ Thanks to the gals who helped Pam assemble the Annual Report: Brenda Spahr and Eva Martin.
- ◆ To the wonderful people who have donated clothing and warm items to both our Sudanese room and the Mitten Tree project.
- ◆ To the ladies of Grace Lutheran Church who have volunteered their time to help with the Sudanese ESL classes on Saturday; Mary Laaker, Janet Hula, Vicki Cox, Marsha Moyer, Barbara Nelson and other women from UNO and Brownell Talbot.

This paragraph was inadvertently left out of the Property Report in the Annual Report. The missing paragraph acknowledges the people who were so vital in the completion of the many projects in 2005.

“The coordinator for the projects in 2005 was Jack Williams. This included planning and designing, preparing cost estimates for projects, seeking contractors and vendors, contracting for goods and services, comparison shopping and purchasing, scheduling work, follow-up, inspection, and approval of work, and writing checks for payments of goods and services. This involved communicating with many persons at church and elsewhere. All the willing help and cooperation that was received was most gratifying and appreciated. Together, much was accomplished. Special thanks to Jerry Van Ormer and Bob Moss for the many hours of hard work they devoted to the projects. They set a fine example of contributed service. Their diligence, skill and good nature are admirable.”

Mary and I would like to express our sincere thanks for the many Christmas remembrances and generous gifts that we received. We are deeply touched by your love and kindness.

Pastor and Mary Laaker

My sincere thanks to the people of Grace Lutheran Church.

Thank you to all the folks who left little gifts at my desk during the Christmas season. Your expressions of love touched my heart and made my day.

I count it a privilege to work with you as we serve God together. May God bless our ministries together in 2006.

With affection,
Pam Reents, Grace Lutheran Church Secretary



Good bye, Myra
‘Til We Meet Again.

Long time member, Myra Watson went home to be with the Lord on Monday, January 30th. Myra was a faithful servant of God, giving of her money, her time and her talent. We grieve the loss with her family but also rejoice that Myra’s work is done here on earth and that she is in the presence of her Lord.



Virginia McGill
Director

Gabriella Ortiz, Assistant
Douglas County Health Department
Se habla español .

Our Latinas en Accion, Women in Action group held its Christmas celebration at Grace Lutheran Church last month. It was a beautiful celebration!

Grace hosted over 55 children who worked for two weeks at Wheeler Church making piñatas for the occasion. They also practiced for several months so that they could sing several traditional Spanish Christmas hymns for their parents and friends. Sara Flores, the Coordinator of our childcare and children's education programs, introduced the children's songs by offering her explanation of helping prepare the children's program:

"Those of us who have lived in Omaha for a while, we are veterans of straddling both cultures. We know how important it is for our young children to learn about the traditions of Mexico where their grandparents still live. Whether we were born in Mexico or the United States, we need to instill in our children an appreciation for their culture and traditions."

To enthusiastic applause, the children sang and their parents joined in singing the final song of the program.

On January 6th, the feast of the Epiphany, our women's group held another fiesta at Grace. It was marked by the women serving hot chocolate and traditional ring bread to all our participants and guests. Inside the bread, two small statues of the Baby Jesus were hidden. Tradition states that those who find the statues while eating the bread are obligated to help with hosting another party in the new year. Our own Pam Reents along with Martha, one of our participants, both found the Baby Jesus and will be planning another gathering for our groups in February!!!!!!



Latinas en Accion,

A free exercise class for women and children is available each Friday morning at Grace Lutheran Church in the Lower Fellowship Hall (LFH) The class begins at 9:00 a.m. and continues for about an hour and half.

Drop by for fun, fitness and fellowship!

For more information on these programs or any of the others offered by Interfaith Health Service, contact Virginia McGill at 660-6689 or at the church at 341-7730.

From the Editor

Doing God's Work

This past week, I attended a worship service and heard a sermon on missions. The speaker said something that has been rolling around in my head all week. He said, "God doesn't need you to accomplish His work." I keep thinking about this statement over and over. If God doesn't need me to get His work done, how will He do it? As I pondered this statement, I began to see the arrogance of my attitude. God can do anything. He is without limits. He has the power and wisdom to speak whatever His will is into existence. He can do whatever His will is without "human intervention."

I've been struggling again. There are so many good "causes" for me to be a part of. My heart has been pulled in so many directions that it has been hard for me to focus on any one thing. As a result, I feel like I haven't accomplished many of my goals for the things I am involved in. My arrogant attitude has been, "God needs me to do this." My flighty mindset has caused me great anxiety. "Lord, I am missing the mark. I need to try harder to do Your work. Pamela, you blew it! This didn't get done. You didn't follow through." My longing to "help" God has been resulting in frustration and self depreciation. What a trap!

This morning, as I was reading my Bible, I found myself in Isaiah again (Chapter 42 and 43). As I was reading, over and over God told the Israelites, "You blew it. You worshiped idols. You didn't obey." As I read, it occurred to me that sometimes we as believers make our good works like an idol. We do His work, not necessarily because we want to bring *Him* glory but because we arrogantly think He *needs* us to do His work. In Isaiah 40:22, God goes on to say, "You are like prisoners. You have become plundered and prey to whatever comes along. You blew it! Even though you thought you were doing My work, your motives weren't right. Who gets the glory? Who gets the credit? You or Me?"

There is a word that I have loved and hated all my life. The word is "but." In Isaiah 43, the first word is "But." It is a good "but!" "But now..." OK, God is going to say something about how to change my feeling of inadequacy. Read Isaiah 43! It is full of verses of hope and direction. Over and over in this chapter, God says, "I know you. You are mine. I am with you even though you keep making mistakes. Don't fear. You are precious."

So why does God *want* me to do His work? I can think of three reasons.

1. To bring Him glory! As His plan unfolds, the mystery of what God's plan is becomes revealed. Like a suspense novel, we, His children, are on the edge of our seat waiting to see what will happen next! As the plot unfolds, we see how God has knitted every event, good and bad to bring about His plan.
2. To make me a part of His story. Think of the privilege it is to be a part of the plan that the God of the universe has set. It's part of the "proof" that I am precious to Him.
To make others a part of His story. The wonderful part about being part of this story is that it is not an exclusive club. It is God's intention that every person be a part of His plan.

If I believe that it is God's story unfolding around me, my main responsibility is to keep myself focused on what *He* wants me to do. How do I determine what part He want me to have in His story? By keeping my relationship right with Him and by intently spending time with Him, both reading His word and listening to Him speak. God is in the business of revealing Himself. He will intentionally show me exactly what I need to do to serve Him.

Pam Reents, Editor



National Blah Buster Month
National Embroidery Month
National Grapefruit Month
National Snack Food Month
National Weddings Month
Responsible Pet Owner Month
Return Carts to the Supermarket Month
Creative Romance Month,
International Twit Award Month
Canned Food Month

A Real Blast...Um.. I Mean Groaner!

A local policeman had just finished his shift one cold November evening and was at home with his wife. "You just won't believe what happened this evening, in all my years on the force I've never seen anything like it."



"Oh yes dear, what happened ?"

"I came across two guys down by the canal, one of them was drinking battery acid and the other was eating fireworks."

"Drinking battery acid and eating fireworks!! What did you do with them?"

"Oh that was easy, . . . I charged one and let the other off."

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A Second Opinion

Jon and Amanpreet were in a mental institution. This place had an annual contest picking two of the best patients and gives them two questions. If they got them correct, they're deemed cured and free to go. Jon was called into the doctor's office first and asked if he understood that he'd be free if he answered the questions correctly.

The doctor said, "Jon, what would happen if I poked out one of your eyes?"

Jon said, "I'd be half blind."

"That's correct. What if I poked out both eyes?"

"I'd be completely blind."

The doctor stood up, shook Jon's hand, and told him he was free.

On Jon's way out, as the doctor filled out the paperwork, Jon mentioned the exam to Amanpreet. He told him what questions were going to be asked and gave him the answers. So Amanpreet came in.

The doctor went thru the formalities and asked, "What would happen if I cut off one ear?"

Amanpreet, remembering what Jon had said was the correct answer said, "I'd be half blind."

The doctor looked a little puzzled, but went on. "What if I cut off the other ear?"

"I'd be completely blind," Amanpreet answered.

"Amanpreet, can you explain how you'd be blind?"

"My hat would fall down over my eyes."



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Valentine's Day -- 1 Corinthians 13

WORD LIST

all mysteries
 angels never
 arrogant not
 away now
 bears own
 became perfect
 boastful prophetic
 burned resentful
 clanging right
 cymbal see
 dim understand
 endures
 fails
 greatest
 imperfect
 insist
 irritable
 know
 knowledge
 love
 man
 men
 mountains
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d r b s e t
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Oh I Wish I Was A Punxsutawney Groundhog

Tune = The Oscar
 Mayer Wiener Song
 © 1998 by Don Halley



Oh I wish I was a Punxsutawney groundhog
 That is what I'd truly like to be
 Some other folks would rather be a hot dog
 But I think that is just plain ol' silly

Oh I wish I was a Punxsutawney groundhog
 Telling all if springtime soon is near
 'Cause if I was a Punxsutawney groundhog
 I'd only have to work one day a year

