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

402-341-7730

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

JUNE SUNDAY EVENTS 9:30 am. Worship Service Grace Lutheran, 1326 South 26th Street Pastor - Rev. Dr. Damon D. Laaker Editor/Church Secretary Grace - Brenda Spahr Editor/Church Secretary St. Luke's - Nancy Klusaw Sexton - Alma Lopez

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THE GRACE St. Luke's MESSENGER Echo 1889 - 2024 1905 - 2024



June Worship Services will be held at Grace Lutheran, 1326 S. 26th Street



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

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



Over the past year, we have been highlighting the "Go and . . ." themes offered from the Synod Assembly a year ago. May's theme has been "God

and Be Church." There is a myriad of ways we can be Church.

At the close of my message on Sunday, May 12, I said the following. "As Andrew Root and Blair Bertrand write in their book, When Church Stops Working, "Faith is the crisis of knowing the true God by how God has revealed Godself in the world. The church has no life other than waiting for and witnessing to the God who reveals Godself in the world in the backward way of love." Our act, as followers of the living, resurrected Jesus, is to wait, and pray, and witness to God's acts revealed to us by that very God. This waiting and praying is not passively sitting inside these four walls but actively engaging with the Spirit that sends us out into the community as Jesus states clearly, "As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world."

Janice Fulmer and Annette Chipman served in the church as Church during the Primary Election on May 14. Their welcome and care for those who came to vote was a witness as Church.

The South Omaha Community Care Council partnered with Omaha Habitat and the South Omaha Business Association to sponsor a "Rock the Block" event. Invitations were sent to individuals, organizations and businesses. I shared the invitation with our Councils. I signed up and went to Be Church as we did minor fix ups on two homes on 23rd Street.

While I was on Police Chaplain duty a week ago, I was called to extend care and compassion to two families who experienced loss. This is Being Church in the community.

Some have gone and helped with the clean-up from the tornados. This is actively engaging with the Spirit to Be Church.

I would hope that the work of the Spirit through each of us gives us opportunities to Be Church. As the theme expresses, The Holy Spirit is moving and blowing through, with, and for God's people. To Go and... means we pray, listen, share our story, serve with neighbors, ask, be honest, be present, rest, have the conversation, be intentional, tell the story, and be the church. Everybody has something to offer.

Pastor Laaker

Stewardship

Henry Ford, the famed US automobile manufacturer, was vacationing in Ireland when he was asked to make a donation for a new orphanage. Ford happily wrote out a check for \$2,000. When the news ran with the story the next day, they mistakenly wrote that the amount of the check was for \$20,000. Apologetic, the orphanage director showed up and promised Ford he would call the newspaper straight away and have it resolved. Ford shrugged him off. "There's no need for that," he said, grabbing his checkbook and writing out another check for \$18,000. "I will give you a check for the remainder if you'll promise me that the new building will open with this inscription over the door; 'I was a stranger and you took me in."

We have been kept very aware of the destruction that visited our communities. There are many agencies that are gathering funds. The Nebraska Disaster Relief Fund is one of our shared ministries through the Nebraska Synod. You can help make a difference by grabbing your checkbook and making a donation to the church with "Disaster Relief Fund" in the memo line.

Pastor Laaker



Continued.....



Grace 2024 Council Members

Council Meeting Notes - May 14, 2024

<u>Call to Order</u> Sarah called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

Gathering of Prayers We ask for prayers for Council Member family and friends, strength for storm victims, watchfulness over Brenda and Andrea as they travel, 2024 graduates and kids/families preparing for summer break, and a prayer of thanks for the rain.

Devotions Devotions were led by Pastor Laaker, reading the selected verses in the "Daily Texts" from Ezra 8:22 and John 6:67. The first tells us that God is gracious to those who seek Him, yet his power and wrath are against those who are against Him. The second tells us that Jesus asked the disciples if they wished to go away.

<u>Visions for Ministry</u> Leading Faithful Innovation by Dwight Zscheile, Michael Binder, and Tessa Pinkstaff

The authors challenge us to intentionally and actively listen and pray for direction as we seek God's path for us. They provide types of listening practices, encouraging us to understand the role of the Holy Spirit in listening and recognizing the presence of God in our neighborhoods, while also allowing for space and time to learn the direction God wants us to go. Read Chapter 3 for next month.

<u>Minutes</u> The minutes of the regular April 2024 meeting of the council were approved.

<u>Financial Secretary's Report</u> The report of the Financial Secretary, Janet Hula, was presented and accepted by motion.

<u>**Treasurer's Report</u>** The report of the Treasurer, Ralph Fitle, was presented and accepted by motion.</u>

<u>Mission Share</u> The monthly Mission Share contribution and San Andres contribution were both made in April – ending with 100% of our pledge for both.

Committee Reports Christian Education No new report.

Evangelism/Outreach Harassment Policy - Adopted by motion.

Finance Thompson Event - memorials received will go toward Loaves and Fishes Pantry.

Property South Double Door Light - new light ordered to replace it. We need to explore possibilities regarding the Basement Pantry Door.

<u>Service/Social Ministry</u> Rock the Block in South Omaha on Saturday - cleanup organized by Habitat. YES – we will begin collecting items for their ministry efforts.

Support/Stewardship Pastor will attend the Pre-Assembly workshop and then decide on it or "Moving Forward by Faith" for our Fall Stewardship Emphasis.

Worship Hymn Selection made music choices for the next three months.

Unfinished Business Ongoing Conversations with St. Luke's.

New Business No new report.

<u>Announcements</u> Greg announced his nephew will be ordained as a Catholic Deacon.

Barnabas will provide a prayer in June.

Adjournment The Council meeting closed in prayer and adjourned at 8:34pm.

Respectfully Submitted, Amanda Vazquez, Secretary

Father's Day Brunch

Following worship service on June 16th a brunch will be served in celebration of Father's Day. All are welcome to stay after service and enjoy great food and fellowship!



Continued...



St. Luke's 2024 Council Members

Officers Serving the Congregation: Treasurer: Nancy Klusaw Financial Secretary & Memorial/Special Gifts: Rose Marie Lad

Council Meeting Notes - May 9, 2024

Frank Durham called the in-person meeting to order at 4:28 p.m

Devotions: Pastor Laaker led devotions from Daily Texts – Ezra 6:22 and 1 Thessalonians 5:16.

Agenda: Agenda adopted by motion.

Minutes of April 4, 2024, meeting: Cindy Fleming moved; John Kolb seconded, to accept the minutes. Motion carried.

Book Study: Chapter 2 "Listen" of the leading, faithful, Innovation was discussed. Please read Chapter 3 "Act" for next month.

Unfinished Business:

1 Roof Status – The new service coordinator, Joey Swafford from McKinnis Roofing, contacted Steve Braun. Specific updates were given. Annette Chipman moved, John Kolb seconded, to select a high impact "slate" shingle for the roof replacement, with cost to be considered. Motion passed.

- 2 Assembly update John Kolb will be attending this year.
- 3 Conversations with Grace continue.

Reports:

Pastor's Report – A written report was provided. T-Shirts for Spring Lake School have been delivered to church. They were divided into classrooms and will be delivered next week. Conversation between Pr. Kim Roberts and Cesar Martinez have occurred and will continue with Canopy South on lawn/snow care. A "Rock the Block" South Omaha Volunteer opportunity was shared. President's Report – A written report was provided. Our American flag is now flying again.

Treasurer/Finance Report – A written report was provided. Financial Secretary's Report – A written report was provided.

Memorial Fund Report - A written report was provided.

Building and Grounds Report – An oral report was given. Dan Ruffner fertilized the yard. A bid of \$410.00 from Glass Masters has been received to replace the glass over the northeast stained-glass window in the alley.

Evangelism – John Kolb gave an oral report.

Fellowship – Annette Chipman gave an oral report. A Mother's Day brunch will be held on May 12 after service.

Stewardship, Parish Education and Social Ministry – No report. Worship and Music – The hymn selection committee met, and new music has been chosen for the next quarter.

Motion to accept all reports as presented was adopted.

New Business:

1. Cinco Mayo parade is May 11, 2024. The church will be open, and all are invited to attend and reach out to our neighbors.

The meeting closed with prayer at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Connie Tefft, Secretary



Steve, Dan, Spring Lake Principal Katy, Nancy, Pastor Laaker, and Cindy presented t-shirts for all students and staff at Spring Lake Elementary School.

Continued...



Yet give attention to your servant's prayer and his plea for mercy, Lord my God. Hear the cry and the prayer that your servant is praying in your presence this day.

1 Kings 8:28

Please keep in your prayers the individuals listed below who have health issues and concerns:

Vicki Cox June Hilmer Samuel Mantzaris Pam Reents Rose Wynn Terri Durham Richard Krambeck Carolyn Matson Marilyn Van Ormer



Pray for wisdom for your Church Council at Grace and St. Luke's Lutheran.

Pray for the Council Members. Ask God to bless their ministry among us. Pray for strength and spiritual wisdom for the leaders in the local church and the Nebraska Synod:

> Pastor Damon Laaker, Grace and St. Luke's Lutheran Church Bishop Scott Johnson, Nebraska Synod Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, ELCA Bishop

Pray for the Sudanese community in general. Charles Tuw and Moses Loda are the elders for the Sudanese Worshiping Community.

Let's encourage each other as we see God's hand in answering our prayers.

Pray for our Shut-ins and Nursing Home residents:

Dolores Castro - Home Vicki Cox - Home Richard Krambeck - Trinity Villiage, Papillion Dee Nielsen - Peyton, CO Rev. Terry Nielsen - Echo Hills Jeri Swanson - Hillcrest Estates Marilyn Van Ormer - Home Doris Westman - Hillcrest Estates



All of our homebound enjoy receiving mail, if you would like to brighten their day, please call the church office for any addresses you need. Blessings!

During the month of June we will be collecting items in support of YES, Youth Emergency Services.



Acceptable items to be collected are:

New, in-package and/or clean gently-used clothing. **Please only donate new, in-package undergarments.** Home goods.

Current season clothing items, as we have limited storage space. Personal or self-care products for all skin and hair types. Feminine products and diapers. Cleaning supplies. Prepackaged food, snacks, and drinks (bottled water and Gatorade in

summer months.) Bus passes.

Please place your donated items on the table in the back of the sanctuary.

Mission: YES provides housing and support to youth experiencing instability, crisis, and homelessness.

Vision: We envision a community where youth homelessness is unacceptable and youth in crisis are safe, supported, and selfsufficient.



Grace Lutheran Church Thursday, June 6, 2024 10:00 am - 3:00 pm

Volunteers Assisting Seniors will be at Grace Lutheran Church on Thursday, June 6, 2024 to help fill out your Homestead Exemption Application. This service is free. **Event is by appointment only. Please call the Volunteers Assisting Seniors office at 402-444-6617 to schedule your appointment.**

Our Mission: Empowering seniors with the knowledge and confidence to make informed decisions about their benefits.

For addidtional information visit our website at: vas-nebraska.org



For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Ephesians 2:10

Thank you Mary for your weekly dedication running the recording equipment every Sunday during worship service.

Thank you Jean, Miriam, and Rod, for sharing your music ministry with us and providing such beautiful music during worship services.

Thank you Deb and Vicki for taking care of the altar, and preparing communion.

Thank you Cindy, Connie, Sara, and Shirley for reading during worship services during the month of May. It is greatly appreciated.

Thank you Bob and Connie for making sure the grounds were picked up for the South Omaha Community Care Council.

Thank you to everyone who assisted in making the Mother's Day Brunch a fun event for all!

Thank you Janet, Bob & Connie, Rose Marie, Eva, and Ron & Donna for your faithful dedication in helping assemble the monthly newsletter! Thank you Bob and Connie for delivering the newsletter to the Post Office.

Thank you to all those that help keep both church grounds neat by picking up trash around the churches.

Thank you Alma for keeping both Grace and St. Luke's clean and so welcoming to everyone who enters. Also for the wonderful "pop" of Spring decorations you put up around St. Luke's!

Thank you to all Loaves and Fishes Pantry Volunteers; for delivering food items on Sunday mornings, unloading and putting foods items away until Monday mornings, getting everything ready for Mondays and in greeting and serving all with smiles, care and love!





Birthday:

- 2 Samantha Trejo
- 10 Trina Rodriguez
- 11 Micah Laaker
- 14 Benjamin Laaker
- 15 Madelyn Moyer
- 20 Anthony Rodriguez
- 22 Amanda Vazquez
- 25 Scott Adrian
- 28 Solomon Lewa

Grace's

Did we miss your birthday or anniversary? Please contact the church office and let us know! Happy Birthday in faith! May blessings be upon you! On your birthday, remember that you were wonderfully made by God and rejoice in God's love. You are so blessed to be you and to share the amazing love of Jesus on your birthday! May God bless this day with more love than your heart can hold.



Yours frailly. Kamila 😻 🖤

Three of the many Thank You cards presented to Pastor Laaker on the last day of reading this school year at Liberty Elementary School.



BIBLE STUDY I first encountered the phrase "an attitude of gratitude" many years ago, when I spent lots of time with addiction recovery and 12-Step

people. I noticed that grateful people tended to be happy people, forgiving also.

What do the Scriptures say about an attitude of gratitude? Well, "attitude " is not a word that one sees often in Scripture. In fact, my Concordance lists it only twice, both times in Maccabees. But the meaning of the phrase pops up all over the place. And people who embody thanks include Hannah (mother of the prophet Samuel), Daniel, King David, St. Paul, and Mary, the mother of Jesus - just look at her Magnificat!

In Acts 16:25, Paul and Silas spend a night in prison singing praises to God, while other prisoners listen raptly. Why? Well, Paul claims in 1 Cor.2:16 to have the mind of Christ. Maybe that's why. He also tells his beloved friends in Philippians 2:5 that they must have the mind of Christ. He then explained that mind by quoting a beautiful passage (2:6-11) about the selfemptying of Christ.

To the Colossian church he wrote, "You must live your whole life according to the Christ you have received - Jesus the Lord. You must be rooted in him, and built on him, and held firm by the faith you have been taught, and full of thanksgiving. " (Col. 2:6-8)

Paul urged the followers in Thessalonia to give thanks in all circumstances, and well he might. An attitude of gratitude is a powerful tool, because it keeps us focused on what is positive and good in our lives

Sara welcomes ideas and questions at 402-686-1693.

Path Assist, now available in your area, connects you to the resources you need to be backet. the resources you need to be healthy and improve the quality of your life. The Path Assist program is



designed to help you confidently navigate local health and social service resources and advocate for your needs. The goal of Path Assist is to help you address issues like housing, food, transportation, access to medicine, isolation, and more before they become serious problems. Path Assist is a free program, you can sign up on their website at: www.path-assist.com/ gethelp or call 402-265-6551.





Birthdays:

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Anniversari	es

3 – Steve Gabrial	14 - Michael & Shirley Carlson	44					
4 - Janice Fulmer	23 - Steve & Jan Gabrial	52					
4 - Robert Malik	26 - John & Barbara Kolb	25					
10 - Eli Retzlaff							
12 - Collin Retzlaff	·····	· ·.					
22 - Douglas Hall	Did we miss your birthday or	÷					
22 - Rose Marie Lad	: anniversary? Please contact the	÷					
26 - Jane Nodean	church office and let us know!						

As you celebrate your special day, May God's blessings be with you always. May God surround you with tender loving care and may God's presence be ever near. May the light of the Lord shine upon you and grant you happiness on this special day and for many years to come.

St. Luke's Mary Circle will meet on Thursday, June 13, 2024 at 9:30 am in the Educational Unit for fellowship and Bible Study. will have devotions, Everyone is welcome to come join in the learning, conversation and refreshments.





Big Thank You note presented to John Kolb on the last day of the reading program for this school year! What an enriching outreach opportunity that gives to both the reader and the school.

thrivent

TABLEC AFE Nourishing Hungry Bodies and Souls

Invite family and friends to our free in-person and virtual events

Save a tree. Plant a tree. Paper shredding events and fundraisers.

Saturday, June 22, 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. | Salem Baptist Church, 3131 Lake St; benefitting the Salem Food Pantry

One best practice to protecting yourself from identity theft is shredding papers with personally identifiable information. The Thrivent Member Network - Nebraska Region has coordinated several contactless drivethru shredding events to assist you in securely shredding your sensitive papers.

Please note: Drive-thru on-site shredding will be located in the assigned parking lots.

Four bankers boxes allowed per vehicle. No tissue, newspaper, cardboard, magazines, or plastic allowed. Staples, paper clips, rubber bands, and folders are all acceptable.

1611 1/2 Farnam Street, Omaha, NE 68102

Hours for Breakfast and Lunch Mon, Tues, Thur, Fri & Sat. from 7 - 2 Closed: Wed and Sun

The Table Grace Musical is currently rehearsing for performances which will be held as follows:

Scottish Rite Center, 202 South 20th Street, Omaha, 402-342-1300. Performance Dates: June 21-22 at 7:00 pm.

Benson Theatre, 6054 Maple Street, Omaha, 402-991-4333. Performance Dates: June 27-29 at 7:00 pm.

Lofte Theatre, 15841 Manley Road, Manley NE, 402-234-2553. Performance Dates: August 8-9 at 7:00 pm.

Make a day with friends and/or family and support Table Grace in a fun way!

Beloved in Christ,

We continue to be thankful for the tremendous response to the destruction caused by multiple tornadoes touching down in eastern Nebraska and western Iowa during the month of May. In less than 24 hours after the May 10th storms, Nebraska Synod congregations in Bennington, Blair, and Elkhorn opened their doors to provide shelter, food, and other resources to those most impacted by the storms, and others contributed generously through their time, goods, and financial support through those congregations and the work of Lutheran Disaster Response. As is sometimes true in these situations, the difficulty has centered in coordinating and distributing the overwhelming abundance of tools, supplies, clothing, and food that has been donated. Nebraskans have

stepped up in a time of need, as we always do. Now we begin to turn our thoughts toward how we continue to step up for our neighbors in the days, weeks, and months to come.

One of the ways that we do this work together as the Nebraska Synod is through the **Nebraska Synod Disaster Response fund**. Through it, we are able to help



respond to needs related to recovery and rebuilding for the long-haul. If you feel so inclined to respond and help your neighbors in need, we invite you to prayerfully consider this financial opportunity. All gifts to the disaster fund are used in response to recovery, responding, and rebuilding to disasters. Disaster response work is a marathon and not a sprint. As Lutheran Christians we walk together with our neighbors in relationship for the long-haul, until all the work is done long after the news crews have gone home. We give thanks for this life we share as God's people and the church together, and for all the many ways God's people have already generously and faithfully responded and will continue to do so.

On the synod website, we have relaunched a **disaster response page** where various resources that are shared will be added in the days and weeks ahead. We will do our best to keep you updated of needs and thank you for your prayers and for all that you are doing for your siblings in Christ impacted by these storms and tornadoes. If you have any questions or if you need to report from your congregation about households or families who have been impacted by the storms and tornadoes, please reach out to Deacon Timothy Siburg directly.

In deep and hope and trust, Bishop Scott Johnson and your entire Nebraska Synod Staff



Loaves and Fishes Pantry

Grace Lutheran Church 1326 South 26th Street 402-341-7730

Pantry is Open 10:00 - 11:00 am Every Monday ~ Even Holidays!

Variety of fresh foods donated by Trader Joe's and Whole Foods.

The Pantry continues to reach out to those in need on a weekly basis. Clients of the Loaves and Fishes Pantry are asked to park along Poppleton Street. Particiapants are then directed through the alley to pick up prepared sacks and bags of much needed food items. **The Pantry is in need of clean plastic grocery bags and paper grocery sacks!** Please continue to keep the Pantry and all the work that is done in your prayers. *All are served with love and care.*

There is a variety of volunteer opportunities for anyone interested.		v of a family or individual in need of food assistance? the Pantry information with them.
	: 	
		riety of volunteer opportunities for anyone interested. rch office for additional information.

Lutheran South Pantry 4401 South 23rd Street ~ 402-502-7070



Items that clients cannot purchase with their food stamps are always appreciated: Dish Soap, Kleenex,

Bar Soap, Deodorant, Toothbrush and toothpaste, Feminine hygiene products, Hair products (combs, brushes, picks), Bathroom tissue, Shampoo, Dry Laundry Soap, Hand Sanitizer, Diaper wipes, and Diapers, especially sizes 6 and pull-ups.

We always need paper or plastic bags.



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

Take a few moments of your time to download the app for **TAGG** - **Together A Greater Good**; they partner with several community business. Take a snapshot of your receipt and some businesses will donate 5% to a charity of your choice ~ either St. Luke's or Grace.

Register your **Bakers Plus card** with Kroger and choose Grace or St. Luke's as your charitable choice!

Ronald McDonald House: Save your pop tabs. They use the proceeds to pay the utilities. A box is provided in the back of the sanctuary for the tabs. Our most recent contribution of pop tabs brings our total to 129,000.

Eye Glasses. Do you have old eye glasses that you no longer use? A box is located in the back of the sanctuary to place them. They will be given to the Lion's Club to be used for individuals in need.

The United Nations World Food Programme recently warned that acute

food insecurity has reached an unprecedented high, affecting a record 349 million people — up from 135 million in 2019. That is a shocking statistic. ELCA World Hunger partners here in the United States and around the world are telling us about the financial strain caused by the rising hunger crisis, and we come to you humbly, asking for a donation.

Through ELCA World Hunger you support families as they address root causes of hunger and poverty through such multifaceted solutions as education, agricultural training and microloans for women. Our faith calls us to be in relationship with our neighbors, and that is what makes your partnership so important.

SPEED BUMP

by Dave Coverly





Signs and wonders

Sign seen in a convenience store: "Live bait. Our worms catch fish, or die trying."

> Rev. Dale Schoening, Madrid, IA

> > _____

Sign outside church in Edmond, OK: "God so loved the world that He did not send a committee." via, Rev. Bill Park

from *JoyfulNoiseletter.com* ©Dave Coverly Reprinted with permission

If I went shopping for a man to be my Dad, here is what I'd buy: One who would always stop to answer a little boy's "Why?" One who would always speak kindly to a little girl or boy; One who would give a bit of sunshine and joy. I'd pick a Dad who followed the Bible's golden rule, And one who went regularly to church and Sunday School. I'd buy the very finest Dad to place in our family tree, And then I'd try to live like him, so he'd be proud of me.

via The Witness Bethany Lutheran Church, LaPort, IN

The father of 14 children was know as "Mr. Fix-it" because of all the broken windows and screen doors he fixed. The dad's favorite saying was, "If it can't be fixed with WD-40 or duct tape, you need to buy a new one."

When the father died, his boys placed a can of WD-40 and a roll of duct tape in the casket with him. And as they closed the casket, the boys duct-taped it shut.

The pastor, unable to control his laughter, had to get his camera to validate what he had seen knowing no one would believe it.

~ Columnist Smily Anders, Baton Rouge (LA) Adovcate

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Fathers of the Bible

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т	G	I	R	с	S	Е	S	0	м	Х	Х	Х	G	с	D	R	с	Z	Ε	G	Т	۷	D
U	Н	A	F	К	L	R	т	Е	Н	Q	D	J	к	0	D	Х	J	Е	L	I	В	Н	D
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Zacharias	manasseh	zebedee
Solomon	Abraham	Joseph
jesse	moses	Isaac
Jacob	David	Adam
Noah	God	Job

"I've learned that simple walks with my father around the block on summer nights when I was a child did wonders for me as an adult.

I've learned that having a child fall asleep in your arms is one of the most peaceful feelings in the world."

~ Andy Rooney