

Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church
1326 South 26th Street
Omaha, NE 68105-2380
402-341-7730

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

AUGUST SUNDAY EVENTS
9:30 am. Worship Service
Grace Lutheran, 1326 South 26th Street

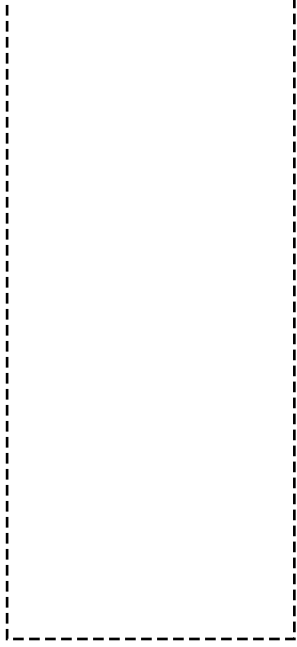
Pastor - Rev. Dr. Damon D. Laaker
Editor/Church Secretary Grace - Brenda Spahr
Editor/Church Secretary St. Luke's - Nancy Klusaw
Sexton - Alma Lopez

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THE GRACE MESSENGER

1889 - 2024

St. Luke's Echo

1905 - 2024

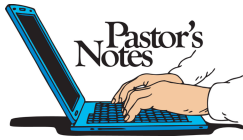


August Worship Services will
be held at Grace Lutheran,
1326 S. 26th Street



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**



I am so thankful for the opportunity to serve as Pastor. The beauty of participating in the Sudanese worship service on July 14 was rewarding. The joy shared was contagious. Lots of singing and a bit of speaking at the end of the service. I was recognized by Pr. John Badeng as having been the connection and support with the Sudanese community that spanned over twenty-two years.

I was teased gently by one of the longtime supporters of South Omaha Community Care Council at its most recent meeting held at St. Luke's. It is nice to have such connections to the community.

I am currently helping to transition a new Senior Chaplain for the Omaha Police Chaplains. I treasure these moments. I know that new leadership is always good. The relationships with the volunteer Chaplains is a delight. I have had the privilege of knowing all the Chaplains that have served since the organization was created in 1982.

All of this is to say that I am convinced that God has placed me here in this community and I have been given the joy of re-presenting Christ. As I said yesterday, at the end of my Sunday message, God is going to get things done through us directing us to go out and encounter others and say to them a Word of Good News in loving deeds.

Thank you for this privilege.
Pastor Laaker

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Romans 15:13



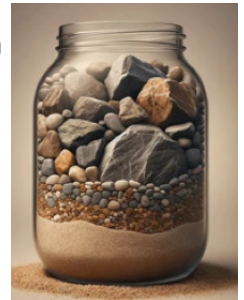
Stewardship

Stephen Covey, the author of 7 Habits of Highly Effective People, does an exercise on time where he puts large rocks in a jar and asks, "is it full?" Then he adds smaller rocks, sand and water, asking the question each time. If the water or gravel went in first, the rest of the ingredients would not have fit. It is clear that we must put "first things first" or they'll be crowded out.

You can take a minute or two to reflect on the things in your life and schedule that keep you from God. You are invited to compose a list on a sheet of paper. Fold the papers, bring them to a bowl and burn them with a candle or drown them with water to symbolize letting these distractions go. Read and highlight Matthew 6:33 ("Seek first the kingdom of God) in your Bible, writing "Priority #1" in margins.

Pray that you will find the strength to break free from the distractions that keep you from God.

Pastor Laaker



Grace received a letter from Lutheran Campus Ministry, below is an excerpt:

Dear Grace:
Thank you for your support and prayers! We are getting ready to welcome and invite a new class of students as fall semester is set to begin. Thank you for sharing in this vital ministry!

Jon Fredricks, Executive Director
Nebraska Lutheran Campus Ministry, Inc.





Grace 2024 Council Members

Ron Adrian	Barnaba Dyedi	Sarah Emery
Arlone Farber	Greg Hula	Janet Hula
Eva Martin	Andrea Spahr	Amanda Vazquez
Pastor Laaker		

Officers Serving the Congregation:		
Financial Secretary: Janet Hula	Treasurer: Ralph Fitle	

Council Meeting Notes - July 9, 2024

The regular meeting of the Council was held on July 9, 2024. Council members shared prayer concerns for individuals, hurricane victims, people of Ukraine, leaders of this country, peace for Palestinians, and employment opportunities for Barnabas.

Devotions: Devotions were led by Pastor Laaker, reading the selected verses in the “Daily Texts” from Psalm 67:1 and Mark 10:16. The first asks God to bless us. The second reminds us that God blesses all of God’s children.

Visions for Ministry: Leading Faithful Innovation by Dwight Zscheile, Michael Binder, and Tessa Pinkstaff

The authors touch on the 3rd piece of their action plan: Share. They discuss the importance of sharing what we’ve learned as we’ve listened and acted in our attempts to connect with people. Sharing stories have a way of connecting people together, finding shared experiences and common themes through which people find comfort and fellowship even outside of the church walls. Read Chapter 5 for next month.

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

Christian Education: KINect Camp (July 21-23) - Pastor and grandson Jericho will be attending.

Evangelism/Outreach: none

Finance: Immanuel Vision Fund New Application - now have 4 cycles to submit applications each year; open to ideas for grant program to apply for this year. Quantum - fiber internet service will increase monthly by \$10. Efforts to rectify payments to Sams Club continue.

Continued...

Property: Alley Door & Parking Lot Door - door has been ordered for the alley. HVAC - waiting on experienced technician to come back out and look over the whole unit and address the concerns.

Service/Social Ministry: none

Support/Stewardship: Quarterly reports will come out this month.

Worship: Sudanese group will be hosting all of the local Sudanese groups for worship at Grace on July 14. Pastor was asked to preach for their service.

Unfinished Business: Grace/St. Luke’s Vision Team will plan to meet in August.

New Business: none

Announcements: Greg will provide a prayer in August.

Adjournment: The Council meeting closed in prayer and adjourned at 8:13pm.

Respectfully Submitted, Amanda Vazquez, Secretary

House Meeting Campaign

In May of 2025, all 7 of Omaha’s City Council Members and the Mayor will be up for re-election! This is the prime opportunity for OTOC to meet with these candidates and discuss the issues WE care about!

This fall, OTOC members will be conducting house meetings to identify leaders and the pressures that affect them so we can build a strong agenda of issues!

Contact your OTOC leaders about participating or hosting a house meeting!





St. Luke's 2024 Council Members

Steve Braun Annette Chipman Frank Durham
Cindy Fleming John Kolb Dave Ruffner
Molly Sedlacek Connie Tefft Pastor Laaker

Officers Serving the Congregation:

Treasurer: Nancy Klusaw

Financial Secretary & Memorial/Special Gifts: Rose Marie Lad

Council Meeting Notes - July 11, 2024

Frank Durham called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

Devotions: Pastor Laaker led devotions from Daily Texts – Hosea 1:10 and Galatians 4:7.

Agenda: Connie Tefft moved; Cindy Fleming seconded, to accept the agenda as written. Motion carried.

Minutes of June 13, 2024, meeting: John Kolb moved; Cindy Fleming seconded, to accept the minutes. Motion carried.

Book Study: Chapter 4 “Share” of the Leading, Faithful, Innovation was discussed. Please read Chapter 5 “Faithful Innovation as a Way of Life for the Church for next month.

Unfinished Business:

1. Roof Status – Steve Braun gave an update. Steve indicated he spoke to a new project manager, Mariah, and she indicated that the start date is scheduled for July 29, 2024.
2. Air Conditioner Update – Blankman HVAC have repaired the damaged unit and replaced the destroyed unit.
3. Trees on the north and west side of the property have been trimmed by Dave and Dan Ruffner.
4. Conversations between Grace and St. Luke’s - A Discernment Team with members from each church continues seeking members.

Continued...

Reports:

Pastor’s Report – A written report was provided. Pastor attended the Board Meeting for South Omaha Community Care Council. While there, he met Jennifer Rodriguez from Workforce Solutions. She looks forward to having open and helpful communication with St. Luke’s. On July 14, Pastor will prepare the message for the extended Sudanese community during a service at Grace.

President’s Report – A written report was provided. He thanked John Kolb for holding last month’s meeting in his absence.

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. Steve Braun reported earlier in the meeting updating the roof status and trimming of trees on the north & west side of the church’s property. Pastor striped the parking lot. More lightbulbs have been replaced. Steve has also sprayed for bugs.

Evangelism – John Kolb gave an oral report.

Fellowship – Annette Chipman gave an oral report. It was reported that the Father’s Day brunch at Grace was fabulous and delicious!

Stewardship & Parish Education offered no new report.

Social Ministry – Cindy Fleming reported that our congregations will continue to collect a variety of items such as feminine products, diapers, cleaning supplies, snack foods, or bus passes for YES - Youth Emergency Services. Our church has donated approximately 155,000 pop tabs to the Ronald McDonald House since initiating giving.

Worship and Music – The hymn selection committee will meet on July 16, 2024.

Connie Tefft moved; Dave Ruffner seconded, to accept all reports as present. Motion carried.

New Business: None

The meeting closed with the Lord’s Prayer at 5:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Connie Tefft, Secretary



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
Richard Krambeck
Carolyn Matson
Marilyn Van Ormer



June Hilmer
Samuel Mantzaris
Pam Reents
Rose Wynn



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!



Quilters for Lutheran World Relief

Beginning Tuesday, September 10th mornings from 9:30 to 11:00 a.m. Join a lively group of people and assemble amazing tie quilts for Lutheran World Relief organization. These quilts are delivered around the world to areas most in need of a little comfort. Please feel free to stop by check out the activity, enjoy a cup of coffee and fellowship with one another. No experience necessary!

COFFEE FELLOWSHIP

Join us!



Scheduled for **Sept. 8, "God's work. Our hands."** is our annual day of service and an opportunity to celebrate who we are as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) — one church, freed in Christ to love and serve our neighbor.

"God's work. Our hands." is a way for us to be church together. On this day we bear witness to the love and concern God's people have for one another. Our congregations do this work every day — loving their neighbors and improving their communities.

One of the greatest examples of how our congregations share love with their neighbors is through their feeding ministries. This year marks the **50th anniversary of ELCA World Hunger**, and we're excited to celebrate the impact that thousands of people from our church have made on communities around the world.

These acts of service allow us to explore one of our most basic Lutheran convictions: All of life in Jesus Christ — every act of service, in every daily calling, in every corner of life — flows freely from a living, daring confidence in God's grace.

This year we invite you to extend your service opportunities from **Sunday, Sept. 8, through Oct. 16**, which is World Food Day. We know that, every day, our congregations are doing the work of loving their neighbors and improving their communities.





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, Rod, and Diane for sharing your music ministry with us and providing such beautiful music during worship services.

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

Thank you Karen, Frank, Cindy and Janice for participating in the readings during worship services during the month of July.

Thank you Bob and Connie for preparing for the South Omaha Community Care meeting.

Thank you Janet, Rose Marie, Eva, and Ron & Donna for your faithful dedication in helping assemble the monthly newsletter!

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.

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!

Grace received a letter from Immigrant - Legal Center, below is an excerpt:

Dear Grace:

Thank you so much for your generous support. Our work would not be possible without partners like you.

Rose Margrave
Director of Development



Grace's

Birthday:

- 2 – Vicki Cox
- 3 – Bobbi Jo Pankaj
- 3 – Joseph Everitt
- 13 – Daniel King
- 13 - Barisila Koka
- 23 - Charlie Emery

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.

**Did we miss your birthday or anniversary?
Please contact the church office and let us know!**

Save the Date:
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 13TH
 Time: 3:00PM
 Location: TBD

CANIDATE
Accountability
SESSION


 More info to come!

BIBLE STUDY Luke's Gospel, chapter thirteen, brims over with many, many short stories. It's easy to miss one or more of the points Jesus is making in them. Let's, right now, read through the chapter again, looking for those points. (Go on; it's not long!) Now:

1. Which tale shows the patience of God, working with us to help us grow and be productive?
2. In which story does a woman image God, spreading grace to everyone who needs it?
3. When does Jesus free someone who's been a prisoner for eighteen years.

These three questions don't even begin to plumb the depths of meaning present to us in chapter thirteen of Luke's Gospel. What questions about this Gospel might you add to mine, making the dive into it richer and fuller than before? Of course, only the Holy Spirit can open our eyes and hearts wide enough to receive the gifts waiting for us there. Jesus, please be with us always and move us to seek your Word in the Scriptures frequently.

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

St. Luke's Evangelical Lutheran Church
Endowment Fund Scholarship Program
For the 2024-2025 School Year



The Endowment Fund's Scholarship Program assists in achieving educational goals by providing scholarships. If you will be attending college during the 2024-2025 school year, now is the time to apply!

In an email to stlukes@stlukesomaha.org please provide the following information:

1. Your Name
2. University, College, Conservatory, or other institution you will be attending
3. Evidence that you have been accepted for enrollment by that school (i.e. upload a picture of your acceptance letter, or college schedule)
4. What your degree or study program you are pursuing
5. Short paragraph about your previous schooling (previous college year or senior year of high school year)

Please send your email by September 15, 2024. We look forward to hearing from you!

St. Luke's



Birthdays:

- 11 – Gabriel Noah
- 15 - Zane Petersen
- 16 - Janice Puckett

Anniversaries:

- 15 - Michael & Cynthia Fleming 32
- 25 - Mike & Donna Pierce 34

**Did we miss your birthday or anniversary?
Please contact the 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, August 8, 2024 at 9:30 am in the Educational Unit for fellowship and Bible Study. Wanda Rhode will have devotions, Deb Ludwig the lesson and Karen Chapman will serve as hostess. Everyone is welcome to come join in the learning, conversation and refreshments.



PATH ASSIST Path Assist, connects you to 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.

A Training for Congregational Leaders! You Are Invited!

Saturday, August 24, 2024, 9:00 am - Noon
Online via Zoom

To learn more and to register go to the Nebraska Synod Website: nebraskasynod.org/event/toolbox



Let's Fill Your Toolbox! was offered in April and participants said we should offer this training again because it was so helpful.

Program Overview

Jumping into a church position without all the "tools" you need can be a challenge! "Now what?" is a question we often hear from newly elected Council members and newly appointed committee chairs. Thank you for being open to God's call and serving in your congregation. It is exciting to see how listening to God, the congregation and the community will lead us to use our gifts, open doors and help us live into our congregational vocation.

Let's Fill Your Toolbox! is an opportunity to gather with others across the Nebraska Synod serving in congregational leadership roles. This 3-hour online training session will include specific training for council presidents, secretaries, treasurers, committee chairs and office administrators.

Join for a morning of prayer, fun, networking and learning. Share with others in your congregation.



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 has only two more performances which will be held as follows:

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!

Disaster Response Update

Beloved in Christ,

The clean up continues after the destruction caused by multiple tornadoes touching down in eastern Nebraska and western Iowa. 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.

On the synod website (nebraskasynod.org), we have relaunched a **disaster response page** where various resources that are shared will be added in the days and weeks ahead. 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.

Red and White ELCA Disaster Response envelopes can be found on the back table in the sanctuary.

Sunday, September 22, 2024
Noon - 3:00 p.m.

6th Annual
Bread for Life Event



This year's event will be held at Lutheran Church of the Master, Satellite Pantry Location, Fellowship Hall at 2617 S. 114th St., Omaha, NE 68144

12:00 PM - Registration, Tour the Pantry, Fundraising, Fellowship and Beverages.

1:00 PM - Meal Served and Event Program.

Project Hope is a food and clothing pantry registed as a non-profit organization in 1985. We are called to feed and clothe God's people in need. We believe nutritious food contributes to good health. We value people with love, hope compassion and dignity.

Reservations are due by September 1, 2024

Please visit: projecthopeomaha.org to reserve your spot and learn more about the mission of Project Hope, Inc. or call 402-881-1165.



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. Participants 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.*

Do you know of a family or individual in need of food assistance?
Please share the Pantry information with them.

There is a variety of volunteer opportunities for anyone interested.
Call the church 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.

After a speech on politics at Yale, a college student asked President Harry Truman, "How do I start in politics, sir?" Truman replied: "You've already started. You're spending someone else's money, aren't you?"

God's kids say & do the funniest things

A mother scolded her young son for being so unruly, and the boy rebelled. He got some of his clothes, his teddy bear, and his piggy bank and proudly announced, "I'm running away from home!"

The mother calmly asked, "What if you get hungry?"

"Then I'll come home and eat!" the boy replied.

"What if you run out of money?" she asked.

"I'll come home and get some!"

"What if your clothes get dirty?" she asked.

"Then I'll come home and let you wash them."

The mother shook her head and told her concerned husband, who had come in to see what the hassle was about: "This kid is not running away from home - he's going to college."



"Bread of Life" Word Search

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

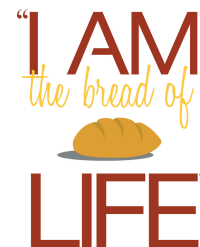
BLOOD OF CHRIST	FIRST COMMUNION	BODY OF CHRIST	CONSECRATION
LAST SUPPER	PURIFICATOR	EUCCHARIST	SACRAMENT
SCRIPTURE	CIBORIUM	CHALICE	PRAYER
PRIEST	ALTAR	BREAD	GRACE
JESUS	HOST	MASS	WINE

THE FAMILY CIRCUS

By Bil and Jeff Keane



Jokes on this page reprinted with permission from JoyfulNoiseletter.com



I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

John 6:51