

St. Luke's Lutheran Church
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www.facebook.com/gracelutheranomaha

NOVEMBER SUNDAY EVENTS
9:30 am. Worship Service
St. Luke's, 2815 I Street

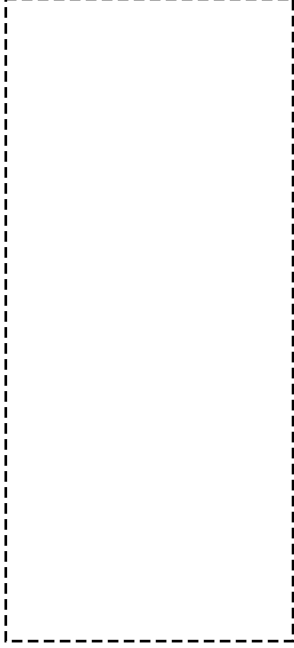
Pastor - Rev. Dr. Damon D. Laaker
Editor/Church Secretary St. Luke's - Nancy Klusaw
Editor/Church Secretary Grace - Brenda Spahr
Sexton - Alma Lopez

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St. Luke's
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THE GRACE
MESSENGER

1889 - 2024


NOVEMBER

November Worship Services
will be held at St. Luke's
Lutheran, 2315 I Street



With love to reach out, to serve,
to welcome all in the name of
our Lord Jesus.

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



Over the last several months, the Discernment Team has met and wishes to share with all their best efforts. The two actions they wish to take at this time are as follows.

Recognizing that mission shapes and defines direction, the Team is making this recommendation for the Mission Statement of our shared congregations.

Grow – Love – Serve

Three simple words but those words capture the direction the Team felt was important for our share congregations.

To amplify those words, the team worked on Vision statements that would accompany the mission statement. Those amplifications are as follows:

Grow: With God’s guidance, we will focus on growing together. With God’s guidance, we will encourage greater development of our relationships in our faith and community.

Love: Guided by God’s love, we will act with dignity, generosity and compassion toward all.

Serve: Guided by God’s will, we will actively maintain, strengthen and build our service efforts, encouraging a strong and enduring presence that uplifts and empowers those around us.

There will be many ways each of these words will address our shared ministry. Our hope is that we will live out this mission in our future. They capture our imagination and hopefully mobilize our energy as we seek to be God’s people in mission at this time.

Recommendations will be made to our Councils to adopt these mission oriented words and take steps to further our shared future.

Pastor Laaker

My Thanksgiving List



Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name. Psalm 100:4 (NIV)

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

FOOD	FRIENDS	FAMILY	FLOWERS	HAPPINESS
SUNSHINE	PRAYER	HOUSE	SCHOOLS	BIBLE
COUNTRY	CLOTHES	RAIN	HEALTH	LOVE
CHURCH	PEACE	FREEDOM	TEACHERS	PETS
MUSIC	PARENTS	SALVATION	TREES	JESUS

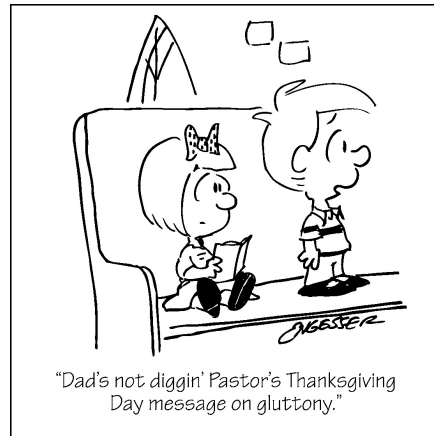
Horn of Plenty



When a music student brought his French horn to my shop for repair, he complained that the instrument “felt stuffy” and he couldn’t blow air through it. It’s not unusual to find partial blockages in brass instruments if small items get lodged in the tubing, but when I tested the instrument, the horn was completely blocked. After much probing and prodding, a small tangerine dropped out of the bell.

“Oh,” said the musician when I handed him the fruit. See the bewildered look on my face, he explained, “My mom used the horn for a cornucopia in a Thanksgiving centerpiece.”

Shared by Mark L. Madden, rd.com



Jokes reprinted with permission from JoyfulNoiseletter.com

O Give Thanks to the Lord

Gratitude to God should be as regular as our heartbeat.

When asked if my cup is half-full or half-empty, my only response is that I am thankful that I have a cup.
~ Sam Lefkowitz

Oh, that people would give thanks to the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of humanity. For He satisfies the longing soul, and fills the hungry soul with goodness.
~ Psalm 107:8-9

Some people have food, but no appetite; others have appetite, but no food; I have both. The Lord be thanked.
~ Oliver Cromwell

Joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and the sound of a melody.
~ Isaiah 51:3

Gratitude is the heart's memory.
~ French proverb

Write it on your heart that every day is the best day of the year.
~ Ralph Waldo Emerson



Pastor Appreciation Celebration!

Mary & Pastor Laaker



Grace and St. Luke's are truly blessed by the continued ministry, guidance and leadership of Pastor Laaker. There are several areas in the life of the church that we can see Pastor Laaker clearly stays busy day after day, for example; guiding the discernment team, volunteering in the Chaplain ministry, teaching confirmation classes, and as always preparing for weekly worship services. There are just as many areas in and around the church that are not as visible, for example; coordinating weekly organist, changing light bulbs and picking up litter that may appear in church yards. With the continued dedication it is also amazing of the support from the Laaker family, some of whom are pictured below.





St. Luke's 2024 Council Members

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

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

Council Notes ~ October 10, 2024

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

Devotions: Pastor Laaker led devotions from Daily Texts – Ezekiel 37: 11-12 and 1 Corinthians 15: 42; 44

Agenda: Agenda was adopted by motion.

Minutes of September 12, 2024 meeting: accepted by motion.

Book Study: Conclusion "Faithful Innovation as a Way of Life for the Church" of the Leading Faithful Innovation was discussed.

Unfinished Business:

- 1. Roof Update – Steve Braun gave an update.
2. Discernment Team – The team continues to meet every three weeks and is having productive conversations.

Reports:

Pastor's Report – A written report was provided. Pastor participated in the S. Omaha Community Care Council meeting on September 18.

Continued.....



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.

- 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
Tuesday, Thursday, Friday
9:30 am - 2:30 pm



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.



Attention Nebraska Synod High School Youth!!

Are you a leader? Do you WANT to be a leader? How can you be a faithful leader? What does faithful leadership look like?

Join us November 22-24 at Covenant Cedars Camp in Hordville, NE for a weekend "leadership lab" where we will explore these questions and more! Throughout the weekend, we will hear "shining stories" from youth and adults in Nebraska who have felt the call to faithfully use their leadership skills in daily life. Together, we will explore how lesser known Bible characters used their leadership skills in surprising ways. Through interactive team building activities (our leadership lab), we'll explore our own leadership styles. We'll have time to practice using (and sharing) our gifts and leadership skills and of course we will worship, fellowship and have fun together!

To learn more and register visit: nebraskasynod.org

President's Report – A written report was provided. October is Pastor Appreciation Month. Rose Marie Lad has talked with Frank. She plans on stepping down from being the Memorial and Financial Secretary positions after the beginning of 2025.

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 – Steve Braun gave an oral report. There continues to be vandalism, graffiti, garbage, and human waste around the church property.

Evangelism – John Kolb gave an oral report. Sign continues to be changed. The doorbell to the church office has been fixed.

Fellowship – Annette Chipman gave an oral report. Fellowship continues to be successful. Nebraska Brass will be holding a concert at St. Luke's on October 18, 2024.

Stewardship – Pastor reported that the new Stewardship Emphasis will begin in November.

Parish Education – Sara Pahl-Ramirez continues to provide monthly messages for the newsletter.

Social Ministry – Cindy Fleming gave an oral report. "God's Work, Our Hands" will be October 13, 2024 at Grace. Snack bags will be prepared and passed out along 24th Street. Lutheran World Relief Kits will be assembled on October 27, 2024 at Grace. The following items are being collected for the project: soap, adult toothbrushes (in package), combs, nail clippers, and light-weight bath towels (52"x27"). Please consider donating and participating in both fun activities!

Worship and Music – The hymn selection committee met on October 15, 2024.

All reports accepted by motion.

New Business:

1. End-of-the-Year Reports will need to be written soon.
2. Promote volunteering to serve on the church council to congregational members.
3. Quilting Group – This group meets on Tuesday mornings at Grace – all are welcomed.

The meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer at 5:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Connie Tefft, Secretary



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: Nancy Klusaw

 Council Meeting Notes ~ October 8, 2024

The regular meeting of the Council was held on October 8, 2024. Council members shared prayer concerns for individuals, storm & flood victims, Israel/Palestinian, rain for the areas experiencing drought, and fair elections.

Devotions: Devotions were led by Pastor Laaker, reading the selected verses in the “Daily Texts” from Joshua 24:14 and Galatians 4:8-9. The first tells us to put away our false gods and revere God with sincerity and faithfulness. The second asks us how we can turn away from God so easily once we know Him and are known by Him.

Visions for Ministry: Leading Faithful Innovation by Dwight Zscheile, Michael Binder, and Tessa Pinkstaff. The authors summarized it’s not really about how to fix your church but rather figuring out what we hope for, to then be able to move forward on that path. Re-read for next month to find ways that you see the authors speaking about what they summarized in the conclusion, and see how it may impact you differently a second time through having finished reading the book.

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

Christian Education: none

Evangelism/Outreach: Crossroads Connection - thank you note was shared from the coordinator. We can think about dates for next year.

Finance: Treasurer - Nancy Klusaw has agreed to fill that role for Grace. Immanuel Vision - will submit a grant for books for the reading program at Liberty and Spring Lake Schools. PC Computer Upgrade is underway. Portico health selection has been made.



Through the generosity of donations given and a little assistanc from Thrivent funds, the original goal of 60 Personal Care Kits was met and exceeded! In the gathering of several hands, smiles and laughter a total of 70 Personal Care Kits were assembled on Reformation Sunday.

May God’s Love reflect in each Personal Care Kit as they help those in need and may the individual receiving a kit be blessed through their time of struggle.



Continued...



Medicare Open Enrollment Event

Volunteers Assisting Seniors (VAS) will be holding a free Medicare Open Enrollment event at Grace Lutheran Church on Wednesday, November 6, 2024.

You could save money on your Medicare prescription drugs by reviewing your prescription drug plan during Open Enrollment (October 15-December 7) You may also review, compare, and switch Medicare Advantage Plans during Open Enrollment.

Medicare drug plans can increase their premiums, deductibles and prices at the pharmacy each year. Medicare Advantage plans can also change what services and drugs they cover each year, in addition to potentially increasing premiums deductibles and copays.

Volunteers Assisting Seniors can help! Call (402)444-6617 today to schedule a personalized appointment to review your Medicare plan with a certified counselor.

Registration is required, NO WALK-INS. Event is by appointment only. To reserve your spot, please call VAS at 402-444-6617 and leave a message including the date and location of the event.

Additional dates and locations can be found on the bulletin board, or in both church offices.

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

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

Sign outside Panther Creek Church of the Brethren, Adel, IA:

“You are on God’s most wanted list. Just give up.”

~ via Rev. Dale A. Schoening, Madrid, IA
Reprinted with permission from JoyfulNoiseletter.com

Property: Painting of alley door continues to seek a volunteer.
Ceiling light over the former choir area needs to be replaced.

Service/Social Ministry: God’s Work – Our Hands: we will bag items at Grace and pass out to the community this coming Sunday.
Medicare Event - Volunteers Assisting Seniors holding Medicare enrollment event in November at Grace.

OTOC events: Candidate Accountability Session on Sunday, October 20th at 2pm at St. Pius X. A number of potential candidates have agreed to attend.
We received a list of donations from Trader Joe’s for the past year.

Support/Stewardship: Quarterly letter will be handed out on Sunday.

Worship: Grace will have services in December this year and the first half of January 2025.

Unfinished Business: Grace/St. Luke’s Vision Team shared an update on their meeting.

New Business: None

Announcements: Pastor will attend the Voyagers conference later this month.
Pastor Omar will preach on Sunday, November 2nd.
Nebraska Brass will have a concert on Friday, October 18th at St. Luke’s at 7pm.
Sarah will provide a prayer in November.

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

Respectfully Submitted, Amanda Vazquez, Secretary

Carol Joy Holling Camp Events in November:

Middle School Retreat: November 8-10, 2024

Mother Daughter Retreat: November 16-17, 2024

To register or read additional information please visit CJHCenter.org or call Laura Stalder at 402-944-2544.





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:

Marcia Beck
June Hilmer
Samuel Mantzaris
Ed Nodean
Pat Scarpello
Rose Wynn



Vicki Cox
Richard Krambeck
Carolyn Matson
Pam Reents
Marilyn Van Ormer



Pray for wisdom for your Church Council at St. Luke's and Grace 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, St. Luke's and Grace Lutheran Churches
Bishop Scott Johnson, Nebraska Synod
Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, ELCA Bishop

Pray for the Sudanese community in general. Charles Tuw, Moses Loda, John Boato, Barnaba Dyedi and Nenchi Ilka are the elders for the Sudanese Worshipping 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
Marilyn Van Ormer - Home
Doris Westman - Hillcrest Estates



BIBLE STUDY Do you ever read Scripture and think "Wait. When did they add those words?" You may feel certain that you've never seen that verse before. I know that I have felt that way. How is it possible to read the same passage a dozen, maybe a hundred times, and never see that something else is there? I don't know, but I thank the Spirit, who nudges us to see such things when we are ready!

I recently read a bit of John's Gospel, chapter 18. Jesus and his disciples, after the Last Supper, walk to a garden in the Kidron valley. Judas arrives with a group of Temple guards, whose leader asks for Jesus. When he replies, "I am He", the guards step back and fall to the ground. That is the new part. I don't remember ever reading that the guards fell down. Never! Surprised, I looked up John 18 in another translation of the Bible. Sure enough, the guards fell back and fell down. I turned to Luke's Gospel next. Though Luke reports the arrest, he doesn't say anything about the guards falling down. So... John is telling us something.

(A parallel note leads to John 8:24, and it may make more sense if read from verse 23 to verse 26, or even to verse 29. There, a footnote to verse 24 tells us that "I am He", or simply "I AM" is the divine name revealed to Moses.) So Jesus is telling the guards that He is the Holy One; He is God. OK, now it makes perfect sense for the guards to back away and fall on their faces before Him. What I don't understand is how they could then follow up by arresting Jesus and hauling him away to face charges in front of the High Priest! Ah, but that's a question for another time...

Sara welcomes comments and questions at: 402-686-1693.

One more photo from God's Work, Our Hands, with volunteers out delivering snack bags and gathering prayer concerns.





God's Work Our Hands Sunday, October 13th at Grace. Following worship service and a celebration acknowledging Pastor Appreciation (see pictures on a previous page,) a total of 85 Snack Bags were assembled by many hands during fellowship hour! Along with adults there were 10 children distributing the snack bags. The group stopped at the Jackson Tower's and talked with several people who were grateful for the bags. When asked for prayer requests, the lady that was helping us at the Towers mentioned her daughter was having a baby soon and would like prayers for her.



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 Donna & Ron Adrian and Brenda Spahr for taking care of the altar, and preparing communion.

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

Thank you Frank, Arlone, Vicki, and Janice for reading during worship services in October. It is greatly appreciated.

Thanks to everyone that helped with worship services during the month of October. It is much appreciated.

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



Election day is Tuesday, November 5th.
Vote, your voice matters.

To find your polling place go to
Vote411.org or call 402-444-8683.



St. Luke's

November

Birthdays

- 1 – Wanda Rhode
- 13 - Nancy Klusaw
- 16 - Cynthia Schneekloth
- 19 - Ken Davis
- 20 - Pastor Laaker
- 27 - David Ruffner
- 27 - Daniel Ruffner

Anniversaries

- 14 - April Carlson & Tom Houston 9
- 17 - William & Deb Ludwig 45
- 22 - William & Cynthia Schneekloth 49

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.



St. Luke's Mary Circle will meet on Thursday, November 14, 2024 at 9:30 am in the Educational Unit for fellowship and Bible Study. Deb Ludwig will have devotions, Rose Marie Lad the lesson and Janet Hula will serve as hostess. Everyone is welcome to come join in the learning, conversation and refreshments.



Path Assist, now available in your area, 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.

Grace's

Birthdays

- 2 – Michael Brown
- 2 – Lama Peter
- 11 - Margie Sutej
- 18 - Charlotte Palczynski
- 20 - Pastor Laaker
- 26 - Greg Hula
- 26 - Ralph Fitle
- 27 – Christina Peter
- 28 – Elena Blenderman
- 29 - Ron Adrian



Anniversaries

- 26 - Cliff & Vicki Cox 55
- 26 - Josh & Jessica Armstrong 13

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



Quilters for Lutheran World Relief

Tuesday mornings at Grace Lutheran Church 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!

Lutheran Women of Omaha
Tuesday, November 12, 2024
12:00 Noon



Join us at Augustana Lutheran Church, 3647 Lafayette Street

Cost: \$3.00

Bring your own lunch, drinks and dessert will be provided.

Guest speaker from Dream Weavers. Free will offering will benefit the Dream Weavers Foundation.

Call Mardelle Gocek at 402-292-1328 by Sunday, November 10th, to reserve your seat.