

Living with Christ, Growing in Grace!

Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church

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Ministers: Everyone!

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*Rooted In Christ - Growing in Love -
Branching out in Service*

Trinity Church UCC/UMC

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Grace & Trinity Newsbites

SEPTEMBER & OCTOBER 2025

As we head into fall let's keep figuring out how to keep the sabbath holy; however, that looks for you and your family. The point is not about following rules and traditions of how sabbath ought to be kept; but to keep a holy sabbath, together. Let's also pay attention and watch for God working in the world, in small and big ways. *Where have you seen God working in the world today, this week?* There are many ways Trinity and Grace are providing opportunities for each of us, and all of us together, to be God's hands in the world. We do this locally and, because we are part of the larger church, we join with others in our region and around the world to do God's work in the world. Please read (and go to denominational websites for more info) the news from the larger church and listen for the Spirit's prompting. We can't do everything, but we all can do something, where we are, to be kind, to do justice, to love mercy, to follow where Jesus leads, here and now.

Traveling mercies. Pr. Priscilla

Looking ahead:

Weekend of October 25 & 26

No service at Trinity - plan to come for the Harvest Festival at Grace on the 26th. Service at 9 with blessing of quilts and LWR kits and thanksgiving for the fruits of all creation; followed by a pot-luck brunch and auction of 'home made' creations. Proceeds will be split 3 ways: Living Nativity on Main St.; diapers for *A Home For Mothers in Lincoln*; *The Care Closet* at Franciscan Healthcare.

Christmas Shoebox Packing weekend - November 15 & 16.

November 16 - time to be announced - Hymn Festival with Jeff Hoffman!

Possible overnight trip to Lutheran World Relief in Minneapolis. If interested, let Pastor know.

Our 2nd Service of Gratitude will be Saturday, November 22 at Trinity. No service at Grace on the 23rd as we will gather for our Community Thanksgiving Dinner which will be served between 11 am and 1 pm.

In December Grace will host the Children/Youth Christmas program on December 14 (no service at Trinity on the 13th) and Trinity will host the Service of Light on December 20th (no service at Grace on the 21st).

Watch for opportunities to help with organizing, serving and participating in these activities. Please mark your calendars. Invite family and friends. Be a part of our shared ministries.

On going plastic recycling - we have already kept over 1000 pounds of plastic from landfills; it's being recycled into useable products! Thanks for your efforts to make this work. There are 3 ways you can participate -1. bring your recyclable plastic to either Grace or Trinity. (see the posted flyers if you need a reminder about what can and cannot be recycled). 2. Help with weighing. Fill a large clear plastic bag (provided) with as much plastic as possible; squish, squish, squish! Then use the luggage scale to weigh the bag. Take a photo of the scale; check that you can read the weight. Send that photo to Bev Meyer or to either office. (Bev takes care of reporting the weight. Write a big W or the word weighed on the bag. 3. If you are heading out of town and have room in your vehicle, take a weighed bag to one of the stores (Fremont, Norfolk, Columbus, South Sioux, Omaha area) listed on flyer posted on the bulletin board. Ask at the service department where they'd like it put. **You do not have to say where it's from or how much it weighs. Just drop it off.**

Christian Ed – Fall into winter 2025

Christian Ed for pre-school through 8th grade: Wednesdays @

Grace **5:30-6:45**

(Includes snack, music, class and prayer time.)

August 27, September 3, 10, 17 & 24

September 28 (Sunday) – All invited for an afternoon at Lake Constance. More info soon!

October 1 – Octoberfest – Nielsen Center

October 8, 15, 22 & 29

November 5 – Lasagna Supper - Grace

November 12 & 19

Thanksgiving service – with children and youth leading - Saturday, Nov. 22 & Dinner Sunday, Nov. 23

(November 26 Thanksgiving week – no class)

December 3, 10, 17 Advent Wednesdays – Supper & prayer, Supper and prepare, supper and sing (caroling)

Christmas program – December 14 (Practice either later Friday (12th) afternoon or Saturday (13th) morning.)

Service of Light – Saturday, December 20

Christmas Eve & New Year's Eve – no class ☺☺

Here's the news from Living Waters Conference UCC

Fall Gathering – More Information Coming Soon!

The Living Waters Association Fall Gathering is on the horizon—the official date is still being finalized; more details to come.

This annual gathering is an important time for connection, worship,

learning, and decision-making across our Association.

It's also a required event for congregations applying for Association grants, as a delegate must be present.

What to Do Now:

- Make sure your church has a delegate ready to attend.

Stay tuned for the official announcement, coming soon!

We look forward to seeing you there and strengthening the work we do together as the Living Waters Association.

Living Waters Association - Small Church Grant Program

Opens September 15, 2025

(Not associated with the article on the other page)

The Living Waters Association of the Nebraska Conference United Church of Christ is pleased to announce the opening of the 2025 Small Church Grant Program, beginning September 15, 2025.

These one-time grants are designed to support churches within our association that have fewer than 225 members. Each congregation may apply for up to \$500 in grant funds this calendar year. Please note: Total available funds are limited to \$5,000, so not all applications may be funded.

Eligible Uses for Grant Funds Include:

- Regular or special church events or functions
- Utilities and building maintenance
- Clergy continuing education (including travel)
- Church education events (youth or adult)
- Pulpit supply support

Application Requirements:

- The Data Hub reporting requirement has been waived this year due to system difficulties.
- Association dues must be current.

A congregation member must be present at the Association Annual Meeting to receive a grant. We encourage all eligible congregations to apply and make thoughtful use of these funds to strengthen ministry and community presence. Stay tuned for more information on the Fall Gathering date. To apply visit the Living Waters Website at

www.livingwatersassociation.org

News from Great Plains UMC Northeast district

(shared at a recent clergy gathering)

CIRA, Rose Margrave - CIRA's website is well-organized, find everything you can think of here <https://ciraconnect.org/> Please also give them a follow on social media to help with the algorithms and to make sharing information easy.

Great Plains UMC immigration resources - You might start here <https://www.greatplainsumc.org/get-involved-immigration>. The side bar will give you additional options.

Nebraska Methodist College, Travis Coufal - Their website has a great deal of helpful information, find it here:

<https://www.methodistcollege.edu/>

All People's Pantry - Find everything you need to know on their website here <https://allpeoplespantry.org/> and see if your social media person can give them a follow as your church(es). This ministry receives a small grant through district mission shares and short-term salary support through district mission share reserves.

The Tent UMC - Please contact Pastor Diana Fajardo directly to schedule small group visits. A visit is the best way for members of our congregations to experience this bilingual Montessori-based new church start.

dfajardo@greatplainsumc.org

Lay Servant Ministries - Mark Nation-Ellis is available to answer your questions, work with laity to get them started in lay servant ministries, and for pulpit supply. All the things! email him at

dlsd.easternne@greatplainsumc.org

He also referred us to the Conference website, where you can find a boatload of information about lay credentialing, classes and more <https://www.greatplainsumc.org/lay-servant-ministries>

Iglesia Comunitaria - If you are looking for them on a map, find Grace UMC at 2418 E Street. Worship time is 11:30am. Please note that the best/only email that is currently working for Pastor Juan Carlos is iglesiacomunitariaomaha@gmail.com

The congregation is currently raising funds for families to attend a retreat in September at Camp Fontanelle and they are always raising funds for additional children's programming. Sometimes they have needs for kids snacks, but please check with Juan Carlos first to see if that is a current need.

Our district has a new and ongoing partnership with **Walthill High School** to collect toiletries for their high school pantry. Anything that would help a teenager feel better about going out in public is what they need -

shampoo/rinse, body wash, deodorant, feminine hygiene items were all specifically listed. The teacher who manages the pantry told me after the first delivery, "the kids who helped me unload the boxes were visibly relieved to see we had the items ready for when people needed them." She comes to Omaha regularly, so we can keep items at the district office as they come in for her to pick up. This might be a good small group or holiday project and connects us with the northern third of our district.

Camp Fontanelle - They've already produced their 2026 summer schedule and are advertising their fall events. They will be sending out packets to churches soon.

We mentioned that All People's Pantry will be at **Afro Fest** on the RiverFront on Sunday August 31st. Here's the link for tickets to go enjoy the festivities <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/afro-fest-omaha-2025-tickets-1043156809097>

Trista Boling shared with me a **conference on suicide loss** that is coming to Omaha in October. This is a topic that is relevant to our congregations, I trust the Kim Foundation's work on this subject and appreciate hearing about this from one of our chaplains.

<https://thekimfoundation.org/event/14th-annual-national-loss-team-conference/>

All for now - thank you for your good work!

I will be sending out **charge conference information** soon, for now plan on those three charge conference dates being between October 12th and 30th with due dates of October 2nd for the northern third of the district and soon after for the rest of you. (From our DS _____)



News from NE Synod

All Grace and Trinity members and friends are welcome to participate in both of these NE Synod events, hosted by Grace.

Grace is hosting! November 1. Get your calendars and plan to attend. Traveling Together as God's People

An Invitation to Dream, Discern, and Do—Together

Is your congregation feeling stuck?

- Are you concerned about your congregation's future?
- Longing for more in your faith community?
- Unsure what to do with aging buildings and empty space?
- Discouraged by a shrinking budget?

- Want to be the hands and feet of Jesus in your community—but don't know how to start?

If you answered YES to any of these questions, this event is for YOU.

What to Expect

This isn't just another meeting—it's a Synod staff-led time of dreaming and listening to God's call. Together, we'll explore:

- How the church is already changing and where the Holy Spirit is leading us next
- What faithful innovation looks like in Nebraska congregations
- How to pack your ministry bag with practical next steps
- Real stories from across our Synod—because you are not alone

You'll have the opportunity to meet Nebraska Synod staff, Cluster Deans, and other local companions who are already walking this path.

Why It Matters

This is more than just a meeting—it's an invitation to be ONE Church Together. We believe God is calling us to something new, and we want to walk this road with you.

The Nebraska Synod Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Accessibility and Advocacy (DEIAA) steering team wants to hear from YOU! As we work together to live our baptismal promise to strive for justice and peace in all the earth, we want to know how we can support justice ministries in your congregation and your community. Please join us for an in person listening post in your cluster this fall. We want to hear from ALL voices: rostered and lay, young and old! Help us gather information so we can support you as we are one church, better together! Grace is hosting a listening post on Sunday, October 5, from 2-4 in the Fireside Room.



Fall LAY Leadership Gathering 2025

October 19, 2025 from 1:30-4:30 p.m.

**Hybrid Event: Online and in person at the
Holiday Inn, Kearney, NE**

God calls and invites all of us to lead in various ways. Rev. Dr. Terri Elton from Luther Seminary will guide us through sessions on God's call and invitation to pivot.

We invite all Lay Leaders in the Nebraska Synod: church staff, church council members, committee member and congregation lay members to join us on Sunday, October 19th from 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. at the Holiday Inn, Kearney Nebraska/online via Zoom.

Medical Debt Relief Campaign

Now through Sept 15

KETV featured our Medical Debt Relief Campaign this week. [Check out the video: https://www.ketv.com/article/nebraska-churches-rally-to-raise-money-awareness-for-medical-debt/65406035](https://www.ketv.com/article/nebraska-churches-rally-to-raise-money-awareness-for-medical-debt/65406035)

Episcopal Diocese of NE, our state-wide campaign runs from June 15th – September 15th. The goal is \$25,000—eliminating approximately \$2.5 Million of medical debt for Nebraskans. Working together, we can change lives and give new hope! [Donate today! - https://unduemedicaldebt.org/campaign/the-episcopal-diocese-of-nebraska/](https://unduemedicaldebt.org/campaign/the-episcopal-diocese-of-nebraska/)

To donate to this campaign, please use the following to make out a check:

Payable To: Undue Medical Debt

Memo Line: The Episcopal Diocese of Nebraska — 66781

Please drop your check off at the church offices by Monday, September 8!

**Tickets available now for
Trinity-Grace Churches' Annual Octoberfest Dinner
Drive-Up Take-Out Only!**

Dinners will be delivered to your Vehicle!

Wednesday, October 1, 2025 - Serving 5:00-7:00pm

Nielsen Community Center - 200 Anna Stalp Avenue - West Point, NE

*Serving: Chicken Fried Steak, Mashed Potatoes, Vegetable,
Salad, Dinner Roll & Pumpkin Dessert*

Tickets \$12.00 available from:

Trinity Church

Grace Lutheran Church

*CharterWest Bank

*F&M Bank

**Proceeds divided between Trinity Church Sanctuary Window
Repair & Local Needs.**

***After September 3rd.**

Please sign up to work on the 1st. You are also invited to consider donating towards the cost of dinner ingredients & supplies.

Drive – Thru Lasagna Supper

Sponsored by the Women of Grace, WELCA with help from the Trinity Women & Christian Ed. Kids

We are again having a "drive-thru" Lasagna Supper. Mark your calendars for Wednesday, November 5. The meal will be lasagna (beef or chicken), dinner roll, salad and dessert. Serving from 5:30 - 7:30. We will be selling tickets for \$10.00. We will be limiting the number of tickets sold, so buy your tickets earlier rather than later. There will be no meal available without a ticket. You may purchase tickets beginning October 12th from a "Friendship Circle" member or call Mary Vander Pol at [REDACTED] or Teala at the church during office hours at [REDACTED].

The proceeds from our supper will be disbursed to further the work of the church missions, local needs and projects, and help maintain church needs.

If you would be willing to help with preparing and/or serving, please let Mary Vander Pol know.

In Our Prayers this Week:

To see an updated list please contact the office.

Trinity News

September Birthdays & Anniversaries

October Birthdays & Anniversaries

To see an updated list please contact the office.

Trinity – July Financial Report – General Fund	
To see the latest report please contact the office.	

Members and friends of Trinity church,

As you know, the renovation of the north wing is near complete, with minor changes remaining. The remodeling looks great and will be very functional for the daycare center. Trinity Church co-hosted a Chamber Coffee on August 15 with Franciscan Healthcare, and approximately sixty people were in attendance, and all were impressed. I even had 3-4 people come to me and thank the church for all we did to make the daycare center a reality.

The FHC partnership is one way we are being wise stewards of our building. We have known for years that the windows were coming to the end of their useful life and would need replacement. The windows are original to the building and have withstood approx. 60-years of Nebraska weather, which is not always kind to brick and mortar.

Franciscan Healthcare's renovation of the north wing was a blessing as FHC replaced the windows in the north wing; so, Trinity will be responsible for only half of the window replacements. The cost of replacing the balance of the windows will be approx. \$51,000. The quote does not cover the cost of replacing the exterior windows that protect the stained glass in the sanctuary. We know the cost will be approximately \$4500 plus labor per window; but we need to research how to do the work without damaging the stained glass.

Trinity Church has been prudent in managing the land funds, and there are monies available to pay for this much-needed update. Half of the 2024 Octoberfest profits (\$4400) were set aside for building renovation, and we will set aside 50% of the 2025 profits again this fall. Considering the fact the Church has funds available, we don't think a formal fundraiser is necessary, but, if anyone is so moved, a directed gift toward the cost of replacing a Sanctuary window would be greatly appreciated and allows us to continue to have resources to further the mission and ministry of Trinity.

The Council is also planning another project. We have identified the need to paint the hallway, exterior doors, railings, and roof in the church entryway. Plans are to complete this project before winter.

Have questions or concerns? Please call or email me or Pastor, or come to the next council meeting on September 17, 2025

Respectfully,

Trinity Church Council

Steve Blocher, Council Chair Pastor Priscilla

Compassion International Update:

We have just received some sad news. Akim has been removed from Compassion's sponsorship program by his guardians and he is no longer able to receive the support we have given through Compassion. I have worried about him for the past couple of years, knowing that his family has moved a couple of times due to conflict and knowing that because of his age, he may need to go to work. The letter did not offer any explanation as to "why". Please lift him up in prayer. I will leave a final picture and update in Trinity's Fellowship Hall.

We are in the process of sponsoring another child. Please stay tune to learn about Abdoul.

Grace News

September Birthdays & Anniversaries
October Birthdays & Anniversaries

To see an updated list please contact the office.

Grace Lutheran Church - July Financial Report – General Fund Council Minutes are posted on the bulletin board by the offices. The full financial report is available in the office.	
To see the latest report please contact the office.	

I hope this newsletter finds you well and surrounded by God's grace. As a church family, we are incredibly blessed to worship together, grow in faith, and serve our community. These ministries and moments of fellowship are only possible through the faithful support of generous hearts like yours.

Today, we are reaching out to ask for your financial support. Your donations help sustain the daily operations of our church, support our youth, maintain our facilities, and fund future needs.

As we are in the later part of the year, we ask that you look at your church donations and offerings this year and ask if there is room to give to our church. You can mail a check, set up an automatic monthly donation or give during the offering at church.

Thank you for your time and consideration!

Sincerely, Jamie Stigge, Council President



The quilts donated by Grace Lutheran Quilters raised \$2630.00 at the CCJH Quilt Auction. In total, over \$114,000.00 was raised to support campers!

The Grace Quilters would greatly appreciate any donations of blankets, sheets and fabric.

Reminder, Vicki Furchert is still collecting Best Choice UPC codes. Our American Legion Auxiliary gets 3 cents per code. The funds are used for Veteran's projects. There is a collection bucket in Parish Hall at Grace.

Don't forget to mark your calendars for movie night – last Tuesday of the month.

Application for Endowment Grants

*Applications are due in the church office by **October 10th**.*

Dear friend,

Please use the Grant Request form on this page to submit Endowment requests. Provide a concise summary of need, and the anticipated benefit provided to recipients. You may attach additional information to this form as necessary.

The Endowment Committee will meet in late October or November to consider your request. You will be contacted in early January as to whether your request was granted. (Investment returns were low this past year, so applicants be mindful that you may not receive as much this year.)

Thank you for your submission. We pray that God will bless your ministry with every success!

Yours in Christ, The Endowment Committee of Grace Lutheran

The Endowment Fund was established by the congregation in the early 1900s. It is a vital component of the ministry of Grace and provides a way for members and friends of Grace to make special gifts to carry on the ministry of the church. A gift to the Endowment Fund is a gift that keeps on giving. The funds are used to support projects that the general fund can't support.

(Grant Request Form is in a separate document and paper copies are available in Grace's Fellowship Hall.)



August 12, 2025

In attendance: Sandy Boots, Pastor Priscilla Hukki, Vicki Furchert, Mary Vander Pol, Linda Lofgren, Fern Thorman, Ruth Maresh, and Mary Thomas.

Linda welcomed us with a prepared supper and then we had a short business meeting.

Thank you notes regarding the youth trip to Milwaukee were received from Max Bruning, Scott & McKayla Dahlgren.

Another thank you note was read from the family of Elveria Thietje in appreciation of our music and help with the funeral luncheon.

It was reported that \$2630 was raised with our quilts at the annual Camp Carol Joy Holling Quilt auction.

The agenda was fairly short. These were the main topics of discussion:

Mary VanderPol read excerpts from a letter received about the Spring Gathering that was held in April. Sadly, there was a small attendance. They are asking for a church to host the 2026 gathering.

An invitation to the 2025 Biennial Convention and Gathering September 26-28 at Camp Carol Joy Holling was read. The Theme is "Wrapped in God's Love." Vicki, Mary VanderPol and Sandy expressed an interest in attending.

Saturday November 1, Grace will be hosting a Synod Cluster presentation including lunch and activities. Grace will be providing the lunch and serving coffee. More information is forthcoming.

The annual Octoberfest Dinner will be held October 1. There will be an organizational meeting on Wednesday, August 13 at noon, at Grace.

The Drive Through Lasagna Dinner is scheduled for Wednesday, November 5. No changes to the menu or time frame were made.

After the close of the business meeting, we had a mission work session preparing Baby Care Kits. ~ Secretary Mary A. Thomas



Vicki Furchert unpacking the cloth diapers.

Ruth Maresh layering the items for the baby care kits.

Linda Lofgren enfolding the baby care kit items with receiving blankets.

Pastor Priscilla finishing the wrap and securing the kit with safety pins.

