



The Love Letter

Volume 37

May 2009

Lord of Love Office

Phone 402.493.2946
Fax 402.493.3087
Website www.lord-of-love.org

Lord of Love Staff

Interim Pastor

Pastor Bob Oleson
pastorbob@lord-of-love.org

Office Administrator, Prayer Chain, and Financial Secretary

Mary Lou Gustafson
marylou@lord-of-love.org

Community Therapist

Kim Mueller
402.354.6891, Ext. 2

Youth Director

Josh Combes
402.871.8393 or
jcombes02@hotmail.com

Web Steward

Gwen Edwards
webmaster@lord-of-love.org

Love Letter Editor

Kim Gust
loveletter@lord-of-love.org

Senior Organist

Carol Novak

Associate Organist

Amy Kragnes

Chancel Choir Director

Jon Novak

Kid's Choir Director

Claudia Rowen

LOL Brass Director

Brian Lund

Custodian

Larry Czapla

Worship Schedule

Sun. 8:00 a.m. Worship Service
Sun. 9:15 a.m. Sunday School
Sun. 10:30 a.m. Worship Service

Mission Statement: Created by God's gracious love, we are called, as a community of faith, to be witnesses and servants of Jesus to the world.

A Look Ahead

Now that Easter has come and gone, it feels as though spring has passed us by and summer is on our doorstep! May brings the end of the program year and our regular activities, such as Sunday School, Wednesday night suppers, and choir practice. This month, there will be a celebration for the **last day of Sunday School** on May 17 (see page 5, Nurture), and then our **summer worship schedule** will begin on May 24, Memorial Day weekend, with **summer breakfasts** beginning the following week (see page 3, Worship).

Although our program year activities are coming to an end, there are still many activities for you to be involved in this spring and summer. You can participate in **Spring Cleanup Day** on Saturday, May 16 (see page 10, Property), and you can help plant our **Community Garden** on Sunday, May 17 (see page 9, Outreach). You can be a spectator or participant in the **men's softball games** (see page 7, Nurture, and page 13, Men's News Corner), and you can join a **summer book study or Bible study** (see page 6, Nurture, and page 15, Women of Love). Finally, you can attend the **Appreciative Inquiry meetings** on Thursdays in June to help understand the positive things Lord of Love has done in the past and to figure out what type of church we want to be in the future (see page 11, Council Report).

Our youth will also be busy this spring and summer as they prepare for the **ELCA Youth Gathering in New Orleans** in July and begin to plan their activities for the fall (see page 16, LOL Youth).

In This Issue

Monthly Calendar	2	Men's News Corner	13
Worship	3	Women of Love	14
Nurture.....	5	LOL Youth	16
Outreach.....	9	Just for Kids.....	17
Property	10	In Our Prayers	19
Finance.....	10	Love Notes	19
Council Report.....	11	Mark Your Calendar	20
Transition/Call Process Update	12		

MONTHLY CALENDAR

May 2009						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 8:00am Coffee Fellowship @ Crane 4:30pm Tour of the Food Bank & ACF Potluck 7:30pm AA	2 7:00am Men's Breakfast & Bible Study 9:00am Feldhaus Shower
3 8:00am Worship & Communion 9:15am Adult Forum 9:15am Sunday School 10:30am Worship & Communion 2:30pm Novak-Haar Piano student recital	4 6:30pm WELCA Bible Study 8:00pm AA & AI Anon	5 9:00am Quilters 5:30pm YWCA Men's Group 6:45pm First Place 7:00pm Vision & Coordination Mtg.	6 5:30pm Supper 6:00pm Brass 6:00pm WELCA Bible Study 6:00pm Luther Kids 7:45pm Chancel Choir	7 9:30am Text Study @ Guthrie's 7:00pm Boy Scouts	8 7:30pm AA	9 7:00am Men's Breakfast & Bible Study
10 8:00am Worship & Communion 9:15am Adult Forum 9:15am Sunday School 10:30am Worship & Communion	11 6:30pm Cub Scout Leaders Meeting 8:00pm AA & AI Anon	12 12:00pm Lutheran Women of Omaha Luncheon @ LoL 5:30pm YWCA Men's Group 6:45pm First Place	13 5:30pm Supper 6:00pm Luther Kids 6:00pm Brass 7:45pm Chancel Choir	14 9:30am Text Study @ Guthrie's 7:00pm Boy Scouts	15 8:00am Coffee Fellowship @ Crane 7:30pm AA	16 7:00am Men's Breakfast & Bible Study
17 12:00am Community Garden Planting 8:00am Worship & Communion 9:15am Sunday School 10:30am Worship & Communion	18 8:00pm AA & AI Anon	19 9:00am Quilters 5:30pm YWCA Men's Group 6:00pm Strategic Planning Comte. Mtg. 6:45pm First Place 7:30pm Committee Mtgs.	20	21 9:30am Text Study @ Guthrie's 7:00pm Boy Scouts	22 7:30pm AA	23 7:00am Men's Breakfast & Bible Study
24 8:00am Worship & Communion 10:30am Worship & Communion	25 8:00pm AA & AI Anon	26 5:30pm YWCA Men's Group 6:45pm First Place 7:00pm Sunnyslope/Sunny view Neighborhood Meeting	27	28 Life Line Screening 9:30am Text Study @ Guthrie's 7:00pm Boy Scouts	29 7:30pm AA	30 7:00am Men's Breakfast & Bible Study
31 8:00am Worship & Communion 10:15am Breakfast 10:30am Worship & Communion 1:00pm AA District 18 Mtg.						

Summer Worship Schedule

Lord of Love will have one worship service on Sunday mornings at 9:00 a.m. during the summer months. This summer worship schedule will begin on May 24, Memorial Day weekend, and will end on September 6, Labor Day weekend.

Breakfast will be served following the worship service each Sunday this summer except May 24, Memorial Day weekend, and September 6, Labor Day weekend.



Summer Worship Schedule

Lord of Love's Worship Servants

	May 3	May 10	May 17	May 24 (9:00 a.m.)	May 31 (9:00 a.m.)
Greeter(s)					
8:00 a.m.	Ed and Marjorie Keiser	Doug and Rose Roberts	Keith and Debra Gillespie	John and Valerie Florea	Paul and Deb Christenson
10:30 a.m.	Don and Claudia Rowen	Gary Ramsay	Gary Krause and Amy Kragnes		
Liturgist					
8:00 a.m.	David Hild			Randi VenHuizen/ Jon Novak	Shawn Lorenzen
10:30 a.m.	Rex Quadhamer	Claudia Rowen	Gary Krause		
Communion Servers					
8:00 a.m.					
10:30 a.m.	Jane and Laura Gehringer; Quadhamer family	Rowen family	Gary Krause and Amy Kragnes		
Altar Care					
8:00 a.m.	Connie Walther, Lisa Meyer	Janet Guthrie, Nancy Shinrock	Mike and Christie Klos	Evelyn Sacrider, Cathy Aden	Diana Haye, Marcia Roads
10:30 a.m.	Rob and Karen Anderson		Concannon family		
Ushers					
8:00 a.m.	Paul Dieter, Dennis Hindemith, John Florea, Brian Walther				
10:30 a.m.	Dave and Adam Lueders, Lund family, Tony Brazier				

Tape Ministry: Updates on Our Members by Karen Pickens and Rachel Novak

Rachel and I have been putting together Agnes Wilson's life story, but it has been a busy month and we haven't yet finished. Hopefully, next month you will get to know Agnes, who has lived an incredible life, getting a degree from the University of Omaha at Nebraska at the age of 68. In the meantime, we would like to fill you in on a few things that have occurred this past month.

We are so glad to report that Pearl Garnaas is back in her apartment at Heritage Pointe after a stay in the hospital. She is feeling fine, enjoying the activities and her friends at Heritage. I think her favorite day is Sunday as she spends most of the day at the home of her daughter, Linda, who always prepares a wonderful meal.

On Good Friday, Rachel and I went to Blair to visit Anna Jensen. Once there, we were told that Anna was at church services. We decided to find the church and worship with Anna. We were invited to stay and have lunch at the church. We saw some familiar faces...Carl and Alice Schattauer and Al and Marge Johnson. Once lunch was over, we all sat together and talked...just like old times. Anna especially enjoyed the company of old friends.

Agnes was able to come to church in the evening on Good Friday, accompanied by her good friend, Esther Welliver. She had with her Easter cards that she had received from the Sunday School children. She was so delighted to receive the cards and couldn't believe they would do this for someone they don't even know. We also want to thank the children for their artwork and their sweet messages to our friends who can no longer come to church. You are going out into the world and sending the love of Jesus.



HONORING
OUR
LONGTIME
MEMBERS

Sunday School Celebration!

The last day of Sunday School for the program year will be on Sunday, May 17. Join us for a fun celebration of all we have learned and shared in Sunday School this year!



Carol Joy Holling 2009 – “Love to Serve”

We celebrate Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection that sets us free to serve others. As God’s children, we are created to serve with loving and gracious hearts. In response to God’s gracious love, we follow the example of Jesus to live a life of service and are then sent out to serve. We’ll learn to serve as Jesus did, not just during camp, but when we return to our homes, congregations, and communities.

Family weekend camps, week-long camps, and kids camps are all available. For more information, see the flyers on the information board or visit www.caroljoyholling.org.



Congratulations to Our High School Graduates!

Everyone at Lord of Love would like to congratulate our high school graduates!

NATHAN ANDERSON
CHAD PRICE

Your Adventure

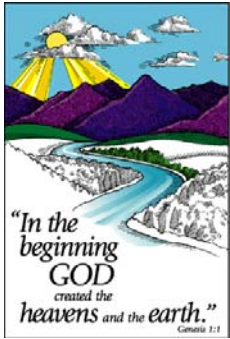
Now that you've graduated,
Your adventure has begun.
Your schooling has prepared you
For the race life has you run.

We praise you for your efforts,
And send good wishes, too,
For a future filled with happiness,
And your fondest dreams come true.

By Joanna Fuchs (www.poemsource.com)



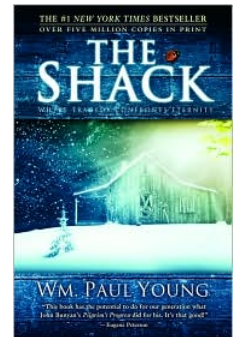
Adult Forum: Evolution, Creationism, and God



Join us on Sunday, May 3 and Sunday, May 10 at 9:30 a.m. in the Sanctuary for an adult forum on Evolution, Creationism, and God. One current topic of debate in this country is whether creationism or intelligent design should be taught in public schools along with evolution. Come to these two adult forums to learn more about the views of Christians supporting creationism and/or intelligent design and the evidence for and against evolution. We will discuss how the debate is rooted in some of the central tenets of some Christians faith, such as how one views the Bible. We will also discuss whether belief in creation by God is incompatible with evolution and how our views about these issues can affect our belief in God. Led by Don Rowen, Professor in Biology at UNO.

Summer Book Study by Ruth Manning

The Shack, by William P. Young, is a story that wrestles with the timeless question: "Where is God in a world so filled with unspeakable pain?" The story of a young girl who was abducted and brutally murdered during a family vacation will challenge you in many ways. It's a book you'll have a hard time putting down.



This summer, I will facilitate a discussion group of this book that many at Lord of Love have already read. Tentatively, I'm planning a 6-week study to be held at church; probably from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. on a weeknight. There will soon be a survey form at the Information Center in the narthex to determine the best time and day for the study and whether it should be weekly or biweekly.

You can pick up a copy of the book at Parables and chain bookstores, or you can get it at a bargain price online on E-bay, Books-A-Million, Amazon, or www.christianbook.com or at Costco and Sam's. Regular price is \$15.00, but I've found it for about \$9.00.

Weekly Education Opportunities at Lord of Love

Sunday 9:15 a.m.	Sunday School (Preschool – High School) @ LOL Classrooms Adult Studies @ LOL Abraham, Mary, and Joseph Rooms	Wednesday 4:45 p.m.	Confirmation (7 th & 8 th grades) @ LOL Abraham Room
		6:00 p.m.	Luther Kids (1 st – 6 th grades) @ LOL Preschool
		6:00 p.m.	<i>Lutheran Woman Today</i> Bible Study @ LOL Joseph Room (first Wednesday of month)
Monday 6:00 p.m.	<i>Lutheran Woman Today</i> Bible Study @ Old Country Buffet (first Monday of month)	Thursday 9:30 a.m.	Text Study @ Guthries
7:00 p.m.	<i>No Experience Necessary</i> Bible Study @ Vandeventers (every other Monday)	Saturday 7:00 a.m.	Men's Breakfast and Bible Study @ LOL Fellowship Hall
Tuesday 6:45 p.m.	First Place Bible Study @ LOL Joseph Room		

Christenson-Combes Wedding Shower

Mark your calendar for May 3, 2009, at 2:00 p.m. There will be a congregational shower for Carissa Christenson and Josh Combes at the home of Jim and Jeri Morgan. Everyone is invited! We will have a light lunch and heavy shower.

Carissa and Josh are registered at Target and Bed, Bath, and Beyond. They have just purchased a house, so gift cards to Lowe's for the "Honey Do" list would also be appreciated. There will be more information in the church bulletin as the date gets closer.



Crafting and Fellowship

Do you have crafts or other projects that you need dedicated time to work on? Do you enjoy the company of others?

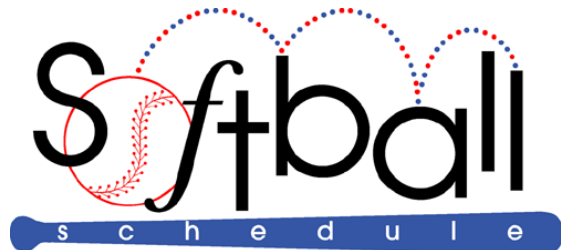
Then bring your scrapbooking supplies, your yarn and needles, or even your sewing machine, and join us for some craft/project time and fellowship at Lord of Love! We will meet in the Preschool room on **May 23 from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.**



Come alone, bring your children, or invite your friends! If you have questions or want to learn more, please talk with Gwen Edwards, Kim Gust, Amy Kragnes, or Beth Olson.

Cheer on Our Men's Softball Team!

The Men's Softball team will play on Mondays at Kelley Softball complex (126th and Fort) on Field 1. Game times are listed below. All are invited to watch and cheer as the mostly older guys on our team, including Pastor Bob, try to beat the young whippersnappers on the other teams! If you have questions, please contact Don Rowen at 965-8977.



May 4th at 8:30 p.m.
May 11th at 9:30 p.m.
May 18th at 7:30 p.m.
June 1st at 7:30 p.m.

Internship 2009-2010 by Rebecca Lund

Dear Lord of Love Family,

I am writing to joyfully inform you that you can "Meet me in St. Louis" next year as I serve there on internship! I will be working 3/4 time in St. Louis University and Washington University's Lutheran campus ministry and 1/4 time at Bethel Lutheran Church. I will have the opportunity of having two supervisors, Pr. Rebecca Boardman and Pr. Bill Yancey. It was my top choice, and I am looking forward to a year of growth and service in the church. Thank you all for your prayers as I endured a rather agonizing long wait, and thank you again for your continued support as I journey on the road to ordained ministry!

Peace,
Rebecca



Preschool Applications for Fall

The Lord of Love Preschool is now accepting applications for the 2009-2010 school year. Preschool classes are available for 3-, 4-, and 5-year-olds. Please contact the church office for more information.



What's Happening at Lord of Love Preschool by Michelle Petersen, Director and Teacher

We had spring break this month, so with that behind us, we are ready to end the year strong. For the month of April, we are focusing on the letters V, W, and X as well as celebrating the Week of the Young Child. Monday will be "kids choice" day, and the kids decided to learn about dinosaurs for the day. We are attending the Stephen Fite concert on Tuesday, so we have been practicing up on his songs so we can dance and sing along. On Wednesday, we will continue the singing and dancing in our classroom during music day. Clayton is planning to come and play guitar for us, which will be a special treat for the kids. Then on Friday, we will take a walk to the park. The kids are so excited for this and have been really looking forward to it. And it looks like the weather will even cooperate for us!



Our field trip to HyVee was a success! The dietician took the kids through the produce department, and we talked about using our five senses to explore the produce department. The dietician discussed healthy food choices, why milk is important to growing bodies, and even allowed the children to get up close and personal with the (huge!) live lobster. We ended the field trip with a healthy yogurt parfait and a sampling of a star fruit.

For the month of May, I will hold the second round of parent teacher conferences, and we will finish up the alphabet with letters Y and Z. We will make some mother's and father's day gifts, do some yoga, practice zipping, and have a final review of all of our letters. Our final day of preschool is May 20, and I have some special festivities planned for the preschoolers and their families. Stay tuned....

I am still registering students for next school year. If you know anyone who might be interested, have them give me a call!

OUTREACH

Lord of Love Mission Ministry Team Update

Remember that we're still collecting non-perishable food items to give to Project Hope through the coming spring and summer months. Don't forget that volunteer help is needed at both the Food Bank and Project Hope, as well! Contact information is on the poster in the Narthex.



Tour The Food Bank and then Join Us for Fellowship!



The Lord of Love Mission Ministry Team has arranged for a tour of The Food Bank at 6824 J Street in Omaha on Friday, May 1. The tour will start at 2:00 p.m. and will last about an hour. After the tour, we will have the opportunity to do some volunteer work helping them with tasks such as sorting items. For those who cannot get there at 2:00 p.m. on a workday, there will be another tour at 3:30 p.m. You won't have time to do any work as they close at 4:30 p.m., but the tour is very interesting and informative. Kids are welcome, but those under 17 must be with a parent to work at The Food Bank. Also, we request that you bring two non-perishable food items to donate to The Food Bank.

After we are finished at The Food Bank, you are invited to come to the Florea's house at 1540 S. 79th Street for burgers and hot dogs. Please bring something to share (chips, salad, dessert, etc.); beverages and burgers will be provided. Also, if the weather is nice, you may want to bring a lawn chair. Look for the sign-up sheet in the Narthex.

Lord of Love Community Garden

Thanks to Mulhalls, Kenn Garder, Doug Roberts, and Brian Lund for amending the soil and preparing it for planting! Thanks to Liz Smith for planting potatoes on the traditional Good Friday potato planting day!

Weather-permitting, we plan to plant vegetable seeds and seedlings in between services on Sunday, May 17. Everyone is welcome to bring gardening clothes and tools to assist in the planting that morning.



We are asking for donations of seedlings and seeds for the garden. A chart listing desired items with a basket for the seed packets will be in the Narthex.

Help will be needed throughout the summer to weed, water, and feed the garden. We anticipate lots of harvesting to do, too, so assistance will also be needed there. Harvested produce will be taken to Project Hope at 42nd and Boyd.

Please let John Florea, Brian Vandeventer, or Deb Lund know if you are interested in helping with an aspect of our community garden project.

PROPERTY

Property Committee Meeting Minutes



Spring Cleanup Day is scheduled for May 16 at 8:00 a.m. We will be doing our usual exterior raking, trimming, mulching, and sprucing up the church grounds. Any additional exterior or interior work that will be done will be mentioned in the church bulletin. Hope you can give us a few hours: the more, the easier.

Craig Pennell met with John Mayberry, Lighting Specialist, from Echo Lighting to take lighting level measurements in the sanctuary and to discuss fixtures style and types and dimming options. John is obtaining cost information on one fixture as a starting point in determining what the total lighting scheme and the associated costs might be.

Elmer Howard of Elmer's Lock and Safe Service has provided an estimate for re-keying the locks of the church. Once the locks have been re-keyed, we will be issuing new keys to those who need them. We will keep everyone posted on when that happens so those who need access the church have a new key.



FINANCE

Stewardship

In a recent survey that was done with about 10 percent of Lord of Love members, one of the comments that came back is that we only seem to emphasize giving money during a few weeks each fall. Unfortunately, that probably is very true.

The truth is that our focus should be much broader than just money. God is interested in the stewardship of our time as well. We are each given the same 168 hours each week. How do we use the time we have? We all need time to sleep, eat, and work each day, but how much of each week do we devote to the Lord? If our only time spent is the 1 hour a week at worship, is that the kind of stewardship of your time that is pleasing to the Lord? That would involve about 0.6 percent of our time each week.



The average gift of money by ELCA members to the church is about 2 percent of income. What would happen if we gave an equal portion of our time? That represents less than 3 ½ hours of our time each week. That could be about ½ an hour a day spent in prayer, meditation, and Bible study. I know there are several who give that much time or more, but what if each of us were to spend just 2 hours more each week doing activities that support the Lord's work? Can you imagine the impact that could have? If we spent 200 to 300 hours a week in prayer as a congregation that we are not spending now? If we had 200 more hours spent on projects for WELCA or Men in Mission? Or Habitat or our garden project? Or stewardship or Sunday School?

Giving from our purse is needed and is a great way to respond to God's love. Giving of our time may be an even greater gift.

COUNCIL REPORT & TRANSITION/CALL PROCESS UPDATE

April 2009 Council Report by Don Rowen, Council Vice-President

The Lord of Love council did not meet during April, but the following is information about ongoing or upcoming activities of the council and the church:

- **Appreciative Inquiry Sessions**

The Vision and Coordination committee and Pastor Bob set dates for four Appreciative Inquiry meetings. We decided to hold the meetings on Thursday, June 4, 11, 18, and 25 starting at 6:00 p.m., with a meal served at the beginning. These meetings were recommended by Pastor Bob and Pastor Laaker to help us with our transition process. Please try to attend as many meetings as possible. Each meeting will discuss different eras in Lord of Love's history. These discussions will help all our members understand Lord of Love's past and the many positive things Lord of Love has done. These sessions will also help us figure out what type of church we want to be in the future.

- **Worship Enrichment Ministry Team**

In March, the council decided to form a Worship Enrichment Ministry Team. The goal of this committee is to consider what we could do to enrich worship life at Lord of Love. This team will study what it means to worship and how churches and people worship using a study guide entitled "Worship in Healthy, Effective Congregations" developed by Herb Miller, a noted scholar on church organizations. The team will meet for about 9 months and will report back to the council and congregation. We are seeking to form a team consisting of members of different ages and lengths of membership at Lord of Love to get a diversity of points of view about worship. The Vision and Coordination committee will form this team in May. If you are interested in serving on this team, contact Pastor Bob, Doug Aden, or Don Rowen.

- **Worship during Summer**

We decided to have one worship service at 9:00 a.m. during the summer months. The single worship schedule will begin on May 24, Memorial Day weekend, and run through September 6, Labor Day weekend. The reasoning was to have one well-attended worship service. In the past, some of the summer worship services were sparsely attended and lacked the energy to be as enriching as a well-attended worship service. A breakfast will usually follow the worship service to allow fellowship time.

- **New Council Structure**

The Vision and Coordination committee is seeking to evaluate how the new council/committee structure is working and to decide how to proceed next year. We have made some minor adjustments to include more groups in the Strategic Planning Meeting, including a representative from the Vision and Coordination committee, the Women of the ELCA, Men's Ministry, and the youth sponsor, to make sure all the major groups that are planning activities at Lord of Love are part of the Strategic Planning Committee. The feeling of the Vision and Coordination committee is that we will probably continue with the trial through next year before deciding whether to adopt the structure permanently, which would require changes to the constitution.

2009 Lord of Love Church Council and Strategic Planning Committee

Executive Committee: Doug Aden, President; Don Rowen, Vice-President; Brian Walther, Secretary; Lisa Meyer, Treasurer

Finance: Brad VenHuizen*, Paul Barnett, and Jackie Combes

Nurture: Heather Christensen*, Angie Meyer, and Liz Smith

Outreach: Deb Lund*, Brian Vandeventer, and John Florea

Property: Craig Pennell*, Doug Roberts, and Joe Combes

Worship: Karen Mullen*, Debra Gillespie, and one other to be announced

Committee chairpersons are denoted with an asterisk; council members are underlined.

The Executive Committee is not part of the Strategic Planning Committee.

COUNCIL REPORT & TRANSITION/CALL PROCESS UPDATE

Bits and Pieces by Doug Aden, Council President

Because of the experimental Council and Strategic Planning Committee structure currently being tried, this is the first time that I have written this article without having just attended a Council meeting. So, we are depending upon each committee to provide updates on their activities in *The Love Letter*.

At the last Vision and Coordination meeting, we did discuss the new structure, how it is working, and the timeline for making a recommendation. In September, the Nominating Committee will begin seeking candidates for the various Council positions. We felt that we have not had enough experience with this format to make a recommendation. Our decision was to keep the Council structure in the format defined in the Constitution but to continue experimenting with the Strategic Planning Committee. By the November Congregational Meeting we should have a plan for next year, and in 2010, there should be enough experience with the structure to make a recommendation.

I have couple of observations or questions about this committee structure. Is Lord of Love big enough to have a Council and a Strategic Planning Committee? We would need to find five additional individuals to be on one or the other of the committees. The Constitution delegates specific responsibilities to the Council. If there is a Strategic Planning Committee working, can the Council do its job. An advantage of this structure is not having to attend so many Council meetings, which in theory gives more time to perform the committee's task, but do we lose communication in the process?

Pastor Bob has been with us for 8 months helping us work through the transition process, and I am satisfied with what has been accomplished. I think we will have a Call Committee in place by the end of the year or right after the beginning of next year. While this can be exciting, I am apprehensive because this will be one of the most important decisions that Lord of Love will make and it will affect what happens to our congregation. So we really have to know what we as a congregation want to be, want to do, and the type of Pastor we want to call.

One of the processes that will help us define who we are will be the Appreciative Inquiry meetings that will be held on Thursdays in June. Vision and Coordination encourages you to attend as many of these meetings as you can. After these meetings are completed, we will have visioning sessions in the fall, when we will develop a vision for Lord of Love.



I attended a "Congregational Leadership in Anxious Times" seminar with Peter Steinke. Several times during his presentation, Mr. Steinke referred to the importance of looking at a Congregation's history in determining its plan for the future. He also stated that that one of the most important criteria for a healthy congregation was its focus on Mission. The Appreciative Inquiry meetings and the visioning meetings will help determine our focus, our vision, and our mission.



At a recent Vision and Coordination Meeting, we asked ourselves the question "Does Lord of Love celebrate when we worship?" My answer was no; the other members were more positive. When asked to explain why I said no, I could not verbalize a response, but even after the discussion I still had the same answer. Another sign of a healthy congregation Mr. Steinke gave was that congregations find ways to celebrate. There was one congregation that just had their gravel parking lot paved, and they were wondering how to celebrate. There were many suggestions, from tail gate parties and sidewalk chalk parties to three man or woman hoop parties. Another congregation celebrated Pentecost by having four microphones set up in each corner of the Sanctuary and the gospel being read at the same time in four different languages.

For the prayers, the congregation formed a huge circle, held hands, and faced inward and said prayers for their congregation. Then they turned around held hands and prayed for their community. So there are many ways to celebrate. Does Lord of Love celebrate? We have reasons to celebrate, but do we? Let me know what you think.

Men's Softball Team in Action

The men's softball team had its first practice with sore muscles to prove that it was a "smashing" success. Pastor Bob took home the trophy for "tuck and roll" and "eating the most turf." Come and cheer for the softball team on Monday evenings at Kelley field. See the team schedule posted on the bulletin board, and keep watching the bulletin for Men's Softball League updates.



SOFTBALL

Notes of Thanks from Men's Ministry

Thanks to all men and women who participated in the Good Friday prayer vigil and the Easter breakfast, which was a youth fund raising event. We successfully raised \$200, and the Men's Breakfast group donated another \$50 towards the youth breakfast. Great job!



Men's Trip to National Drag Racing Event

Be watching for updates on a men's fellowship day trip, traveling to Topeka, Kansas, for the National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) O'Reilly Summer Nationals event on Saturday, May 30. We will have the chance to see Lord of Love's own Dave Rieff in action as he reports for ESPN2 from the pits.



Upcoming Fellowship Opportunities

Plans for additional Men's fellowship opportunities will be coming together soon. If you have an idea or want to sponsor an event, please contact any Men's Ministry breakfast member or any council member.

Proposed events include:

- Father/kids event
- Niobrara River canoeing
- Handyman and auto repair day



WOMEN OF LOVE

Blessings from Ruth Manning, President, LOL Women of Love

To my Sisters in Christ,

I just returned from our Sons of Norway (SON) Ethnic Night dinner. I enjoyed the displays of Norwegian handiwork as well as Norwegian food such as lefse, rice pudding, fruit soup, open-faced sandwiches, pickled herring, rommegrot (a cream pudding), waffler (small heart-shaped waffles) with whipped cream and strawberry jam, and a variety of delicious Norwegian cookies and cake (sorry, no lutefisk).

I appreciate my Norwegian heritage and love to take part in anything that helps me understand it better. Besides SON, I am a member of Sigdalslag, an organization of people whose ancestors came from Sigdal, Norway. I attend the Lag's annual meeting, where I take part in a variety of workshops on genealogy, history, and cultural information about the area where my great-grandfather was raised.

But I have a heritage even richer than my Scandinavian heritage. I have been given a wonderful resource in the Bible, which helps me understand my Christian heritage as a child of God. I have opportunities to worship, listen to sermons, go to Bible studies, attend Christian conferences, etc., which help me grow in my faith.

And yes, there's also a meal—the body and blood of Christ that I receive through the bread and wine at communion.

Yes, I am thankful for my ethnic heritage, but even more so, I am thankful for my spiritual heritage given me by a gracious, merciful, and loving God through his son, Jesus Christ. He is risen! He is risen indeed!

2009 Women's Retreat – Keeping the Sabbath Wholly

A hearty thank you to Heather Christensen, Randi VenHuizen, Brenda Thom, and Anne Yarger for your dedication and hard work to put on the annual women's retreat. Nineteen women registered for this special time of refreshing and renewal as daughters of the Living Christ.



Crane Coffee

If you haven't had a chance to join the Lord's Laughing Ladies at Crane Coffee, 77th and Cass, you don't know what you're missing! We'll be there at 8:00 a.m. on May 1, 15, and 29.



Women of Love Ministry Team

The Women of Love Leader Ministry Team will meet in the Joseph Room at 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday, May 13. All women are invited to participate. Pick up dinner in the Fellowship Hall, and join us for planning and discussion!



Lutheran Woman Today Bible Study

The *Lutheran Woman Today* Bible study contemplates “unexpected heroes” as we conclude our Bible study on the hidden hand of God. *Esther: Reversal of Fortune* shows us how some people in the Bible turn out to be unlikely heroes. That’s good news for us—we may be unlikely heroes of the faith, too. The theme verse is Esther 9:1b. All women are invited to attend either one of two study groups: Monday, May 4 at 6:00 p.m. at Old Country Buffet at 145th and West Center Road or Wednesday, May 6 at 6:00 p.m. in the Joseph Room at church.



Just a reminder to watch for information on the summer *Lutheran Woman Today* study on Mary, the mother of Jesus. You’re invited to use the opportunity of a lighter summer schedule to participate in this study.



From CWO, “Mary is one of the few female characters of the Bible that we get to see not just once or twice in her life, but over a period of decades, appearing in a number of verses and in a variety of situations well beyond the familiar lines of the Christmas story. Whether you are doing this summer Bible study as a personal devotion, as a...retreat, or shared with a circle of others over the summer, we hope you will be enriched and find in Mary a friend to cherish, a spiritual guide who points you forward to a fuller life in Christ, throughout your own seasons as a woman of faith.”

In this summer Bible study, *Mary: A Woman for All Seasons*, we will take a closer look at these three seasons in the life of Mary:

- The Annunciation
- Kinships, Friendships, and Holy Encounters
- Mary Among the Disciples

“For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven.” Ecclesiastes 3:1

Calendar of Events

May

1	8:00 a.m.	Coffee Fellowship, Crane Coffee, 77th and Cass
4	6:00 p.m.	LWT Bible Study, Old Country Buffet, 145th and Center
5	9:00 a.m.	Quilters, Fellowship Hall
6	6:00 p.m.	LWT Bible Study, Joseph Room
13	6:00 p.m.	Women of Love Ministry Team Meeting, Joseph Room
15	8:00 a.m.	Coffee Fellowship, Crane Coffee, 77th and Cass
19	9:00 a.m.	Quilters, Fellowship Hall
29	8:00 a.m.	Coffee Fellowship, Crane Coffee, 77th and Cass



Women of the ELCA

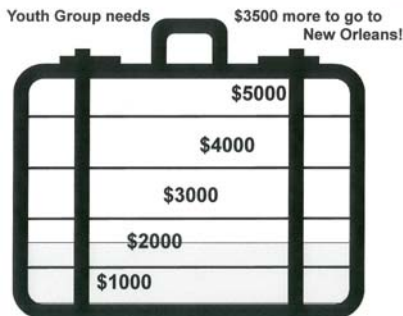
Coming Up

September 25-27 Nebraska Synodical Women’s Organization Convention, Holiday Inn Convention Center, Kearney, NE

Youth Group Says Thanks for the Support

All the Youth Group members would like to say thank you to Lord of Love for all the support this past year, particularly the financial support! Raising funds for this many people to go to the 2009 ELCA Youth Gathering in New Orleans has been a big job.

The youth still need about \$3,500 (any money raised at the Talent Show isn't included in this amount, since it occurred after *The Love Letter* deadline). If you would like to donate further to the youth, you can drop a donation in the offering plate marked "youth group." If you'd like to write a check, make it out to Lord of Love and write "youth group" in the memo line.



Planning for Fall

The focus of this year has been on the New Orleans trip, but of course Youth Group is more than one trip. When planning events for the year, the youth and leaders try to strike a balance between service/learning events and events just for fun. It's time to start thinking about fall planning soon, so give some thought to volunteering to help with events in the fall. We've been blessed with an active youth group at Lord of Love for many years, and the support of the whole congregation is needed to keep it strong.



Youth Gathering

When those going to the 2009 ELCA Youth Gathering in New Orleans met in January to begin planning for the trip, they were asked some questions about what they wanted to see and do on the trip. They were also asked who they wished could go along with them. Some of the answers are as follows:

- I wish that Taylor Swift came because she'd be fun to hang out with and sing songs and just have an amazing time. And I just want to meet her.
- My dog.
- Bob Hope.
- My BFF who is very religious and wants to come along with. (For all you non-texters, BFF is "best friend forever.")

Who's going to New Orleans this summer?

Youth

Laura Armitage
 Jason Combes
 Casey Florea
 Lauren Florea
 Matt Garder
 Alex Harris
 Kevin Krause
 Kimi Lueders
 Kira Luxon
 Nadine Rowen
 Sarah Vandeventer

Chaperones

Josh Combes
 Carissa Christenson
 Jeri Morgan
 Jim Morgan

Calendar of Youth Events

Coming Up

June 7 Final meeting for New Orleans
 July 19-26 ELCA Youth Gathering in New Orleans

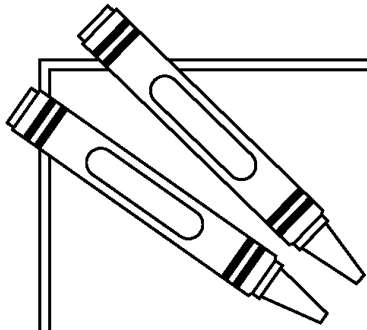


Happy
Mother's
Day!



Bible Kids Fun Zone grants permission to photocopy this page for local church or preschool use. © Copyright Bible Kids Fun Zone 2006.

<http://sunday-school-fun-zone.com>



Just for **KIDS**

A legacy of faith

You're blessed when you have a mother, a grandmother or any relative or friend who passes down a strong faith to you. In the Bible, Timothy was influenced by his grandmother and mother.

Complete 2 Timothy 1:5 (NIV) below by filling in the blanks with the correct vowel.

VOWELS: 1 = a 2 = e 3 = i 4 = o 5 = u

"_ h _ v _ b _ _ n r _ m _ nd _ d _ f
3 1 2 2 2 3 2 4

y _ _ r s _ nc _ r _ f _ _ th, wh _ ch
4 5 3 2 2 1 3 3

f _ rst l _ v _ d _ n y _ _ r gr _ ndm _ th _ r
3 3 2 3 4 5 1 4 2

L _ _ s _ nd _ n y _ _ r m _ th _ r
4 3 1 3 4 5 4 2

_ _ n _ c _ _ nd, _ _ m p _ rs _ _ d _ d,
2 5 3 2 1 3 1 2 5 1 2

n _ w l _ v _ s _ n y _ _ _ ls _ ."
4 3 2 3 4 5 1 4

2 TIMOTHY 1:5 (NIV)

IN OUR PRAYERS & LOVE NOTES

In Our Prayers

Dick and Jessie Bell
Ryan Bolen (nephew of Sandy Hall)
Miranda Brown (future in-law of the Shinrocks)
Ashley Christenson (daughter-in-law of Paul and Deb Christenson)
Jan Davis (aunt of Paula Foster)
Pearl Garnaas
Norma Gunter
Claude Hall
Cindy Harper (friend of Lynda McGraw)
Matthew Hayek (nephew of Sandy Hall)
John Hoelsing (friend of Judy Egr)
Harold and Marj Holbrook (parents of Judy Messerschmidt)
Rachael Hueftle (student of Linda Christensen)
Cathy Johnson (friend of Marilyn Thomsen)
Bob Kasworm and his ministry in Tanzania
Ken Kellogg (father of Karen Armitage)
Hannah Knudson (neighbor of the VenHuizens)
Mike Koesters (friend of David Boarts)
Paula Lawhead (at seminary)
Rose Lubbert (friend of the Rieffs)
Carl Lueders (uncle of Dave Lueders)
Irene Lund (aunt of Brian Lund)
Rebecca Lund (at seminary)
Pastor Elisante Maimu

Bob McKnight (grandfather of Ann Kroll)
Pastor Elibariki Mtui and all the saints of TPC Lutheran Parish, Tanzania
Harry Naasz
Susan Oleson (sister-in-law of Pastor Bob)
Joe Policky (grandfather of Tamra Johnston)
Berniece Reitan
Eloyse Rice
Don St. Ours (brother-in-law of Lynda McGraw)
Nancy Thoman (stepmom of Ann Kroll)
Joey Thompson (friend of the Murphys)
Brody Vermilyea (grandson of Brian and Nancy Shinrock)
Harlan Walther (father of Brian Walther)
Glenn Wapelhorst (brother of Brenda Mac)
Esther Welliver
Agnes Wilson
Bernie Wolff (friend of Marilyn Thomsen)
Rob Zalk (cousin of Mary Lou Gustafson)

Men's servant ministry
Stephen Ministers and their care receivers
Those deployed around the world
Those seeking employment
Those who mourn

If you would like to add a name to the In Our Prayers section of *The Love Letter*, please contact the office at 402.493.2946, send an email to marylou@lord-of-love.org, or fill out a prayer request note available in the narthex and place it in the basket. **Please help keep this list current by informing us when a name can be removed.** Thanks!

Love Notes

Ried and Eunice Neve have moved to St. Joseph, Missouri, and wanted to share their new address with their Lord of Love family.

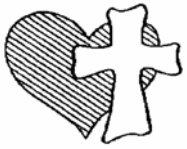


Ried and Eunice Neve
1202 Heartland Rd #305
St. Joseph, MO 64506
telephone: (816) 671-8369
email: reneve3@gmail.com



Mother's Day





The Love Letter
 Lord of Love Lutheran Church
 10405 Fort Street
 Omaha, NE 68134-1298

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION
 U.S. POSTAGE PAID
 OMAHA, NE
 PERMIT NO. 368

Return Service Requested

Mission Statement: Created by God’s gracious love, we are called, as a community of faith, to be witnesses and servants of Jesus to the world.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

This Month

- May 1 Tour of The Food Bank and Fellowship at Florea’s house
- May 3 Christenson-Combes Wedding Shower
- May 16 Spring Cleanup Day
- May 17 Planting of the Community Garden between services
- May 23 Crafting and Fellowship
- May 24 Summer worship schedule begins

Upcoming Events

- June “Appreciative Inquiry” meetings on Thursday nights
- June 5-7 Nebraska Synod Assembly & Festival at Midland Lutheran College in Fremont
- July 19-26 ELCA Youth Gathering in New Orleans
- September 6 Last day of summer worship schedule
- September 13 Kickoff Sunday

Articles for The Love Letter can be submitted to the editor, Kim Gust, in the Love Letter mailbox at church or by email at loveletter@lord-of-love.org. Articles must be received by the Love Letter editor by the 20th of the month.