



Tidings of Peace

From the Pastor's Desk...

February 2023

A couple of months ago, I spent some time catching up on the magazines sitting on my desk. There had to be at least 15 magazines – *Ministry Today*, *The Lutheran*, *Christianity Today*, and some other quarterly magazines. There were several articles I actually ripped from the magazine to save, and read again later, pondering their message.

There was one article which struck a chord with me titled, “*What is our job?*” For ELCA Lutherans in the 21st century, I think that it speaks to where we are today. I would, however, rephrase the question to read – **What exactly is our call?** I often used the phrase, we are called, in my sermons and prayers. Now I choose to break it down to our context, and what it means for us.



Our call is a multitude of things: our jobs/careers, our position at church, our volunteer work, our family and friends, and God’s call upon us. There are no specific requirements or descriptors for God’s call upon you; in fact, it’s very personal. It’s the connection between you and God, answerable only to him. It’s the action of the Holy Spirit in our lives, in our hearts, centered on you alone. My call is not your call; your call is not someone else’s. We are the kingdom, brought together as children of God, unique in our own ways and mirrored in God’s image. Our call is but our journey of faith, with Christ Jesus by our side. The paths are worn; the forks in the road are congested; the questions and doubts

consume us. And yet, we are not alone! Christ Jesus walks with us.

My wish for this new year is that we journey together; that we walk our own faith journey; that we join our gifts, talents, skills, and love for our church – and all of our God-sent calls – to form a more perfect union. We have been called by God – to be who God has made us to be – to live our lives in his service, in his kingdom, and in the light of his Son, Jesus the Christ.

God's Blessings and Peace

Pastor Neil

Pastor's Office Hours

Monday/Wednesday 10:00 am – 1:00 pm Tuesday 10:00 am – 2:00 pm

Thank you... Peace Lutheran Church.

At our annual meeting on Sunday, the congregation voted to add two weeks of vacation to my contract (making a total of 6 weeks), due to the restraint on this year's budget and my compensation package. We thank you very much.

Thank You!

However, we feel it is too much!

We believe 4 weeks of vacation included in my package is more than enough. We are grateful for this congregation's willingness to provide the time for vacation, and if needed, any additional time as you have in the past.

Blessings to all of you – your generosity is appreciated.

Pastor Neil and Sandy

Choir

We can hear you on Sunday mornings as you sing boldly and loudly during our worship services. We want to expand our choir with voices like yours. Join us on **Thursday evenings for choir practice beginning at 7:00pm**. In the Choir Room. If you have any questions, see Scott Myckowiak.



Men's Breakfast



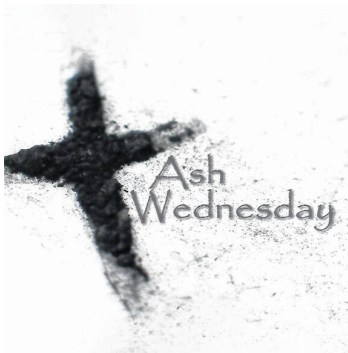
We will meet at the Eaton Place for food and fellowship on **Thursday, February 9th at 8:30am**. Hope to see you there!

Men's Night Out

This is something most of us enjoy – so let's get together again on **Tuesday, February 21st at 6:00pm** for a sandwich and beverage. It's a great time to catch up with one another and share some stories. Hope to see you there!



Ash Wednesday



Peace Lutheran Church will be hosting an ecumenical Ash Wednesday service here at church beginning at **7:00pm on February 22nd**. We will be gathering with our sisters and brothers from St. John Episcopal Church and the First Congregational UCC as we begin the Lenten season. We hope you can join us for this service to mark the beginning of our journey to the cross.

Ladies Luncheon

Join us on Wednesday, February 16th at 11:30 am at The Eaton Pub



Communications Team



The Communications Team will meet on Wednesday, February 15th at 7:00 pm in the Fellowship Hall. Please bring some ideas as to what we can do to increase awareness in the surrounding communities of “*who we are as Peace Lutheran Church*” and “*what we do as Peace Lutheran Church.*” See you then.

FREE laundry event "Loads of Love"

At Quality Dairy in Charlotte on Saturday, February 11th from 8 am to noon. Quarters and other monetary **donations are being accepted in the Gathering area at church** as well as a **sign-up sheet** to work 2 hour shifts on the 11th. Your help in this community event is greatly appreciated!

Poinsettias for Hunger and Farm animals



We would like to thank all those who donated towards this Christmas project. Due to your generous donations, we were able to donate the following: 2 sets of chicks (10 each), 2 roosters, 3 goats, 5 piglets, 4 shares of a cow, and 1 set of honeybees! We were also able to donate to a soup kitchen to provide 20 meals!

Thank you so much.



FLOWERS FOR WORSHIP



Would you like to provide flowers for worship? People often provide flowers in honor of a birthday or anniversary, in memory of a loved one who has passed away, or just for the glory of God! If you'd like to bring flowers for a weekend, please sign the sheet in the Gathering Area.

Providing flowers is easier than ever! We have arranged with a local florist to provide the arrangements. All you need to do is bring a check made out to Peace Lutheran Church or cash for \$30 to the office. We will take care of the rest.

Following worship on Sunday, you may take the flowers home if you choose. If you choose to take them home, please bring a vase to transfer flowers to, or return the vase to the church for the next weekend

When you sign up, please indicate if there is an occasion you are celebrating and would like to have listed in the bulletin.

Contact Kathy Cook in the office at 517-543-1503 if you have any questions.

WEST FUND

The West Fund is truly one of Peace's blessed ministries. This fund is available to the needs of members of the congregation. There were no requests from the congregation in 2022. We did have a woman with her children come to Peace and ask for gas money. Upon further questioning it was discovered there was no food in her household. Kathy, our secretary, took her food shopping. Pastor Neil said, "And get some cookies for the children." The West Fund reimbursed that expenditure, and she did receive a gas gift card.

With no requests from our congregation the West Fund tithes monthly to the Community Assistance Benevolence Fund. This fund helps with emergency expenditures for housing, utility, and other items. In 2022, we tithed \$525 to this fund.

The West Fund began the year with \$478.17 and ended the year with \$517.04. This after tithing \$525 and buying groceries for \$54.13.

An amazing commitment our congregation has made. We keep on giving and the West Fund keeps on giving. Thank you to those that continue to donate to this ministry.



Kimmy Leiby	February 1
Harry Moore	February 9
Terry Jorgensen	February 12
Sandy Brady	February 24
Vicki Lumbert	February 26
Dolores McCoy	February 26



Steve and Kathy Clark	February 7
Del and Beverly Leffler	February 10
Roger and Darlene Gareiss	February 12
Glen and Linda Meyer	February 14



Charlotte Lions

Eyeglass and Hearing Aid Recycling Challenge

The Charlotte Lions Club is asking for help to meet their “**Recycle for Sight**” 2nd Challenge of collecting 2,000 pairs of eyeglasses and hearing aids by **March 1, 2023**. All the good glasses, pats and pieces are boxed separately and sent to the Lions Eyeglass Recycling Center in Grand Rapids. At the recycling center they recycle every donated pair of glasses. Good glasses are used for Mission trips. The defective glasses are sent to ReSpecs (a recycling company in California), and they pay poundage for the glasses. This means those unusable glasses do not end up in a landfill. Money from ReSpecs is used to help pay for materials and shipping glasses for Mission Trips. These glasses may be the only pair of glasses a recipient ever receives. Please dig into your closets and drawers for your old eyeglasses and hearing aids and bring them to Peace. Place them in the basket provided in the entryway by the mailboxes.

THE BLURRING OF LAW AND GOSPEL

January 6, 2023



Martin Luther once said, “I felt that I had been born anew and that the gates of heaven had been opened. The whole of Scripture gained a new meaning. And from that point on the phrase ‘the justice of God’ no longer filled me with hatred, but rather became unspeakably sweet by virtue of a great love.”

Luther had been studying the Bible—Paul’s letter to the Romans to be exact—when he finally came to understand that it was not up to human beings to make themselves worthy in the eyes of a righteous God. Luther had tried—he quit his study of law, entered a monastery and was so rigorously observant that his health suffered. The word of God only seemed to bring condemnation. It tormented him.

But in an instant, all that changed. From hatred to love. Here was the gospel, the good news. We receive forgiveness of sin and become righteous before God by grace for Christ’s sake through faith. Thanks be to God!

This is a treasure, and it is the church’s unique and proper work to preach the gospel purely and to administer the sacraments according to the gospel. “It is also taught that at all times there must be and remain one holy, Christian church. It is the assembly of all believers among whom the gospel is purely preached and the holy sacraments are administered according to the gospel” (Augsburg Confession, Article VII, German translation). The church, of which we are a part, is the only institution on earth given this task.

[The Augsburg Confession](#) gives a clear explanation of the gospel: “Likewise, they teach that human beings cannot be justified before God by their own powers, merits, or works. But they are justified as a gift on account of Christ through faith ...” (Augsburg Confession, Article IV, Latin translation).

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I'm concerned that the Lutheran understanding of the word being both law and gospel, and that there is a distinction between law and gospel, is getting blurred. Some define the gospel as social justice—feeding the hungry, standing with the poor and marginalized, racial equity, justice for migrants, respect for the dignity of all people. These are all vitally important ministries in which this church must be engaged. But they aren't the gospel. Rather, these works of justice and mercy flow from the liberation the gospel brings.

In November 1520, Martin Luther wrote his treatise *On the Freedom of a Christian*. In it he makes clear the distinction between law and gospel and between God's work and our work. The gospel, God's gift of grace, has set us free. Luther explains it this way: "Lord Jesus, you are my righteousness, just as I am your sin. You have taken upon yourself what is mine and given me what is yours" (*Luther's Works*, 48:12-13). No one and nothing can take this away from us. No longer crushed by the weight of self-justification, but gloriously free by being bound to the righteousness of Christ, we are free to serve the neighbor.

Luther wrote: "I will do nothing in this life except what I see is necessary, profitable, and salutary to my neighbor, since through faith I have an abundance of all good things in Christ" (*On the Freedom of a Christian*).

Lutherans have been accused of quietism in the past. And I sense the current blurring of law and gospel is motivated out of an earnest desire to follow Jesus' command to care for "the least of these" (Matthew 25:1-46). But we aren't quietists. Our faith compels us to be active in the public square.

Jesus said, "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly" (John 10:10). We don't bring life or salvation. That is God's work, and it has already been accomplished through the death and resurrection of Jesus. It is because of this life, this grace, this freedom that we human creatures are bold to stand with the marginalized and excluded.

A monthly message from the presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Her email address: bishop@elca.org



Charlotte Area CROP Hunger Walk

January 10, 2023

Peace Lutheran Church
830 N. Cochran Avenue
Charlotte, MI 48813-1102

Dear Members of the Peace Lutheran Church:

The Charlotte Area CROP Hunger Walk Leadership Team would like to thank you for your generous support of the 2022 CROP Hunger Walk. Peace Lutheran Church had eight walkers who raised a total of \$2,698.84.

A total of \$17,797.03 was raised by the 39 walkers from the ten churches and one college group who participated this year. Forty-nine students from Olivet College helped set up and tear down at the Walk. Of the monies raised, \$4,449.26 (25%) benefited these Charlotte agencies:

- SIREN/Eaton Shelter
- Helping Hands
- St. Vincent DePaul

The remaining \$13,347.77 will go to areas of greatest need worldwide. This year much of the focus has been on helping refugees from war-torn Ukraine. Thank you for extending the love of Christ to our needy brothers and sisters both here in the United States and abroad by sharing life-saving food, supplies, and equipment.

Sincerely,

Sally L. Seifert
Charlotte Area CROP Hunger Walk Leadership Team

Schedule of Worship Volunteers *February 2023*

Date	Sunday 2/5	Sunday 2/12	Sunday 2/19	Sunday 2/26
Acolyte	Carson Clark	Kendall Jobson	Logan Levi	Payton Jobson
Altar Guild	Kathy Cook	Kathy Cook	Kathy Cook	Kathy Cook
Audio/ Visual	Scott Lumbert	Scott Lumbert	Scott Lumbert	Scott Lumbert
Choir Director	Scott Myckowiak	Scott Myckowiak	Scott Myckowiak	Scott Myckowiak
Fellowship		Walt and Rosalie		
Lector	Susie Moore	Susie Moore	Susie Moore	Susie Moore
Pastor	Pastor Neil Brady	Pastor Neil Brady	Pastor Neil Brady	Pastor Neil Brady
Musician	Bryan Guarnuccion	Bryan Guarnuccio	Bryan Guarnuccio	Bryan Guarnuccio
Ushers	Steve and Kathy Cook	Steve and Kathy Cook	Steve and Kathy Cook	Steve and Kathy Cook
Worship Assistant	John Thiel	John Thiel	John Thiel	John Thiel

Church Calendar

February 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 11:30 am Caring Team Meeting 7:00 pm Book Club	2 7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal	3	4
5 9:30 am Worship 10:30 Gathering 10:45-12:00 Sunday School	6	7 10:00 am Worship and Music Team Meeting 7:00 pm CAT Team Meeting	8 1:00 pm IT/Personnel Team Meeting	9 8:30 am Men's Breakfast 7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal	10	11 8:00-Noon Loads of Love at Quality Dairy
12 9:30 am Worship 10:30 am Gathering 10:45-12:00 Confirmation	13	14 7:00 pm Council Meeting	15 7:00 pm Communications Team Meeting	16 11:30 am Ladies Luncheon at Eaton Pub 7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal	17	18
19 9:30 am Worship 10:30 am Gathering	20	21 6:00 pm Men's Night Out	22 7:00 PM ASH WEDNESDAY	23 7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal	24 Articles Due for the December Tidings	25
26 NOISY BUCKET OFFERING 9:30 am Worship 10:30 Gathering 10:45-Noon Sunday School	27	28				

Pastor's Office Hours

Monday 10:00-1:00

Tuesday 10:00 2:00

Wednesday 10:00-1:00

Please feel free to submit articles or pictures for the Tidings to the editor, Kristin Shannon
gore.kristin88@gmail.com

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*Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul,
and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and love your
neighbor as yourself.*



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