

The Peace Post

Peace Lutheran Church ~ Alma, MI

February, 2011

Peace Lutheran Church is a member congregation of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. We believe, teach, and confess the doctrine of the evangelical, catholic faith as it is taught by Holy Scripture and faithfully confessed in the Book of Concord of 1580. We are committed to the pure preaching of God's Word and the right administration of the Holy Sacraments, catechesis of all people in the Christian faith, and liturgical worship consistent with our Reformation heritage. We are an evangelical, orthodox, and catholic congregation, proclaiming Jesus Christ crucified, risen, and reigning for the salvation of the world!



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From the Desk of Pastor Messer **Pastor's Annual Report for 2010**

The year 2010 was the 48th year that our Lord Jesus Christ, through His Holy Spirit, gathered to His heavenly Father a community of Evangelical Lutheran Christians here at Peace in Alma. In many ways, it was an uneventful year in the life of our small parish, but it was a blessed year nonetheless, marked specifically by the very noticeable peace, love, and unity which graced our life together. That is a rare gift not experienced often enough in the Church Militant, where conflict and strife often sadly rule the day. Cherish that gift, beloved, and pray that our Lord continues to gift us with this peace, love, and unity in the years to come. And, uneventful as the year may have been, our Lord continued to visit us with His love, grace, and mercy, feeding His flock gathered here with His Holy Word and Sacraments, and thus strengthening us on our journey through the wilderness of this sinful world toward the Promised Land of His Kingdom, which has no end. With eternal gratitude to our Lord Jesus, in Whose stead and by Whose command I am blessed to serve this parish, I submit the following annual report:

January

As we entered the calendar year of 2010, we found ourselves celebrating the joys of a very brief Epiphany season, lasting only a few weeks before we shifted gears and entered the season of Pre-Lent on January 31. We were blessed to experience some church growth the old-fashioned way, first with the birth of Kylie Rose Stahl on January 10, and then with the announcement that Megan and Chris Brown were expecting their first child. Little Kylie arrived on the scene about seven weeks earlier than expected via an emergency C-section. Prayers ascended for her, and for Jilian and Kyle, and our Lord was gracious to answer those prayers by sustaining little Kylie, granting her growth, healing Jilian, and eventually making it possible for Kylie to join her parents at home.

Lisa and I were immensely blessed to have the opportunity to cruise the Caribbean from January 16—23, thanks to the gracious gift of a good friend. In my absence, Pastor Sam Reith (Zion, Mt. Pleasant) served our flock, celebrating Divine Service and making a couple of hospital calls. It was wonderful for us to get away, made all the more so knowing that our parish was in capable hands.

January also found us continuing our study of the Holy Liturgy in both Sunday School and Adult Bible Study, our study of Romans during Together in the Word, and our study of Christian History on Wednesday evenings. We also held our first quarterly Voters' Assembly on January 24, during which we approved our annual budget, voted unanimously to release six of our members for self-exclusion (Sue Reithel; Dale & Trina Palmer, and their children, Heather, Brian, and Darren), and voted unanimously to submit the following nominations to the Praesidium of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (to be elected in July): President—Rev. Matthew Harrison; First Vice President—Rev. Herbert Mueller; Second through Fifth Vice Presidents—Rev. Dr. John Wohlrabe, Rev. Daniel Preus, Rev. Dr. David Adams, Rev. Dr. Scott Murray, and Rev. Dr. Carl Fickenscher (alternate).

February

Highlights of our life together during February included a Super Bowl Party on February 6, hosted by Megan and Chris Brown, and a special Authentic Mexican Dinner/Movie Night on February 26. Both events were enjoyed by all who were able to attend.

According to the Church Year, we moved out of the short season of Pre-Lent and into the Lenten Fast on Ash Wednesday (Feb. 18). As we made our 40-day journey with our Lord to His cross, we were blessed to meditate more deeply on His salvific work for us through the "Our Suffering Savior" Sermon and Bible Study Series. In addition, our Ladies' Guild lovingly provided Soup & Salad dinners for us throughout the holy season of Lent, and did a fabulous job of doing so, as always. We also continued our study of the liturgy on Sundays, and our study of Romans on Thursdays.

I was blessed to attend the 2nd annual Brothers of John the Steadfast Conference February 12-13 at Bethany Lutheran Church in Naperville, IL, which featured presentations made by Rev. Klemet Preus, author of *The Fire and the Staff*, Rev. Todd Wilken, host of "Issues, Etc.," and Mrs. Mollie Hemingway, free-lance reporter, who writes on religious matters for such publications as *Christianity Today* and *The Wall Street Journal*. The conference was simply outstanding and I look forward to attending the 3rd annual BJS Conference, which is only a couple weeks away from my writing this report.

February also brought us the blessing of receiving John and Tanarae Lemmermann into our fellowship by way of transfer from Zion in Mount Pleasant. We were also happy to grant the transfer request of Ryan and Sarah Cummins, and their daughter, Evelyn, who moved to the Lansing area and are now members of Our Savior in Lansing.

We continued our support of "Issues, Etc." by sending in our annual donation of \$1,000.00 (\$500.00 budgeted; \$500.00 donated), maintaining our status as a proud member of the "Issues, Etc. 300." We also began a fundraising effort to support *The Siberian Lutheran Mission Society*, making mission cans available to all members and asking them to fill them throughout Lent and return them on Easter Sunday. And, it was during February that we were blessed to finally have someone volunteer to chair our Stewardship Committee, which had been vacant for over a year, as Bill Harmon was appointed by President Chris Brown.

March

As we entered March, we were nearly half-way through the Lenten fast, continuing our meditation upon "Our Suffering Savior." Our study of the liturgy on Sundays, and Romans on Thursdays, continued. On March 26, we gathered together to watch "The Passion of the Christ," which has become an annual tradition here at Peace in preparation for our entrance into the Holiest Week of the year.

Holy Week commenced on March 28, as we gathered in the fellowship hall with palms in hand for our Palm Sunday procession into the nave. As in years past, we continued the tradition of celebrating Divine Service daily during Holy

Week, both at Noon and at 7:00 p.m. (7:30 p.m. on Good Friday) to give everyone the opportunity to receive our Lord's Gifts in these beautiful Services. We also prayed Matins daily throughout the week at 7:00 a.m., which was an additional blessing for those who were able to come.

We were blessed to witness the Sacrament of Holy Baptism on Oculi Sunday (Lent 3—March 7), as Kylie Rose Stahl was graciously and lovingly brought into our Lord's eternal kingdom through the washing of regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit.

April

April began in correspondence with the Sacred Triduum (the Three Holy Days), as April 1 found us celebrating the Institution of the Holy Eucharist during our Holy/Maundy Thursday Divine Service. At the conclusion of that austere and beautiful Service comes the Stripping of the Altar, while Psalm 22 is somberly read in the background. Thus were we prepared for the hauntingly beautiful Services of Good Friday, which included Matins at 7:00 a.m., Sacred Noonday Divine Service, Devotion at the Sacred Hour at 3:00 p.m., the hour in which our Lord breathed His last and gave up His spirit, and culminated with the always stunning Service of Tenebrae at 7:30 p.m., which ends with the dramatic "strepitus" (loud noise) and complete darkness. The Services of Good Friday allowed us to stand in awe and wonder before the love of a God who would embrace the suffering and death of the cross to wipe out our sin and set us free from death's power. After early morning Matins and Divine Service at Noon on Holy Saturday, we had the joy of decorating our church for Easter, which never fails to be a most welcomed endeavor after the rigor of Lent and meditative nature of Holy Week. Then, in the evening, we celebrated our first-ever Easter Vigil at 8:00 p.m., which is one of the most ancient Services celebrated in the Church. We were blessed to light our new paschal candle (which we were thankfully able to purchase, along with a beautiful new stand) and process into the Church to receive our Resurrected Lord's Gifts, which He lavishly poured out upon us in each of the six parts of the Vigil: 1) The Service of Light, 2) The Service of Readings, 3) The Service of Holy Baptism, 4) The Service of Prayer, 5) The Service of the Word, and 6) The Service of the Sacrament. Following the Vigil, we were treated to a lovely Champagne Reception by our Ladies' Guild, where we toasted our Lord's victory over the grave and enjoyed a time of wonderful fellowship over a little "bubbly" and some delicious hors d'oeuvres. Then, it was up and at 'em early for Easter Sunrise Service at 7:00 a.m., followed by a wonderful Easter Breakfast, again hosted by our fantastic Ladies' Guild, and the Chief Feast of the Resurrection of Our Lord at 9:30 a.m., which was one of the most beautiful Services of the year, as usual.

After reflecting upon our Holy Week and Easter Services, we will be making a few changes for the coming year, moving every morning Matins to 8:00 a.m. (instead of 7:00 a.m.), moving Easter Vigil to 7:00 p.m. (instead of 8:00 p.m.), and, since we have the Vigil in place now, we will eliminate the Easter morning Sunrise Service, which only saw a few attendees the last couple of years.

On April 22, Mabel Diane Elliott was born to proud parents, Larry and Andrea, and big brother, Benjamin. Mabel came in at a healthy 7 lbs., 4 oz., 20 in., and it has been wonderful to watch her grow in our midst these past several months. More church growth the old fashioned way—gotta love it!

We continued our study of the liturgy on Sundays, were still in Romans on Thursdays, and resumed our study of Christian History on Wednesdays, having completed our study of "Our Suffering Savior" throughout Lent. We held our second quarterly Voters' Assembly on April 25 and, besides the reports, the only business conducted was to release Curt, Tammy, Jessica, and C.J. Oswald from our fellowship for self-exclusion.

May

We entered May still basking in Easter joy and were blessed to witness the Holy Baptism of Mabel Diane Elliott on Cantate Sunday (Easter 5—May 2). We went high-tech with her Baptism, as Larry set up his laptop in the front pew with the

webcam up and running, so that Mabel's godmother could participate from afar. Pretty neat, that. On Thursday, May 13, we celebrated the Ascension of Our Lord, and the Easter Season came to a close the following Sunday (Exaudi Sunday). We ushered in the Trinity Season with the dual Feasts of Pentecost (Sunday, May 23) and The Holy Trinity (Sunday, May 30). During Divine Service on the Feast of Pentecost, Natalie Penzien was Confirmed in Christ and received her First Communion. This was also the last day of Sunday School in the parish, which would reconvene again in September. We continued our study of the liturgy in Adult Bible Study on Sundays, our study of Christian History on Wednesdays, and our study of Romans on Thursdays.

Highlights of our life together during May included our Youth participating in a Bake Sale at Wal-Mart, a Bowling Night for young and old(er) at 300 Bowl, the sending in of our collected donation for *The Siberian Lutheran Mission Society*, which totaled \$603.51 (we extended the collection past Easter Sunday to allow more members to participate), and a wonderful lunch with our choir at Francesco's. I am so thankful that our little parish has a group so committed to the further beautification of our Services with their musical talents. They come early every Sunday throughout the Festival half of the Church Year to practice and we are all the more blessed by their faithful service among us. Additionally, we were also blessed with beautiful new landscaping to grace the front of our church, thanks to the efforts of a group of our members, led by Larry and Andrea Elliott, in consultation with local landscaping guru Bob Eldridge. The new landscaping, combined with having cut down the three big trees in front of our building last fall, has given our church a wonderful face-lift and made it a beautiful sight to take in for those passing by. A spring cleaning day was also held on Saturday, May 22, to accomplish some much needed cleaning tasks inside and out.

June

As we entered June, we embarked upon what I like to refer to as the "Green Season," which is a reference not only to the full blooming of green outside which the spring season has provided us, but also to the liturgical green of the Trinity Season we see inside the Church throughout the summer months and into the fall. As we entered the "Green Season," which is normally a time when things slow down a bit in parish life, we found ourselves busy preparing for Vacation Bible School, which was held June 14-18. This year's VBS employed a wonderful program produced by Pax Domini Press titled, "Five Words of Understanding." The children who attended, between ten and twenty daily, learned the full meaning behind the Greek word, "ICHTHUS," which the early Christians used as a secret code to avoid their Roman persecutors. The word simply means "fish," but the early Christians used the word because it provided an acronym (I = Jesus, CH = Christ, TH = God's, U = Son, S = Savior) which resulted in the confession of their faith, "Jesus Christ, God's Son, Savior."

Another cleaning day was held on Saturday, June 12, to finish up some of the tasks left undone after the cleaning day in May. In Adult Bible Study on Sundays, we turned our attention to a study of some of the parables of our Lord, and spent some time also discussing the importance of the LCMS National Convention to take place in July. We continued our study of Christian History on Wednesdays and completed our study of Romans on Thursday, June 10, after which our Thursday morning Together in the Word Bible Study went on hiatus for the summer months, to be reconvened in September.

Tuesday, June 22, was a day of deep sadness and great rejoicing, a dichotomy that only Christians can fully experience and understand, for our dear sister in Christ, Freda Hill, fell asleep in Jesus. It was a day of deep sadness because those of us who were blessed to get to know Freda well miss her greatly. Her quick wit and sense of humor always made being around her a joyous occasion. But, it was also a day of great rejoicing, for Freda was a sister blessed with great faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and we know that she now basks in the bliss and glory of heaven, and that we who have been blessed with that same faith will see her again. As I spent the evening with Freda the night before our Lord called her home, her faith was on full display. She shared with me that she knew it was really time for her to depart this vale of tears this time (she had come close to doing so a few times in the previous years). When I asked her what made her so sure, she told me

that she had seen an angel in her room a few times that day and that she knew that he was the angel being sent by our Lord to take her home. She assured me that she was neither crazy nor seeing things and I told her that I fully believed her. As it turned out, just a few hours after Tina, Josh, and I left for the night, per Freda's request and insistence, that angel did indeed gather her up and take her to be with her Lord and all the saints and angels. She was ready to go home and our Lord graciously took her quickly and peacefully. He is good! Visitation was held at Berry Funeral Home in Shepherd on Thursday, June 24, and Freda's Funeral Service was held here at Peace on Friday, June 25. She was laid to rest a couple of days later in Newark, Ohio, her Committal presided over by Pastor Larry Kudart (her former pastor at Zion Lutheran in Zanesville, OH).

July

July was a month filled with great joy. Not only were we blessed with the warmth of summer fully upon us, but many of us took advantage of a couple of wonderful opportunities to enjoy some fellowship and fun together. The annual Peace Camping Weekend took place July 9-11 at Wilson State Park in Harrison, MI. We only had a few campers this year, but several members made the trip up to spend the day together on Saturday. Besides the good food and conversation, the swimming and games, one of the highlights of the day was the photo taken of our group, everyone wearing thick mustaches to show our support for Rev. Matthew Harrison in the LCMS Presidential election that would take place a few short days from then. A couple weeks later, on Sunday, July 25, many of us also enjoyed spending the afternoon together at a Lansing Lugnuts baseball game.

July also marked the joyous occasion of our fifth anniversary together at Peace, which is quite a milestone for this congregation, since I am only the third full-time pastor in Peace's forty-eight year history to reach the five-year mark, and, Lord willing, this May will mark mine as the longest full-time pastorate. I shared my thoughts about my five years at Peace in a three-part series of articles in *The Peace Post* last year (May, June, August). As I shared then, I am eternally thankful to our Lord for bringing me here to serve, thankful for the love and support I have received from all of you during my time here, and pray that the Lord will grant us many more blessed years together.

Perhaps the greatest joy in this joy-filled month came on the afternoon of July 13. I was glued to my computer that afternoon, as were a great many other prayerful and hopeful Lutherans, watching the LCMS National Convention via live streaming and anxiously awaiting the election of president. When the time came and the screen showed that Rev. Matthew Harrison had been elected, I was overcome with emotion, as were so many others. And then, to hear President-elect Harrison address the assembly with such humility left me all the more awe-struck. What a blessing from our Lord that we have been given a solid theologian, a very capable historian, and a compassionate pastor, who is, in all three respects, decidedly and thoroughly Lutheran, to lead our synod. And that blessing was multiplied as the elections continued during the remaining days of the Convention, as the vast majority of those elected to serve our synod were those who take being Lutheran seriously.

Our own Larry Elliott was privileged to be there in person to witness the blessed and historic events of this Convention unfold. He was elected the previous fall to serve as our circuit's lay delegate to the Convention, which was also another huge milestone for our little parish, for this was the first time in our history that we were privileged to send either a lay or pastoral delegate to represent our circuit at an LCMS National Convention. Together with Pastor David Reed (Grace, Auburn), who was elected to serve as our circuit's pastoral delegate, our circuit could not have had better representation, and we are thankful to the faithful service provided by both.

Another joy to be mentioned in July is the adoption by our Board of Elders of our new First Communion Policy. After nearly a year of study, prayer and conversation, we now have a policy in place which gives our children the opportunity

to receive the great benefits of the Holy Sacrament of our Lord's Body and Blood much sooner than before. This practice brings us more in line with the practice throughout the history of Christ's Church, and especially with the practice of our own Lutheran forefathers, and we are confident that it will be a blessing for our congregation in the years to come.

And yet another joy to be mentioned is the beautiful new banner stand we were blessed to put into service for the first time during Divine Service on July 25, thanks to the generosity of one of our members. We continued our study of Christian History on Wednesdays and spent most of our time talking about the LCMS National Convention during Adult Bible Study on Sundays. On Sunday, July 18, we were privileged to hear a report from Larry regarding his time in Houston.

August

August was probably the quietest month in the life of our parish last year. Besides the group of members who participated in the *Relay for Life* event held at St. Louis High School August 13-14, there is not much to report regarding our life together during August. We held our third quarterly Voters' Assembly on Sunday, August 1 (having moved it from the last Sunday in July due to our trip to Lansing to watch the Lugnuts play), which was rather short and sweet, consisting of only the reports given by our congregational officers and chairpersons of our various committees. No business was brought before the Assembly. Our congregation was blessed to have Pastor Jon Bakker from Zion, Mt. Pleasant, conduct the Divine Service on August 15 (Feast of St. Mary, Mother of Our Lord), due to my being on a two-week vacation. Our elders were gracious to lead the congregation in the Service of Prayer and Preaching on the other Sunday I missed (Trinity 12—August 22). I had the joy of spending my two weeks of vacation working with my dad on a complete remodel of Sharyn Greening's kitchen, which I began referring to as "my second job." Other than that, August was indeed a rather quiet month in our parish, which is usually the case, as everyone is eager to take advantage of the these last days of summer before the busyness of the fall kicks in.

September

By mid-September, parish life was back in full swing. Rally Day, on September 12, kicked off a new year of Sunday School for our children, during which they will be studying the Holy Gospel for each Sunday using the excellent materials from the Pax Domini Press Sunday School program, "A.D.," our Thursday morning Together in the Word reconvened and we commenced a detailed study of Joshua, we began a detailed study of Ephesians during Adult Bible Study on Sundays, Confirmation classes commenced for our two second-year confirmands, Sierra Luplow and Aaron Messer, (we have no first-year confirmands this year) and some of the other regularly occurring activities were picked up again after having taken a break for the summer (e.g. Peace Movie Nights, Table Talks, SALT and Ladies' Guild meetings). It was good to get back into the flow of things.

But, before that flow kicked in for me, I was immensely blessed to go on a wonderful trip with Lisa to St. Louis, MO, thanks to the generosity of some of our members. The purpose of this trip was to attend the Installation Service of President Harrison and Other Synodical Officers. What a tremendous honor it was for me to join hundreds of LCMS pastors in the Procession into the Chapel of Saints Timothy and Titus at Concordia Seminary for this beautiful Service. I am so thankful to those of you who donated toward the collection to make this possible. It is something that I shall never forget. During this trip, Lisa and I were also blessed to join the saints for Divine Service at St. Paul in Hamel, IL, where Pastor William Weedon serves, and to pay a visit to the "Issues, Etc." studio, which was wonderful, not to mention that it was just plain lovely to have this time to spend alone with my wife. A grand trip this was, indeed!

It was during this trip that Lisa and I received the wonderful news that Abigail Marie Brown was born to proud parents, Megan and Chris. Abby came in at a healthy 8 lbs, 15 oz., 21 1/2 in. around 11:45 a.m. on Sunday, September 12. We got

the news via a text message Chris sent to me, which included a picture of Abby. What a cutie! We couldn't wait to get back home and meet her in person. Joys overflowed a couple of weeks later when little Abby was reborn by water and the Word in the Sacrament of Holy Baptism during Divine Service on Sunday, September 26.

That joy turned to sorrowful joy (again, something only Christians can fully understand) the next day (Monday, September 27), as one of our dear shut-ins, Violet Byers, was called home by our Lord, thus completing her Baptism and receiving its rewards in heaven. Violet had been in hospice care for about a week and death seemed imminent already on Wednesday, when I conducted the Commendation of the Dying for her, with Barbara, her daughter, praying along. But, our Lord was gracious to allow Violet to remain here in this vale of tears long enough for her other daughter, Linda, to see her one last time. Linda was travelling in Paris and could not get back until Sunday. She spent that night with her mom and early the next morning, the Lord called Violet home. Some may consider this a fortunate coincidence, but we know better. Our Lord's hand in this is obvious to those of faith. I actually got the news about Violet's departure on my cell that Monday morning, just as I was pulling into the parking lot of Zion Lutheran Church in Detroit, where the St. Michael Liturgical Conference was about to begin. I immediately turned around and started the trek back to Alma, arriving at Lux Funeral Home just in time to be with the family and help them make the arrangements. Violet was blessed with ninety-two years of life here on earth by our gracious Lord. The last four of those years were spent in the nursing home and what bothered Violet the most about that was that she was not able to make it to Church for Divine Service. I don't think a single visit went by during those four years when Violet didn't lament that fact. She appreciated having the Word and Sacrament brought to her, but she so missed the opportunity to sit in the pew and receive our Lord's Gifts in His House. But, thanks be to God, Violet has finally received her wish to be back in the House of the Lord, worshiping now with all the saints and angels in the heavenly bliss of the Church Triumphant. Her Funeral Service was conducted by me at Lux Funeral Home on Wednesday, September 29. She was laid to rest at Riverside Cemetery here in Alma following the Service.

October

October is always a great month for Lutherans, for it is in October that we celebrate the Festival of Reformation Day, when we give thanks to our Lord for re-establishing the pure Gospel in His Church through His servant, Dr. Martin Luther. In addition to our absolutely beautiful Festival of Reformation Day Divine Service, which is always one of the very best Services of the year, we held our first annual "Reformation Celebration" following the Service. We feasted on brats and other delicious German food and desserts, enjoyed some "Lutheran" beverages, and had a blast playing several games together. Co-sponsored by SALT and our Ladies' Guild, this was a wonderful event for all who attended, and we hope to make it bigger and better this year, and in the years to come. We also continued our tradition of watching the movie, "Luther," together on the Friday before Reformation Day, which always provides a helpful reminder of what we are about to celebrate.

October 10 was a special day in the life of our parish, as we witnessed the First Communion of Aaron Messer and Morgan Johnson, the first children to take advantage of our new First Communion policy. What joy to welcome them to the Holy Supper of our Lord to receive the eternal blessings of His very Body and Blood with the rest of us.

October 17 was also a special day in the life of our parish, but even more so for me, personally. A Pastor Appreciation Dinner was held at 1:00 p.m. that day. I knew about that, and was humbly appreciative that our Ladies' Guild would put this together, as they have in years past. What I didn't know was that this was also a surprise Fifth Anniversary Party, and that they had invited members of my family, all the pastors in our circuit, and members of my vicarage congregation (Immanuel, Frankentrost). I was simply blown away when I walked into the fellowship hall and saw some dear friends from Frankentrost sitting there. Then, to see many members of my family coming through the door was nearly

overwhelming. What an enormous blessing this was. I simply cannot thank our Ladies' Guild enough for putting this together, or all of you who presented me with gifts, cards, and well wishes. It is such a blessing to serve among such a loving, generous, and faithful group of God's children here at Peace!

Our Sunday School children continued their study of the Holy Gospel for each Sunday, we continued to study Ephesians in Adult Bible Study, Christian History on Wednesday evenings, and Joshua during Together in the Word on Thursdays. On October 24, we held our fourth quarterly Voters' Assembly, the main business of which was to elect congregational officers for the coming year. Ken Hill was elected to his second term as Vice President; Cassie Tennant was elected to her first term as Secretary; Terry Luplow was re-elected to the Board of Elders; Jon Penzien was re-elected to the Board of Trustees; Sharyn Greening and Marlene Miller were re-elected to the Board of Christian Education. In addition, the congregation voted to have Carol Zeile continue serving as Treasurer via an appointment by President Chris Brown, even though she would be completing her second term at the end of the year, since no one else had come forward to serve.

I was privileged to attend the annual Liturgical Seminar in Kewanee, IL October 10-12, which is always one of my favorite conferences. Dr. David Scaer was the keynote speaker and guest preacher, and led us in an excellent study of how Liturgy, Church, and Ministry fit together like a hand in a glove, and how important it is for us to be ever mindful of the catholic (universal) nature of the Holy Church in everything we say and do. It was great to sit at Dr. Scaer's feet once again and learn from him, as I had done while at seminary, and to spend time with many brother pastors I have grown to know, respect, and love over the years. Studying the Word and receiving our Lord's Gifts in Divine Service with them is time cherished.

Lastly, it was during the month of October that LCMS President Harrison and his team unveiled the new emphasis of our church body: Witness, Mercy, Life Together. How exciting it is to once again have reason to get behind and support what our synodical leaders are doing. What a tremendous blessing this new emphasis will be for our church body.

November

The first Sunday in November found us celebrating the Festival of All Saints Day (Sunday, November 7). Then, it was two more Sundays in the Trinity Season before commencing a new Church Year by ushering in the Season of Advent on Sunday, November 28. Advent is always a welcomed sight in the parish, as it marks the glorious transition from the non-festival half to the festival half of the Church Year. Preparations for that transition were underway in the parish.

Those who participated in the Secret Pals program met on November 7 for a luncheon at Big Boy here in Alma, where all secrets were revealed. Our Sunday School children continued to study Sunday's Holy Gospel texts, we adults continued our journey through Ephesians on Sundays, Christian History on Wednesdays, and Joshua on Thursdays.

After a busy October, November always provides me with an opportunity to take a breath before the busiest time of the year, which lasts from the beginning of Advent until Easter. One of the ways I most enjoy taking that breath is to spend time with my family in the woods, and it was wonderful to have the opportunity to spend several days hunting with them once again this year. Another way I get to take that much needed breath is to travel down home and spend time with family at Thanksgiving, which I was also blessed to do again this year. Unfortunately, the joy of that time together was clouded by the fact that I received news on the eve of Thanksgiving Day that my best friend, Pastor Aloysius Majewski, had been hospitalized due to liver failure.

Earlier that day, Wednesday, November 24, I conducted the Funeral Service for Earl Netzley (Tanarae Lemmermann's father). I had met Earl a couple of months before when he visited our congregation for Divine Service. I began visiting

him and his wife, Nilah, at Arbor Grove here in Alma early in November, per Earl's request made through Tanarae, and after speaking with Pastor Larry Warsinski of Immanuel, Wheeler, where Earl was a member. I enjoyed getting to know Earl (and Nilah) during those visits and it was evident right away that he was a man blessed with great faith, even after years of suffering several illnesses. When I started visiting him, he knew full well that his time here was short. He had been on dialysis for a while and was ready to stop, since his body could barely take it anymore. His only wish was to see his 83rd birthday before going home to be with his Lord, and the Lord was gracious to grant that wish, as Earl was surrounded by family and friends that day (Saturday, November 20). He also desired to partake of the Sacrament of our Lord's Body and Blood with his family one last time that day as well, and I was privileged to administer this Blessed Gift to him and his family. The next day I stopped by to see, and pray with, Earl after Divine Service and Bible Study. He was in good spirits, but noticeably weaker than the previous day. He knew he would be going soon and we prayed that the Lord would take him quickly and peacefully. That prayer was answered early the next morning, which, in the words of Earl's children, was "a good day," for they knew that their father had been taken to the bliss of heaven, where there is no more pain and suffering, but only peace and joy. Earl's Funeral Service was held at Immanuel, Wheeler, where I was blessed to preside and preach. Earl was laid to rest at Pine Grove Cemetery in Ithaca, where his body awaits the resurrection of all flesh on the Last Day.

Mary Jakolat was blessed to attend The Good Shepherd Institute again this year, which took place November 7-9 at Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne. Mary came back with a ton of knowledge regarding the "Art of Dying" from a Lutheran perspective, and a greater appreciation for the liturgy and hymnody used by Lutherans surrounding death. I am so thrilled that we continue to send her to this most excellent conference.

December

December began with great sadness for me. I received news on Wednesday, December 1, that Al had taken a turn for the worse. His kidneys had begun to shut down and the doctors didn't think he was long for this world. I had been keeping in regular contact with the family ever since I received the news on the eve of Thanksgiving, and while Al's condition never ceased being critical, up to this point, the doctors were optimistic that he had a fighting chance. I left early Thursday morning and traveled to Illinois to visit my friend and spend time with his family. The tears began to flow the moment I walked into that waiting room in St. Francis Hospital and saw Al's wife and kids. After some much needed hugs all around, they told me that they had decided, based on the advice of the doctors, to have the breathing tube pulled early the next morning. When I walked into the room and saw Al lying there, I was simply devastated. To see my friend, who was always so full of life, lying there helpless and hanging by a thread, was almost more than I could bear. I am thankful to the many pastors who were there to minister to the family and to me during this difficult time, reminding us of the sure and certain fact that Al would soon be taken to heaven and that we would see him again.

I prayed that evening that our Lord would take Al as quickly and as peacefully as possible that next morning. We all held to the thread of hope that Al might regain enough consciousness after having the breathing tube removed to speak with us, but I knew that it was doubtful. The scene that next morning is one that I shall never forget. We all huddled outside of Al's room, praying together, as the doctors removed the tube. When they gave us the okay, we entered the room and it was immediately evident to all that Al would go quickly. In the midst of the great sorrow that overcame that room, we listened to the courageous voice of Pastor Dan Chambers, who conducted the Commendation of the Dying. Amidst the tears, we prayed those parts of that beautiful liturgy we all knew together. Minutes later, after everyone had had the opportunity to say their farewells, Al departed.

I spent the day with the family and helped them to make some of the arrangements before heading back home that evening. I put together the bulletin for Al's funeral, with Mary's gracious assistance, conducted Divine Service at Peace on

Sunday, and then Lisa and I headed back down to Illinois for Al's Visitation and Funeral Service. The Funeral was held at St. Paul Lutheran in Manito, where Al had served faithfully for over four years prior to his death, on Tuesday, December 7. I served as Liturgist during the Service and Pastor Dan Chambers preached. I was pleased to see the Church packed to the gills that morning and to have so many clergy in attendance, some of whom came from great distances. Al was loved and respected by many. After spending some time with the family, Lisa and I made our way back home, and I presided over Al's Committal on Thursday, December 9, in Milford, MI. I miss him greatly and look forward to seeing him again in heaven.

I am thankful to the congregation for bearing with me during those trying weeks, and for all the prayers and words of encouragement and support. I was bummed to have missed the opportunity to come to the annual Cookie Walk and Craft Show put on by our Ladies' Guild on Saturday, December 4, which was another smashing success this year. I also regret the cancellation of our Advent Tea, which was scheduled for Tuesday, December 7, but am thankful for everyone's understanding.

The month ended much better than it had begun, however, as we made our way through Advent and into the joyous Christmas Season. Throughout Advent, we had meditated upon "The Holy Mountain of the Lord," a phrase we witness often in Holy Scripture, which refers to Christ's Church. When we gather together in Christ's Name for Divine Service, we find ourselves on that Holy Mountain (often referred to in Scripture and our hymnody as "Mt. Zion"), where the Gospel flows freely like a stream down the side of a mountain, creating and sustaining the faith of those who have been called and chosen to inherit the Eternal Kingdom of our Lord. Our Ladies' Guild provided us with wonderful Suppers throughout Advent. A Family Christmas Movie Marathon was held on Saturday, December 18, and a good time was had by all who were able to attend. Our Children's Christmas Program took place on Wednesday, December 22, and the kids did a fabulous job once again this year of sharing the Christmas story with us, as only they can. Then, it was time for the beauty of our Christmas Services, beginning with our Service of Lessons and Carols at 7:00 p.m. on Christmas Eve. What joy to enter the nave and see the beauty of the Christmas decorations all around. We held off decorating this year until after Advent had concluded, and I think it gave us the opportunity to appreciate the beauty of Christmas all the more. Following the Service of Lessons and Carols, which always ends with such beauty, as Silent Night is sung to candlelight, we gathered again at 11:30 p.m. for Midnight Mass. This is such a gorgeous Service and I was thrilled to see more people than anticipated attend. If you weren't able to attend this Service the last couple of years, I strongly encourage you to do everything you can to make your attendance possible next year. There is just something extra special about being in the Lord's House to meditate upon His Holy Incarnation and receive the Holy Sacrament at the midnight hour. We also reinstated our Christmas morning Divine Service this year, gathering together at 9:30 a.m. that morning to receive the Divine Gifts of our Lord, who was born to live and die for us.

Toward the end of December, we granted the transfer request of Linda Oswald to Zion, Mt. Pleasant. Our Sunday School children continued to study the Holy Gospel each Sunday, we finished our study of Ephesians and began a study of Jude on Sundays, continued to study Christian History on Wednesdays, and were still making our way through Joshua on Thursdays, as the 48th year of our congregation drew to a close.

Concluding Thoughts

We began the calendar year of 2010 with 143 baptized members and 123 communicant members. We ended the year with 132 baptized members and 114 communicant members, a net loss of 11 baptized Members and 9 communicant Members. We lost 2 members by death (Freda Hill, Violet Byers), 10 members by release for self-exclusion (Sue Reithel, Dale, Trina, Heather, Brian, and Darren Palmer, Curt, Tammy, Jessica, and CJ Oswald), and 4 members by transfer (Ryan, Sarah, and Evelyn Cummins, Linda Oswald). We gained 3 members by Baptism (Kylie Stahl, Mabel Elliott, Abigail Brown), and 2 members by transfer (John and Tanarae Lemmermann). NOTE: In the process of gathering the information to produce

this report, I found some clerical errors in the Parochial Reports published in last year's newsletters. The correct numbers are those produced above.

Our average attendance for Sunday morning Divine Services last year was 49, which means that approximately 37% of our baptized members are in attendance on any given Sunday. Our average attendance for Feast Day Services last year was 8. Our average attendance for Sunday School was 8, and our average attendance for Adult Bible Studies on Sundays was 21.

Last year, I made 89 shut-in visits, 24 hospital visits, and 16 other visits (funeral homes, births, members' homes), for a total of 129 pastoral visits. I conducted 143 Services and preached 137 sermons here at Peace, and participated in 5 Services elsewhere. I taught 183 classes here at Peace (Bible Studies, Christian History, Confirmation, First Communion), and attended 2 Conferences (Brothers of John the Steadfast in Naperville, IL—Feb. 12-13; Liturgical Seminar in Kewanee, IL—Oct. 10-12). I was commissioned and privileged to write a four-part series of articles under the theme, "Feasting with Our Lord," which were published in *Higher Things Magazine* (*Spring 2010, Summer 2010, Fall 2010, and Winter 2010*), and had the honor and privilege of being interviewed regarding each of these articles on "Issues, Etc."

As I noted at the onset of this report, we were blessed by the very noticeable peace, love, and unity which graced our life together last year, which is something for which to be thankful and to dearly cherish. Even so, there is a danger here which should also not go unnoticed, namely the temptation to give way to complacency. Let us not fall prey to that temptation, beloved, for there is much work for us to do here. Our little parish, like so many, is struggling. We should not pretend otherwise. It should concern us that less than 40% of our members are in Divine Service on any given Sunday, that we gained not a single adult member last year by way of Confirmation, and, yes, that we spent nearly \$14,000 more than we took in last year, even while we managed to stay within our budget. It should also concern us that our congregation is not an active participant in our surrounding community, looking more diligently for ways to share the mercy of Christ with those in need. With these concerns, and others, contentment and complacency should not be a temptation to which we even remotely consider falling prey.

I love this little parish with all my heart, as I know so many of you do. But, if we do not take the above mentioned concerns seriously and seek to address them in a faithful manner, we may find ourselves without a parish to love someday. We have so much to offer, my friends. We have a solid foundation upon which to build, but we need to start doing some building. It is true that our Lord is responsible for building His Church, but it is a grave mistake to use that truth as an excuse to sit back and do nothing. Our Lord uses us to build His Church, for He sends us out from here to confess our faith to others, inviting them to come and see where Jesus is for them, and to extend His mercy and love to one another as we live out our lives together, and to our surrounding community. We need to be better at this. And, when I say, "we," I'm including myself, first and foremost. Pray, dear friends, that we will work diligently in the coming year to address these concerns, that we may seek to be more faithful in our calling to "proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called us out of darkness and into His marvelous light" (1 Pet. 2:9b).

Finally, the life of a Christian parish is one of ebb and flow, one that encounters many challenges and endures many struggles, but also one that experiences many joys, much like the life of every individual Christian. Through all the challenges, struggles, sorrows, triumphs, and joys, our faithful Lord continues to serve us His with His grace, mercy, and love, lavishing us with His free Gifts of forgiveness, life, and salvation, which He delivers Himself through His Holy Word and Sacraments. He truly shepherds His people with tenderness from this passing age into the bright light and shining joys of that Age to come, where with the Father and the Holy Spirit, He ever reigns in majesty and glory. To the Blessed and Most Holy Trinity be all glory forever and ever! Amen.

Respectfully submitted,
Your servant in Christ,

Rev. Thomas C. Messer, the 8th pastor of Peace, in the 5th year of the current pastorate.



WITNESS, MERCY, LIFE TOGETHER: A THREEFOLD KEY TO OUR FUTURE

LCMS President Matthew Harrison
(*The Lutheran Witness*—January 2011)

Luther well knew what he was preaching on that St. Stephen's Day in 1523. He did not believe that the response of the apostolic church in Acts 6 to the problem of needy widows was merely a temporary glitch in the Church's life. Neither did C. F. W. Walther. Right from his earliest years in America, this text from Luther began to appear again and again in Walther's writings on the Church. Why? Our fathers and mothers in the faith knew Luther, and they knew the New Testament.

Dr. Walther asserts that the pastor is also to be concerned with the poor, the needy, and the weak *within* the congregation. And yet, he asserts that in times of need and disaster, the congregation is to be concerned with those *outside* the church. He refers to Galatians:

“When James and Cephas and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given to me, they gave the right hand of fellowship [*koinonia*, LIFE TOGETHER] to Barnabas and me, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised [WITNESS]. Only, they asked us to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do [MERCY]” (Gal. 2:9–10).

Here three things come together:

1. The apostles carefully resolved the doctrinal and practical challenges that always result from taking the Gospel to new peoples—for the sake of WITNESS to Jesus [Acts 15].
2. The apostles were deeply concerned that the Church be a locus of MERCY to those suffering physical need.
3. This WITNESS and MERCY were part and parcel of the Church's very life—yes, its LIFE TOGETHER.

This is the threefold key to the future of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Hear Luther:

“From this story (Acts 6) we learn in the first place how a Christian community should be constituted. In addition, we have a true pattern of spiritual government [*geistlichen Regiments*] that the apostles here provide. They care for souls, occupy themselves with preaching and prayer, and yet also see to it that the body is cared for; for they suggest several men who are to distribute the goods, as you have heard. Thus the Christian rule is concerned for the people in both body and soul [*Leib und Seele*] so that no one suffers want . . . that all were richly fed and well cared for in both body and soul.

This is a very fine pattern and example, and it would be well for us to do likewise, if only the people were so minded. A city could be divided, as here, into four or five parts, and every part would receive a preacher [*Prediger*] and several deacons to supply the people with preaching, distribute the goods, visit the sick, and see to it that no one suffers want. But we do not have the persons for that. . . . A “bishop” means a steward [*Amtmann*] of God who is to distribute the divine and spiritual gifts, preach the Gospel, and supply the people with the Word of God. He must have ministers, and these are the deacons who serve the community in such a way that they have a list of all the poor people and care for them in all their needs with the money of the community, visit the sick, and in every way handle the supplies with great care.”

(“Sermon for St. Stephen's Day, Dec. 26, 1522;” WA 12:693 ff.; quoted by Walther, *Church and Ministry*, Theses VIII, On the Ministry)

God grant it!

Pastor Matthew Harrison

“Let's go!” Mark 1:38



Synopsis of January 4, 2011 Council Meeting Minutes

Call To Order & Opening Prayer

- President Brown called the meeting to order at 7:05pm. President Brown conducted the opening prayer. The following members were present: Carol Zeile, Gary Miller, Chris Brown, Bill Harmon, Cassie Tennant, Sharyn Greening, Carolyn Johnson, Vern Jakolat, and Larry Elliott. Pastor Messer was also present.

Approval of Agenda

- No agenda provided.

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

- Motion made by Treasurer Zeile, supported by Financial Secretary Miller to approve the December 14 meeting minutes. Motion carried unanimously.

Report(s)

- **Pastor** – Pastor Messer presented the attached report. The Council received the report into record.
Treasurer's Report – Treasurer Zeile presented the attached report. She also informed the Council that spending was within budget. Motion made to give Mary a bonus of \$150, seconded by Sharyn Greening. Motion carried unanimously. **Financial Secretary** – Financial Secretary Miller informed Council that year end reports were ready and put in members' mailboxes. The Council received the report into record.
- **Boards:** **Board of Elders** – No report.; **Board of Trustees** – Terry Luplow has been helping out. Summer project- repair parking lot, need fundraising ideas. Pew cushions have been ordered, will take 4-6 months; **Board of Christian Education** – Christmas program was great, the children all did a wonderful job. Need to start thinking about and preparing for vacation bible school; **Board of Evangelism** – Next meeting January 20, 2011; **Board of Stewardship** – Councilmember Harmon expressed his thanks for service over the past year.
- **Organization and Committee Reports:** **Peace Lutheran Ladies Guild** – cushions for the metal chairs have arrived and available for use; **Peace Youth Group** – No report.

Business - No new business

General Comment - None

Adjournment & Closing Prayer

- Motion made by Financial Secretary Miller, supported by Councilmember Jakolat to adjourn at 7:45pm. Motion carried unanimously. Pastor Messer closed with the Lord's Prayer and Benediction.

Respectfully submitted,

Cassie Tennant, Secretary



A Couple of Thank You's from Pr. Messer

First, huge thanks to all of you who gave towards the collection gathered for my family and me this Christmas/New Year. Elder Larry Elliott presented me with the card and collection before Bible Study on January 2. It was most appreciated!

Secondly, thanks to everyone who contributed to our collection for *The Siberian Lutheran Mission Society* over the last several months. We took in over \$740.00, which is wonderful! Look for details about a "Community Mission Can" to be located in the fellowship hall soon!

UPDATE FROM THE TREASURER

CAROL ZEILE

For those of you who were unable to attend, following is a summary of the report presented at the Voters' Assembly on January 23, 2011. You will notice that this is a comparison between December 2010 and December 2009 income and expenses. If you have questions, please let me know.

In Christ
Carol Zeile

PLC Income and Expenses

	As of 12/31/10		As of 12/31/09	
	Total Actual	Total Budgeted	Total Actual	Total Budgeted
<u>Income</u>				
Offering	\$98,190.96	\$112,005.00	\$103,663.81	\$114,655.00
Rental Income : City	\$150.00	\$0.00	\$150.00	\$0.00
Rental Income : Weight Watchers	\$1,320.00	\$1,560.00	\$1,440.00	\$1,560.00
Total Income	\$99,660.96	\$113,565.00	\$105,253.81	\$116,215.00
<u>Expense</u>				
Church and Worship : Altar and Worship	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$1,857.76	\$1,500.00
Church and Worship : Christian Education	\$498.97	\$800.00	\$975.42	\$800.00
Church and Worship : Evangelism			\$0.00	\$500.00
Church and Worship : Music	\$1,811.95	\$2,000.00	\$2,016.34	\$2,000.00
Church and Worship : Stewardship			\$0.00	\$100.00
Church and Worship : Youth Group			\$500.00	\$500.00
Miscellaneous			\$1,606.25	\$0.00
Missions : Issues, Etc.	\$500.00	\$500.00	\$500.00	\$500.00
Operating Expense: Administrative Assistant	\$5,200.00	\$5,200.00		
Operating Expense : Advertising			\$131.31	\$200.00
Operating Expense : Building Maintenance	\$1,297.84	\$1,000.00	\$1,975.36	\$1,000.00
Operating Expense : Insurance	\$1,965.50	\$2,000.00	\$2,190.00	\$2,800.00
Operating Expense : Snow Removal			\$1,080.00	\$1,000.00
Operating Expense : Maintenance Supplies			\$566.50	\$250.00
Operating Expense : Office Expense	\$3,057.04	\$3,000.00	\$3,908.17	\$2,400.00
Operating Expense : Telephone/Internet	\$2,207.31	\$2,100.00	\$2,100.29	\$2,000.00
Operating Expense : Utilities	\$4,763.28	\$5,000.00	\$5,429.29	\$5,500.00
Pastoral Expense : Benefit Package	\$23,310.40	\$23,000.00	\$22,236.24	\$22,000.00
Pastoral Expense : Conferences and Training	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$1,138.82	\$1,000.00
Pastoral Expense : Down Payment Loan	\$2,220.00	\$2,220.00	\$2,220.00	\$2,220.00
Pastoral Expense : Guest Pastors	\$200.00	\$200.00	\$200.00	\$200.00
Pastoral Expense : Mileage	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00	\$2,148.72	\$2,000.00
Pastoral Expense : Book Allowance	\$460.03	\$500.00	\$524.81	\$500.00
Pastoral Expense : Salary	\$62,045.00	\$62,045.00	\$62,045.00	\$62,045.00
<u>Total Expenses</u>	\$113,537.32	\$113,565.00	\$120,550.28	\$116,215.00
Total:	-\$13,876.36	\$0.00	-\$15,296.47	\$0.00

2011 BUDGET

The Peace budget for 2011 was the main topic of conversation at the January 23, 2011 Voters' Assembly. The goal was to reduce the budget as much as possible in order to help the congregation achieve a balanced budget. Even with our best efforts, we were only able to decrease the budgeted amount by \$4,000. Below is a comparison of the 2010 budget and the 2011 budget adopted by the members present at that meeting. Please see a Council member if you have questions or comments.

<u>Expense</u>	2010 budget	2011 budget
Church and Worship : Altar & Worship	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00
Church and Worship : Christian Ed.	\$800.00	\$400.00
Church and Worship : Music	\$2,000.00	\$1,300.00
Missions : Issues, etc.	\$500.00	\$400.00
Operating Expense : Administrative Assistant	\$5,200.00	\$5,200.00
Operating Expense : Building Maintenance	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00
Operating Expense : Insurance	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00
Operating Expense : Office Expense	\$3,000.00	\$900.00
Operating Expense : Photocopier		\$1,600.00
Operating Expense : Telephone	\$2,100.00	\$1,600.00
Operating Expense : Utilities	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00
Pastoral Expense : Benefit Package	\$23,000.00	\$23,000.00
Pastoral Expense : Book Allowance	\$500.00	\$500.00
Pastoral Expense : Conf. and Training	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00
Pastoral Expense : Down Payment Loan	\$2,220.00	\$2,220.00
Pastoral Expense : Guest Pastors	\$200.00	\$200.00
Pastoral Expense : Mileage	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00
Pastoral Expense : Salary	\$62,045.00	\$60,245.00
<u>Total Expenses</u>	\$113,565.00	\$109,565.00

From Our Stewardship Committee

At the January 23 Voter's Assembly a budget of \$109,565 for 2011 was approved by the voting members present. In 2010 the goal to stay within our budget was met, but our income was not enough to keep up with our budget demands. Church Council worked very hard to reduce this year's budget in order to be able to have spending more closely meet our income level.

If the total budget is divided by 52 weeks, our approximate need on a weekly basis is \$2107. In even simpler terms that is an amount of \$49 per week per envelope. For some this is simply not possible. Others may see this as an attainable goal for their weekly giving. Lastly, several in our congregation are able to meet or exceed this amount. What should be prayerfully considered is a goal to have our income meet our budgetary needs, and how each one of us can contribute toward reaching that goal.

The stewardship committee hopes you will find this information useful in sharing your time, talents, and treasures at Peace.

PEACE NEWS & NOTES



PYG NEWS

<u>February Event</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Start</u>	<u>End</u>	<u>Location</u>
Monthly Meeting	2/13	5 pm	7 pm	Fellowship Hall
Weekly Fellowship	Sundays During Fellowship			Fellowship Hall

Greetings in Christ,

As noted at the Voters' Assembly meeting, we will be finalizing our plans for attending the Higher Things gathering. We are reviewing interest and practicality. Whether we attend this July or turn our focus on preparing to attend the gathering in the summer of 2012, I wish to thank everyone for your continued support of the Youth at Peace.

No matter what our decision will be for this July, we will be looking at quarterly activities that can involve all members of the Youth Group. We will be watching the weather and snow conditions and hope to have a sledding party in the latter part of the month of February. Keep an eye on the PYG board for further details.

Thanks again to everyone for your continuing support of the Youth through our on-going fundraisers: pop can collection, Spartan labels, and cell phones. But most of all, thank you for your time that you spend with our youth.

May the Spirit of the Lord be with you,
Jonathan Penzien

SALT NEWS

MEXICAN MEAL

Possibly in February.

2011 CAMPING

Scheduled for the weekend of July 15.

MEETINGS

Please see the Minutes of our last meeting on the SALT Bulletin Board.

Next meeting Thursday, February 24

We welcome anyone who would like to join us.

SUPPORT OUR TROOPS

This is an ongoing outreach for the SALT Committee. If you know of a person in the armed forces who is serving abroad, please contact Carolyn Johnson (email ckj1969@yahoo.com or telephone 463-3052).

Ladies Lunch Bunch

Will meet at 1:30 pm on Monday, February 14 at J J Ruby's. All ladies of Peace are welcome and also may invite a guest - someone without a church or someone living alone. Please enter your name on the signup list posted in Fellowship Hall and join us!

Real Worship

Rev. Larry Beane II (a.k.a. Father Hollywood)

(posted on www.gottesdienstonline.blogspot.com)

I believe one of the reasons we have "worship wars" among American Christians is that it has been a long time since we have had physical warfare on our own soil. 9-11 was close, but even that was dominated not by the theology of the cross of Christ, but rather by a sense of the national therapy of Oprah.

Consider this poignant picture above of the ruins of a bombed-out church in Germany, where amid all the chances and changes of this life, the one thing that people could hold onto is the liturgy of the Church, the Mass, the real physical communion with the real physical Lord.

Notice what you don't see: entertainment. There is no gyrating chanteuse working the microphone like a Vegas performer, a spotlight shining on a grimacing drummer, a perfectly-coifed guitarist wearing the latest fashions, or a trendy prancing made-up motivational speaker with gelled-up hair and a plastic smile emoting in overly-dramatic hushed intonations.

Instead, we see a celebrant, deacon, subdeacon, and two servers, all reverently and historically vested, each stationed in his proper order, proclaiming by their very placement that no matter how unpredictable and desperate things may get in this war-torn existence, Jesus is here, week in and week out, in the midst of our pain and uncertainty. And the Church is here, century in and century out, bearing the Good News by proclaiming Christ crucified, the eternal Word of the cross. And even amid the rubble and missing walls and blown-out windows, the old stone edifice of the church building, even in its humiliated state, carries a reverent gravitas of which the latest and greatest multi-million-dollar "worship centers" are bereft.

Continued on page 18

Ladies Guild

Ladies Guild Meeting

Our Ladies Guild will meet on **Monday, February 7 at 1 pm**. Hostess will be Yvonne Elenbaas. All Ladies of the congregation are invited to attend our Guild meetings. If you are a confirmed female member of Peace, you are a member of Guild. We would sincerely encourage you to participate and be an active member of the Guild.

PLC Women's Prayer Chain

The current list is posted on the Ladies' Guild Bulletin Board. All participants should have a copy. If you wish to be added to the prayer chain as a caller, or if you wish to have yourself or someone else "sent through the chain," please see or call Marlene Miller at 463-3710.

Altar Flowers

There is a flower calendar for 2011 is posted on the fellowship hall bulletin board. We are now working toward ordering altar flower arrangements that coordinate with and enhance the liturgical colors of each Season of the Church year. Depending on the dates, flowers may not always be displayed for a calendar month. Some Seasons of the Church year cross calendar months. If you wish to place flowers on the altar sometime during the year, please put your name on the calendar and contact the church office with any information that you wish to have included in the bulletin. If there is a specific date in the month that commemorates an occasion, please also enter that date. A bouquet costs \$25. We encourage two persons (families) to purchase flowers each month, one for each plant stand. Please make checks payable to Peace Lutheran Church, attach a note marked "Altar Flowers" and place in the Financial Secretary's envelope in the church office. Any questions may be directed to Carol Zeile. Thank you for helping to beautify our chancel.

PEACE LUTHERAN LADIES GUILD COOKBOOK

Cookbooks are now available; price is \$13.00 and can be purchased during fellowship time from any member of the Guild. There are flyers available in the fellowship hall to be used for posting on bulletin boards at grocery stores, offices, and the like. You may use your phone number for contact information or Coaline's name and number. Questions, ask a member of the Guild.

LADIES GUILD ON THE WEB

Ladies Guild information appears on the Peace website. This is a place to check for items such as coffee hostesses, Altar Guild assignments and Ladies Guild events. See www.peacealma.org and click Ladies Guild at the left.

PEACE LUTHERAN

LADIES GUILD

LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF

the Ladies Guild is collecting the following items for Layettes to send to the Lutheran World Relief:

2 receiving blankets

2 shirts

2 gowns or sleepers

4 cloth diapers

1 sweater

2 washcloths

1 bath-size bar of soap

2 diaper pins

Wrap the items in one of the receiving blankets and secure with diaper pins.

COLLECTION DATES:

January 1 - March 31

CHAIR CUSHIONS

The Ladies Guild has purchased 18 cushions for your use in the sanctuary and fellowship hall. Please feel free to use them. They are located in the coat room in a storage box.

LADIES GUILD SELLS CUTLERY

Rada cutlery is on display the 3rd Sunday of each month in the fellowship hall during the coffee hour. We have seven different items in stock: Paring Knife, Large Slicer Knife, Tomato Slicer, Serrated Steak Knife, Spatula, Pie Server, and Veggie Peeler. A product catalogue is available for viewing and orders may also be placed through the catalog.



February

Carolyn Johnson

March

Altar Care

Coaline Luplow

April

Carol Zeile

Coffee Hostesses

6 Jennie Harmon
13 Y.Elenbaas/M.Girard
20 S.Greening/M.Brown
27 Carolyn Johnson

6 Andrea Elliott
13 Jo Wendt
20 Cassie Tennant
27 Jenny Baughman

3 Carol Zeile
10 M.Miller/C.Dargie
17 Peace Youth Group
24 Easter - No Coffee
30 Tina Schafer



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AT PEACE

Sunday School and Adult Bible Class

- Sunday School and Adult Bible Class is offered on **Sundays at 11 a.m.**

Together in the Word

- We meet every **Thursday at 10:00 a.m.** We are currently studying *Judges*. All are welcome to join us!

Christian History 101

- Weekly Wednesday classes meet at 6 pm, followed by Divine Service at 7 pm (during Advent and Lent, class is at 5 pm).

First Communion and Confirmation Classes

- First Communion Classes take place as arranged (see Pastor Messer if interested); Confirmation Class for our 2nd-year confirmands (Sierra Luplow and Aaron Messer) will meet on Thursdays at 6:00 p.m. (no 1st-year confirmands this year).

“Real Worship” continued from page 16

And at the center of it all is the chancel. There is no stage, big screens, lasers, or sound system paraphernalia, but rather a simple but elegant book containing the liturgy and the Word of God, dignified candles flickering with the soft glow of the flames reminiscent of the Day of Pentecost and silently confessing the Son as "light of light, very God of very God." And of course, the Holy of Holies is the stone altar, anchored like the rock of St. Peter's confession amid the gravel of a desperate world, the marble slab upon which one finds the Cornerstone, the Christ Himself in the Holy Eucharist, the mystery of the Lord's Presence for the forgiveness of sins given by means of the simple creatures of bread and wine.

By contrast, "contemporary worship" is a sad and spiritually impoverished display of vulgar bourgeois suburban kitsch, a puerile frivolity that is more at home in a sterile strip mall or a vacuous night club than in the gritty real world inhabited by real people who suffer real pain and who need a real saving encounter with the real God.

That is why we need real worship.

Birthdays & Anniversaries

FEBRUARY

Happy Birthday

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| 1 Sierra Luplow | 21 Coaline Luplow |
| 5 Connie Cook | 24 Sally Pease |
| 6 Dorothy Wisser | 24 Melanie Penzien |
| 12 Yvonne Elenbaas | 24 Jeffrey Sager |
| 21 Eric Lovejoy | 28 Rebekah Rodriguez |

Happy Anniversary

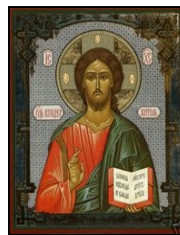
- 19 Barbara and Ernest Komar

If we ever miss your birthday or anniversary, please let us know so that we can update our records.

TALK RADIO FOR THE THINKING CHRISTIAN!

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www.issuesetc.org



PASTOR MESSER IS BLOGGING!

www.abideinmyword.blogspot.com

Check in from time to time to see what's on his mind.

PAROCHIAL REPORT

(as of 1/30/11)

Membership at Peace

Baptized - 132; Confirmed - 114

Membership gains: 0

Membership losses: 0

Financial Report as of 1/30/11

YTD Budgeted.....\$10,535.00

YTD Receipts.....\$7,406.00

Difference.....\$-3,129.00

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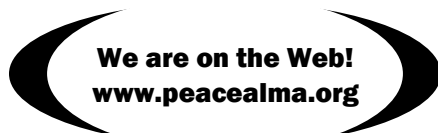
Peace Lutheran Church
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February 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 <i>Pastor Messer at Winked</i> 7 pm - Church Council	2 6 pm - "Christian History" 7 pm - Divine Service <i>Purification of Mary</i> & <i>Presentation of Our Lord</i> 	3 10 am - Together in Word 5 pm - Weight Watchers 6 pm - Confirmation Class	4	5
6 <i>5th Sunday after Epiphany</i> 8:30 - Choir 9:30 - Divine Service 10:45 - Fellowship 11:00 - BC,SS 	7 1 pm - Ladies Guild	8	9 6 pm - "Christian History" 7 pm - Divine Service <i>St. Cyril of Alexandria</i> 	10 10 am - Together in Word 5 pm - Weight Watchers <i>No Confirmation Class</i>	11	12
13 <i>Transfiguration</i> 8:30 - Choir 9:30 - Divine Service 10:45 - Fellowship 11:00 - BC,SS 5-7 pm PYG 	14 1:30 pm - Lunch Bunch	15	16 6 pm - "Christian History" 7 pm - Divine Service <i>St. Onesimus</i> 	17 10 am - Together in Word 5 pm - Weight Watchers 6 pm - Confirmation Class	18	19
20 <i>Septuagesima</i> 8:30 - Choir 9:30 - Divine Service 10:45 - Fellowship 11:00 - BC,SS 	21 <i>Newsletter articles due</i>	22 6:30 pm - SALT 7 pm - Stewardship	23 6 pm - "Christian History" 7 pm - Divine Service <i>St. Matthias</i> 	24 10 am - Together in Word 5 pm - Weight Watchers 6 pm - Confirmation Class	25	26
27 <i>Sexagesima</i> 8:30 - Choir 9:30 - Divine Service 10:45 - Fellowship 11:00 - BC,SS 	28	March 1	2 6 pm - "Christian History" 7 pm - Divine Service <i>Sts. Perpetua & Felicitas</i> 	3 10 am - Together in Word 5 pm - Weight Watchers 6 pm - Confirmation Class	4	5

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Mary's Home: 989-463-3067
Pastor's Home: 989-463-3093
Pastor's Cell: 989-388-2037



The mission of Peace Lutheran Church is to welcome all people into the fellowship of God's love by proclaiming the forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ and to nurture our members with God's Holy Word and Sacraments.

Serving in February

	ELDERS	ACOLYTES	USHERS	GREETERS
February				
6 - 9:30 am <i>(Epiphany 5)</i>	Terry Luplow	Sierra Luplow Tyrel Harwager	Gary Miller Daren Johnson	Miguel and Sue Ortiz
13 - 9:30 am <i>(Transfiguration)</i>	Miguel Ortiz	Natalie Penzien Samantha Messer	Vern Jakolat Kevin Sellke	Larry and Andrea Elliott
20 - 9:30 am <i>(Septuagesima)</i>	David Zeile	Myka Luplow Melanie Penzien	Phillip Schafer Chris Brown	Helen Meyers
27 - 9:30 am <i>(Sexagesima)</i>	Larry Elliott	Paige Harwager Aaron Messer	Gary Miller Miguel Ortiz	James and Janice Sager
March				
6 - 9:30 am <i>(Quinquagesima)</i>	Terry Luplow	Sierra Luplow Morgan Johnson	James Sager Daren Johnson	Lillian Manns Lois Ramsey

“Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men” (Eph. 6:7)