

The Peace Post

Peace Lutheran Church ~ Alma, MI

Vol. 10, No. 3 March 2014

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!



Fifty Years of God’s Grace

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From the Desk of Pastor Messer

“The Holy and Penitential Season of Lent: A Review”

On Wednesday, March 5, we will begin the season of Lent. The season of Lent is a forty day Christian festival beginning on Ash Wednesday and concluding on Holy Saturday, the day before Easter. There are actually forty-six days from Ash Wednesday to Holy Saturday, but the six Sundays are not counted in Lent, since every Sunday is a “mini-Easter,” a celebration of Jesus’ victory over sin, death, and the devil on the cross, which is validated by the empty tomb on Easter morning. This does not mean that the Sundays in Lent are Lent-free, however. They are not. The liturgy during Lent reminds us that we are in a season of repentance and fasting as we fast from the “Alleluias” (already begun in Pre-Lent) and the “Gloria in Excelsis.” On Judica Sunday (Lent 5), we begin yet another liturgical fast, omitting the “Gloria Patri” as well. So, while the Sundays in Lent are not counted in Lent, they are still Lenten in nature. Don’t get too hung up on this; the Church has never been interested in being consistent in the way she numbers days, seasons, and time.

Lent originated in the very earliest days of the Christian Church as a preparatory time for Easter, when the faithful rededicated themselves and when converts were instructed in the faith and prepared for Holy Baptism. Though we are not certain how it developed, by 350 A.D., the forty day season we still observe was already well established in the Church.

The early Christian Church took the season of Lent very seriously. It was observed as a penitential season in which Christians took stock of their sinful lives and recognized their desperate need for Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. Lent was a time for fasting and repentance; a time for analyzing one’s life in relation to God’s commandments, realizing the profundity of one’s sin and inability to stand before God on one’s own. Thus, Lent was a time for self-awareness, which led to self-denial and sole reliance upon the sinless Son of God, who completely fulfilled the Law of God by living the perfect life sinful human beings are incapable of living and then, graciously and mercifully, submitted Himself to torture and execution on a cross to pay the price for the sins of all people of all time.

The Christian Church today observes the penitential season of Lent for the same reasons. Or, at least she should. Our sinful condition has not changed. We are,

from the moment we are conceived, sinners in desperate need of salvation (cf. Psalm 51:5). Likewise, the way of salvation has not changed. We cannot save ourselves. We are “dead in sin” (Rom. 5:12) and completely incapable of fulfilling God’s Holy Law, which demands perfect obedience to God in thought, word, and deed. Our only hope for salvation is to trust in Jesus Christ, the Holy and Righteous Son of God, who came down from heaven and was Incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary in order to live the perfect life we cannot live and to die on the cross for our sins. There is no other way of salvation. Jesus Christ is the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no one comes to the Father except through Him (John 14:6).

So, because our sinful condition has not changed (and will not change) and because faith in Jesus Christ alone will remain the only way of salvation until the Last Day, the penitential season of Lent continues to provide Christians with an opportunity to recognize their sinfulness and to renew their trust in the Savior who takes their sin away. During this holy season, we journey with our Lord to the Cross, where He finishes our salvation by taking all the wrath and punishment of God we deserve for our sins upon Himself, paying for them all with His holy and precious blood. While our focus is on Christ and His Cross year round, it is during the season of Lent that this focus becomes all the more magnified.

But, sadly, many Christians fail to see Lent for what it is. Many do not observe the season at all. Many others see Lent as nothing more than a time for them to give up a personal vice or habit, or to deny themselves of something they love (“I’m giving up chocolate for Lent”). But, the season of Lent, which is not just an old, worn-out tradition the Church used to observe, calls for Christians to give up something far greater than a personal vice or habit. It calls for them to give up themselves and rely solely on Christ. That is not to say that there is anything wrong with giving up some personal vice or habit during Lent. If you want to fast from chocolate or soda or sugar in your coffee or whatever, fine. Go for it. As Dr. Luther says in the Small Catechism, “Fasting and bodily preparation are, indeed, fine outward training.” And, our Lord Jesus Himself expects His disciples to fast (cf. Matt. 6:16). But, such fasting is rather pointless and will do you not a bit of good if it is not accompanied by self-examination and repentance. In fact, fasting done purely for the sake of fasting, as if the act of giving this or that thing up during Lent is what the season is all about, can be very dangerous to your spiritual welfare, for if it is not anchored in self-examination and repentance, your self-denial can lead to self-righteousness, the very thing this holy and penitential season pleads with you to avoid.

Dearly beloved, I pray that you will allow the upcoming Lenten season to have its way with you. Heed its call to examine yourselves and recognize your sinfulness. As crazy as it sounds, this is the way to true Christian growth, for the more you realize how sinful you are, the more you will come to rely upon the One who took on your human flesh to live and die in your place, for your salvation. To that end, I leave you with the Ash Wednesday Address and Prayer, which will be the first words we hear as we embark upon the holy season of Lent:

Dear brothers and sisters of our Lord Jesus Christ, on this day the Church begins a holy season of prayerful and penitential reflection. Our attention is especially directed to the holy sufferings and death of our Lord Jesus Christ.

From ancient times the season of Lent has been kept as a time of special devotion, self-denial, and humble repentance born of a faithful heart that dwells confidently on His Word and draws from it life and hope.

Let us pray that our dear Father in heaven, for the sake of His beloved Son and in the power of His Holy Spirit, might richly bless this Lententide for us so that we may come to Easter with glad hearts and keep the feast in sincerity and truth.

Your servant in Christ,

Pastor Messer

Lenten Discipline

The holy and penitential season of Lent provides Christians the opportunity to refocus, rededicate, and recommit themselves to Gospel-motivated holy living. There are six particular areas of discipline Christians can concentrate on during this holy season for self-examination and improvement: 1) Prayer, 2) Almsgiving, 3) Fasting, 4) Confession, 5) Commitment to be in the Word, 6) Service and Support. These disciplines are not given as works to be performed to merit God's favor or as a checklist Christians can check off so that they can feel better about themselves. God forbid! Rather, they are given as gifts Christians can unwrap to examine themselves and strive for improvement. I pray that each of us will prayerfully consider embracing these disciplines this Lententide.

To that end, there will be additional opportunities provided to the saints at Peace this year to exercise these disciplines. Below is the Midweek Schedule we will follow throughout Lent. Take note that we will be having Divine Service BEFORE our Casserole Suppers this year, which is a change from our usual pattern. This will allow those who wish to exercise the discipline of fasting the opportunity to do so, breaking their fast with the Holy Supper, then enjoying the Casserole Suppers with everyone after the Divine Service. The Divine Service on Ash Wednesday will be the same at Noon and 6 pm, the only difference being that it will be spoken at Noon and sung at 6 pm. The Divine Services on the remaining Wednesdays will be different, as we will celebrate Feasts at Noon and the Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ in the evening. The earlier Divine Services on March 12 and April 2 are scheduled for 11:30 am, since the Ladies' Guild will meet at Noon those days. The times for the Casserole Suppers are tentative; we will gather and eat when the Divine Service is over (it will be a little later on Ash Wednesday, as indicated).

Ash Wednesday—March 5

9:30 am Matins
10:00 am Bible Study (*Nehemiah*)
Noon Divine Service (*Ash Wednesday—Spoken*)
4:30 pm Vespers
5:00 pm Bible Study (*Isaiah*)
6:00 pm Divine Service (*Ash Wednesday—Sung*)
7:00 pm Casserole Supper

Oculi Midweek—March 26

9:30 am Matins
10:00 am Bible Study (*Nehemiah*)
Noon Divine Service (*The Annunciation of Our Lord*)
4:30 pm Vespers
5:00 pm Bible Study (*Isaiah*)
6:00 pm Divine Service (*The Passion of Our Lord, Part 3*)
6:45 pm Casserole Supper

Invocavit Midweek—March 12

9:30 am Matins
10:00 am Bible Study (*Nehemiah*)
11:30 am Divine Service (*St. Gregory the Great, Bishop*)
4:30 pm Vespers
5:00 pm Bible Study (*Isaiah*)
6:00 pm Divine Service (*The Passion of Our Lord, Part 1*)
6:45 pm Casserole Supper

Laetare Midweek—April 2

9:30 am Matins
10:00 am Bible Study (*Nehemiah*)
11:30 am Divine Service (*St. Ambrose, Bishop*)
4:30 pm Vespers
5:00 pm Bible Study (*Isaiah*)
6:00 pm Divine Service (*The Passion of Our Lord, Part 4*)
6:45 pm Casserole Supper

Reminiscere Midweek—March 19

9:30 am Matins
10:00 am Bible Study (*Nehemiah*)
Noon Divine Service (*St. Joseph, Guardian of Jesus*)
4:30 pm Vespers
5:00 pm Bible Study (*Isaiah*)
6:00 pm Divine Service (*The Passion of Our Lord, Part 2*)
6:45 pm Casserole Supper

Judica Midweek—April 9

9:30 am Matins
10:00 am Bible Study (*Nehemiah*)
Noon Divine Service (*St. Mary Clopas, Sister of Mary*)
4:30 pm Vespers
5:00 pm Bible Study (*Isaiah*)
6:00 pm Divine Service (*The Passion of Our Lord, Part 5*)
6:45 pm Casserole Supper

PEACE NEWS & NOTES



MARCH

Happy Birthday

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------|
| 1 Tyrel Harwager | 20 Morgan Johnson |
| 1 Zane Luplow | 22 Ken Hill |
| 5 Tina Schafer | 31 Deb Penzien |
| 11 Bob Wendt | |

Happy Anniversary

- 19 Miguel and Sue Ortiz

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

SALT NEWS

Next SALT meeting will be held March 11, 2014, 6:30 p.m. at the church.

We welcome anyone who would like to join us.

*Please see our Meeting Minutes on the SALT
Bulletin Board*

Advent Tea 2014

Save the date! The 2014 Advent Tea will be on Thursday, December 11 at 7:00 p.m. The color will be green. Please consider hosting and/or attending!

LADIES LUNCH BUNCH

We will meet on Tuesday, March 18, at 1:00 pm at Mancinos. Please join us. The more the merrier!

REMEMBERING OUR SHUT-INS

We all love to receive greetings from people who care for us. What better way to remember our shut-ins (when it is difficult for us to make a personal visit) than to send a note or a card periodically to let them know we are thinking of them and to give them something to look forward to in the mail. Please consider dropping a few lines to our shut-ins during the course of each month.

Marlene Wiltshire	Joan Burch
Warwick Living Center	Schnepf Health Center
842 W. Warwick Dr.	427 E. Washington
Alma, MI 48801	St. Louis, MI 48880

Also, while correspondence is not requested for him, please remember our dear brother in Christ, Dick Wiser, who is at Pine River in St. Louis, in your prayers.

Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days

Lord, who throughout these forty days
For us didst fast and pray,
Teach us with Thee to mourn our sins
And close by Thee to stay.

As Thou with Satan didst contend,
And didst the victory win,
O give us strength in Thee to fight,
In Thee to conquer sin.

As Thou didst hunger bear, and thirst,
So teach us, gracious Lord,
To die to self, and chiefly live
By Thy most holy Word.

And through these days of penitence,
And through Thy passion tide,
Yea, evermore in life and death,
Jesus, with us abide.

Abide with us, that so, this life
Of suffering over past,
An Easter of unending joy
We may attain at last.

Ladies' Guild

Ladies Guild Meeting

Our Ladies Guild will meet on **WEDNESDAY, MARCH 12 at 12:00 pm.** with Sharyn Greening as hostess. 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 2014 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. 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 or Coaline Luplow. Thank you for helping to beautify our church.

PEACE LUTHERAN LADIES GUILD



The Ladies' Guild is collecting the following items to send to Lutheran World Relief:

BABY CARE KIT

- 2- LIGHTWEIGHT COTTON T-SHIRTS
- 2 -LONG OR SHORT-SLEEVED GOWNS OR SLEEPERS (without feet)
- 2 -RECEIVING BLANKETS
- 4- CLOTH DIAPERS
- 1- JACKET, SWEATER OR SWEATSHIRT WITH A HOOD
- 2- PAIRS OF SOCKS
- 1- HAND TOWEL
- 2- BATH-SIZE BARS OF GENTLE SOAP
- 2- DIAPER PINS OR LG. SAFETY PINS

COLLECTION DATES:

January 1 - March 31

PEACE LADIES GUILD COOKBOOK

Cookbooks are available for \$13.00 and can be purchased during fellowship time from any member of the Guild. Please see Coaline Luplow with any questions.

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.



March

Carol Zeile

- 2 Jenny Baughman
- 9 Lisa Messer
- 16 Jo Wendt
- 23 Peace Youth Group
- 30 Amy Blair

April

Altar Care

Carol Zeile

Coffee Hostesses

- 6 Cassie Tennant
- 13 Lois Ramsey
- 20 EASTER
- 27 Y.Elenbaas/M.Girard

May

Megan Brown

- 4 Carol Zeile
- 11 S.Greening/M.Brown
- 18 Dorothy Trgina
- 25 Miriam Cross



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AT PEACE

Sunday School and Adult Bible Class

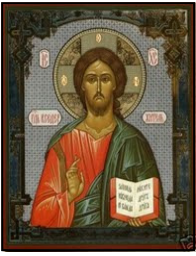
- Sunday School and Adult Bible Class (currently studying *Hosea*) is offered on **Sundays at 11 a.m.**

Wednesday Bible Studies

- At our **10:00 a.m. Bible Study**, we are currently studying *Nehemiah*.
- At our **6:00 p.m. Bible Study**, we are studying *Isaiah*.

First Communion and Confirmation Classes

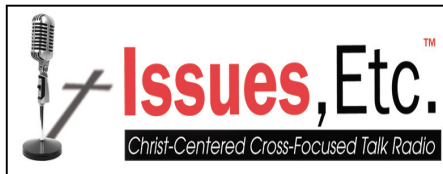
- First Communion Classes take place as arranged (see Pastor Messer if interested); No Youth Confirmation Class this year.



PASTOR MESSER IS BLOGGING!

www.abideinmyword.blogspot.com

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



TALK RADIO FOR THE THINKING CHRISTIAN!

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www.issuesetc.org

PAROCHIAL REPORT (as of 2/28/14)

Membership at Peace

Baptized - 130; Confirmed - 110

Membership gains: 0

Membership losses: 0

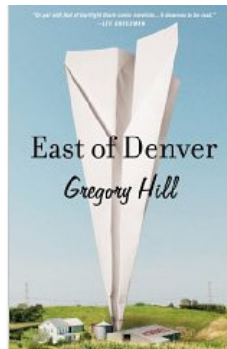
Financial Report as of 1/31/2014

YTD Budgeted.....\$17,408

YTD Receipts.....\$12,660

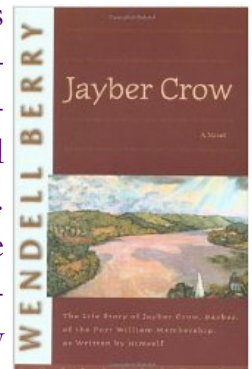
Difference.....- \$4,748

Peace Book Club



The Book Club met on February 18 to discuss *East of Denver* by Gregory Hill. The overall consensus was that we enjoyed the book in an ordinary kind of way and our average rating was 3 out of 5. It was funny, light reading that didn't require too much brain power!

The next book we will tackle is *Jaber Crow* by Wendall Berry. Berry is a prolific author and has written several books about the fictional town of Port William, Kentucky. "*Jaber Crow* is another story of the Port William membership, the community whose life--and lives--Berry has unfurled over the course of a half dozen novels. Jayber himself is an orphan, lately returned to the town. And his status as barber and bachelor places him simultaneously at its center and on its margins. A born observer, he hears much, watches carefully, and spends 50 years learning its citizens by heart."








We will meet on Tuesday, March 18, at 7:30 p.m. at the Zeiles. Please join us!

Rev. Thomas C. Messer
 (989) 463-3093—Home
 pastor@peacealma.org
 pastormesser@gmail.com
 www.abideinmyword.blogspot.com

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March 2014

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
2 Quinquagesima 8:30 am - Choir Practice 9:30 am - Divine Service 10:45 am - Fellowship 11:15 am - Special Voters Assembly 	3	4 7:00 pm - Council	5 Ash Wednesday 9:30 am Matins 10:00 am Bible Study (<i>Nehemiah</i>) Noon DS (Ash Wednesday—Spoken) 4:30 pm Vespers 5:00 pm Bible Study (<i>Isaiah</i>) 6:00 pm DS (Ash Wednesday Sung) 7:00 pm Casserole Supper	6	7	8
9 Invocabit (Lent 1) 8:30 am - Choir Practice 9:30 am - Divine Service 10:45 am - Fellowship 11:15 am - SS & BC 	10	11 6:30 pm - SALT meeting	12 Invocabit Midweek 9:30 am Matins 10:00 am Bible Study (<i>Nehemiah</i>) 11:30 am DS (St. Gregory the Great) Noon Ladies' Guild 4:30 pm Vespers 5:00 pm Bible Study (<i>Isaiah</i>) 6:00 pm DS (Passion of Our Lord Pt.1) 6:45 pm Casserole Supper	13	14	15
16 Reminisere (Lent 2) 8:30 am - Choir Practice 9:30 am - Divine Service 10:45 am - Fellowship 11:15 am - SS & BC 	17	18 1:00 am - Ladies' Lunch Bunch 7:30 pm - Book Club	19 Reminisere Midweek 9:30 am Matins 10:00 am Bible Study (<i>Nehemiah</i>) Noon DS (St. Joseph) 4:30 pm Vespers 5:00 pm Bible Study (<i>Isaiah</i>) 6:00 pm DS (Passion of Our Lord Pt.2) 6:45 pm Casserole Supper	20	21	22
23 Oculi (Lent 3) 8:30 am - Choir Practice 9:30 am - Divine Service 10:45 am - Fellowship 11:15 am - SS & BC 	24	25 7:00 pm - Stewardship Committee meeting	26 Oculi Midweek 9:30 am Matins 10:00 am Bible Study (<i>Nehemiah</i>) Noon DS (Annunciation of Our Lord) 4:30 pm Vespers 5:00 pm Bible Study (<i>Isaiah</i>) 6:00 pm DS (Passion of Our Lord Pt.3) 6:45 pm Casserole Supper	27	28	29
30 Laetere (Lent 4) 8:30 am - Choir Practice 9:30 am - Divine Service 10:45 am - Fellowship 11:15 am - SS & BC 	31	April 1 7:00 pm - Council	2 Laetere Midweek 9:30 am Matins 10:00 am Bible Study (<i>Nehemiah</i>) 11:30 am DS (St. Mary Clopas) Noon Ladies' Guild 4:30 pm Vespers 5:00 pm Bible Study (<i>Isaiah</i>) 6:00 pm DS (Passion of Our Lord Pt.5) 6:45 pm Casserole Supper	3	4	5

Peace Lutheran Church
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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 March

	ELDERS	ACOLYTES	USHERS	GREETERS
March				
2 - 9:30 am <i>Quinquagesima</i>	Gabriel Blair	Zane Luplow Paige Harwager	Tyrel Harwager John Lemmermann	Terry & Coaline Luplow
5 - 7:00 pm <i>Ash Wednesday</i>	Gabriel Blair	Savannah Blair Morgan Johnson	Vern Jakolat Bill Hendrick	
9 - 9:30 am <i>Invocabit (Lent 1)</i>	Larry Elliott	Farrah Blair Sierra Luplow	Gary Miller James Sager	Lisa Messer
16 - 9:30 am <i>Reminiscere (Lent 2)</i>	Terry Luplow	Aaron Cross Natalie Penzien	Chris Brown Aaron Messer	Helen Meyers
23 - 9:30 am <i>Oculi (Lent 3)</i>	Miguel Ortiz	Myka Luplow Noah Cross	Jon Penzien Terry Luplow	Miguel & Sue Ortiz
30 - 9:30 am <i>Laetare (Lent 4)</i>	Gabriel Blair	Paige Harwager Morgan Johnson	Daren Johnson Miguel Ortiz	Jon Penzien
April				
6 - 9:30 am <i>Judica (Lent 5)</i>	Larry Elliott	Zane Luplow Savannah Blair	Gabriel Blair Tyrel Harwager	Jim & Janice Sager