

THE PEACE POST

July, 2006

And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus, unto life everlasting.

FROM THE DESK OF PASTOR MESSER

“Some Pastoral Concerns”

Greetings in the Name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

As you all know, I was away during the last week of June attending the Michigan District Convention. The Convention was held on the campus of my *alma mater*, Concordia University in Ann Arbor. Walking back onto the campus where my journey to the Office of the Holy Ministry began was wonderful and brought back many memories. However, rather than take you on a walk down memory lane, I would rather use this space to summarize some of the significant Convention happenings.

First, Rev. Dr. C. William Hoesman was re-elected to a fourth term as our District President. We look forward to three more years of faithful leadership and service from him.

Second, I am happy to report that Rev. David H. Reed, pastor at Grace, Auburn who has been serving as circuit counselor of our Midland Circuit, was elected to the position of District Secretary. I am thrilled for Pastor Reed and wish him God’s richest blessings as he begins his new duties. I know that he will provide faithful service just as he has in our circuit for some time now.

However, there is one drawback regarding Pastor Reed’s election to District Secretary. He will no longer be able to serve as our circuit counselor, since our District By-Laws forbid one to hold both offices at the same time. For that reason, all of the pastoral and lay delegates of our Midland Circuit who were present at the end of Convention business Monday afternoon came together to form a caucus for the purpose of electing a new circuit counselor. Rev. Paul V. Young, pastor at St. Paul in Sanford, was elected. So, as of Tuesday morning, when all of the circuit counselors in our District were ratified, Pastor Young is now our circuit counselor. We wish him God’s richest blessings as he begins his new duties and look forward to his leadership in our circuit.

There are a great many other things I suppose I could highlight regarding the Convention—the many other election results, the many presentations made, including Synodical President Rev. Dr. Gerald Kieschnick’s address to the Convention, the adoption of several resolutions, and so on. But, I would like to use the remainder of this article to express the concerns I have regarding the differing spirits that

obviously exist within our District. Attending my first District Convention confirmed the sad reality I already knew to be true, that we are no longer truly “walking together” as a District or a Synod.

Of course, I suppose the powers that be would probably chastise me for bringing this to your attention. I would probably be told that it is unethical to express my concerns and that the “Christian” thing to do is to accept the differences that exist among our pastors and congregations as “blessed diversity.” Be that as it may, as your pastor, I feel compelled to express these concerns to you so that, together, we may be aware of them with the result that we may continue to cling to “what is in accord with sound doctrine” (Tit. 2:1) as it is revealed in the Holy Word of God.

I am concerned about a District that would, on the one hand, adopt a resolution which resolves “that each congregation of the Michigan District give thoughtful and prayerful consideration to utilizing the *Lutheran Service Book* and its supporting materials in its worship life in the coming months and years,” but, on the other hand, applauds and puts forward as “leading congregations” those congregations that have abandoned, in part or in whole, the use of Lutheran liturgy and hymnody in favor of contemporary forms of worship derived from American Evangelicalism. It seems to me that, as a District and Synod, we have grown accustomed to speaking out of both sides of our mouth, of letting

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PEACE LUTHERAN LIBRARY



New books in our library:

There will be a list of new books next month. Ladies Guild purchased some new books—most especially for teen youth. Once they have been cataloged, we will publish a list.

Donations welcomed:

If you are thinking about donating (a) book(s) to our library and are not sure what to be looking for, we have a 'wish' list of suggestions in the church office. Prices and books can also be found in the CPH catalog, also in the church office.

We would like to encourage people to use our Church Library more often. We will be encouraging people to read books and share a book review with the congregation via the monthly newsletter. If you have read a book from our library that you enjoyed, or that inspired you, and you would like to share it, please contact Beth Brostrom or Coaline Luplow.



THIS MONTH'S REVIEW:

By Cheryl Kuehnlein

A Mother's Touch

By Elise Arndt

A Mother's Touch is a book written by a woman named Elise Arndt. She is the wife of a Lutheran pastor here in Michigan and the mother of five children.

Though the book was written in the 1980's, I found most of it to hold timeless values. Throughout the book she reminds us that our children are blessings from God and that they are "loaned" to us rather than us owning them.

In raising her children, Elise found much wisdom from the native families of New Guinea where she and her husband spent their early lives as missionaries. However, after her book was written, many family members saw long-time traditions that were a part of their American heritage as well.

Elise has a beautiful way of making motherhood seem as if it is the most important role in life. Raising a child need not be high tech and must never be taken for granted. I would recommend this book to anyone who thinks they might be even remotely influenced in the life of a child, young or old. She reminds us that our love is very important and that no one can teach our children of Jesus' love and of His world as well as mothers.



(Next month a review from another member of our church)

Want something included in "The Peace Post" next month? Email Beth or Pastor Messer (addresses on back page) by July 26 with your item. Also, call or email them anytime with your feedback and/or ideas!

TREASURE COVE: Discover the riches of Christ!

JULY 10-14, 2006



Vacation Bible School for ages 4 through 7th grade will be held at Peace Lutheran Church, July 10-14, 2006 from 9:00 am—12:00 pm.

Come discover the riches of Christ through stories, songs, and activities. Invite your friends and relatives to join for this exciting week of Christian education.



QUARTERLY VOTERS' ASSEMBLY

SUNDAY, JULY 23
11:00 a.m.

All members of Peace are encouraged to attend!

Meeting Minutes Summaries

Summary of Peace Lutheran Church Council Meeting - June 12, 2006

Summary Minutes, Peace Lutheran Church Council Meeting, June 12, 2006

Minutes from the May 8, 2006 meeting were approved without corrections.

Pastor's Report:

1. Official Acts
 - a. Two confirmations – Sarah Messer and Ariel Row
 - b. Dorothy Trgina has joined our congregation through an affirmation of faith
 - c. Meeting with John Row and Amanda Richardson for premarital counseling and catechisis. They are scheduled to get married at Peace on July 22, 2006.
 - d. Pastor will be in Hamburg, MI on June 25 to preach at the ordination of his good friend, Al Majewski. Pastor will also be attending Al's installation in Manito, IL on July 16. As of now, Pastor has not been able to find a guest pastor for these dates. Elders will probably be leading the services.
2. Christian Education
 - a. Adult Bible Study will conclude our study, *The Da Vinci Code: Fact or Fiction?* on Sunday, June 18.
 - b. *Together in the Word* is still going strong on Tuesday mornings.
 - c. The Board of Education and Pastor will be meeting later in the summer to discuss the Sunday School curriculum for next year and beyond.
3. Outside Service and Peace Picnic
Pastor received positive feedback on the outside service and picnic and plans to make it an annual event.
4. Conferences
The District Convention will be held in Ann Arbor on June 25-28, 2006.
5. S.A.L.T.
We are planning an Evangelism Walk some time in June or July.
6. Table Talk in July and August will be at Pastor's house around the campfire.

Elder's Report: None.

Trustees Report: None

Board of Education Report:

There will be a planning meeting on June 15, 2006 for VBS. Sharyn has all of the helpers that she needs.

Treasurer's Report: None

New Business

Pastor, Jon and Vern have talked about updating the constitution. Something that we need is a Budget and Finance Committee. Any changes in the Constitution or Bylaws need to be presented to the Voter's Assembly in October and voted on in January.

Meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Carol Zeile, Council Secretary

Note: *This is just a summary. The complete version of the minutes are available to any member of Peace in the Church Office at any time.*

NEW MEMBERS:

Row, John II & Amanda
Ariel
227 E. Penrith
Alma, MI 48801
463-1975

Trgina, Dorothy
419 S. Main
St. Louis, MI 48880
681-5123



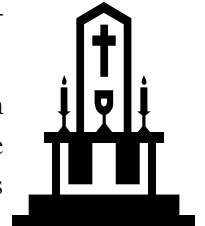
ADDRESS CHANGES:

Lovejoy, Eric
1306 Pennsylvania Ave.
Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858
989-773-3810



LADIES & ALTAR GUILD INFO

- **LADIES GUILD MEETING:** Guild will resume meeting on Tuesday, September 5 at 7:00 pm. Hostess: Sharyn Greening. All ladies of the congregation are invited to attend our guild meetings; if you are a confirmed female member of Peace, you can be a member of the guild. We would sincerely encourage you to participate and be an active member of the guild.
- **LADIES GUILD PRAYER CHAIN:** The Ladies Guild has a prayer chain in place. If you wish to be included in the prayer chain as a caller, see Marlene Wiltshire. If you wish to add yourself or someone else to the prayers, the chain starts with either Georgia Spindler (466-4352) or Marlene Wiltshire (463-4101).
- **ALTAR GUILD DUTY:** July—Carol Zeile/Marlene Wiltshire; August—Carol Zeile; September—Carol Zeile
- **ALTAR FLOWERS:** There is a flower calendar for 2006 posted on the fellowship bulletin board. If you wish to place flowers on the altar some time during the year, fill in your name and/or contact Marilyn Oswald. A bouquet usually lasts about one (1) month and the cost is about \$25.



UPCOMING COFFEE HOSTESSES:

- July 2—Lois Ramsey
- 9—Megan Brown/Sharyn Greening
- 16—Thrivent
- 23—Beth Brostrom
- 30—Carol Zeile
- August
- 6—Carol Zeile



PEACE YOUTH GROUP

PYG will gather at Jon Penzien's on Sunday, July 16, 4:00 pm.



*Happy
Independence
Day!*

For the United States of America, that, as we again celebrate the founding of our nation, we would give thanks to God for the freedoms He has granted to us, and that God would continue to grant us these freedoms especially so that the Gospel can be proclaimed freely, let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, have mercy!
Amen!

obvious contradictions not only stand, but praising them as if they are blessings from God.

This comes from the belief held by many in our District and Synod that we can remain one in doctrine while being diverse in practice. The problem with that, as those of you who have read, or are in the process of reading, *The Fire and Staff*, are learning, is that doctrine and practice, by necessity, go hand in hand. Lutheran practice flows out of Lutheran doctrine, just as Catholic, Baptist, Methodist, Pentecostal, etc. practices flow out of their perspective doctrines. The idea that we can remain Lutheran while employing non-Lutheran and, in many cases, anti-Lutheran forms of worship is simply impossible. And yet, by applauding the congregations that do this, we are not only being led to believe that this is somehow possible, but the implication is that if we want to “grow” and “flourish” as a congregation, we better follow suit.

“Look at these beloved congregations of ours,” we’re told. “See how they’re growing. They’ve broken down the barriers that prevent people from coming to church. They’ve been willing to pave the way for us to embrace new ideas and techniques to bring people into the Kingdom of God. They’ve been willing to learn the wants and desires of the un-churched and have courageously changed their ways to meet those wants and desires. Let’s praise them for embracing these new methods and for being willing to do whatever it takes to win people for Jesus!”

And then, when a concerned pastor stands up and says, “Wait a minute, here. Aren’t these new methods theologically false? Don’t they promote the false theology of American Evangelicalism? Don’t they endorse such false teachings as decision theology, in which faith is said to be a personal decision to accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior instead of the gift of God which the Holy Spirit works in those whom He chooses as they hear the Gospel? Don’t they promote a false theology of worship which believes that worship is all about what we do for the Lord instead of what the Lord does for us? Don’t the so-called praise songs being used exhort us to give praise to some generic god instead of to the One and Only Triune God of the universe?” that pastor is said to be stubborn and unloving. Such a pastor, like me, who would raise such concerns, is said, by many, to not have the heart to save the lost. Such pastors who desire to cling to the sound doctrine revealed in the Word of God and refuse to compromise that sound doctrine in the least are looked down upon by many. So be it! With Luther, I say, “Here I stand. I cannot do otherwise. So help me God. Amen!”

Of course, what I’m telling you here is nothing new. We have talked about these things often in Bible Study and you have heard me preach about them on many occasions. I have always been open and honest with you regarding my concerns over these things. But, it is one thing to know that different spirits exist within our District and Synod, it is quite another to see these different spirits in action as I did at the Convention. Nowhere was this more evident than in the debate which broke out regarding the following resolution, which is included in its entirety beginning here and concluding on the next page:

1 COMMITTEE NAME: **THEOLOGY, MISSION and RELATIONS**
2 RESOLUTION NUMBER: **1-03**
3 SUBJECT: **To Encourage Each of Our Congregations to Register for Ablaze**
4 **Tabulation Project**
5 REFERENCE: Overture 1-03, CW Overtures Page 4
6

7 WHEREAS our church body has its roots and heart in worldwide evangelization, and

8
9 WHEREAS we have been presented with a bold challenge to share the Gospel with
10 100,000,000 people between now and 2017, the 500th Anniversary of the Posting of the 95 Theses, and

11
12 WHEREAS we already count many things in our congregations, District and Synod, and

13
14 WHEREAS the saving of lost people adds great joy in heaven (Luke 15:7), and

15
16 WHEREAS we have committed to walk together by being part of the Lutheran Church-
17 Missouri Synod, therefore be it

18
19 RESOLVED that each of our congregations be encouraged to develop a system by which
20 Gospel contacts made by members in that congregation can be counted, and be it further

I realize that I am being a little silly here and I am well aware of the fact that those who voted in favor of adopting this resolution are not referring to sermons and newspaper articles as “Gospel contacts,” but I am simply trying to prove a point. This is ridiculous! This resolution resolves “that each of our congregations be encouraged to develop a system by which Gospel contacts made by members in that congregation can be counted” (lines 19-20). It resolves to encourage us to do something that is impossible, since only the Holy Spirit knows when a Gospel contact is made! Forgive me for getting a little worked up, but COME ON, GET REAL!

Hopefully, you are convinced by now that this is a terrible resolution. But, just in case, I will continue.

The third problem with this resolution is that counting the “Gospel contacts” we make (if this were possible, but, as we have already determined is not) has the potential to create competition among our members and our congregations. Member A (or Congregation A) made 20 “Gospel contacts” this month, but Member B (or Congregation B) only made 5. People can (and most likely will) conclude that Member A (or Congregation A) either is more passionate about sharing the Gospel or, at least, busier in doing so. Member A (or Congregation A) is to be commended for his/her (or their) efforts, while Member B (or Congregation B) needs to get with the program! In fact, this type of competition is already included in the wording of the resolution in lines 25-26 where it is “Resolved that any of our congregations that have already registered as partners in Ablaze be commended for their leadership.” Those congregations who have already agreed to doing what this resolution proposes are to be commended, while those other congregations, like ours, who have not are to be “most evangelically encouraged” to do so (lines 31-32), whatever that means.

The fourth problem with this resolution is that counting the “Gospel contacts” we make not only has the potential to create competition among our members and our congregations, but also has the potential to lead our members and congregations to develop a false sense of pride. “Look at how many people with whom I shared the Gospel this month. I’m such a good Christian!” This turns sharing the Gospel into a work about which we can be proud, which stands in stark contrast to what we Lutherans have always confessed. We share the Gospel through our words and deeds with the hope and prayer that the Holy Spirit would use our witness to work faith in those to whom we have witnessed, not to keep a running tab so that we can report a number to Synod. Like good works, sharing the Gospel is supposed to flow naturally from the faith in Christ we have been given. Besides that, aren’t we told by the Lord Himself to “not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing” (Matt. 6:3)? Counting the number of “Gospel contacts” we make is not only letting our left hand know what our right hand is doing, but is also using our left hand to pat ourselves on the back for what our right hand has done.

The fifth problem with this resolution is that it sounds way too much like the popular “altar call” employed by many American Evangelical denominations today. Many Protestant denominational (and non-denominational) churches use this method to exhort people to “make a decision for Jesus.” After a message is preached, the minister says something like, “If you’ve been moved by the message today and would like to make Jesus your personal Lord and Savior, then approach the altar.” Once the crowd is assembled at the altar, the minister leads them in a prayer (often called “The Sinner’s Prayer”) in which they accept Jesus and make Him their Lord. We Lutherans have always opposed the “altar call” because it promotes the false theology known as “decision theology,” which turns faith into a work we accomplish, instead of that which the Holy Spirit works in us through the power of the Gospel. I know that this resolution is not promoting the theology behind the “altar call,” but just the fact that it sounds anything like it is enough for me to oppose it.

My friends in Christ, I could go on and on, but I have already written more than needed. Let me assure you that I am all for sharing the Gospel with the lost. That’s what we Christians are called to do! In fact, it’s for this reason that our Lord doesn’t take us to heaven the moment we’re converted. He leaves us here on this earth to be His instruments through which the Good News about Him might be shared with others so that they, too, can be brought to faith and receive forgiveness, life, and salvation. As long as I am your pastor, I will preach and teach this truth among you. And, as long as you continue to come to the Lord’s House where He strengthens and preserves your faith in Him by means of His Holy Word and Sacraments, He will use you as His instruments of love in this dead and dying world. You will not always know when He’s using you to share His Gospel with others (which, by the way, is the main reason why we could never, ever count the “Gospel contacts” we make), but you can be assured that He will. Should sharing the Gospel with others be a priority among us? Absolutely! Should we actively seek to be better equipped to share the Gospel with others as individual Christians and as a congregation? Amen! But, should we try to keep a count of the “Gospel contacts” we make? Absolutely not! Instead, I have a better idea. Why don’t we “let our lights shine” and then let the Holy Spirit do what only He can do. Then, we’ll count those whom the Holy Spirit brings into our fellowship and place them on our membership roster so that we can serve them. Oh, wait a minute, that’s what we already do!

Your concerned Servant in Christ,
Pastor Messer

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AT PEACE

Sunday School and Adult Bible Class

- Sunday School has been discontinued for the summer and will re-convene in September.
- Adult Bible Class is offered **every Sunday at 11:00 a.m.** for all confirmed members of Peace and adult guests. Starting on July 2nd, a detailed study of the book of *Revelation* will begin.

Youth Confirmation Class

- Youth Confirmation Class will re-convene in September.

Adult Confirmation/Information Class

- Five prospective members are currently meeting with pastor for catechesis.



Together in the Word

- Our *Together in the Word* Bible Study takes place **Tuesday mornings at 9:30 a.m.** All men and women of Peace who are available at that time are encouraged to join us. Guests are always welcome, too. We are currently engaged in a detailed study of the **Gospel of John**. Please plan on joining us soon. (NOTE: Due to scheduling conflicts, *Together in the Word* will not meet at all in the month of July; we will resume on August 1)

JULY BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

Happy Birthday to:

2—Chris Figueroa	15—Lois Miller	24—Sharyn Greening
4—Bill Brostrom	15—Tim Mikek	25—Pastor Messer
6—Ryan Cummins	21—Steffanie Rosalez	25—Chris Brown
8—Tanya Strong	22—Gretchen Harrison	27—John Brostrom
9—Brandon Brown	24—Jon Greening	

Happy Anniversary to:

15—Joyce & Dick Kohler
17—Valerie & Mike Warne
20—Debra & Jon Penzien
24—Cheryl & Jeff Kuehnlein
25—Cheryl & Burt Henry
26—Dorothy & Bruce Bellow

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



ATTENTION SECRET PALS

Our current Secret Pals program will continue throughout the summer. We will come together in September to be revealed to one another and to sign up for our next program. Look for details in next month's *Peace Post*.



TABLE TALK BY THE FIRE

Table Talk by the Fire will take place **Friday, July 21** at Pastor Messer's house, beginning at 8:00 p.m. (the August date is still yet to be determined). We hope you will consider joining us for these nights of fellowship and discussion. Look for details concerning these on flyers posted at the church soon!

PAROCHIAL REPORT

(As of June 30)

Membership at Peace

Baptized - 182

Confirmed - 142

Membership gains: 2

John Row II (Adult Confirmation)

Amanda Richardson (Adult Confirmation)

Membership losses: 0

Financial Report


YTD Receipts (1/1/06 - 6/30/06): \$45,611.34
Budgeted YTD (1/1/06 - 6/30/06): \$ 53,300.00

Rev. Thomas C. Messer
 (989) 463-5121—Home
 (989) 289-3908—Cell
 pastor@peacealma.org

July 2006

Peace Lutheran Church
 325 E. Warwick Drive
 Alma, MI 48801
 (989) 463-5754
 www.peacealma.org

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

June 25	June 26	June 27	June 28	June 29	June 30	July 1
<i>Pres. of Augsburg Conf.</i> 3rd Sunday of Pentecost 9:30—Divine Service 10:45—Fellowship 11:00—BC		NO Together in the Word		5:00 pm—WW		
		<i>Pastor @ Michigan District Convention and Ordination of Candidate Aloysius Majewski</i>				
2 <i>4th Sunday of Pentecost</i> 9:30—Divine Service 10:45—Fellowship 11:00—BC	3	4 NO Together in the Word	5	6 5:00 pm—WW	7	8 12:00 pm—HGP Meeting
9 <i>5th Sunday of Pentecost</i> 9:30—Divine Service 10:45—Fellowship 11:00—BC	10	11 NO Together in the Word	12	13 5:00 pm—WW	14	15
		 Independence Day				
16 <i>6th Sunday after Pentecost</i> 9:30—Divine Service 10:45—Fellowship 11:00—BC 4:00—PYG at Penzian's — <i>Pastor Messer @ Installation Service in Manito, IL</i>	17	18 NO Together in the Word	19	20 5:00 pm—WW 1-3 pm—Pastor in Office	21 Table Talk by the Fire (Pastor Messer's House 8:00 pm-?)	22 Row/Richardson Wedding
23 <i>7th Sunday after Pentecost</i> 9:30—Divine Service 10:45—Fellowship 11:00—Voters' Assembly	24	25 NO Together in the Word	26	27 5:00 pm—WW	28	29
		<i>Pastor Messer on Vacation</i>				
30 <i>8th Sunday after Pentecost</i> 9:30—Divine Service 10:45—Fellowship 11:00—BC	31	August 1 9:30 am—Together in the Word	August 2	August 3 5:00 pm—WW	August 4	August 5
		1-3 pm—Pastor in Office		1-3 pm—Pastor in Office		

SERVING IN JULY

	<u>ACOLYTES</u>	<u>ORGANIST</u>	<u>ELDER</u>	<u>USHERS</u>	<u>GREETERS</u>
JULY					
2—9:30 am	Jessica Oswald Kelsey Gensler	Beth Brostrom	Dave Zeile	Leland Oswald Burt Henry	Lois Miller
9—9:30 am	Jared Kuehnlein Samantha Messer	Mary Jakolat	Bill Hendrick	Curt Oswald Vern Jakolat	Bill & Beth Brostrom
16—9:30 am	Tyrel Harwager Jordan Henry	Beth Brostrom	Larry Elliott	Miguel Ortiz Don Reithel	Burt & Cheryl Henry
23—9:30 am	CJ Oswald Alex Henry	Mary Jakolat	Terry Luplow	Jon Penzien Jon Greening	Marlene Wiltshire/Carol Durst
30—9:30 am	Melanie Penzien Sarah Messer	Beth Brostrom	Dave Zeile	Bill Brostrom Leland Oswald	Jeff & Cheryl Kuehnlein
AUGUST					
6—9:30 am	Lauren Penzien Kim Penzien	Mary Jakolat	Bill Hendrick	Chris Brown Vern Jakolat	Terry & Coaline Luplow

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

Peace Lutheran Church
325 E. Warwick Dr.
Alma, MI 48801

Church: 989-463-5754
Beth's Home: 989-463-1498
E-mail: contact@peacealma.org
Pastor's Home: 989-463-5121
Pastor's Cell: 989-289-3908
E-mail: pastor@peacealma.org

We are on the Web!
www.peacealma.org

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.