THE PEACE POST



February, 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

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

"But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain" (1 Cor. 15:57-58).

Oh, the sweet sensation of victory! How wonderful it feels to win! Is there any feeling as pleasing as victory? Is

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"Victory In Christ"

there any sensation as joyous as being on the winning team? If you have ever been involved in sports, you know exactly what I am talking about. There is a feeling of overwhelming joy when your team, after hours and hours of hard work and practice, wins the contest. Victory is, indeed, sweet!

But, there is a distinct difference between the victories we experience in this life and the victory we have in Christ. You see, our victories in this life come as the result of hard work. dedication, and practice. We earn our victories in this life. We set goals, either individually or as a team, and then we work hard at achieving those goals. And, if we are fortunate, our hard work (along with a little luck) produces a victory, which is followed by a celebration marking our achievement. However, our victory in Christ is much different. It is not earned by us. It does not come as the result of our hard work, dedication, and practice. Instead, remarkably, it is given to us by God on account of the saving work of His Son, our Lord, Jesus Christ. Jesus has won the victory for us! Through faith in Christ, the Victor, we are on the winning team.

And, to the victors go the spoils. Our victories in this life earn trophies and medals (along with pride), but the victory Christ has won for us brings immeasurable blessings and rewards to us. Our victories in this life are over other individuals and teams and bring temporary rewards and pleasures that last only until we again, inevitably, experience defeat. But, the victory Christ has won for us is over sin, death, and the devil and brings eternal blessings and rewards to us – forgiveness of sins, everlasting life, and salvation!

Thus, we can conclude that the victories we experience in this life are mere foretastes, and incomparable, to the victory we have been given through Christ. To be sure, we enjoy victories in this life. It is wonderful to be on the winning team. The athletes who win gold medals at the Winter Olympics this year will savor their victory. They will be on cloud nine for a while. However, as wonderful as it would be for any of us to win Olympic gold, we know that the victory we have in Christ is far sweeter, for it is eternal and it removes all earthly doubts and fears, and assures us that sin has been overcome, death has been conquered, the devil has been summarily defeated, and paradise in heaven is ours.

Dear friends in Christ, rejoice in the victory your Lord and Savior Jesus Christ has won for you. Nothing on earth, whether trials or tribulations, illnesses or financial difficulties, persecutions or tragedies – not even death – can take away the victory you have through Jesus Christ. Through faith in Him, you will one day join the everlasting celebration of Christ's victory in heaven. Through faith in Him, you are on *the eternal* winning team!

Your Servant in Christ,

Pastor Messer

PEACE LUTHERAN LIBRARY



New books in our library: No new books this month.

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 Georgia Spindler

Christy, by Catherine Marshall, is a very interesting fiction novel based on the adventures her mother had while teaching school for two years in the Great Smokey Mountains.

In 1912, after a year and a half of college, Christy Huddleston decided to go into the mountains and help to start a school for the children in Cutter Gap, Tennessee. None of the children had ever had any education, so it was quite a challenge. A lot of mothers were interested in "book larnin" also. So, Christy started a class for them as well. She became very involved with some of the mountain families. This is a very interesting story and I enjoyed it very much, even though this was about the fourth time I had read this book over the years.

(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 February 15 with your item. Also, call or email them anytime with your feedback and/or ideas!

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AT PEACE

Sunday School and Adult Bible Class

- Sunday School is offered every Sunday at 11:00 a.m. for all children from Kindergarten through 12th Grade.
- Adult Bible Class is offered every Sunday at 11:00 a.m. for adults. Our current study is titled *The Truth About the End Times*, which will lead into a detailed study of the book of *Revelation*.

Youth Confirmation Class

• Youth Confirmation Class is taught every Thursday from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Adult Confirmation/Information Class

• A new class will begin when one becomes necessary.

Women in the Word

• Our *Women in the Word* Bible Study takes place **Tuesday mornings at 9:30 a.m.** All women of Peace who are available at that time are encouraged to join us. Female guests are always welcome, too. We are currently engaged in a detailed study of the **Gospel of John**. Please plan on joining us soon.

Men's Bible Breakfast

• The date and location of our next *Men's Bible Breakfast* is **tentatively** scheduled for **Saturday, February 25 at 9:30 a.m.** It is "tentative" because this month's newsletter was completed prior to our first *Men's Bible Breakfast*, which is when we will decide for certain the date and location of the next one. If the date changes, it will be posted at the church and included in the bulletin. Like the women, we are studying the **Gospel of John.** Please plan on joining us.

"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path" (Psalm 119:105).

"Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true" (Acts 17:11).

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PEACE WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS



Pictured above: Front row, from left to right—Jenny Baughman, Paige Harwager, Tyrel Harwager, Charlotte Dargie, Marlene Miller, Tina Schafer; Back row, from left to right—Elder Terry Luplow, Jeff Cummins, Pastor Messer, Ryan Cummins, Chris Brown, Josh Schafer. New Members not pictured: Freda Hill, Philip Schafer, Gary Miller, Dick & Dorothy Wiser.

- Freda Hill is the mother of Ken Hill and transferred to our congregation from Trinity Lutheran in Zanesville, OH. She was accepted into our membership in October, 2005.
- Jenny Baughman and her two children, Paige and Tyrel Harwager, transferred to our congregation from Immanuel Lutheran in Laurel, NE. They were accepted into our membership in November, 2005.
- Gary & Marlene Miller transferred to our congregation from Immanuel Lutheran in Wheeler, MI. They were accepted into our membership in December, 2005.
- Charlotte Dargie is the mother of Marlene Miller and transferred with Marlene and Gary to our congregation from Immanuel, Wheeler. She was accepted into our membership in December, 2005.
- Dick & Dorothy Wiser were former members of our congregation. They were accepted back into our membership in December, 2005 by reaffirmation of faith.
- Chris Brown is the fiancé of Megan Greening. He completed the Adult Confirmation Class here at Peace on January 7, 2006 and was confirmed and received into our fellowship during Divine Service on January 15, 2006.
- Ryan Cummins is the husband of Sarah Cummins. He, and his nephew, Jeff Cummins, completed the Adult Confirmation Class here at Peace on January 7, 2006 and were confirmed and received into our fellowship during Divine Service on January 15, 2006.
- Tina Schafer is the niece of Ken Hill and granddaughter of Freda Hill. She and her son, Josh, completed the Adult Confirmation Class here at Peace on January 7, 2006 and were confirmed and received into our fellowship during Divine Service on January 15, 2006. Tina's youngest son, Philip, is in his first year of confirmation class here at Peace.

WE ARE OVERJOYED THAT THESE CHILDREN OF GOD HAVE JOINED OUR FELLOWSHIP!

LADIES & ALTAR GUILD INFO

• LADIES GUILD MEETING: The February meeting of the Guild will take place on Monday, February 6 at 7:00 p.m. Coaline Luplow will serve as hostess. All ladies of the congregation are invited to attend our guild meetings; if you are a 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: February Tammy Oswald; March Carol Zeile; April Carol Durst/Cheryl Henry
- 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:

FEBRUARY 5 - Cheryl Henry 12 - Sarah Cummins 19 - Sharyn Greening 26 - Janice Langan MARCH 5 - Lisa Messer 12 - Cheryl Kuehnlein 19 - Trina Palmer 26 - Carol Durst APRIL 2 - Vivian Strom 9 - Jo Wendt 16 - EASTER (no coffee) 23 - Carol Zeile 30 - Coaline Luplow



EUCHRE NIGHT! The next euchre night has been scheduled for **Friday, February 10 at 7:30 pm.** We had 24 people attend in January and a great time was had by all. Everyone is welcome to come and have fun playing the great game of euchre. Please bring a dish to pass. See you there!

JOIN US FOR TABLE TALK!

Our next *Table Talk* will take place on **Thursday**, **February 9 at 8:00 p.m.** *Table Talk* is an opportunity for you to meet with Pastor Messer and some of your brothers and sisters in Christ for an informal discussion on topics that are decided by the group present. We have had many interesting and informative discussions thus far and those who have attended have enjoyed the opportunity to get together in this setting. However, we would



Peace Forming Evangelism Committee

Peace is in the process of forming an Evangelism Committee for the purpose of developing and organizing various outreach events and the promotion of our congregation and its mission to our surrounding community, so that, by the grace of God, we may reach the lost with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Larry and Andrea Elliott have agreed to co-chair this committee and are looking for more dedicated members to join this team. This committee will be very important in shaping the future of our church, and we will probably meet as often as twice a month. We will be holding our first meeting on **Wednesday, February 1 at 7:00 p.m.** in the Fellowship Hall. A few items that will be on the agenda for our first meeting include: Determine a name for the committee; develop a mission statement; discuss and brainstorm how we can promote our congregation to the community right away; discuss and determine the initial outreach events we want to get going; and more. All members interested in becoming a part of this committee should see or call Larry, Andrea, or Pastor Messer, or just come to our first meeting. Larry and Andrea can be reached at 463-2604.

Peace Adopts Official Church Logo

At the Quarterly Voters' Assembly on January 22, the members of Peace decided to adopt the logo below as our official church logo. Julie List, Andrea Elliott's sister, created the conceptual design, and Larry and Andrea did the finishing touches. A colored version of our new logo can be found on the bulletin board on the north side of the Fellowship Hall. Our new logo is simple, but rich in Christian symbolism: The cross stands in the center and forefront, for it is the death of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ on the cross that brought us everlasting salvation. The cross is black, for the color black symbolizes sin and Jesus took all the sins of the world upon Himself on the cross. The gold ring between the cross and the dove symbolizes the Oneness of our Triune God; it is gold because the color gold symbolizes power and authority and the Triune God is the Creator and Ruler over all things. The white dove in the background symbolizes the Holy Spirit. The dove is descending because the Holy Spirit descends upon us when we are brought to faith in Christ through the Gospel. The dove also symbolizes peace, and its white color symbolizes holiness and righteousness. These are ours because the Holy Spirit has given us faith to believe in Christ. Finally, the black cross, gold ring, and white dove are placed within a red circle—the color red symbolizing the blood of Christ which atoned for our sins and reconciled us to God, and the circle to once again symbolize the Oneness of our Triune God. We are extremely excited to have this beautiful and meaningful design as our new official church logo.

Greeters and Ushers

As a member of Peace, you are automatically placed on the lists to serve as an usher or greeter for the church. If you do **NOT** wish to be included on these lists, or if you have specific Sundays that you cannot serve, please let Beth know. Also, if you are willing to serve, but unable to serve on a specific day you've been scheduled, please help us out by finding a replacement for yourself. Thank you in advance for your cooperation!

Notes From Pastor Messer ALL MOVED IN!

The final touches on the new pastor's office were completed the second week in January and I am very happy to report that, as of January 18, I am all moved in! I am extremely pleased with the new office and I want to extend a sincere thank you to Bill Brostrom, Chariman of the Board of Trustees, for overseeing this project. His crew did a fantastic job and I could not ask for a nicer office. Now that I am moved in, I will be working full time from the church, which will make it so much easier for me to perform my duties and stay organized. As for Office Hours, I am reluctant to post "set" hours, since I have no idea where my duties will take me from day to day. Plus, I want to reiterate what I said to all of you when I first arrived in July, that, as your full-time pastor, my "office hours" are twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. I have been, and will continue to be, available to you at all times. With that said, I anticipate working in the office most of the time during the week, with the exception of Mondays, which will be my day "off." Of course, as I said above, I am available to you at all times, so please do not hesitate to contact me at any time, even on Mondays. You are more than welcome to stop by the office at anytime to see me (I'd love to visit with you!), but if you want to make sure I am there, please call ahead as I may be out on calls or involved with a prior appointment.

INCREASING THE VISIBILITY OF OUR ELDERS

It is one of my goals as your pastor to increase the visibility of our elders so that the congregation will begin to look at them as the spiritual leaders they are. The office of elder is an extension of the pastoral office and our elders exist to assist the pastor in caring for the spiritual welfare of the congregation. One of the ways in which the elders and I have decided to increase their visibility is to give them additional duties to carry out during our Services. In addition to assisting with the distribution of Holy Communion, the elder on duty will assist with the readings and, occasionally, the prayers, and will be seated with me in the chancel area during Service. Please bear with us as we make this transition and please encourage our elders as they take on these additional responsibilities. Currently, our elders are Dave Zeile, Terry Luplow, Bill Hendrick, and Larry Elliott. These four men are wonderful, faithful men of God, and I consider it an absolute blessing to work side by side with them.

DONATIONS RECEIVED FROM PARTY AMERICA

In December, 2005, Peace received a donation from *Party America* which includes a host of party supplies with a Fall/Thanksgiving theme. My sister, Brandy Melton, is an Assistant Manager for *Party America* and has graciously agreed to put our church on their list of places to donate their extra, seasonal supplies. I believe these donations will be a blessing to our congregation and I anticipate our Evangelism Committee using them in future outreach events and activities. In addition to the party supplies we have already received, *Party America* has also donated to us a brand new fax machine still in the box. I hope to make use of this new blessing very soon. Please join me in saying a prayer of thanks for these donations.

PEACE GOES ONLINE

With the unanimous approval of the Church Council, Peace has purchased *Verizon DSL* and now has the capability of getting online, which will greatly increase our ability to run an effective church office. Special thanks to Larry Elliott for ordering this service and getting it up and running.

PYG NEWS

Seven members of the Peace Youth Group attended the "Youthquake" in Lansing January 6-8 and a fun time was had by all. The next **PYG MEETING** will take place on **Sunday, February 12 at Noon.** All PYG members are strongly encouraged to attend! **NOTE TO CONGREGATION:** Please support PYG by coming to the fundraising dinner they will be hosting on **Wednesday, March 1 at 6:00 pm.** Ash Wednesday Service will follow the dinner at 7:00.

KATRINA RELIEF

Continue to keep Trinity Lutheran Church of Meridian, MS, Bethel Lutheran Church of Point Clear, AL, and Trinity Lutheran School of Mobile, AL in your thoughts and prayers. These are the congregations and school that have been assigned to our Region in the Michigan District for our support. Elder Bill Hendrick is our Congregational Liaison. If you would like to participate in the support effort, please see Bill and he will let you know what they need. Thank you!

NEW MEMBER ADDRESSES

Please add the following addresses to your Peace Member Directory:

Jenny Baughman + Tyrel, + Paige Harwager 3885 W. Tyler Rd. Alma 48801 466-3780

Chris Brown 329 Rockingham Alma 48801 463-2750

Jeff Cummins 404 E. North Ithaca 48847 875-2617



Have you checked out our website lately? Be sure to visit often—many exciting additions are on the way! One addition that has recently been made is that *The Peace Post* can now be viewed online. Check it out! Charlotte Dargie 402 S. State Alma 48801 463-3710

Freda Hill 339 Schoolcrest Dr. Shepherd 48883 828-5963

Gary & Marlene Miller 402 S. State Alma 48801 463-3710 Tina Schafer Josh, + Philip 9797 S. Shepherd Rd. Shepherd 48883 828-5219

Dick & Dorothy Wiser 7 Pine Point Dr. St. Louis 48880 681-0354

+ - Baptized, NOT confirmed

Note: Add Ryan Cummins as a member next to his wife, Sarah, in the Directory

PAROCHIAL REPORT

(As of January 24)

Membership at Peace Baptized - 177

Confirmed - 137

Official Acts: 5 Adult Confirmations

Membership gains: 6

Chris Brown, Ryan Cummins, Jeff Cummins, Tina Schafer, and Josh Schafer by Adult Confirmation. Philip Schafer received as Baptized member.

Membership losses: 0 <u>Financial Report</u> YTD Receipts (1/1/06 - 1/24/06): \$7755.88 Budgeted YTD (1/1/06 - 1/24/06): \$8200.00

ASK THE PASTOR

Each month, this space will be used to answer a question I was asked by one or more of our members. If you have a question you would like answered in a future newsletter, please contact me and let me know. No names will ever be mentioned, so feel free to ask away!

Q: Why do we have to stand at the introduction to the sermon during Service?

A: First of all, let me preface my answer by stating that there is no Divine ordinance that tells us that we must stand at that point in the Service. What we are talking about belongs in the realm of the *adiaphora*, which are things neither commanded nor forbidden in Holy Scripture. So, this is not a "must do" thing. For this reason, you will

"The main reason is to show reverence and respect to our Lord Jesus Christ."



not see this custom practiced by all LCMS congregations.

However, many churches, like ours, do adhere to this tradition. In fact, the last three congregations I was privileged to serve did.

Now for the reason we practice this tradition.

The main reason is to show reverence and respect to our Lord Jesus Christ. Since we are about to hear the Word of the Lord proclaimed to us in the sermon, we assume a posture befitting the occasion. Also, at the conclusion of the introduction to the sermon, we join in prayer, asking the Lord to speak to us through the words of the pastor. And, since standing (or kneeling) is a traditional posture to assume for prayer, it is proper for us to stand. It is not that we "have to," but rather that we choose to out of reverence to the Lord.

Standing at the introduction to the sermon is akin to standing during a doxological stanza of a hymn, the Prayer of the Church, the Benediction, and other appropriate parts of the Service. In all cases, the reason is to show reverence and respect to our Lord as we receive His Word.

On a different, but related, note, I want to say that it has been wonderful to hear the congregation say "Amen" after the greeting, "Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ," which begins the introduction to the sermon, and after the blessing, "Now the peace of God that passes all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus, unto life everlasting," which concludes the sermon. It is appropriate for the congregation to respond with an "Amen" at those points. By doing so, the congregation is saying, "Yes, Lord, let it be unto us as You have said!" In other words, "Let Your grace, mercy, and peace-the peace that passes all understanding-be ours!" I have always found it awkward and strange when the pastor alone says "Amen" at those points, since he is speaking on behalf of the Lord to the congregation. So, please keep responding with your "Amen" at those pointsit is your "Amen" to say!

I hope all of this helps you to understand why we do these things during Service. Please continue to ask these kinds of questions whenever you have them. I am always more than willing and eager to answer them as it is my fervent desire that you learn why we do the things we do during Service.

Your Servant in Christ,

Pastor Messer



Happy Birthday to:

- 12 Yvonne Elenbaas
- 21 Coaline Luplow
- 21 Eric Lovejoy
- 24 Melanie Penzien
- 24 Amber Rosalez
- 24 Jeffery Sager
- 28 Javier Rosalez, Jr.

Happy Anniversary to:

- 18 Marilyn & Leland Oswald
- 19 Barbara & Ernest Komar

Kev. Ihomas C. Messer (989) 463-5121—Home (989) 289-3908—Cell pastor@peacealma.org Sun		on Tue We	wed	Thu Y	III OOO	325 E. Warwick Drive Alma, MI 48801 (989) 463-5754 www.peacealma.org Sat
January 29	January 30	January 31	1	2	ယ	4
<i>Epiphany</i> 4 9:30—Divine Service 10:45—Fellowship 11:00—SS/BC		9:30 am—Women in the Word	9:00 am—WW 7:00 pm—Evangelism Committee	5:00 pm—WW 6:00 pm—Youth Confir- mation Class		9am-12:30pm—Thrivent Financial Regional Vol- unteer Leader Training
J	6	7	8		10	11
<i>Epiphany 5</i> 9:30—Divine Service 10:45—Fellowship 11:00—SS/BC	7:00 pm—Ladies Guild Hostess: Coaline Luplow	NO Women in the Word (Pastor at monthly Winkel)	9:00 am—WW	5:00 pm—WW 6:00 pm—Youth Confir- mation Class 8:00 pm—Table Talk w/ Pastor Messer (everyone invited!)	7:30 pm—Euchre Night	
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
<i>Epiphany 6</i> 8:00—Elders Mtg. 9:30—Divine Service 10:45—Fell./ SS/BC 12:00—PYG mtg.	5 pm—Council Meet-	9:30 am—Women in the Word	9:00 am—WW	5:00 pm—WW 6:00 pm—Youth Confir- mation Class		2-4 pm—Anniversary party for Leland and Marilyn Oswald
19 E	20	21	22	23	24	25
Eppnany / 9:30—Divine Service 10:45—Fellowship 11:00—SS/BC		9:30 am—Women in the Word	9:00 am—WW 7:00 pm—Evangelism Committee (?)	5:00 pm—WW 6:00 pm—Youth Confir- mation Class		9:30 am—Men's Bible Breakfast (?)
26 <i>Transfiguration</i> 9:30—Divine Service 10:45—Fellowship 11:00—SS/BC	27	28 9:30 am—Women in the Word	March 1 ASH WEDNESDAY (The Season of Lent begins) 9:00 am-WW 6:00 pm-Dinner (PYG fundraiser) 7:00 pm-Service	March 2 5:00 pm—WW 6:00 pm—Youth Confir- mation Class	March 3	March 4

FFDDLLADY	ACOLYTES	SERVING ORGANIST	IN FEBR	RUARY USHERS	<u>GREETERS</u>
FEBRUARY 5—9:30 am	Jessica Oswald Sarah Messer	Mary Jakolat	Terry Luplow	Burt Henry Richard Palmer	Jon Penzien & family
12—9:30 am	CJ Oswald Jordan Henry	Beth Brostrom	Dave Zeile	Jon Penzien James Sager	Don & Sue Reithel
19—9:30 am	Lauren Penzien Tyrel Harwager	Beth Brostrom	Bill Hendrick	Don Reithel Vern Jakolat	Dave & Carol Zeile
26—9:30 am	Melanie Penzien Jared Kuehnlein	Beth Brostrom	Larry Elliott	Jon Greening Curt Oswald	Burt & Cheryl Henry
MARCH 1—7:00 pm (Ash Wednesday)	Alex Henry Kelsey Gensler	Beth Brostrom	La rr y Elliott	Jon Greening Curt Oswald	
5—9:30 am	Kim Penzien Sarah Messer	Mary Jakolat	Terry Luplow	Miguel Ortiz Leland Oswald	Larry & Andrea Elliott
8—7:00 pm (2nd Wed. in Lent)	Samantha Messer Jordan Henry	Mary Jakolat	Terry Luplow	Miguel Ortiz Leland Oswald	

"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're 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.