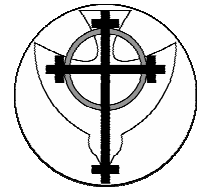


The Peace Post



The peace of the Lord be with you always. Amen!



From the Desk of Pastor Messer

“Post-Voters’ Assembly Thoughts”

Dear fellow redeemed in Christ,

I have no idea how many Voters’ Assemblies I have sat through in my day. I have been serving in some leadership aspect of various congregations for nearly twenty years now, so I know it’s been a lot. I have seen the good, the bad, and the ugly. Most often, the ugliest Voters’ Assemblies I’ve witnessed were those in which the budget was being discussed. That’s probably no surprise to anyone. There’s a reason why we’re taught, and warned, in Holy Scripture that “the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils” (1 Tim. 6:10). When the subject of money comes up, people can often get downright nasty with one another. I still can’t believe some of the things I’ve heard come out of the mouths of people who claimed to be Christians during Voters’ Assemblies through the years.

With that said, I wasn’t exactly counting the seconds in eager anticipation of the Voters’ Assembly we had this past Sunday. Knowing that we would be discussing the budget was worrisome to me and made me a little apprehensive. It’s like the great theologian Forest Gump once said, “Voters’ Assemblies are like a box of chocolates; you never know what yer gonna git” (okay, so Forest said that about life, and not Voters’ Assemblies, but I think it still applies).

But, thanks be to God, my worries were unfounded. That Voters’ Assembly we had last Sunday was one of the very best I have ever attended. I mean that! The members of our Church Council deserve high praise and hearty thanks for the diligent work they did in preparation, and for the stellar, very professional, and very Christian way in which they presented the fruits of their labors to the assembly. I think everyone who attended was thoroughly impressed by what they witnessed. I know I was. Our Council members painted an accurate picture of where we are as a congregation financially, complete with detailed charts and spreadsheets, and offered ideas on how we can get to where we need to be, so that the Lord’s work can continue to be done among us. I am very proud of my brothers and sisters in Christ who serve on our Church Council. They

worked very hard over these past several weeks, giving up many hours of their own personal time to meet, discuss, and prepare (without any pastoral influence or interference from me), and they did a fabulous job! I was so glad to hear several members speak up in recognition of that fact during the meeting.

I was also extremely pleased with how everyone in the assembly conducted themselves that day. This was how a *Christian* Voters’ Assembly should be—brothers and sisters in Christ discussing important matters relating to their congregation in the spirit of Christian love and charity. Concerns, and even disagreements, were expressed, and responded to, in that spirit, and it was wonderful to witness. It brought to mind Psalm 133:1, “Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!” I saw and heard unity that day—the unity of the Spirit which resides in all who have faith in Christ; the unity which shows itself forth among Christians, who say, “Even though things may not go exactly as I would like, I love my Lord and my brothers and sisters in Christ, and I will support the ministry and mission of this congregation as best I can.” I was ever so proud to be serving as pastor of those assembled that day!

The only downfall about last Sunday’s Voters’ Assembly was the absence of some of you who could have, and should have, been there. This was noticeable to all gathered and was brought up several times during the meeting. People were both saddened and frustrated that some of you seem to have chosen a non-participatory approach with the congregation to which you belong. Please understand that this is not in reference to those of you who could not be there, but in reference to those of you who chose not to be there. What I found impressive was that, amidst the sadness and frustration expressed concerning your absence, there was also a very real desire among your brothers and sisters to have you there. In fact, the true Christian spirit I referenced above was further seen by the fact that the feeling among most was that we need to take your feelings into consideration, even though you chose not to be there to express them, and proceed

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with caution. This is, in large part, why, at the end of the day, the assembly approved a no-increase budget for 2009, instead of the proposed budget originally publicized.

From a pastoral point of view, I am not as concerned about the fact that some of you have chosen not to participate as I am about what the reasons may be that have led you to that choice, and what that might mean for your spiritual welfare. Let me just say, right up front, that the Word of God does not provide any legitimate reasons for choosing not to participate among, and/or support, the congregation to which you belong, unless, of course, that congregation has abandoned the true Word of God. In that case, however, you would leave that congregation and seek out fellowship with a congregation where the true Word of God was preached and taught, not stick around, refusing to participate. And, again, just so I am vividly clear, I am not addressing those of you who are unable, but those of you who have willfully and knowingly made this choice. Be aware that you do not have any Scriptural foundation upon which to stand in this matter. God's Word is vividly clear: Christians serve and support the ministry and mission of their Lord in the congregations in which He has placed them. Withholding your participation and/or support is never an option for a Christian; it is always sinful and, thus, always displeasing to the Lord.

If you have been guilty of this, there is only one faithful option for you, and that is to repent. Turn from your wicked ways and return to the Lord in faith. The good news is that He stands ready to take you back. He wills to embrace you and remember your sins no more. He is good, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love. The bad news is that if you refuse to repent, you are keeping yourself outside of His grace and mercy and are in very real danger of Hell. Remember, and heed, the Lord's warning: "On that Day, many will say to Me, 'Lord, Lord' . . . And I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you workers of lawlessness'" (cf. Matt. 7:21-23). You cannot be a pretend Christian. The Lord knows who belongs to Him and who doesn't. Do not think that you can willfully and knowingly withhold your participation and/or support from Him and remain in His grace. It does not work that way. Be warned. Repent!

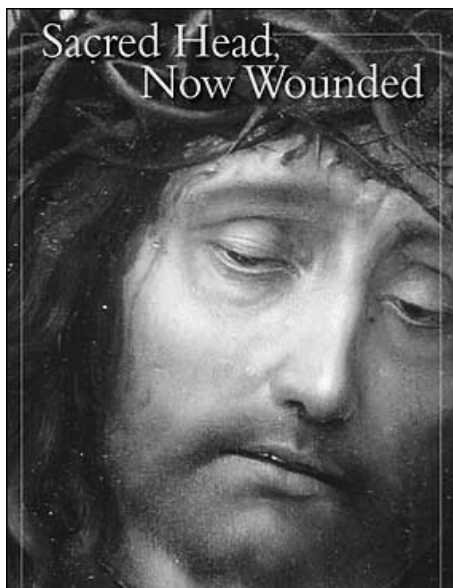
It may not seem like it, but I write this to those of you to whom it applies in Christian love. My sincere hope and prayer is that you will prayerfully consider these things, for I am convinced that doing so will lead you to repentance and faith. Whatever your reasons have been for withholding your participation and support, it is time to cease and desist from treading down that wicked path. Whatever your reasons have been, it is time to confront them and seek to overcome them, so that you may be the faithful servant of the Lord He has chosen you to be. If you have issues with me; if you're mad at me for something I've done or said, then let's talk about it and seek after reconciliation. If you have issues with other brothers and sisters, then talk to them and seek after reconciliation. That's what Christians do! They communicate with one another, confronting their brothers and sisters in Christ, whom they feel have sinned against them, with the hope of being reconciled to one another. To refuse to do so, to remain angry and hold grudges, and to put your anger and grudge-holding into action by withholding your participation and support, is not Christian.

For my part, I know I have failed in many ways as the pastor here at Peace. I have made more than my fair share of mistakes. I have done things I should not have done and said things I should not have said. I often wonder what in the world the Lord must have been thinking by calling and ordaining me to serve as a pastor. The fact that He has is proof that He certainly does work in mysterious ways. My biggest failure has been the way in which I have approached conflict when it has arisen. I have not been persistent enough. I have tried to arrange meetings with those who have had issues, but have allowed them to brush me off. I should have kept after them more, but I chose to back off, hoping that time would heal those wounds. That hasn't worked, and it's my fault. I have been serving in the church long enough (many moons before I was ever called to be a pastor) to know that the "allow them time to get over it" approach hardly ever works. Thus, I pledge to be more persistent from this time forth.

Along these same lines, it has been suggested that I try to visit with every member/family in our congregation this year, taking along that member's/family's elder. This is a good suggestion and one that the elders and I will do our best to fulfill. So, if you get a call from Mary Jakolat in the weeks and months to come trying to arrange a time for your elder and I to visit you, do not fear. The purpose of these visits will simply be to touch base and make sure all is well with you.

Lastly, what we learned this past Sunday was that we have many challenges facing our congregation. Will we be able to meet those challenges? With us this is impossible, but with God all things are possible. I am very optimistic about our future. I have never belonged to a congregation where I have witnessed the level of faithfulness I have seen here at Peace. I am constantly blown away by the selfless love and generosity put on display by so many of you. The Holy Spirit is definitely at work among us, and when that is the case, blessings shall follow. The Lord will provide in His way and in His time. He always does. He is always faithful to His promises, and, thus, we have nothing to fear. His will be done, whatever that may be. It is always good! Amen!

With love,
In Christ,
Pastor Messer



“Sacred Head, Now Wounded”

Lenten Sermon Series & Bible Studies

Based on the hymn by Bernard of Clairvaux, this series will explore the wounds we inflict upon our Lord through our acts of betrayal, apathy, denial, mockery, and abandonment. Yet the ultimate message is one of healing and joy as the sermons and Bible Studies declare the Good News that in Jesus' wounds we have forgiveness, life, and salvation.

Each Wednesday, beginning with Ash Wednesday, Feb. 25, we will have Bible Study at 5:00 p.m., followed by dinner at 6:00 p.m., and Midweek Service at 7:00 p.m. We hope that you will consider making your Lenten journey to the cross and to the empty tomb more meaningful this year by joining us as we meditate upon the Passion of our Lord in study, fellowship, and worship.

“Sacred Head, Now Wounded” Schedule

Ash Wednesday—February 25

5:00 p.m.—Bible Study; 6:00 p.m.—Dinner; 7:00 p.m.—Service

Bible Study/Sermon Title: *“A Wounded Savior for a Wounded People”* (Joel 2:12-19)

Invocabit Midweek—Wednesday, March 4

5:00 p.m.—Bible Study; 6:00 p.m.—Dinner; 7:00 p.m.—Service

Bible Study/Sermon Title: *“The Wound of Betrayal”* (Matt. 26:20-25)

Reminiscere Midweek—Wednesday, March 11

5:00 p.m.—Bible Study; 6:00 p.m.—Dinner; 7:00 p.m.—Service

Bible Study/Sermon Title: *“The Wound of Apathy”* (Matt. 26:36-45)

Oculi Midweek—Wednesday, March 18

5:00 p.m.—Bible Study; 6:00 p.m.—Dinner; 7:00 p.m.—Service

Bible Study/Sermon Title: *“The Wound of Denial”* (Matt. 26:29-75)

Laetare Midweek—Wednesday, March 25

5:00 p.m.—Bible Study; 6:00 p.m.—Dinner; 7:00 p.m.—Service

Bible Study/Sermon Title: *“The Wound of Mockery”* (Matt. 27:27-31)

Judica Midweek—Wednesday, April 1

5:00 p.m.—Bible Study; 6:00 p.m.—Dinner; 7:00 p.m.—Service

Bible Study/Sermon Title: *“The Wound of Abandonment”* (Matt. 27:45-48)

Holy Thursday—April 9

7:00 p.m.—Divine Service w/Stripping of the Altar

Sermon Title: *“A Meal for the Wounded”* (Exodus 24:3-11)

Good Friday—April 10

7:30 p.m.—Service of Tenebrae

Sermon Title: *“The Wounds That Heal”* (Isaiah 53:1-6)

Easter Sunday—April 11

9:30 a.m.—Divine Service

Sermon Title: *“He Is Risen! The Wound of Death Is Vanquished!”* (John 20:11-16)

“O Sacred Head, Now Wounded” **(LSB 449)**

*O sacred Head, now wounded,
With grief and shame weighed down,
Now scornfully surrounded
With thorns, Thine only crown.
O sacred Head, what glory,
What bliss, till now was Thine!
Yet, though despised and gory,
I joy to call Thee mine.*

*What Thou, my Lord, hast suffered
Was all for sinners' gain;
Mine, mine was the transgression,
But Thine the deadly pain.
Lo, here I fall, my Savior!
'Tis I deserve Thy place;
Look on me with Thy favor,
And grant to me Thy grace.*

*What language shall I borrow
To thank Thee, dearest Friend,
For this Thy dying sorrow,
Thy pity without end?
O make me Thine forever!
And should I fainting be,
Lord, let me never, never,
Outlive my love for Thee.*

*Be Thou my consolation,
My shield, when I must die;
Remind me of Thy passion
When my last hour draws nigh.
Mine eyes shall then behold Thee,
Upon Thy cross shall dwell,
My heart by faith enfold Thee.
Who dieth thus does well.*



Lord Jesus Christ,

You endured great shame, were spit upon and mocked, pierced with thorns, nails, and spear all for me, and yet I have often lived as though none of it mattered. Forgive me, Lord, and use this holy season of Lent to enliven my faith and bring me closer to You. In Your Holy and Precious Name. Amen.

Thoughts on the Most Holy Eucharist

We believe, teach, and confess with the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church established by Christ Himself, that in, with, and under the bread and wine, we are given to eat and to drink the very Body and Blood of Christ during the administration of the Most Holy Eucharist. This demands our utmost reverence and adoration. As Dr. Luther put it:

“It is the Word, I say, that makes and sets this Sacrament apart. So it is not mere bread and wine, but is, and is called, Christ’s body and blood (1 Cor. 11:23-27). For it is said, ‘When the Word is joined to the element or natural substance, it becomes a Sacrament.’ This saying of St. Augustine is so properly and so well put that he has scarcely said anything better. The Word must make a Sacrament out of the element, or else it remains a mere element. Now, it is not the word or ordinance of a prince or emperor. But it is the Word of the grand Majesty, **at whose feet all creatures should fall and affirm it is as He says, and accept it with all reverence, fear, and humility** (Isaiah 45:23; Philippians 2:10).” — Luther’s Large Catechism, V.11 [Emphasis mine]

It is for this reason that, after the Consecration of the elements, the pastor elevates them and genuflects (bows) before them. They are no longer merely bread and wine, but have been joined by the very Body and Blood of Christ, which demands our “reverence, fear, and humility,” as Dr. Luther says.

As we approach the altar to receive the Sacrament, we must do so in that same “reverence, fear, and humility.” To do so means that we acknowledge that Christ is present, but also that we have taken His Word seriously and have examined ourselves to make sure that we come to His altar as those who are truly sorry for their sins and desire to amend their lives. Those who come to the altar without contrition (sorrow over sin) and have no desire to amend their sinful ways receive the Lord’s Body and Blood not to their benefit, but to their judgment and great harm. As Dr. Luther put it, “This is not child’s play! God cannot be mocked!” We need to take this very seriously. In order to help us in that regard, what follows is an exhortation to communicants, authored by two of our most faithful Lutheran forefathers, Martin Chemnitz and Jacob Andreae:

An Exhortation to Communicants

Since from the fall and trespass of our first parents, Adam and Eve, we have all fallen into sin and are guilty of everlasting death, and through such sin have grown weak and corrupted in both body and soul, so that we of ourselves can do no good thing, much less keep the commandments and will of God, and since according to the Law we are cursed and ought to be eternally damned, as it is written in the book of the Law, and though neither we ourselves nor any other creature in heaven or on earth could help us out of such sorrow and condemnation, God the Almighty has had mercy upon us.

Out of his inexpressible love, he has sent his own Son, Jesus Christ, into this world to take our nature upon Him, taking flesh and blood from the Virgin Mary. On Him were laid our sins and those of the whole world. He bore them for us as on the gallows of the cross He died, and on the third day he rose again, having atoned for our sin and that of our parents, again reconciling us to God the Almighty, so that we are now justified, made children of God, and will have eternal life and salvation.

That we may be sure of this and never forget His great, inexpressible love and kindness, Jesus Christ, as He was about to begin his sufferings, instituted His Supper, giving to His beloved disciples His own body to eat and His blood to drink and said to them - and to all Christians - that it is His body given for them and His blood shed for them, for the forgiveness of sins, and that as often as they eat and drink of it, they should do so for His remembrance and, as St. Paul says, to proclaim His death until He comes again on the Last Day as judge of the living and the dead.

Therefore we are to do as he has commanded us, that is, to eat his body and drink his blood, remembering and giving thanks for His great kindness in reconciling us to God the heavenly Father, and rescuing us from sin, death, and eternal damnation. We ought also believe what He has said. Namely, "This is My body, given for you; This is My blood, shed for you, for the forgiveness of sins." When we do as He bids us and believe, we receive according to His word His true body with the bread and His true blood with the wine, and with them all His merits and righteousness: that is, forgiveness of sins, deliverance from death, the adoption as children, and eternal salvation.

But let only those who hunger and thirst for righteousness go to this most holy sacrament; that is, those who confess their sins, are sorry for them, and who have the intention to do better, and as far as possible live according to God's will. Therefore, let a man examine himself, and if he finds such a disposition go to the sacrament boldly, for he receives it worthily. And though he is weak, yet still believing, let him go to the sacrament. God will have patience. "A bruised reed he will not break and a dimly burning wick he will not quench." He is pleased with but the beginning of faith. Yet we should pray as in the Gospel: "Lord, I believe! Help thou mine unbelief." But whoever is not sorry for his sins and has no intention of bettering himself, but plans to continue in open sin and lust, let him stay away from the sacrament, for he receives it to his judgment, as St. Paul says.

Now then, as we are gathered together to observe the Supper of our Lord and to receive His body and blood, in order that we may do so worthily, that our faith may be strengthened, that we might live more according to God's will, that we might forgive our enemies and love our neighbors and do good to all, let us call on God our Father through Jesus Christ and pray together the holy Our Father . . .

[From the *Braunschweig-Wölffenbüttel Kirchen Ordnung*, authored by Chemnitz and Andreae]

Synopsis of January 6, 2009 Church Council Minutes

Call to Order and Opening Prayer

President Brown called the meeting to order at 8:13pm. Pastor Messer conducted the opening prayer. The following members were present: Chris Brown, Andrea Elliott, Marlene Miller, Megan Brown, Carol Zeile, Gary Miller, Larry Elliott and Ken Hill. Pastor Messer was also present.

Approval of Agenda

Motion made by President Brown, supported by Financial Secretary Miller to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

Motion made by Councilmember L. Elliott, supported by Treasurer Zeile to approve the minutes from December 2, 2008. Motion carried unanimously.

Report(s)

- **Pastor** Pastor Messer presented the attached report. The Council received the report into record. Pastor Messer was unable to stay for the remainder of the meeting and had to leave.
- **Treasurer's Report** – Treasurer Zeile presented the attached report. The Council received the report into record.
(At this point in the meeting, Councilmember L. Elliott was unable to stay for the remainder of the meeting and had to leave.)
- **Financial Secretary** – Financial Secretary Miller presented his report and informed the Council that annual statements would soon be available to members. The Council received the report into record.

Boards

- **Board of Elders** – No report.
- **Board of Trustees** – No report. President Brown informed the Council that he had performed some minor repairs.
- **Board of Christian Education** – Marlene Miller reported to the Council that the Christmas program had gone very well.
- **Board of Evangelism** – Councilmember A. Elliott presented her report and informed the Council of upcoming events. The Council received the report into record.
- **Board of Stewardship** – No report.

Organization and Committee Reports

- **Peace Lutheran Ladies Guild** – No report.
- **Peace Youth Group** – No report.

Business

- **Snow Removal** – Treasurer Zeile informed the Council of the new contract with Greenside Up for snow removal. The Council discussed the contract. No action was taken.
- **Locks on Doors** – As of this meeting, no action has been taken. Vice President Hill offered to start the process by getting bids.

General Comment

None.

Adjournment & Closing Prayer

Motion made by Financial Secretary Miler, supported by President Brown to adjourn at 10:04pm. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Megan Brown, Secretary

(Note: Complete minutes with all attachments are available in the church office for review.)

PEACE NEWS & NOTES



LADIES GUILD FUNDRAISER FOR CHRISTIAN CARE FUND

The Ladies Guild is planning to provide a dinner for the congregation on February 25 at 6:00 p.m. prior to the Ash Wednesday Service. There will be soups in bread bowls served with salads.

PYG NEWS

February Events

Monthly Meeting - February 15, Noon-2:00 pm

Greetings in Christ,

We need all forms in for the Higher Things gathering in Grand Rapids this July. Please get them to me right away.

Please plan on being at the monthly meeting as we need to move forward on the Spring Bazaar plans and other activities.

I want to thank everyone for your continued support of the Youth here at Peace. Please let us know where we can assist you.

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



Introducing *The Lutheran Study Bible*

Scheduled to release on Reformation Day, 2009

Pre-Orders begin February, 2009

Engage in devotional, Christ-centered Bible reading and study with the distinctive, comprehensive notes and practical application of The Lutheran Study Bible. This new Bible is the first in English to be developed from the ground-up with notes that are distinctively Lutheran, prepared by Lutheran theologians and pastors from over twenty Lutheran church bodies. Current Lutheran scholarship, insights from the Church Fathers, and rich devotional commentary provides meaningful perspective for both young and mature Christians.

Look for info posted in the fellowship hall soon!

Come join us on the Trail!

The Wittenberg Trail is the online community for people exploring and confessing the Lutheran faith. To join the community, go to:

www.wittenbergtrail.ning.com

To join our Peace Lutheran group on the Trail, go to:

www.wittenbergtrail.ning.com/group/peace-lutheran-alma-michigan



LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF

Ladies Guild has made the decision to do the Lutheran World Relief Collection year-round. There are four separate "kits" to be collected as well as quilts and soap. We will be collecting each kit on a rotating basis throughout the year and gathering quilts and soap all year. Directions for quilts were put into mailboxes and posted on the Guild board. Questions - see Beth

Current Kit Collection:

February 1 - March 28

SEWING KITS

Three (3) yards of 44" or 45" cotton or cotton blend fabric (4 yards of 36")

1 - package sewing needles (for hand sewing)

1 - spool matching thread

1 - card buttons

Wrap sewing notions inside fabric and tie with string, yarn or strip of fabric

In Christ,

Dorothy Trgina, Charitable Donations Chair
Beth Brostrom, Guild President.

EUCHRE NIGHT



Euchre lovers will next meet on **Friday, February 13 at 6:30 p.m.** Everyone is welcome to come and have fun playing the great game of euchre. Please bring a refreshment to pass - and a friend. See you there!

TABLE TALK

Our Table Talks are informal and informative discussions with Pastor Messer on various topics decided by the group in attendance. Our next Table Talk will take place **Thursday, February 12 at 7:00 p.m.** at the church. All are invited to attend! Hope to see you there!



PEACE NEWS & NOTES Cont'd



Issues, Etc.TM
Christ-Centered Cross-Focused Talk Radio

Issues, Etc. CDs Available!

S.A.L.T. has undertaken the project of recording episodes of *Issues, Etc.* onto CDs, so that any member of our congregation may check them out and listen to them at their leisure. Every episode of *Issues, Etc.* since the show returned to the air on June 30, 2008 is now available. Cases with the recorded CDs are located in the Adult Bible Study area, along with instructions on how you can check the CDs out. A log of each show's date, guests, and subjects accompanies the cases of CDs to allow you to choose specific shows you would like to listen to. We hope that providing these CDs will enable more of you to listen to this excellent, Christ-Centered, Cross-Focused broadcast. If you have any questions about this, please see Pastor Messer.

ATTENTION: Fundraiser for "Issues, Etc. 300"

"Issues, Etc." is looking for 300 LCMS congregations to support their worldwide outreach by donating \$1000.00 annually. Our congregation has pledged to be a part of the "Issues, Etc. 300" and support this Christ-centered, Cross-focused radio ministry.

However, due to the cuts we had to make in our budget, in order to keep from increasing it, we now only have \$500.00 allotted to send to "Issues, Etc." Therefore, we need to raise an additional \$500.00 in order to honor our pledge.

Please prayerfully consider helping us reach our goal by donating whatever you can. Any donation, from \$5 to \$100 (or more), would not only be greatly appreciated, but would also be money well spent, as you would be supporting one of the absolute best confessional Lutheran ministries in existence today.

Please submit your donations to Pastor Messer or to Mary Jakolat in the office. So that we can avoid confusion and keep proper track of the money given, please do not put donations for this fundraiser in the offering plates during Service. Make checks payable to "Peace Lutheran Church." Your donations will be recorded as offerings for tax purposes. Please consider donating soon, so that we can get the brothers at "Issues, Etc." our donation as soon as possible.

Thanks in advance to all who participate in this worthy cause!

GOTTESDIENST

Gottesdienst is an excellent theological periodical published quarterly. Go to www.gottesdienst.org or see Pastor Messer if you are interested in learning more or wish to subscribe.

S.A.L.T.

Sharing with All His Love and Truth



EASTER EGG HUNT April 5 (Palm Sunday)

The committee will be accepting candy donations, small enough to go into plastic eggs - NO chocolate, please. We are also asking for help with planning the event and invite any and all who are willing to join us at our S.A.L.T. meetings. Our next meeting is on **Tuesday, February 10 at 6:30 p.m.** This is one of our largest events at Peace and we will need lots of help. Please give it your consideration.



SUPPORT OUR TROOPS

A shipment has gone out filled with foods and supplies to LCPL Kenneth Berry, grandson of Bruce and Donna Bebow, who is serving in Iraq. Many thanks to all who have made donations of food and/or money. We hope this will brighten his day and let him know there are many who care and appreciate his service. Please consider continuing to make donations for this on-going mission of the S.A.L.T. Committee.



STEWARDSHIP AT PEACE

Dear Members of Peace,

In light of our current financial hardship here at Peace, I am compelled to encourage us all to get to the heart of the matter. Eph. 4 v. 22-24 says, "You were taught with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires, to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness." How does this apply to giving? What is, "the new attitude of your mind?" What should our attitude be towards giving?

Giving to the Lord is merely returning to Him what is already His. In doing so, we put our complete trust and faith in Him, not in our money.

We are to do this freely, cheerfully, and with thanksgiving in our hearts. Knowing all the while that we are not giving to Peace, or the evangelism committee, or any other part of our church, but that we are giving to God alone. Proper giving is about having the proper attitude.

So, if we as a church only give when and where we see fit, we are putting ourselves first, and that is dangerous. We are not trusting that God will put our money to work according to His superior will, and therefore lose sight of His love and promises. If we are afraid that tithing is going to leave us high and dry, then we need to go back to His Word and be reminded of His promises to bless us. This is not meant to discourage members from giving to

specific needs as they arise, so long as it's above and beyond their regular offering/tithe.

We have a defined mission, a Pastor who cares, and many willing and talented members. To me, it is sad that we are only able to make ends meet, and are thus unable to participate in the mission field the way we ought. It is time for us to seriously consider our attitudes. Then, in the spirit of God's grace through Christ, to move forward together so that the Lord's will may be accomplished through us here in Alma and beyond.

*In Christ,
Andrea Elliott
Board of Evangelism Chair*

ABOUT THE SPREADSHEET ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE

I have provided the following spreadsheet to give us all a sense of not only where we fall in how much we give back to the Lord, but to provide goals that would allow us to meet the budgetary needs of the church in order that God's will might be carried out through us

If you look at the first bold line, the 6 in the first column means that this row shows the 6th highest offering. The third column shows that the top six givers gave \$52,118.84, which is 49.01% (fourth column) of the total offerings (\$106,335.58). The fifth column shows that those 6 envelopes makes up 10.53% of the 57 active envelopes. In other words, the top 10% of our givers gave 49% of the total offerings. Looking at the next bold lines, we see the top 32% accounted for 81% of our total offerings, and the top 44% accounted for 90% of our total offerings. There are, of course, several people below that line who are faithfully giving as much as they can, and I do not intend to undermine their faithful offerings to the Lord, but many of us should certainly be giving more to the Lord.

In bold at the bottom left corner, you can see the amount of reserve funds we have remaining. If we continue to borrow \$14,079.39 from those funds each year, we will run out in 5.31 years. So, how can we make up that \$14,000? That's where the last three columns come in. The third column from the right shows the average amount given per week for each envelope. The next column shows the same amount plus \$5. Looking at the bottom of that column, you can see that if we all gave just \$5 more each week, we would more than make up what we were short in 2008. Furthermore, looking at the last column, if we all gave \$7 more each week, we could have a surplus of about \$6,000 (\$20,748 - \$14,079 = \$6,669), and we could finally start to increase our mission contributions.

My hope is that you will seriously and prayerfully consider this small increase in your weekly offerings. Together, we can all make a big difference.

In Christ
Larry Elliott
Chairman, Board of Elders

STEWARDSHIP AT PEACE

From our treasurer . . .

At the January Voters' Assembly, someone suggested that it would be useful to have a report from the treasurer in each newsletter. I think that is a great idea and I am glad to respond to the request.

Since the month of January is not yet complete, I will not give an update of our current finances in this newsletter. Beginning next month I will include a financial summary for the previous month and also include information about where the money is being spent. For those of you who were not able to attend the January meeting, following is the 2009 budget that was approved by the voters:

Peace Lutheran Church Budget	2009
<u>Expense</u>	
Church and Worship : Altar and Worship	\$1,500.00
Church and Worship : Christian Education	\$800.00
Church and Worship : Miscellaneous	\$0.00
Church and Worship : Music	\$2,000.00
Church and Worship : Stewardship	\$100.00
Church and Worship : Evangelism	\$500.00
Church and Worship : Youth Group	\$500.00
Missions : Issues, Etc.	\$500.00
Missions : Local	\$0.00
Operating Expense: Administrative Assistant	\$5,200.00
Operating Expense : Advertising	\$200.00
Operating Expense : Building Maintenance	\$1,000.00
Operating Expense : Insurance	\$2,800.00
Operating Expense : Janitorial	\$0.00
Operating Expense : Lawn/Snow Removal	\$1,000.00
Operating Expense : Maintenance Supplies	\$250.00
Operating Expense : Miscellaneous	\$0.00
Operating Expense : Office Expense	\$2,400.00
Operating Expense : Telephone/Internet	\$2,000.00
Operating Expense : Utilities	\$5,500.00
Pastoral Expense : Benefit Package	\$22,000.00
Pastoral Expense : Conferences and Training	\$1,000.00
Pastoral Expense : Down Payment Loan	\$2,220.00
Pastoral Expense : Guest Pastors	\$200.00
Pastoral Expense : Mileage	\$2,000.00
Pastoral Expense : Book Allowance	\$500.00
Pastoral Expense : Salary	\$62,045.00
<u>Total Expenses</u>	\$116,215.00

We had a very good conversation at the Voters' Assembly. Please feel free to ask me or any other Council member if you have questions.

Carol Zeile

Ladies & Altar Guild

Ladies Guild Meeting

Our Ladies Guild next meets on Monday, **February 2 at 7:00 p.m.** Hostess is Mary Jakolat. 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

If you wish to be added to the prayer chain as a caller, see Carol Durst or Beth Brostrom. If you wish to have yourself or someone else "sent through the chain," call Carol Durst at 463-2270.



Altar Flowers

There is a Flower Calendar for 2009 posted on the fellowship hall bulletin board. If you wish to place flowers on the altar sometime during the year, please fill your name in on the calendar and contact the church office with any information that you wish to have included in the bulletin. A bouquet costs \$25 and usually lasts about one (1) month. **We would like to encourage 2 persons (families) to purchase flowers each month, one for each plant stand.** If paying the church for the flowers, checks should be made payable to Peace Lutheran, Church with a separate sizeable note marked "Flower Fund," attached and placed in the Financial Secretary's envelope in the church office. Thank you for helping to beautify our chancel. Questions? See Beth Brostrom, Cheryl Henry or Marilyn Oswald.

Altar Guild Duty

February

Beth Brostrom

March

Carol Zeile

April

Carol Zeile



Coffee Hostesses

February

- 1 Cheryl Henry
- 8 Lois Ramsey
- 15 S. Greening/M. Brown
- 22 Jennie Harmon

March

- 1 Andrea Elliott
- 8 Jo Wendt
- 15 Cassie Tennant
- 22 Jenny Baughman
- 29 Carol Durst

April

- 5 Janice Sager
- 12 EASTER - NO COFFEE
- 19 Peace Youth Group
- 26 Carol Zeile



Ladies Lunch Bunch

Peace Lutheran Ladies Lunch Bunch will meet on Tuesday, February 17, at 1:30 p.m. at Country Chef Café in Ithaca.

All ladies of Peace are welcome and also may invite a guest—someone without a church or someone living alone. Please join us!



"Girls" Night Out

Another fun night is planned for Thursday, February 26, at 6:00 p.m. at Stucchi's in Alma. Please join us for an evening of chatter and treats. Ladies of all ages are invited. Reservations not requested.



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AT PEACE

Sunday School and Adult Bible Class

- Sunday School meets at 11:00 a.m. every Sunday. There are four Sunday School Classes (Pre-K-2nd Grade; 3rd-5th Grade; 6th-8th Grade; 9th-12th Grade).
- Adult Bible Class is offered **every Sunday at 11:00 a.m.** for all adult members of Peace and guests. We are currently studying the **Book of Concord**, which contains our Lutheran Confessions. This is an excellent opportunity for you to come and learn what we Lutherans truly confess and believe. So, come and learn!

Youth Confirmation Class

- Youth Confirmation Class meets **Thursdays at 5:00 p.m.**

Together in the Word

- Our *Together in the Word* Bible Study meets on **Thursday mornings at 10:00 a.m.** All men and women of Peace who are available at that time are encouraged to join us. Guests are always welcome as well. We have just completed our study of **Exodus** and will begin studying **Leviticus on Thursday, Feb. 5.** This would be an excellent time to begin studying with us as we begin a new book. Please plan on joining us soon.

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

Happy Birthday to:

1 Sierra Luplow	21 Coaline Luplow
5 Connie Cook	24 Melanie Penzien
6 Dorothy Wiser	24 Amber Rosalez
12 Yvonne Elenbaas	24 Jeffrey Sager
21 Eric Lovejoy	28 Rebekah Rodriguez

Happy Anniversary to:

18 Leland and Marilyn Oswald
19 Barbara and Ernest Komar



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

PAROCHIAL REPORT

(as of 1/25/09)

Membership at Peace

Baptized - 157; Confirmed - 135

Membership gains: 4

By Baptism: Rebekah Grace Tennant, Kayleb Michael Black, Faith Lauren Russell, and Albert Lawrence Russell

Membership losses: 0

Financial Report

YTD Receipts: \$7,589.23
YTD Budgeted Needs: \$8,940.00

PEACE OFFICE HOURS

Monday—Friday 9 am-1 pm

Pastor Messer's Office Hours

Tuesday and Wednesday 9 am-12 pm & 1-3 pm

Thursday 1-3 pm










Other times by appointment

Please note: These are the hours Pastor Messer will regularly be available in his office at the church, but please check the monthly calendar to ensure that he is not tied up elsewhere (wink, conference, etc.). Feel free to pop in on him during these hours, but please know that his duties may call him away from the office from time to time (hospital call, lunch meeting, member visitation, etc.), so if you want to make sure he is there before you come for a visit, call ahead of time. Lastly, please do not hesitate to contact Pastor Messer at any time should you desire or need to speak or meet with him beyond these posted office hours.

Rev. Thomas C. Messer
 (989) 463-3093—Home
 (989) 388-2037—Cell
 pastor@peacealma.org
 pastormesser@gmail.com

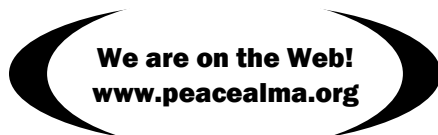
Peace Lutheran Church
 325 E. Warwick Drive
 Alma, MI 48801
 (989) 463-5754
 contact@peacealma.org

February 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 Transfiguration of our Lord 8:30—Choir 9:30—Divine Service 10:45—Fellowship 11:00—BC, SS 	2 12 pm—Divine Service <i>Pur. of Mary & Pres. of Lord</i>  7 pm—Ladies Guild	3 <i>Pastor at Winkler</i> 7 pm—Church Council	4	5 10 am—Together in Word 5 pm—Weight Watchers	6	7
8 Septuagesima (Pre-Lent 1) 8:30—Choir 9:30—Divine Service 10:45—Fellowship 11:00—BC, SS 	9	10 6:30 pm—S.A.L.T.	11	12 10 am—Together in Word 5 pm—Weight Watchers 7 pm—Table Talk	13 6:30 pm—Euchre 	14
15 Sexagesima (Pre-Lent 2) 8:30—Choir 9:30—Divine Service 10:45—Fellowship 11:00—BC, SS 12:00—PYG 	16	17 1:30 pm—Lunch Bunch	18	19 10 am—Together in Word 5 pm—Weight Watchers	20	21 10 am—Elders
22 Quinquagesima (Pre-Lent 3) 8:30—Choir 9:30—Divine Service 10:45—Fellowship 11:00—BC, SS 	23 <i>Newsletter articles due</i>	24 12 pm—Divine Service <i>Feast of St. Matthias</i>  6:30 pm—S.A.L.T.	25 Ash Wednesday 5 pm—Bible Study 6 pm—Guild Dinner 7 pm—Divine Service 	26 10 am—Together in Word 5 pm—Weight Watchers 6 pm—Girls Night Out	27	28
March 1 Invocabit (1st Sunday in Lent) 8:30—Choir 9:30—Divine Service 10:45—Fellowship 11:00—BC, SS 	2 7 pm—Ladies Guild	3 <i>Pastor at Winkler</i> 7 pm—Church Council	4 5 pm—Bible Study 6 pm—Potluck 7 pm—Lenten Service	5 10 am—Together in Word 5 pm—Weight Watchers	6	7

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

Church: 989-463-5754
E-mail: contact@peacealma.org
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

February	ELDER	ACOLYTES	ORGANIST	USHERS	GREETERS
1 - 9:30 am (<i>Transfiguration</i>)	Bill Harmon	Samantha Messer Natalie Penzien	Mary Jakolat	Burt Henry Bill Hendrick	Michael and Anna Gilbert
8 - 9:30 am (<i>Septuagesima</i>)	Larry Elliott	Tyrel Harwager Ashleigh Rodriguez	Beth Brostrom	Curt Oswald Bill Brostrom	Terry and Coaline Luplow
15 - 9:30 am (<i>Sexagesima</i>)	Terry Luplow	Jordan Henry Sierra Luplow	Mary Jakolat	Chris Brown Michael Gilbert	Leland and Marilyn Oswald
22 - 9:30 am (<i>Quinquagesima</i>)	David Zeile	Sarah Messer Rebekah Rodriguez	Beth Brostrom	Gary Miller James Sager	Marlene Miller Charlotte Dargie
25 - 7:00 pm (<i>Ash Wednesday</i>)			Beth Brostrom	Gary Miller Vern Jakolat	
March					
1 - 9:30 am (<i>Invocavit</i>)	Miguel Ortiz	Samantha Messer Philip Schafer	Mary Jakolat	Jon Penzien Vern Jakolat	Curtis and Tammy Oswald
4 - 7:00 pm (<i>Lent 1</i>)			Mary Jakolat	Vern Jakolat	

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