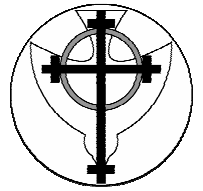
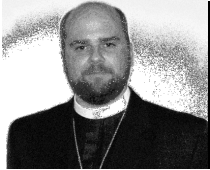


The Peace Post



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



*From the Desk of
Pastor Messer*

“With the Highest Reverence”

Dearly beloved in Christ,

Holy worship in God’s Holy House is, well, Holy. That should go without saying, but, unfortunately, in our day and age, it needs to be said. It seems many Christians, including many Christians within the Lutheran branch of Christendom, have forgotten what worship really is. It is not simply an informal gathering of people in a building to sing a few hymns, say a few prayers, and listen to God’s Word proclaimed. It is, rather, a Holy Encounter with our Holy Lord in His Holy House. It is where our Lord Himself comes to be present with us. It is when our Lord fulfills His promise to be with us always, as He comes into our midst to gift us with forgiveness, life, and salvation through His Holy Word and Sacraments.

Our Lord is with us in the Divine Service, my friends. REALLY with us! And, that fact, which is attested by Holy Scripture time and time again, demands our respect and reverence. This is not optional. We do not get to enter the Lord’s House and do as we please. The Divine Service is not a time for us to have fun and “get down with Jesus,” as many today falsely believe. It is a time for us to come, at our Lord’s gracious invitation, into His Holy House to have our sins forgiven, our lives renewed, our faith strengthened and preserved, and our salvation secured.

The Divine Service is Christ-centered and Cross-focused. It is Liturgical, Sacramental, and Confessional. It is formal, ceremonial, orderly, and reverent. It is not a time for flippancy and nonchalance. We are on Holy Ground in the Divine Service. We are in the presence of our Lord. If ever there was a time for reverence, this is surely it!

For that reason, our Lutheran forefathers were very careful to

make clear: “Our churches are falsely accused of abolishing the Mass (i.e. Divine Service). The Mass is held among us and celebrated with *the highest reverence*” (Augsburg Confession, Article XIV—emphasis mine). And, again: “At the outset, we must again make this preliminary statement: we do not abolish the Mass, but religiously keep and defend it. Masses are celebrated among us *every Lord’s Day and on the other festivals*. The Sacrament is offered to those who wish to use it, after they have been examined and absolved. And the *usual public ceremonies are observed*, the series of lessons, of prayers, vestments, and other such things” (Apology, Article XIV—emphases mine).

Contrary to what seems to be an ever growing popular belief among those claiming to be Lutherans, our Confessions (the very documents which define Lutheranism!) make it vividly clear that Lutheran worship is done with the highest reverence, the Lord’s Supper is celebrated every Sunday and on Feast Days, and the customs and traditions (i.e., “the usual public ceremonies”) are retained among us. It was never the intention of our Lutheran forefathers to start a new church. It was never their intention to do away with the salutary customs and traditions which had been handed down to them through the years. The Lutheran Reformation was not pragmatic or innovative, but purely theological. It sought to correct the abuses which had crept into the Church over time and to restore the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the center of all the Church says and does. It sought not to be a new and improved version of the Church, but to restore the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church established by our Lord Jesus Himself.

Sadly, over time, especially as Lutheranism made its way to America and fell under the influence of Americanized

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protestants, Lutherans began to drift away from their roots. Enamored by the apparent “success” of the Americanized protestants, Lutherans began to adopt practices that would surely result in their Lutheran forefathers turning over in their graves. A growing “Romaphobia” crept in (which, make no mistake about it, was the result of flirting with the protestants, who detested any and all things they perceived to be related to the Roman Catholic Church) and Lutherans began purposely doing away with many of the things their own Confessions claim to “religiously keep and defend.” Many ancient and salutary customs and traditions, which were practiced in the Church long before Roman Catholicism ever came on the scene, were eliminated from Lutheran practice, such as making the sign of the cross, bowing, chanting, kneeling, genuflecting, elevating the consecrated Host and Chalice, etc. The Mass (i.e. Divine Service) was no longer celebrated with “the highest reverence” and the “usual public ceremonies” were no longer observed. Over time, Lutherans came to believe that what made them Lutherans was their refusal to do what their own Confessions said they did. How strange is that?

As Lutherans fell further and further away from what their own definitive Confessions taught, for many years they at least maintained some sense of unity in doctrine and practice. As near as thirty to forty years ago, it was a pretty safe bet that one could attend any congregation within our own synod and feel right at home. While there may not have been “the highest reverence” and while the “usual public ceremonies” may not have been observed, the liturgy and hymnody was still there, along with the vestments, candles, and such. Not so anymore. Not even close. Sadly, what Forrest Gump proclaimed about life has come true about our own beloved synod: “The LCMS is like a box of chocolates; you never know what yer gonna git.”

You could walk into a number of LCMS congregations next Sunday and find the pastor leading a “worship experience” in his jeans and a t-shirt, the altar removed to make room for the “praise band,” Christian “rock and roll” pounding forth with people dancing to the beat, “chancel dramas” or video presentations replacing the sermon, and on and on. Surely, anything goes in our synod today.

Dear friends, this is the inevitable result of our falling away from our Confessions many, many years ago. The more Lutherans strayed from what they claimed to believe, teach, and confess, the more susceptible they became to the plethora of tomfoolery we see happening in our midst today. The more Lutherans adopted the practices of Americanized

protestants, the more they actually became like them, to the point that the only thing that distinguishes many congregations in our own synod today from Americanized protestants is the name on their sign out front (and even that is not present among some).

So, what’s the point of all this? It is simply to state most emphatically that what is needed among Lutherans today is a reformation. We need to get back to our roots. We need to be who we confess we are. We need to get back to being the people who confess: “The Mass is held among us and celebrated with *the highest reverence*.” Why? Because that confession is made with the theology of worship revealed to us in Holy Scripture in full view. People can try as they will to twist the Scriptures so that they promote the idea that Christian worship can be informal and irreverent, “fun and exciting,” and so on, but the simple truth of the matter is that you will not find one example of God’s people engaging in this kind of “worship” in Scripture. Not ONE! Worship in God’s Holy Word is ALWAYS reverent. The very word which we translate, “worship,” in both the Hebrew and Greek of Scripture literally means, “to fall prostrate in reverence.”

Of course, reformation is never easy in the Church. People don’t usually react very well to change, even if that change involves nothing more than getting back to the place from which we should have never strayed. This is especially true among Lutherans, or so it seems. The old joke goes: How many Lutherans does it take to change a light bulb? And the answer, of course, is: Change?!!!

All joking aside, there seems, in my humble opinion, to be at least three identifiable obstacles to a substantive reformation among Lutherans happening today:

- 1) *The “We’ve Never Done That Before” Syndrome.* The older Lutherans among us, who may not be fans of the contemporary, “happy-clappy” stuff being promoted more and more today, are nevertheless reluctant to accept the re-introduction of many customs and traditions that should have never fell out of practice, but unfortunately did. An illustration: When I was on vicarage, I remember visiting a very sweet lady named Arlene. She was one of our shut-ins who resided in the Lutheran Home. She was 90 years old and a life-long Lutheran. She spoke fluent German and could even recite much of the Small Catechism from memory in German. As I was leading a devotion with her, we came to the Apostle’s Creed and recited it together. As the Creed concluded, I made the sign of the cross at the words, “and the life ✠

everlasting,” as is customary. Arlene said, quite bluntly, “Please don’t do that, vicar.” “What’s that?” I asked. “That sign of the cross thingy. It gives me the creeps. It’s too Roman Catholic.” I tried to explain to her that this custom goes back to apostolic times, long before Roman Catholicism came on the scene. I even had her open her German Small Catechism to read how Martin Luther himself urges us to make the sign of the cross during our morning and evening prayers. That caught her attention a bit, but she still wasn’t budging. She had been formed by 90 years of practice which taught her that making the sign of the cross was not something Lutherans did; more than that, that making the sign of the cross was something Lutherans purposely avoided, so as to steer clear of Roman Catholicism. So it is with many of our elderly Lutheran brothers and sisters. They have been so long without many of the salutary customs and traditions we Lutherans confess to religiously keep and defend that they find them very difficult, if not impossible, to accept. “We’ve never done that before,” they say. And, the sad thing is, they’re just speaking the truth.

- 2) *The growing disunity and divergence in practice plaguing our synod today.* It is very difficult to convince people that the true theology of worship to which we Lutherans confess to adhere involves “the highest reverence” and employs the “usual public ceremonies” when there are other Lutheran pastors down the road teaching them otherwise. Our synod has sadly become a virtual smorgasbord of competing ideologies in which people can choose for themselves which pastors and congregations suit their fancies best. Why should you listen to Pastor Messer when Pastor so-and-so says it’s okay to “worship” like the methabaptist? Of course, the solution to this little dilemma is readily available to one and all, namely to search the Scriptures and our Confessions for yourselves to see whether Pastor Messer’s or Pastor so-and-so’s teachings are in line with them. That, by the way, is exactly what our Lord teaches us to do in His Word. As St. John says, “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world” (1 John 4:1). But, this leads us to the third obstacle.
- 3) *Unwillingness to be catechized.* Throughout my years at seminary, there was a constant exhortation driven home to us by all the profs: “Catechesis is the key! Teach your people! Teach your people!” It sounds great. And, indeed, it is exactly what is necessary. But, herein lies the problem: How do you catechize people who have no

desire to be catechized? We live in a day and age when Bible Study attendance is pathetically low on average. Here are some stats that should startle any and all Christians: About 75% of Americans claim to be Christian. That’s great, right? Not so much, since only about 20% of Americans attend Church on a regular basis (regular being defined as “at least once a month”). Less than 10% of Americans attend Church weekly. So, what about Bible Study attendance? Of those Christian congregations that offer a weekly Sunday Bible Study (around 35% of Christian congregations don’t, by the way), less than 10% who attend Church also attend Bible Study. Less than 10%! That means that over 90% of those who attend Church do not attend Bible Study on any given Sunday where Bible Study is offered. Of course, who knows how accurate these statistics really are. You can go online and find all kinds of stats like these and they will vary from place to place. But, one thing is most definitely certain: The vast majority of those professing to be Christian neither attend Church nor Bible Study on a regular basis. The simple, and very sad, fact of the matter is that, in our day and age, people just don’t take their faith very seriously anymore. Even the vast majority of those who take their faith seriously enough to attend Church on a regular basis do not see the need to delve further into God’s Word by attending Bible Study. No wonder people swap congregations, and even denominations, like my friends and I used to swap baseball cards when I was a kid. They simply go where their itching ears are scratched and their own personal wants and desires are met. They don’t choose congregations based on their faithfulness to God’s Word. How can they? They don’t know the Word. So, we can cry out, “Catechesis is the key!” till the cows come home, but it’s pretty hard to catechize people who do not make themselves available to be catechized. This, by far, is the most frustrating thing 21st century Lutheran pastors face today. There are many faithful and brilliant pastors in our midst, but there are few genuine disciples who are willing to learn. Is there any doubt that we are living in the Last Days? I should add, though, before concluding this section, that we are very blessed here at Peace to have between 40-50% of our adults who attend Church stay for Bible Study on a regular basis, which is way above average. But, that percentage, while wonderful when compared against the overall average, should be higher, shouldn’t it? I mean, barring physical restrictions or other obligations that must be met, is there a good reason or excuse to skip Bible Study? That’s something those who don’t attend need to prayerfully consider.

So, with those three obstacles (and there are surely many more we could add to the list), it is very difficult to accomplish a substantive reformation among us Lutherans today. But, that doesn't mean we throw in the towel. By no means! We press on. We teach those who will be taught. We preach the pure Gospel and administer the Sacraments according to Christ's institution. We slowly, but surely, reintroduce those customs and traditions our Lutheran Confessions, to which we claim to subscribe unconditionally as a congregation, say we religiously keep and defend. We do our best to celebrate the Mass with the highest reverence.

And, as difficult as it may be to accomplish a reformation among Lutherans today, make no mistake, my friends, a reformation is underway. More and more pastors and congregations in our synod are making a deliberate attempt to get back to our true Lutheran roots. The Lord's Supper is celebrated weekly by more congregations in our synod today than ever. Many congregations, like ours, are adding Feast Day Services, and deliberately attempting to celebrate the Mass with the highest reverence, bringing back many of the ancient customs and traditions which have been celebrated in the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church since her earliest days—customs and traditions like a) making the sign of the cross at the appropriate places in the liturgy, b) processing at the beginning of the Divine Service, c) bowing during the liturgy when the Triune God is mentioned, d) chanting the liturgy, e) bowing the head at the name of Jesus during the liturgy, f) elevating the consecrated Host and Chalice, and genuflecting before the very Present Christ in the Holy Supper, and so on.

We are Lutherans, my friends. At least, that's what we claim to be. We really should be who we say we are and do what we say we do. Shouldn't we? I mean, to claim to be Lutheran and not follow our Confessions, which define Lutheranism, is, at best, dishonest, and, at worst, deceptive. Dishonesty and deception are not virtues of the Christian faith. In fact, I'm quite certain that God frowns upon those things in His Holy Word.

So, the Lutheran Reformation of Lutheranism is well underway, as disturbingly ironic as that may sound. Who knows what will become of it. Only the Lord. But, we do well to participate in it, because, to borrow another line from that great theologian, Forrest Gump, "Lutheran is as Lutheran does."

Your servant in Christ,

Pastor Messer

"With Our Lord, There Is Always More!"

What follows is the Easter sermon written and preached by Rev. William Weedon, pastor at St. Paul Lutheran in Hamel, IL, this year. It is one of the best Easter sermons I have ever heard and I thought it would be a blessing to share it with you as we continue our celebration during this Easter Season. Enjoy!

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Alleluia! Alleluia! Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Today we mark yet another step in the unfathomable love of God for the human race. It was not enough for Him to have created us out of nothing in His image and to place us into the paradise of plenty. It was not enough for Him, when we fell into sin, to promise us a Savior. It was not enough for Him, to give us the Law to teach us our need of His mercy. It was not enough for Him, to send us prophets to call us to trust in Him and to turn from all that is death and vanity. It was not enough for Him to send His Son into our flesh. It was not enough for His Son to walk among us, a man among men, the only REAL man among all others who are really only failures at being men. It was not enough for our Lord to stand in the waters of the Jordan in solidarity with sinners. It was not enough for Him to reach out and touch and heal. It was not enough for Him to teach us the counsels of salvation. It was not even enough for Him to offer up His life a ransom for us upon Golgotha's stony slope. It was not enough for Him to share our graves and taste our death. It was not enough for Him. He would love us even more. And so the joys of THIS day.

For make no mistake about what THIS day celebrates. Not merely that a man was raised from the dead. This Man had raised others from the dead before - Jairus' little girl, the widow of Nain's son, Lazarus. But they were all brought back from death into life with still corruptible flesh. That is, they each finally grew sick and died yet again. I don't imagine that any of them faced death in the same way again - for they had encountered Him whose Word and call was stronger than death. But their coming back to life was not like what we celebrate today.

For THIS day we celebrate that human flesh, like unto our own, of a piece with us, has been raised from death in incorruption. He will never die again. He is forever

beyond all that. As we like to sing: "Gone the nailing, gone the railing, gone the pleading, gone the cry, gone the sighing, gone the dying, what was loss lifted high."

This is the news that the Angel brought to the Mary's and Salome at the tomb: "You seek Jesus of Nazareth. He is not here. He is risen. Come, see the place where they laid Him, but go and tell His disciples and Peter that He is risen and goes before you into Galilee. There you will see Him just as He told you."

As He told you. His words of promise never fail. You can count on them when everything else around you is shaking, when your world crumbles, when your heart breaks, when your body fails. He will not fail you. It wasn't enough for Him to merely share our flesh and blood. Oh, no. He would have that flesh and blood glorified, raised in incorruption, shining with the light of deity, the very source of our eternal hope. And He will take that glorified flesh and blood and raise it to the right hand of the Father, bringing humanity at long last to that place where God had intended us to live from the beginning.

And do you see what His incorruption means to you? He, who is now forever beyond death, beyond sin, beyond the accusations of the law, beyond hell - He has joined you to Him. In your Baptism you went into that grave with Him and you came out with Him. Alive. One with Him. His life was given you there in the water to be your life - His INCORRUPTIBLE life. But with Him, that's never enough. There's always more.

And so He sends His servants out to proclaim His promises - promises that cannot fail, that are as sure and certain as His rising from that grave on this day in incorruption. Incorruptible promises to make you partakers of His divine nature. This is how St. Peter put it: "His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire." (2 Peter 1:3,4) The promises of the Incorruptible One impart to you incorruption and make you a sharer in His divine nature - so that all that He is by nature you become by grace. He, a child of God; You, a child of God; He, the Heir of the Father; You, the heir of the Father.

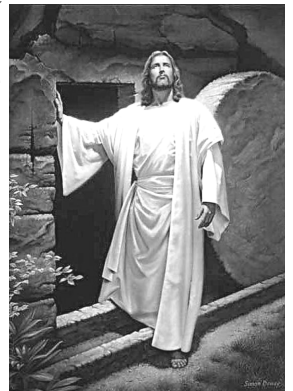
But with Him there is always more. It was not enough for Him to baptize you into His own indestructible life; not enough for Him to arrange for His promises to be spoken to you to impart to you incorruption through faith. He goes further; He has more; His love knows no limit. He has a meal for you. He wants to put into you, into your corruptible, dying, sinful bodies His incorruptible, undying, sinless Body and Blood for your forgiveness and for you life. He wants to unite you to Himself; to strengthen the bonds of your faith; to comfort you; to hold and still you in all your anxieties and fears. He wants you to know that just as death was not the end of Him, so it will NEVER be the end of you. He wants you to rejoice that YOU have a life that is stronger than all the death in this world.

Old Job could go to his grave in the confidence that his Redeemer lived, and that on the other side of the corruption - yes, though his body be destroyed - yet he would live again in this flesh and his eyes and none other would behold God. And as he thought of it, his heart burned within him.

We see more than Job. For we have known the Redeemer for whom he waited, and we know His triumph over death and the grave. We know that not a single word of His ever proves false.

So, beloved, since Christ our Passover Lamb has been sacrificed, let us keep the feast. Away with the corruptible leavened bread of malice! Away with the corruptible leavened bread of evil! Let us welcome the incorruptible unleavened bread of sincerity and truth: the sincerity that is God's earnest promise and the truth that with our God and His love for us, nothing was good enough until He had made our nature incorruptible in His Son and united us to Him that we might live in Him forevermore. This is God's sincerity. This is God's truth. This is the Bread on which we feast this day - the incorruptible bread that is Christ our Passover Lamb to whom be glory with His Father and the Holy Spirit - the only true God who has loved us with a love immeasurable, deep, divine. Amen.

Alleluia! Alleluia! Christ is risen!
He is risen indeed! Alleluia!



“Out of the Mouth of an Ass”

Palm Sunday—from the donkey's perspective (posted on Rev. Weedon's blog—www.weedon.blogspot.com)

So, let me tell you my story. Do you have any idea what it's like to be saddled with ears like what I got? And when I go to open my mouth, what comes out but this obnoxious sound: “Hee-haw! Hee-haw!”

Everyone made fun of me. All the other animals. They said I was half-grown. They said I was God's joke on the animal kingdom. They said I wasn't good for anything but carrying heavy burdens on my back. They said I was as stupid as I was stubborn.

I used to let it get to me. I used to feel kinda low. But then one day something happened. Something that changed me forever. And now, when I swagger down the street, all those smarty animals look at me with envy. Let me tell you about it. It happened like this.

There I was, mindin' my own business, munchin' away on some grass. It was spring and boy did that fresh grass taste great. I mean, you gotta imagine what it's like to have straw shoved down your throat all winter long. Yuck! Now, where was I? Oh, yea. I was eatin' this new grass, when along come these people that I never laid eyes on before. They walked right up to me, untied me and started to lead me away.

Well, do you think I was just going to let them donkey-nap me? No way. I started my hee-hawing and planted my feet firm. And pretty soon my owner showed up and wanted to know what these bozos were up to, making off with his prize donkey, right? So, I settle back to hear him tell them off. Only he doesn't. They say to him: “The Lord has need of him.” And right away my owner wacks me with a stick and tells me to start with these men I've never seen. Now, I ask you, does this make any sense?

So there I was, feeling dejected, rejected, and humbled. Handed over to strangers without a fight. But then, they bring me to Him. You humans. You humans are so blind. You can't see what's right before your eyes. But not us animals. We are not so stupid as to not recognize the hand that made us. I started shivering and shaking, let me tell you. I was scared. I mean, there was God. All got up like a human. Well, I mean, He was a human. But it was God. You get what I mean? And He looks into my eyes and He knows that I know who He is, right? And you know what He done?

He smiled. He smiled and He winked. Like it was a big secret between me and Him. And then they lift him up on my back. My back. Here I was, your average donkey, and the Creator of all actually sat Himself down on my back. Let me tell you, I held my head up high.

Who notices a donkey? I mean, you'd have to be a donkey to realize how everybody ignores you. But not that day, no siree. They crowded around me and they sang to Him. Clothes were coming off as people lined the path before my feet. Palm branches filled the air. And everyone everywhere was shoutin' “Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord, the King of Israel. Hosanna in the highest!”

Down that big hill and then up to the city walls, I carried Him. And I could tell He was glad, and yet sad. You see, He was riding to that City to die. His look told me that too. He was going to die to fix this world. He was going to die to get rid of the death and sorrow that fills this place. He was going die to open up the way back home – back to where we all really belong. Donkeys too.

When He got off my back we were right outside the temple. He looked into my eyes and I don't mind tellin' youse – I couldn't hold back the tears. But the look He gave me was as clear as it could be: “It's not good-bye, donkey! It's until we meet again! Because even though I die, I am not going to remain dead. I'm going rise again!” And then He smiled that smile and I was the happiest donkey in the world.

Now, like I said, you humans sometimes are so blind. I'm sure you don't mean to be, but it amazes us animals. Because just like the Master rode into town on that fine spring day in Jerusalem, He still rides into your town. Only this time, I don't get to carry Him, this time He comes on bread and wine. I mean, if you had animal eyes you'd see Him right there, right there on that altar after the words are spoken: “This is my body given for you; this is my blood shed for you, for the forgiveness of sins.” The same Jesus – the one that rode on my back. He comes to you right there, and then I wish I was a human so I could smile and receive Him too. Because when you sing: “Hosanna in the highest and blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!” each week, it's just like it happened all over again, and I'm carrying Him into town.

Humans! Do you even begin to realize the blessings you got? Open your eyes. Take it from a donkey.



Holy Week Thoughts, 2009

As I sat down to write these thoughts, I was tempted to look back at what I wrote after Holy Week last year. Because time is short and there are many demands on my time, maybe I could get away with just making small edits to what I wrote last year. Would anyone even notice?

Those thoughts led me to realize that every Holy Week is very different and that even every Service is different for us humans. The pressures of daily life, of world events, of happenings in our home life and in the work of the congregation, all go together to make our lives dynamic and our state of mind fluid as we enter our Lord's Holy House. Our minds wander, our hearts are filled with hate or anger, we often fail to put all of that aside and focus on what is important. He, however, is always present, always freely giving us His gifts, always the same.

This year, members and visitors at Peace were blessed by a wider variety of Services from which to choose. How did Pastor Messer prepare and deliver all of those Services? There are no words to adequately describe his constant devotion to our Lord and to us. As I went about my daily life this Holy Week and struggled to put my Lord first, I always knew that Pastor was there serving us three times a day, at least. Attendance at Services increased this year during Holy Week as many of us were able to receive our Lord's gifts multiple times.

I recall last year how moved I was by the Good Friday Services. Meditating on the pain and suffering of our Lord is indeed necessary and good. This year it was the Easter morning Services that stand out in my mind as the height of the week. Reinstating the Sunrise Service was a special blessing for me. I pray that we will be able to continue that Service in the future. The Easter Divine Service was one of the best, if not the best, Services I have ever attended at Peace. The sermon, music, beautiful altar, flowers, readings and Holy Communion all came together as a wonderful celebration of that blessed day.

The Lord is indeed good to us here at Peace in Alma. I feel so blessed to have been led here. I pray that more will be led to appreciate this great gift.

*In Christ,
Carol Zeile*

Synopsis of April 14, 2009 Church Council Minutes

Call To Order & Opening Prayer

President Brown called the meeting to order at 7:00pm. Pastor Messer conducted the opening prayer. The following members were present: Chris Brown, Carol Zeile, Vern Jakolat, Gary Miller, Sharyn Greening, Megan Brown and Larry Elliott. Pastor Messer was also present.

Approval of Agenda

The agenda was amended to add three business items: Use of Fellowship Hall for Graduation Party, Health Insurance, and Crop/Garden. Motion made by Financial Secretary Miller, supported by President Brown to approve the agenda as amended. Motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

Motion made by Treasurer Zeile, supported by Financial Secretary Miller to approve the minutes from March 3 as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Report(s)

- **Pastor** – Pastor Messer presented the attached report. The Council received the report into record.
- **Treasurer's Report** – Treasurer Zeile presented the attached report. The Council received the report into record. The Council also discussed the \$1,650 loaned to the Youth Group and how it was to be paid back; a request from the Church Secretary for renewal of the anti-virus software and establishment of an account at Staples for office supplies. Motion made by Financial Secretary Miller, supported by Councilmember L. Elliott to approve the establishment of an account at Staples for office supplies. Motion carried unanimously.
- **Financial Secretary** – Financial Secretary Miller reported that the quarterly financial statements would be available soon and that offerings during Holy Week totaled over \$5,500.

Boards

- **Board of Elders** – Councilmember L. Elliott reported that the Elders voted to remove Bonnie Mier and that the final approval would be presented at the next Voters' Assembly on April 26. Councilmember L. Elliott also reported on other activities of the Elders and that Administrative Professional's Day was April 22. Motion made by Treasurer Zeile, supported by Financial Secretary Miller to approve a monetary gift in the amount of \$200 for Mary Jakolat. Motion carried unanimously.
- **Board of Trustees** – Councilmember Jakolat reported that special thanks were to be given to Jim and Jeffrey Sager for cleaning and preparing the church for Holy Week and Easter, to Miguel Ortiz for installing the new faucet in the kitchen and to Chris Brown for working to get the new locks installed and keys distributed to members of the congregation. The Trustees are also working on plans for the delivery of the new storage shed.
- **Board of Christian Education** – Councilmember Greening reported that VBS will be held June 15-19 and a program from Pax Domini will be used.
- **Board of Evangelism** – Councilmember L. Elliott reported that the clothing sale was very successful and they have a new troop to support. Details of the Second Time Around sale will be coming soon.
- **Board of Stewardship** – No report.

Organization and Committee Reports

- **Peace Lutheran Ladies Guild** – Holy Week and Easter events went very well. The Guild is looking into purchasing new tables and is making plans for moving items from the storage room into the new shed.
- **Peace Youth Group** – No report.

Business

- **Request for Use of Fellowship Hall for Graduation Party** – Councilmember Jakolat presented information to the Council for use of the fellowship hall for a graduation party. Motion made by Financial Secretary Miller, supported by Councilmember L. Elliott to approve the request to use the space for \$50 donation and agreement to follow the policy regarding use of the fellowship hall. Motion carried unanimously.
- **Health Insurance** – Pastor Messer informed the Council of a change to the health insurance to cover Kelsey. Motion made by Councilmember L. Elliott, supported by Financial Secretary Miller to approve the cost of rider coverage for Kelsey at \$47 per month. Motion carried unanimously.
- **Crop/Garden** – It was suggested by a member of the congregation to start a garden in the field behind the church. After discussion, it was decided that the idea needed further research and discussion. No action was taken.

General Comment

- Councilmember L. Elliott inquired about a 501(c)3 determination letter for a web-hosting service that would be available at no cost.

Adjournment & Closing Prayer

- Motion made by Financial Secretary Miller, supported by Councilmember Jakolat to adjourn at 9:04pm. Motion carried unanimously. The Council closed with the Lord's Prayer and Pastor conducted the Benediction.

Respectfully submitted

Megan Brown, Secretary

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

PEACE NEWS & NOTES



SECOND-TIME-AROUND SALE MONDAY MAY 18 and TUESDAY MAY 19 9AM - 7 PM WEDNESDAY MAY 20—9AM - 1PM



Time to clean out your garages, basements, attics, whatever. **Church will be open Monday-Friday, May 11-15 from 9am-1pm** to receive any and all unwanted items that are of good use. We will begin accepting donations on Sunday, May 10. Set-up will be done on Sunday, May 17 after Adult Bible Class and Sunday School. Volunteers are welcome to help whenever you have available time.

Sponsored by S.A.L.T. Committee

AN ADDED ATTRACTION



Peace Youth Group will have a **BAKE SALE** during the STA Sale to earn funds for their Higher Things event.

PYG NEWS

May Events

Church Cleanup—May 9, 9am to ?

Monthly Meeting—May 17, Noon-2pm

S.A.L.T. Second-Time-Around Sale, May 18-19

Greetings in Christ,

Unfortunately, we are unable to hold a Spring Bazaar this year. Vendor interest was not sufficient. I want to thank everyone who worked on this project. Your assistance is much appreciated.

To help replace this fundraiser, we will be having a bake sale table at the S.A.L.T. Second-Time-Around Sale. We are accepting any donated baked goods for this sale. Please drop off the baked goods on Sunday or Monday of the sale. Thank you.

The youth will be assisting with the “barn razing” and cleanup on May 9.

If you have not paid for your Easter lilies, please get with Jonathan soon.

Thank you for your continued support of our Pop Can Drive and Spartan Labels Collection. We will be rolling out a new collection drive for used cell phones this months. Details will be posted on the PYG Board.

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



VBS MEETINGS

May 7—7:00 p.m.

May 28—7:00 p.m.

BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS

Meeting—May 28—7:30 p.m.

A VBS meeting will be held prior to this meeting and you are welcome to come early to help with the VBS planning

THANK YOU

My heartfelt and sincere thanks to Pastor, the Elders, Church Council, and the congregation for your gracious gifts and remembrances on Administrative Professional's Day. It is with deep humility I feel blessed to be able to use the gifts God has given me for the work of His church and to work with such a wonderful family at Peace. It is a very good feeling.


Mary Jakolat

PEACE NEWS & NOTES Cont'd

BOARD OF TRUSTEES AT WORK VOLUNTEERS NEEDED . . .

. . . ON SATURDAY, MAY 9
(AT 9AM) TO TEAR DOWN
THE "OLD STORAGE"
BUILDING AND MAKE THE
SAME AREA READY FOR THE
NEW BUILDING.



 In addition to the above project, it
was decided at the Voters'
Assembly to include some
SPRING CLEANING in and
around the church (windows, pews, kitchen, etc.)
on **SATURDAY, MAY 9.**

(volunteers needed)

Bill Brostrom will bring the new building over
during the next week (May 11-15) . . .

. . .and then on **SATURDAY, MAY 16 (AT 9AM)**



**WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO
START "MOVING IN."**
Members of the Ladies'
Guild will help sort what
goes out to the new building
from the storage/classroom

(volunteers needed)

TOOLS AND SUPPLIES NEEDED

Bring hammers, wrecking bars,
gloves, etc. for
"building tear-
down" and bring
some cleaning
supplies (rags,
paper towels,
buckets, etc.) for
the cleaning project.



Any questions, comments, suggestions?
Call Vern at 463-3067 or 989-576-0848 (cell).

THE FEAST OF THE ASCENSION OF OUR LORD THURSDAY, MAY 21—7:00 P.M.



The Feast of the Ascension of Our Lord
is a High Feast Day in the Church Year,
right up there with Christmas and Easter.

It behooves all Christians to attend
Divine Service on this day,
if at all possible!

PEACE LUTHERAN LADIES GUILD

and



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

Hand towels
Wash clothes
Toothbrushes
Combs (wide tooth)
Metal nail files
Nail clippers (w/file attached)
Band-aids (1/2" to 3/4")
Soap (bath-size bar)

Collection Dates:
April 1—May 28

PEACE NEWS & NOTES Cont'd



Our congregation is a proud member of the *Issues, Etc.* 300, which includes all congregations who have pledged to give \$1,000 annually to support the program. Recently, the staff of Issues, Etc. added new features to the program and their website to promote congregations that belong to the *Issues, Etc.* 300. Pastor Todd Wilken regularly announces these congregations during breaks in the broadcast, and our congregation's name has been mentioned many times. They also recently added a new link to their website listing all the names of these congregations and their contact info. You can check this out at the website, www.issuesetc.org and click on the link "Find a Church."

Please consider supporting this Christ-centered, Cross-focused Worldwide Outreach individually. You can send a donation at any time by making a check payable to:

Lutheran Public Radio
P.O. Box 912
Collinsville, IL 62234

You can donate online via PayPal and now you can even fill out an automatic withdrawal form to make a monthly donation. Simply go to www.issuesetc.org and click on "Donate" to download a form, or see Mary in the church office to get a form.

TABLE TALK

Our Table Talks are informal and informative discussions with Pastor Messer on various topics decided by the group in attendance. Plus, THEY'RE FUN! Our next Table Talk will take place **Friday, May 29 at 7:00 p.m.**

(Please note NEW DAY!) at Chris and Megan Brown's house. If you need directions, see Megan, Chris or Pastor. All are invited to attend! Hope to see you there!



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:
www.wittenbergtrail.ning.com/group/peacelutheranalmamichigan



AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY RELAY FOR LIFE AUGUST 7-8 BRECKENRIDGE HIGH SCHOOL

The American Cancer Society Relay For Life will be held August 7-8 at Breckenridge High School starting at 3pm Friday through 3pm Saturday. Peace Lutheran Church will again have a church-sponsored team co-chaired by Bill Brostrom, Coaline Luplow and Dorothy Trgina. We will partner with the Wheeler MSL Church.

A "Care Abounds in Communities" supplementary grant will be given by Thrivent Financial for Lutherans in the amount of \$750, meaning fund-raising and contributions given through the Peace Lutheran/Immanuel Lutheran Church team will be supplemented by TFFL at \$.50 for each dollar fund-raised to a maximum grant of \$750, or we will have to raise at least \$1500 to receive the full grant of \$750 given by Thrivent.

Contributions can now be made/given to any of the captains or myself toward the purchase of Luminaria, or checks can be written/endorsed to the American Cancer Society. Questions? Please contact Don Reithel by cell phone at 989-289-2274 or by email at dreithel@edzone.net



Ladies' & Altar Guild

Ladies' Guild Meeting

Our Ladies' Guild next meets on Monday, **May 4 at 7:00 p.m.** Hostess is Marilyn Oswald. 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

May
Megan Brown

June
Beth Brostrom

July
Lois Ramsey
Coaline Luplow



Coffee Hostesses

May
3 Coaline Luplow
10 Gretchen Harrison
17 M. Isaksson/H. Meyers
24 Lois Ramsey
31 Lisa Messer

June
7 Tina Schafer
14 Beth Brostrom
21 Cheryl Henry
28 Shawna Greening

July
5 Carol Zeile
12 Andrea Elliott
19 Dorothy Trgina
26 Joyce Kohler

Ladies Lunch Bunch

Peace Lutheran Ladies Lunch Bunch will meet on Tuesday, May 26, 1:30 p.m. at Francesco's. There will be discussion on where we might like to go for a "special" treat in June—maybe to Frankenmuth for an extended day? We could leave early in the morning (9 or 10 o'clock) and have time to tour the city as well as have lunch—maybe at Zehnder's this time? Or maybe someone has another suggestion??? Let's talk about it at our next luncheon. All ladies of Peace are welcome and also may invite a guest—someone without a church or someone living alone. Please join us!

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. on **Sunday, April 26**, we completed our Lent and Easter series. We reviewed an introduction to the Book of **Hebrews** and are now beginning a detailed study of this very interesting book of the Bible.

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 are currently studying the book of **Leviticus**. Please plan on joining us soon.

“Christian History 101”

- The first study class was held on Wednesday, April 29. Weekly studies continue on **Wednesday, May 6 at 6:00 p.m.** The class will take a look at the history of the Christian Church from the time of the apostles to today. Few Christians today really know and understand the history of the Christian Church, so this is a study that will benefit all who attend.



Happy Birthday to:

2 Natalie Penzien	14 Trina Palmer
4 Anna Gilbert	15 Jared Kuehnlein
4 LeRoy Isaksson	20 Daren Palmer
4 Daren Johnson	21 Paige Harwager
5 BJ Henry	29 Gordon Slick
9 Curt Oswald	30 Benjamin Elliott
10 Connie Saxton	30 Cheryl Kuehnlein
10 Mary Girard	31 Aaron Messer

Happy Anniversary to:

10 Dick and Dorothy Wiser
30 Richard and Darlene Palmer

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

Thoughts

God always gives His best to those who leave the choice with Him.

Everyone has beauty
but not everyone sees it.

Thank God for what you have,
TRUST GOD for what you need.

PAROCHIAL REPORT

(as of 4/26/09)

Membership at Peace

Baptized - 156; Confirmed - 134

Membership gains: 0

Membership losses: 2

Arlene Hale called home to the Lord April 1
Bonnie Mier - requested removal; joining Church of Christ

Financial Report as of 4/26/09

YTD Receipts.....\$36,350.75
YTD Budgeted Needs.....\$37,995.00

Update from the Treasurer

For those of you who were unable to attend, following is a summary of the report presented at the Voters' Assembly on April 26, 2009. You will notice that this is a comparison between April 2009 and April 2008 income and expenses and that both figures have increased in 2009. Please note that the 2009 figures are through April 19 and the 2008 figures through April 30.

PLC Income and Expenses







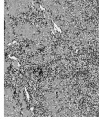

	As of 4/19/09		As of 4/30/08	
	Total Actual	Total Budgeted	Total Actual	Total Budgeted
<u>Income</u>				
Offering	\$34,634.75	\$114,655.00	\$32,256.33	\$114,655.00
Rental Income : City	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$150.00	\$0.00
Rental Income : Weight Watchers	\$390.00	\$1,560.00	\$480.00	\$1,560.00
Miscellaneous Soc. Security	\$146.88	\$0.00		
Miscellaneous Medicare	\$34.40	\$0.00		
Total Income	\$35,206.03	\$116,215.00	\$32,886.33	\$116,215.00
<u>Expense</u>				
Church and Worship : Altar and Worship	\$478.48	\$1,500.00	\$546.45	\$1,800.00
Church and Worship : Christian Education	\$545.94	\$800.00	\$181.81	\$1,000.00
Church and Worship : Miscellaneous	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$150.00
Church and Worship : Music	\$700.00	\$2,000.00	\$580.00	\$2,500.00
Church and Worship : Stewardship	\$0.00	\$100.00	\$0.00	\$300.00
Church and Worship : Evangelism	\$0.00	\$500.00	\$0.00	\$500.00
Church and Worship : Youth Group	\$500.00	\$500.00	\$1,500.00	\$2,500.00
Miscellaneous	\$0.00		\$146.40	\$0.00
Missions : Issues, Etc.	\$500.00	\$500.00	\$0.00	\$1,000.00
Missions : Local	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$180.00	\$250.00
Operating Expense: Administrative Assistant	\$2,368.00	\$5,200.00		
Operating Expense : Advertising	\$131.31	\$200.00	\$288.00	\$900.00
Operating Expense : Building Maintenance	\$721.00	\$1,000.00	\$661.57	\$2,000.00
Operating Expense : Insurance	\$613.00	\$2,800.00	\$645.00	\$3,000.00
Operating Expense : Janitorial	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,144.00	\$3,500.00
Operating Expense : Snow Removal	\$1,080.00	\$1,000.00	\$1,088.00	\$1,750.00
Operating Expense : Maintenance Supplies	\$321.72	\$250.00	\$240.87	\$250.00
Operating Expense : Miscellaneous	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$300.00
Operating Expense : Office Expense	\$1,816.79	\$2,400.00	\$1,285.20	\$2,500.00
Operating Expense : Telephone/Internet	\$566.66	\$2,000.00	\$607.80	\$1,750.00
Operating Expense : Utilities	\$3,322.86	\$5,500.00	\$2,699.33	\$5,500.00
Pastoral Expense : Benefit Package	\$7,759.23	\$22,000.00	\$6,715.73	\$19,000.00
Pastoral Expense : Conferences and Training	\$702.41	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	\$1,000.00
Pastoral Expense : Down Payment Loan	\$740.00	\$2,220.00	\$740.00	\$2,220.00
Pastoral Expense : Guest Pastors	\$0.00	\$200.00	\$0.00	\$400.00
Pastoral Expense : Mileage	\$686.40	\$2,000.00	\$253.35	\$2,000.00
Pastoral Expense : Book Allowance	\$365.22	\$500.00	\$141.32	\$500.00
Pastoral Expense : Salary	\$20,461.04	\$62,045.00	\$19,881.68	\$59,645.00
<u>Total Expenses</u>	\$44,380.06	\$116,215.00	\$39,526.51	\$116,215.00
Total:	-\$9,174.03	\$0.00	-\$6,640.18	\$0.00

In the past, several members have asked for comparison information on our income and spending. I will be doing more of this type of report in the future. Please let me know if you have questions or suggestions.

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

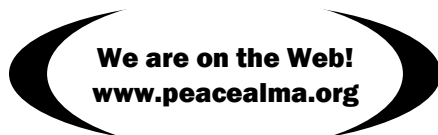
Peace Lutheran Church
 325 E. Warwick Drive
 Alma, MI 48801
 (989) 463-5754
 contact@peacealma.org

May 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
3 Jubilate (Easter 4) 8:30—Choir 9:30—Divine Service 10:45—Fellowship 11:00—BC, SS 	4 7 pm—Ladies Guild	5 Pastor at Winkel 7 pm—Church Council	6 6 pm—"Christian History" 7 pm—Service	7 10 am—Together in Word 5 pm—Weight Watchers 7 pm—VBS Planning	1  12:00 <i>Feast of St. Philip and St. James, Apostles</i> 8	2 9 am—Trustees old shed removal and spring cleaning day
10 Cantate (Easter 5) 8:30—Choir 9:30—Divine Service 10:45—Fellowship 11:00—BC, SS <i>Mother's Day</i> 	11 <i>Donations to Second Time Around Sale</i>	12 <i>Donations to Second Time Around Sale</i>	13 6 pm—"Christian History" 7 pm—Service	14 10 am—Together in Word 5 pm—Weight Watchers	15 9 am—1 pm <i>Daily</i>	16 9 am—Trustees (moving in to our new shed) 7 pm—Elders
17 Rogate (Easter 6) 8:30—Choir 9:30—Divine Service 10:45—Fellowship 11:00—BC, SS 12:00—PYG Mtg. 	18 <i>Second Time Around Sale</i> 9 am - 7 pm	19 <i>Second Time Around Sale</i> 9 am - 7 pm	20 <i>STA Sale</i> 9 am - 1 pm 6 pm—"Christian History" 7 pm—Service	21 10 am—Together in Word 5 pm—Weight Watchers 7 pm—Ascension of our Lord 	22	23
24 Exaudi (Easter 7) 8:30—Choir 9:30—Divine Service 10:45—Fellowship 11:00—BC, SS 	25 <i>Memorial Day</i>  <i>Remember Our Veterans</i> <i>Church Office Closed</i>	26 <i>Newsletter articles due</i> 1:30 pm—Lunch Bunch	27 6 pm—"Christian History" 7 pm—Service	28 10 am—Together in Word 5 pm—Weight Watchers 7 pm—VBS Planning 7:30 pm—Bd of Christian Ed and SS Teachers	29 7 pm—Table Talk	30
31 Whitsunday (Pentecost) 8:30—Choir 9:30—Divine Service 10:45—Fellowship 11:00—BC, SS 	June 1	2	3 6 pm—"Christian History" 7 pm—Service	4 10 am—Together in Word 5 pm—Weight Watchers	5	6

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 May

May	ELDER	ACOLYTES	ORGANIST	USHERS	GREETERS
3 - 9:30 am (Easter 4)	Miguel Ortiz	Sarah Messer BJ Henry	Beth Brostrom	Vern Jakolat Curt Oswald	James and Janice Sager
10 - 9:30 am (Easter 5)	Terry Luplow	Samantha Messer Sierra Luplow	Mary Jakolat	Jonathan Penzien Burt Henry	Bill and Beth Brostrom
17 - 9:30 am (Easter 6)	Dave Zeile	Melanie Penzien Phillip Schafer	Beth Brostrom	Michael Gilbert Bill Brostrom	Dick and Joyce Kohler
21 - 7:00 pm (Ascension Day)	NA	NA	Mary Jakolat	Vern Jakolat	NA
24 - 9:30 am (Easter 7)	Larry Elliott	Tyrel Harwager Aaron Messer	Beth Brostrom	James Sager Chris Brown	Jenny Baughman
31- 9:30 am (Pentecost)	Terry Luplow	Jordan Henry Natalie Penzien	Mary Jakolat	Daren Johnson Vern Jakolat	Lois Ramsey Amy Lesinger
June					
7 - 9:30 am (Trinity)	Miguel Ortiz	Samantha Messer BJ Henry	Beth Brostrom	Bill Hendrick Gary Miller	Vern and Mary Jakolat

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