

May, 2010

The Peace Post

Peace Lutheran Church ~ Alma, MI

From the Desk of Pastor Messer

“Five Years at Peace: Part 1—Send Me, Lord!”

Over the next three months, I'll be dedicating this section of our newsletter to reminiscing about my call to, and first five years of service at, Peace.



I've been a bit lost in the land of nostalgia this week. It happens around this time every year, as I watch the vicarage and pastoral candidates receive their placements and calls at our seminaries (streaming online video can be a real blessing!). I have a pretty good idea about what they and, in many cases, their families are going through as they sit there and wait for their names to be called. The strange mixture of anticipation, expectation, and anxiety provides for increased brain-wave activity and rumbling stomachs, as these candidates, who have sacrificed so much along the way to get to that night, wonder what the Lord has in store for them. Where will the Lord send me? What will the place be like? How will the people there receive me?

Five years ago, I sat in Kramer Chapel at Concordia Theological Seminary with all these questions, and many more, running through my mind. I still remember it like it was yesterday. I was a nervous wreck that day. So was my family. We had no idea what the Lord had in store for us.

At the same time, we were very thankful to be there, since, just seventy-two hours earlier, it didn't look like we would be making the trip down to Fort Wayne, IN for Call Night. A week earlier, I had received a phone call from Rev. Dr. Carl Fickenscher, who was serving as the Placement Director at that time. He called to inform me that they did not have enough calls to go around and that he was calling all the Delayed Vicars, such as myself (a “delayed vicar” is someone who does his three years of class work and spends his fourth year on vicarage, as opposed to the traditional vicarage route of going out on vicarage during the third year and coming back to complete studies during the fourth year), to let them know that he was not slotting them in yet. As you might imagine, this came as troubling news. Having spent the past eight years of my life studying to become a pastor, I was looking forward with great anticipation to receiving a call that next week. To hear that there was no call available for me was shocking and very upsetting.

What made things all the more unsettling for me was the special offer Dr. Fickenscher made to me during that phone call. He informed me that there was an executive position available at Lutheran Heritage Foundation (LHF) and that he thought I would be an excellent candidate for the position. As he described to me what that position would entail, there were some appealing features. First, it would mean that I wouldn't have to wait in limbo for a future call to come, since I would be called and ordained to serve as a missionary for LHF. Second, I would be stationed in Macomb, MI, which was less than an hour away from both my family and Lisa's. Third, the salary I would receive would be higher than any parish would give a first-year pastor. Fourth, it would afford me a chance to travel not only around our own country, but to many other countries around the world (although this was an unappealing feature as well, since all that traveling would mean lots of time away from family). Fifth, I would be part of a mission organization that was doing fantastic work in the kingdom of Christ's Church. The mission of LHF is to translate and publish confessional Lutheran writings for Lutherans around the world in their own language. To be part of that blessed endeavor was an appealing thought indeed.

But, for all these appealing features, what was swimming around in my mind as I talked

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

| | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| “Five Years at Peace . . .”1-4 | Update from Treasurer..... 13 | Christian Education 18 |
| “Feast of the Ascension”5-6 | “On Christian Stewardship” 14 | Birthdays & Anniversaries 18 |
| “Holy Week Reflection”7-8 | Ladies Guild Info 15 | Parochial Report 18 |
| Church Council Minutes..... 9 | Ladies Guild Minutes..... 16-17 | May Calendar..... 19 |
| Peace News & Notes10-12 | Harrison Tops Nominations... 17 | Serving in May..... 20 |

with Dr. Fickenscher about this was the fact that I had spent the past eight years training to be a parish pastor and was very much looking forward to serving Christ's Church in that way. I was looking forward to preaching and teaching, administering the Sacraments to the faithful, visiting the sick and shut-in, comforting the bereaved and troubled, and so on. I had long dreamed about the day when I would be serving some parish somewhere as pastor, even though I had some reservations about doing so, since I was worried that I wouldn't be very good at it.

As I expressed these things to Dr. Fickenscher, he was absolutely wonderful. He understood where I was coming from. He knew what a shock to my system it was to be contemplating the possibility of not being called to serve as a parish pastor. Even though he was extremely busy and had many other phone calls to make, he spent a lot of time with me on the phone (we talked for nearly an hour) and talked me through everything, reminding me in his usual faithful and pastoral manner that the Lord had plans for me, even though we may not yet know what those plans involved. By the time we hung up the phone, I told him that, while I had a strong desire to receive a call to serve as a parish pastor, I was ready to go wherever the Lord sent me. He set up an appointment for me to go and talk with Rev. Dr. Robert Rahn, then Executive Director of LHF, which would take place the next week on the day before Call Night, but also promised that he would not give up on trying to find me a call.

So, as it stood on that Monday, eight days before Call Night, I was not slotted in to receive a call, my family and I would not be heading down to Fort Wayne the next week, and I was set to go and meet with Dr. Rahn from LHF the next week. At the same time, Dr. Fickenscher told me not to cancel our hotel reservations in Fort Wayne and to stay by the phone, just in case the plans changed. He told me that if I didn't hear from him by Saturday afternoon, it was almost certain that I would not be participating in Call Night.

That was a tough week, to say the least—one of the toughest I have ever had to endure. I spent a lot of time in prayerful conversation with the Lord that week, asking Him to give me the strength to accept His will for me, whatever that might be. The people at Immanuel, Frankentrost, where I was serving my vicarage, were such a blessing during this uncertain time for me. They assured me that I could stay there and continue serving among them for as long as it took to receive a call. They were even willing to forgo receiving another vicar from the seminary for the upcoming year so that they could continue to support my family and me, and they even entertained the idea of calling me to serve as associate pastor there. So, I spent the week wondering what the Lord had planned for me: Would I be called to serve at LHF? Would I remain at Immanuel on an extended vicarage? Would Immanuel decide to call me to serve as associate pastor? Would Dr. Fickenscher call and inform me that I had a call after all? Of all those options, the one that appealed to me the most, that I would receive a call to serve somewhere as a parish pastor, seemed the most unlikely. Nevertheless, against the strong desires of the Old Adam in me, I prayed: Not my will, Lord, but Yours be done.

Not having heard anything from Dr. Fickenscher by that Friday, our family headed down to my parents' house, which was our plan all along. We had planned to go down and spend the weekend there, and then head down to Fort Wayne together on Monday. While that seemed highly unlikely now, it still seemed a good idea to keep our plans, since this would put me closer to Macomb where I was expecting to meet with Dr. Rahn on Monday. So, I called and left a message for Dr. Fickenscher, giving him my parents' phone number just in case he needed to reach me, even though I had all but given up hope that he would be calling.

My hope was further dashed as the hours melted away that Saturday. At 4:00 p.m., I told everyone, "Well, that's that. Dr. Fickenscher would have surely called by now. Looks like there will be no Call Night for us."

Then, amazingly, about five minutes after I had said this, the phone rang. I glanced at the caller ID and saw that it was a call from Concordia Theological Seminary. My heart was racing as I answered. It was Dr. Fickenscher. "Thomas," he said, "I have great news for you, my friend! You have a call, so gather up that family of yours and get on down here for Call Night!" I can't even remember what I said to him in response, but he could obviously tell that I was overwhelmed by the news, since he said, "I know this has been a difficult week for you and your family, and I'm sorry that you were put through all this. But, I couldn't be more pleased with how things have turned out. I am really excited about the call you will be receiving and I am confident that you will be, too." I asked him about the meeting I had scheduled with Dr. Rahn and he told me that he had already let him know that I had received a call and would not be showing up for that. "Just get yourselves down here!" he said.

After hanging up with him, I wish I could say that I soberly gathered my family together and had everyone kneel so that we could prayerfully give thanks to the Lord for the news. Instead, for a few brief moments, I think I turned into a Pentecostal, as I was whooping and hollering in excitement (obviously "speaking in tongues") and yelling, "Thank

you, Jesus!”

Having gone into my old bedroom to take the call, my family heard me whooping it up and came to see what was going on. When they opened the door and looked at me, all I could muster was, “We’re going to Fort Wayne, baby!” For some reason, high fives seemed in order. Oh well, you’ll have to forgive me. I was very excited.

Anyway, back to Kramer Chapel. As I sat there in the pew on the evening of Tuesday, April 26, 2005, waiting to hear my name called, I had lots of thoughts swimming around in my head. First, I was so thankful to be sitting there that evening, probably more thankful than I would have been had I not gone through the difficulties of that week before. Second, I, like every other candidate who has ever sat in those pews waiting for his name to be called, couldn’t help but wonder where the Lord was going to send me and what I would face when I finally got there a few months later. As I said before, the strange mixture of anticipation, expectation, and anxiety provides for increased brain-wave activity and rumbling stomachs. I was filled with relief that this day had finally come, but also with both joy and fear at the same time. It is a scary, most humbling experience to give yourself over to the will of the Lord in this manner, not knowing where you’ll be called to serve or what the conditions will be when you get there. And yet, at the same time, there is a sense of overwhelming joy and peace in this as well, as you know that you are in the Lord’s hands, which is always a very safe place to be.

I was pondering all these things, and much more, as the men in front of me were having their names called and receiving their calls. Then, it was my turn. When I was in position, Dr. Fickenscher said:

“Thomas C. Messer. Peace Lutheran Church. Alma, Michigan. Michigan District.”

It was one of the most surreal moments I have ever experienced in my life. I had a call to serve as a parish pastor! Me! Almost unbelievable, and yet, as real as it gets. As I walked by Dr. Fickenscher, he looked at me, gave me a big smile, and winked at me. I smiled back at him, and then proceeded through the line, shaking the hands of the other professors and synodical officials there, receiving that coveted large envelope which contained all the details about the calls we candidates were receiving, reverencing the altar, and heading back to the pew.

The temptation to rip open that envelope the moment you get back to your pew to see the details about the call is fierce. But, we are forbidden from doing so, warned by those in charge that we will experience the wrath of God (which would be meted out through them, of course) if we do. We have to wait to open those envelopes until after we have recessed out of the chapel at the conclusion of the Service.

When I got outside of Kramer Chapel that evening, I continued to withstand the temptation to open that envelope until my family had made their way out. I thought it would be nice for them to be there when I did. So, when they finally arrived, after all the hugs, we opened it together and read through the details.

It might surprise you to hear this, but the least of my concerns as I shuffled through the documents was the compensation information. Having given up an excellent paying job at Ford’s, and having lived in virtual poverty for three years at seminary, and having earned a whopping \$12,000 during my vicarage, the salary I would be earning was not all that important to me. So, I quickly bypassed the compensation information, handing that portion to Lisa, and started thumbing through the additional congregational information, which provided an overview of what Peace Lutheran in Alma, MI was like (brief history, how many members, congregational activities, strengths and weaknesses, expectations of the new pastor, and so on). What I was really interested in reading, which should come as no surprise to any of you, was the description of the congregation’s worship practices. So, I skimmed through the rest until I got to that section. Here is what I read:

“Mostly traditional; *Lutheran Worship*; *Hymn Supplement*; chanting is acceptable; occasional special worship services, lectors at some services; occasional variety is appreciated. Have a PA system.”

I have to admit that I was a little confused by this. What did “mostly traditional” mean? What about “occasional special worship services” and “occasional variety is appreciated”? At the same time, I was relieved to see that the congregation used one of our synodical hymnals (“*Lutheran Worship*”), and I figured that “mostly traditional” was better than reading “mostly contemporary,” or something like that. One of my biggest fears was that I would be called to a congregation that had gone full-blown “contemporary,” so “mostly traditional” sounded wonderful, even though I wasn’t sure what that meant exactly.

As I worked my way through the rest of the information, I learned that this was a small parish (the numbers on the document were as follows: Baptized membership—108; Confirmed membership—91; Average Sunday church attendance—51) that desired to remain faithful, but to grow in membership. Under the section titled, “Special pastoral

qualities needed in our next pastor,” I read:

“Our congregation seeks a pastor who is faithful to scripture with strong preaching, outreach, and leadership skills. The pastor should support the continuing Christian education of the congregation through Adult Bible study, VBS, Sunday school, confirmation, etc.”

And, under the section titled, “Special concerns,” I read:

“Growth.”

That’s it. Just one word—“Growth.” Obviously, the chief concern of this congregation was that it wanted to grow. As I compared notes with other guys later on, it was clear that this was a chief concern of just about every calling congregation, even those who were already pretty large, membership-wise. It’s only natural. What congregation doesn’t want to grow, after all? The trick, of course, is in understanding what true Biblical growth means, and I wondered if the people I was being called to serve understood the difference between that sort of growth and mere numerical growth. Only time would tell, of course.

But, what caught my eye the most as I read through the information was what was written under the last section, titled, “Other helpful information regarding the congregation,” which read:

“Congregation desires to grow and continue. Congregation has remained intact after suffering community economic issues and several previous pastoral problems. Congregation wants to move ahead, hoping for strong support from the district and a capable full-time pastor.”

What stuck out the most was, “several previous pastoral problems.” Uh-oh! What did this mean? Was this a congregation that had adopted the habit of eating their pastors up and spitting them out? Or, was this a congregation that had just had the misfortune of having been sent several less than faithful pastors? Again, only time would tell. But, I’d be lying if I didn’t note that this had me wondering what I would be getting myself into when I would finally begin serving at Peace.

Anyway, after attending the Welcome Reception for all the candidates who had been placed into the Michigan District, which was hosted by then President William Hoesman, we headed back to the hotel for the evening and spent lots of time discussing all of the information contained in the call packet. All in all, we were very pleased with the information we found and excited about what lay ahead of us, even though we still had so many questions about the congregation and the area in which it was located. We were vaguely familiar with Alma and its surrounding area, since my parents own a cottage on Lake Montcalm in Six Lakes, but there was much we didn’t know. One of the main concerns we had was where we would live. According to the information, there was no parsonage or housing allowance, so obviously we would have to purchase a home and, while the salary seemed pretty decent for a first-year pastor (\$47,227.00), we wondered if we would be able to purchase a home that would suit our family. Not only that, but we wondered if we would even be able to get a loan, given the poor credit rating we had unfortunately accrued during our time at seminary (both Lisa and I entered seminary with gold credit ratings, but left with sub-par ratings). At the same time, even though we had these, and many other, concerns, we had learned (often, the hard way) that the Lord would provide for us—somehow, someday, in His time and in His way, He would provide.

The next day, I called Jon Greening, who was listed as the contact person for Peace. After chatting with him for about half an hour on the phone, my mind was set at ease and I was very excited about coming to Peace. Jon was wonderful. He was very easy to talk to and patient with me as I bombarded him with many questions. I’m sure he had a chuckle after he got off the phone with this over-zealous pastor-to-be. He and I kept in contact over the next few months as the preparations for our transition from Frankentrost to Alma were made. He was nothing short of fantastic every step of the way, helping us find a home, taking care of moving arrangements, and coordinating efforts to facilitate my upcoming ordination and installation. Truly, Peace could not have had a more faithful, gracious, and helpful spokesman working on behalf of the congregation to welcome a new pastor. Jon was great, not only in assisting us in getting to Peace, but in making us feel at home once we arrived. He was extremely helpful during my first year of service here at Peace. I miss him dearly. More on that next time, as I begin to discuss my first five years here at Peace in:

“Five Years at Peace: Part 2—In the Beginning.”

Your servant in Christ,
Pastor Messer



The Feast of the Ascension of Our Lord

(By Rev. Randy Asbury, Pastor at Hope Lutheran Church, St. Louis, MO)

At Christmas, we celebrated God the Son coming down to us and taking on our human flesh and blood. In Lent and Holy Week we celebrated Jesus' descent into suffering and death, humbling Himself further, to rescue us from sin and give us life with Him. On Easter Sunday, and for several Sundays since, we have celebrated His rising to life again and His victory over the grave.

On **Thursday, May 13** we will celebrate Jesus' enthronement, His victorious reign, and our abundant life in Him as we celebrate ***The Ascension of Our Lord*** at **2:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.** (Note: Here at Peace, we just have the one Ascension Service at **7:00 p.m.**) Jesus' exaltation began when He descended into hell and continued with His rising to life. But it did not stop there. Jesus' Ascension completes His Father's mission to accomplish our salvation.

Sad to say, though, Jesus' Ascension doesn't get as much attention as do Christmas or Easter. Perhaps it's because we celebrate it on a Thursday. Why a Thursday? In our hectic world we want a pretty good reason for adding yet one more thing to our frantic schedules. We're so frazzled from shuttling the kids to school and sports and juggling our own schedules that a Thursday evening is prime time for "vegging out" in front of the "boob tube."

Why celebrate Jesus' Ascension on a Thursday? Because it marks 40 days after Jesus' Resurrection. After He rose from the dead Jesus remained on earth 40 days (see Acts 1:3), teaching His apostles and others what His dying and rising meant (also read Luke 24 and John 20-21). Jesus had to put all the puzzle pieces together for His followers—what kind of Savior He is, what kind of life He gives through His Gospel and Sacraments, and how they were about to be sent out to teach others.

Another reason Ascension Day may not be a big deal is that we've lost its meaning. We may think that once we've celebrated Easter, we've finished the salvation story. But that's like leaving a baseball game at the seventh inning stretch! Your team may be ahead by one point on the scoreboard, but you haven't seen the exciting conclusion. Your favorite player may yet hit a grand slam to clinch the victory. To echo Paul Harvey, Jesus' Ascension gives us "the rest of the story."

On Christ's Ascension...

The Formula of Concord says: *Now He has ascended to heaven, not merely as any other saint, but as the apostle testifies (Ephesians 4:10), above all heavens. He also truly fills all things being present everywhere, not only as God, but also as man (FC, VIII, 27).* What does this mean?

First, Jesus' Ascension means that His work of saving all people is done. When Jesus died on the cross, He said, "It is finished." When He ascended into heaven, Jesus showed that everything for our salvation is accomplished. Our eternal life with God is a "done deal." Love came down at Christmas, accomplished forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation on the cross, rose victorious over death, and then returned to God the Father. Jesus finished His journey. Our life with God, now and into eternity, is safe and secure. What a comfort when doubts annoy, temptations assail, and sorrows come crashing in!

Second, Jesus' Ascension means that a perfect human being has entered heaven and sits at God's right hand. We can try all we want to get to heaven on our own steam, but we cannot get there. The people at the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11) tried to get up to heaven, but their pride was their downfall. We try to impress God with our good lives, but then our pride leads us to ruin too. No human being can enter God's glorious presence and live. Until now! Jesus not only breaks the bonds of death, but He also opens the barrier between God and human beings. Our ascended Lord gives us the hope of entering God's glorious, eternal presence.

Third, Jesus' Ascension means that He rules over all things. Without this step in Jesus' exaltation, we in the Church would wander through life aimless and scared. Terrorist attacks, political scandals, or economic bad news would lead us to despair. We would vainly try to create some kind of heaven on earth. Without Jesus' Ascension, we might think that we should mould and shape the Church like a wax nose—make it look and act differently with every passing fad of "popular" teaching.

But with Jesus' Ascension, we have peace. Jesus rules all things for the good of His Church. Everything from terrorist attacks to church struggles to personal tragedies takes on new meaning. Jesus uses everything—even the conflicts and wars, even our personal trials and stresses—to strengthen us in faith toward Him and in fervent love toward one another. Nothing is out of Jesus' gracious control. He works it all for the good of His people.

Faith comes by hearing...

How does this good, Biblical teaching of Jesus' Ascension help us in faith and life? Why is it important for the Church to hold on to Jesus' Ascension as one of its prime teachings?

First, Jesus promises the Holy Spirit for His followers. While Jesus goes away from physical sight, He does not leave His Church. He promises to be with her “in, with, and under” the work of the Holy Spirit. In John 14:26 Jesus says, “*He will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.*” In John 15:26, our Lord says, “*When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, He will bear witness about Me.*” Jesus promises the Holy Spirit who, in turn, keeps our focus on Him.

Then in Acts 1:9 we read, “*When He had said these things, as they were looking on, He was lifted up, and a cloud took Him out of their sight.*” Notice: this key verse does not say that Jesus is gone! The great joy of the Ascension is that while Jesus may be out of sight, He is not out of mind, and He most certainly is not absent. He's still with His forgiven, precious people!

Here's an illustration. A mother and her six month-old baby are playing together on the living room floor. Mom has to get up and go into the kitchen. The baby looks around but doesn't see Mom. She starts to fuss, fearing that she is alone. What does Mom do while she is in the kitchen? She speaks. She speaks so her baby can hear her: “It's alright, my dear. Mommy's still here.” The baby is comforted. How? Not by the visible presence of Mom, but by hearing her voice.

That's what the Ascension of Jesus means for us Christians. A cloud hid Him from the disciples' sight, but He was not absent. Instead, Jesus comforts His disciples, then and now, with His voice. So Jesus' Ascension teaches us something very important: the Church does not live in the time of seeing, but in the time of hearing. Faithfully hearing the Word of God read, preached, and sung is the most important thing any Christian can do in life. As St. Paul says, “*Faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ*” (Romans 10:17).

Based on this clear, comforting Ascension teaching from the Bible, we in the Church must, and can, trust our ears more than our eyes. Too often our eyes lead us astray. If pews look empty, we despair and don't trust Jesus' eternal care for His Church. If pews look full, we gloat and pat ourselves on the back for how we ingeniously brought people into “our” church. Instead of relying on our eyes—and the common, worldly standards of success and failure—our Lord calls us to rely on our ears. After all, the more we *hear* the Gospel of Jesus' gifts of forgiveness and life, the more we are comforted and strengthened in faith. The more we *hear* the Gospel, the better equipped we are to give “*a reason for the hope that is in [us]*” (1 Peter 3:15).

Supposedly Dr. Martin Luther (1483-1546) was once asked about a preacher who had distracting mannerisms in the pulpit. The upset church member complained to Dr. Luther, “I just can't watch him and get anything out of the sermon.” Dr. Luther replied, “Well, then, take your eyeballs out of their sockets, put them in your ears, and listen!” Jesus' Ascension ushers us into the time of hearing God's Word. After all, hearing God's life-giving Word is the fountainhead of our life with God.

So, set aside Thursday, May 13 to attend the Divine Service. When Jesus ascends to God's right hand, so do we. And Jesus promises to rule all things for the good of His body, the Church. As we sing in the Ascension Day hymn:

***On Christ's ascension I now build
The hope of my ascension;
This hope alone has always stilled
All doubt and apprehension;
For where the Head is, there as well
I know His members are to dwell
When Christ will come and call them.
— LSB 492:1***



Holy Week Reflection

By Pastor Messer

What an absolute blessing it is for me to serve among God's children at Peace. We may be a small parish numbers-wise, but there is nothing small about the faith I am privileged to witness here. That faith was on full display during the most important week of the Church Year last week. The faithful gathered daily around Word and Sacrament to travel the *via delorosa* with our Lord as He set His face to willingly and lovingly

endure betrayal, denial, spitting, mocking, hitting, and flogging on His way to the Cross. They gathered to be fed and strengthened by the same Lord with the Fruits of that Cross, which has become for us the Tree of Life.

There is always that underlying fear I feel as I put together the rather intense Holy Week schedule we observe here that no one will show up for one or more Services during the week, but, thus far, that fear has been unfounded. Even for daily Matins held at 7:00 a.m., I was joined every day by some of the faithful here; in fact, there were at least six of us gathered for Matins daily throughout the week. And, for all of the Divine Services, two held each day, many of the faithful here gathered together - more, really, than I expected, especially given the fact that Spring Break paralleled Holy Week this year.

Of course, the highlights of this Holy Week, as with all Holy Weeks, were the Services held during the Sacred Triduum. Our Holy (Maundy) Thursday evening Divine Service began with Corporate Confession and Absolution, included Dr. Luther's Christian Questions with Their Answers, and concluded with the Stripping of the Altar, all of which was beautifully observed. This is one of our longest Services of the year, yet I have never heard a complaint about its length, since it is also one of the most austere and moving Services of the year. Simply beautiful! And it sets the stage well for our transition into Good Friday and Holy Saturday. The Chief Service of Good Friday was held at Noon and included meditation upon our Lord's Seven Words from the Cross, the Sacred Procession of the Rough-Hewn Cross, and the reception of our Lord's Body and Blood in the Holy Eucharist. Another very moving Service indeed! Then, eight of us gathered together at 3:00 p.m. for a Short Devotion at the Sacred Hour when our Lord breathed His last and gave up His Spirit, which is always a special time together as we kneel in awe at the foot of our Lord's Salvific Cross and plead for His mercy upon us and the whole world. Finally, our Good Friday observance was concluded in the evening as we gathered for Tenebrae. I know there are some of my brother pastors out there who are not big fans of this Service and prefer to observe Vespers in the evening, but I wouldn't dream of changing this Service, which is also one of the most moving and meaningful Services we observe here annually. We begin the Service with the somber bells, which ring forty times. For the last twenty rings, the congregation turns to face the rough-hewn Cross in the rear of the nave. It is during this Service, and not the Noon Service, that the reproaches and their responses are shared as the Cross is processed in, with the choir singing "Lamb of God, Pure and Holy" (LSB 434) in between (the trio of ladies - Carol, Lois, and Marlene did a fabulous job of singing this hymn beautifully this year - thanks, ladies!). The Service continues with the Sentences and Collects, after which comes the reading of the Passion according to St. John with hymns and the extinguishing of candles in between each part. The homily and Bidding Prayer come next, and then the Service reaches its climactic conclusion with the reading of Isaiah 52:13-53:12, the *strepitus* (loud noise from the slamming of the book), and the complete darkness which envelops the church. It is always awe-inspiring and, yes, even emotional. Nope, wouldn't change it for the world!

Then comes our Holy Saturday Divine Service in the morning, in which we hear the account of Daniel and the Lion's Den and meditate upon the rest of our Lord, the Greater Daniel, in the tomb. After this Service, we decorate the church for Easter, which is always a welcomed endeavor following the Divine Drama we've witnessed unfold before us the previous couple of days. Then, this year, we added the Easter Vigil to our Holy Week/Easter schedule, gathering together around the new light of Christ. All in all, our first-ever Easter Vigil went very well, although there are definitely some kinks to be ironed out for next year. We had planned to begin outside around the "new fire," from which we would light our new Paschal Candle, but the weather didn't cooperate, so we began in the fellowship hall, allowing an old Christ Candle to serve as our "new fire." We followed the Paschal Candle into the darkened church, carrying our own individual candles with us, stopping at the entrance to the nave, in the middle of the nave, and at the front of the nave for the *Lux Christi* ("Light of Christ") to be chanted (Roger, who is our default Cantor, even though he probably doesn't realize that, did a fabulous job of leading us in this and in singing the *Exsultet*, one of the most ancient songs of the Church, which followed - absolutely beautiful!). Then we settled in for the trek through the lengthy readings from God's Word, which put before us the Divine Plan of salvation, beginning with the Creation account and ending with the account of the Fiery Furnace (we actually only

read 6 of the 12 readings assigned, but that's still a TON). This is one of the kinks we'll iron out for next year. I read all the readings myself - not a good idea. Midway through, my throat was letting me know that it did not appreciate this at all; it was all I could do to make it through with my voice intact, and the pain was barely bearable, but more annoying than anything else. Anyway, yeah, I'll be employing some additional lectors for next year. Another kink we'll have to iron out is the carrying of the Paschal Candle by the elder. I don't know if it's the specific candle we purchased or if all wax Paschal Candles are the same, but the wax splashed all over the alb Larry was wearing and the candle holder was pelted with wax as well. Amazingly, the wax kept to the alb and the basin of the candle holder and did not get on the carpet, but, still, improvement in this area is something we'll strive for next year. But, other than that, the Vigil was beautiful, attended by far more than I expected, and I received lots of compliments on it. We didn't have any Baptisms this year, but the Service of Holy Baptism, during which we all recalled our Baptismal vows, was special - and the symbolism of dipping the Paschal Candle into the font during the Rite was stunning. The Litany of the Resurrection, the brief Service of the Word with Gospel Procession and brief homily, and the reception of our Lord's crucified and resurrected Flesh and Blood in the Supper concluded the Vigil. The Vigil actually proceeds rather quickly after the lengthy Readings are completed. Our first Vigil ended up coming in at about an hour and forty-five minutes, which is noticeably longer than our normal Divine Services, and even about 15-20 minutes longer than our Holy Thursday evening Divine Service, but what a blessing to all who attended!

After the Vigil, we held a Champagne Reception, which went far better than I ever dreamed it would. Special thanks to Carol for making all the arrangements for this. The hors d'oeuvres and desserts were delicious. Everything was absolutely perfect!

The next morning it was up and at 'em early for our Sunrise Service, Easter breakfast (best one EVER!) and the Festival of the Resurrection of Our Lord. I was exhausted by the time Easter morning rolled around, and left without much of a voice, but by God's grace got through the morning okay. What joy it was to break out our Alleluias again (actually, we broke them out already during Vigil, but Easter morning Divine Service, packed as it was, really saw them unpacked with great vigor again after the Lenten fast). Both choirs (adult and children's) sounded amazing, as did Roger's solo of "Christians, to the Paschal Victim," during the Festival and it may have been our best celebration to date.

It truly was a blessed Holy Week this year; perhaps, for me, the most meaningful yet. Although, I have to admit that I was more wiped after this year than I ever have been in the past. Three Services a day with visits to our eleven shut-ins interspersed throughout the week took its toll on me - maybe I'm just getting old! In any event, I was thankful for the rest afforded me in the following week and so glad that we transferred our Easter Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday Services to our regularly scheduled Wednesday evening slots for the next three weeks, rather than observing them at Noon on the actual days as originally planned. That gave me not only some time to rest and visit with family, but also time for my voice to recover a bit.

Next year, we'll make some adjustments not only to the Vigil, as mentioned above, but also to our schedule. We'll start the Vigil a little earlier next year and we'll drop the Sunrise Service (it was pretty sparsely attended this year and seems a little redundant with the Vigil in place). I'm already looking forward to it, even as I am enjoying the Great 50 Days of Easter, where fasting has given way to feasting! Christ is Risen! He is Risen Indeed! Alleluia!

Special thanks to everyone who served so wonderfully throughout the week, especially to Mary, who made sure to have all the bulletins prepared (and to the ladies who volunteered their help with that), and who played absolutely beautifully during our Triduum and Easter Services, and did a wonderful job preparing and leading our choir; to Carol, who did an excellent job, as always, caring for our altar and preparing for each Service, who oversaw the Stripping of the Altar with great care (and to the ladies who assisted in that endeavor), who sang beautifully, and who did a superb job, as mentioned above, with our Champagne Reception after Vigil; to my elders for assisting me so faithfully throughout the week; to all who sang in the choirs; to all who helped decorate; to all who prepared food for our awesome Easter Breakfast; to all who served in any way. "I thank my God always for you!" A Holy and Blessed Week it was! All praise, glory, and honor be to God our Father, to His Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, and to the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, now and always! Amen.



Synopsis of April 6 , 2010 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, Carolyn Johnson, Vern Jakolat, Gary Miller, Marlene Miller and Megan Brown. Pastor Messer was also present.

Approval of Agenda

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

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

- Motion made by President Brown, supported by Financial Secretary Gary Miller to approve the March 2 meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Report(s)

- **Pastor** – Pastor Messer presented the attached report. The Council received the report into record.
- **Treasurer** – Treasurer Zeile presented the attached report. The Council received the report into record.
- **Financial Secretary** – No report.
- **Boards**
 - **Board of Elders** – The Elders are continuing their work to contact inactive members.
 - **Board of Trustees** – Councilmember Jakolat reported on various projects including parking lot repair and air conditioner checks.
 - **Board of Christian Education** – Councilmember Greening reported that VBS is scheduled for the week of June 14 with planning meetings to be scheduled.
 - **Board of Evangelism** – Councilmember Johnson reported that a planning meeting on April 15.
 - **Board of Stewardship** – Please see the notes on the bulletin board for updates.
- **Organization and Committee Reports**
 - **Peace Lutheran Ladies Guild** – No report.
 - **Peace Youth Group** – No report.

Business

- No business was brought before the Council.

General Comment

- No general comments were offered.

Adjournment & Closing Prayer

- Motion made by Financial Secretary Miller to adjourn at 7:35pm. Supported by President Brown. Motion carried unanimously. Pastor Messer led the Lord's Prayer and closed with the Benediction.

Respectfully submitted,
Megan Brown, Secretary

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

PEACE NEWS & NOTES

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL JUNE 14-18 - 9:00-12:00 AGE 4 THROUGH GRADE 7



Thanks to all who have volunteered. Materials will be given to you soon.

- Printer paper for the student activity sheets, song sheets and worship bulletins
- Print cartridges, or
- Money toward buying supplies to print the materials needed
- Food for the daily snack time (such as cookies, fruit)
- Food for closing day picnic (such as hot dogs, hamburgers, buns, chips, veggies, desserts)
- Help with advertising, flyers, postcards, newspaper articles.

If you would like to make a donation, we will need the following:

Please see Sharyn Greening if you can help with any of the above.

PYG NEWS

May Events

Bake Sale, May 1, 8:30 am-3:30 pm

Alma Wal-Mart

**Spring Cleaning, Saturday May 22, 9 am - 12 pm
at Church**

Greetings in Christ,

We will be pausing monthly meetings for the summer. Remember to keep the Lord with you in your travels and tasks. May He keep you safe and be bountiful upon you.

Although, as I write this, we have not had our Bake Sale yet, I want to thank everyone for your assistance and support of this and all the youth activities throughout the year.

Our continuing fundraisers of pop cans, Spartan labels, and used cell phones are going well. Your support is very much appreciated.

We will be planning/participating in various fellowship and service activities this summer. If you have any ideas for either, please contact me or any of the youth. Thank you.



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

SALT NEWS

BOWLING

Saturday, May 15, at 7 pm, 300 Bowl

\$3 per game, free shoes

**Please email Carolyn Johnson
or sign up on bulletin board.**

PEACE MOVIE NIGHT

Friday, May 21

6:30 pm—Pizza; 7:00 pm—Movie

Movie TBD; look for info on SALT board

LUGNUTS BASEBALL GAME

Sunday, July 25, 2:05 pm

Kids Day

See Postings for Signup

SUPPORT OUR TROOPS

SUPPORT OUR TROOPS is an ongoing outreach for the SALT Committee. If you know of a person in the armed forces who is serving abroad, please contact Carolyn Johnson (email ckj1969@yahoo.com or telephone 463-3052).

**Check the SALT bulletin board for
more info, meeting minutes, and
announcements!**

Next Meeting: May 20, 6:30 pm

PEACE NEWS & NOTES Cont'd

SPRING CLEANING



Saturday, May 22 at 10:00 am. Come clean with us. We will be working inside and outside. Bring cleaning supplies and rags and lots of energy. Questions call Coaline at 989-763-1016.

Sponsored by Ladies' Guild

LADIES LUNCH BUNCH

WE WILL MEET AT FOR LUNCH ON MONDAY, MAY 17 AT 1:30 PM. LOCATION TO BE ANNOUNCED.

ALL LADIES OF PEACE ARE WELCOME AND ALSO MAY INVITE A GUEST—SOMEONE WITHOUT A CHURCH OR SOMEONE LIVING ALONE. PLEASE ENTER YOUR NAME ON THE SIGNUP LIST POSTED IN FELLOWSHIP HALL AND JOIN US!

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 on **Thursday, May 27 at 7 pm**. All are invited. Location will be announced. We hope you're able to join us!



DID YOU KNOW that the hospital does not always notify us when one of our members has been hospitalized? Please call the church office at 463-5754 or Pastor Messer at 989-388-2037 (cell) when a member of Peace has been admitted to the hospital.

PEACE LANDSCAPING GARDENING

We will meet on Monday, May 3 at 6:30 pm with our planner, Bob Eldridge, to discuss a timetable for initial digging and removal of old plant material prior to planting, along with ideas for plantings.

Here are some thoughts we received from Bob Eldridge:

* I will be recommending that you plant a combination of perennials (shrubs as well) and annuals. Perennials can actually be planted anytime now until the end of May. Some shrubs can be planted all year long, but may not do as well when planted in the hot summer months.

* Any annual flowers should not be planted before May 20, due to the probability of frost.

* With those timelines, I think you have a good window to get some initial digging and removal of old plant material prior to planting.

We seek your input and invite you to attend. Questions, please contact Larry Elliott (home phone 463-2604, email elliott@alma.edu).

SPECIAL MISSION OFFERING:

As announced in the bulletin a few weeks ago, the total we collected for *The Siberian Lutheran Mission Society* came to **\$603.51**. Thanks to all who donated!

Also, we have decided to make this a **year-round collection**. We will have "mission cans" available for you to pick up throughout the year, so that you can continue to deposit your change in them to support this important mission. We'll collect all the cans sometime in November or December.

PEACE NEWS & NOTES Cont'd

Pregnancy Services
of Gratiot County

Baby Bottle Boomerang

Begins Mother's Day

Sunday, May 9

Ends Father's Day

Sunday, June 20

We have a wonderful opportunity to support Pregnancy Services of Gratiot County and their many life affirming programs. Please watch for our display and take home a bottle on Mother's Day, fill it with your spare change, cash or a check and return it to church on Father's Day.

Pregnancy Services of Gratiot County is a faith based ministry that exists to affirm life by educating and supporting those who are facing unplanned pregnancies. Facilitating hope and healing for those who have experienced an abortion, and empowering unmarried individuals to choose a life of sexual integrity.



Listen to what you want,
when you want, at:

www.issuesetc.org

CHURCH WEBSITE

You may view current newsletters and service bulletins prior to the service dates on our Peace website at www.peacealma.org. Keep up to date at your convenience.

Confirmation Sunday will fall on **Pentecost Sunday (May 23)**

Service of Public Questioning @ 8:30 a.m.

(Please join us for this!)

Rite of Confirmation during Divine Service

NATALIE PENZIEN is our sole Confirmand this year; please keep her in your prayers as she completes her studies!

Our Newest Member, Mabel Diane Elliott, arrived on Thursday, April 22, a healthy 7 lb.s, 4 oz., 20 in. Her Baptism is scheduled for Sunday, May 2.



UPDATE FROM THE TREASURER

For those of you who were unable to attend the April Voters' Assembly, below is the report of income and expenses through March 29, 2010 (*Please note: As reported at the meeting, we have made up some ground since the end of March*).

PLC Income and Expenses 2010

As of 3/29/10

| | Total Actual | Total Budgeted | Difference | YTD Budgeted | Difference |
|---|--------------|----------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|
| <u>Income</u> | | | | | |
| Offering | \$22,690.95 | \$112,005.00 | \$89,314.05 | \$28,001.25 | \$5,310.30 |
| Rental Income : City | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 |
| Rental Income : Weight Watchers | \$270.00 | \$1,560.00 | \$1,290.00 | \$390.00 | \$120.00 |
| Total Income | \$22,960.95 | \$113,565.00 | \$90,604.05 | \$28,391.25 | \$5,430.30 |
| <u>Expense</u> | | | | | |
| Church and Worship : Altar and Worship | \$431.02 | \$1,000.00 | \$568.98 | \$250.00 | (\$181.02) |
| Church and Worship : Christian Education | \$13.80 | \$800.00 | \$786.20 | \$200.00 | \$186.20 |
| Church and Worship : Music | \$232.50 | \$2,000.00 | \$1,767.50 | \$500.00 | \$267.50 |
| Miscellaneous | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | |
| Missions : Issues, Etc. | \$500.00 | \$500.00 | \$0.00 | \$125.00 | (\$375.00) |
| Operating Expense: Administrative Assistant | \$1,200.00 | \$5,200.00 | \$4,000.00 | \$1,300.00 | \$100.00 |
| Operating Expense : Building Maintenance | \$305.90 | \$1,000.00 | \$694.10 | \$250.00 | (\$55.90) |
| Operating Expense : Insurance | \$391.00 | \$2,000.00 | \$1,609.00 | \$500.00 | \$109.00 |
| Operating Expense : Office Expense | \$1,095.32 | \$3,000.00 | \$1,904.68 | \$750.00 | (\$345.32) |
| Operating Expense : Telephone/Internet | \$571.42 | \$2,100.00 | \$1,528.58 | \$525.00 | (\$46.42) |
| Operating Expense : Utilities | \$2,875.49 | \$5,000.00 | \$2,124.51 | \$1,250.00 | (\$1,625.49) |
| Pastoral Expense : Benefit Package | \$5,815.87 | \$23,000.00 | \$17,184.13 | \$5,750.00 | (\$65.87) |
| Pastoral Expense : Book Allowance | \$22.37 | \$500.00 | \$477.63 | \$125.00 | \$102.63 |
| Pastoral Expense : Conferences and Training | \$296.03 | \$1,000.00 | \$703.97 | \$250.00 | (\$46.03) |
| Pastoral Expense : Down Payment Loan | \$555.00 | \$2,220.00 | \$1,665.00 | \$555.00 | \$0.00 |
| Pastoral Expense : Guest Pastors | \$100.00 | \$200.00 | \$100.00 | \$50.00 | (\$50.00) |
| Pastoral Expense : Mileage | \$752.95 | \$2,000.00 | \$1,247.05 | \$500.00 | (\$252.95) |
| Pastoral Expense : Salary | \$15,594.00 | \$62,045.00 | \$46,451.00 | \$15,511.25 | (\$82.75) |
| <u>Total Expenses</u> | \$30,752.67 | \$113,565.00 | \$82,812.33 | \$28,391.25 | (\$2,361.42) |
| Total: | (\$7,791.72) | \$0.00 | \$7,791.72 | \$0.00 | \$7,791.72 |

Please let me know if you have questions.

In Christ,

Carol Zeile

On Christian Stewardship

From the Peace Lutheran Church Stewardship Committee

By Pastor Messer

Years ago, I belonged to a congregation where the giving of money to the church was way over-emphasized. Hardly a Sunday went by when the pastor or some other congregational officer wouldn't make a plea for us members to give more of our money to support the mission of the congregation. I'll be perfectly honest with you. I hated it. It was more than a little annoying. It made me feel guilty, even though my wife and I were already tithing regularly. It was uncomfortable and embarrassing. It was too much, too often. It made it seem like all that the leaders of the congregation cared about was getting our money.

Perhaps that is why I am hesitant to talk too much about money in the congregation. You don't hear me preach much about this from the pulpit. I do, at times, when the Scriptures for the day speak of it, but it is not a topic I emphasize otherwise. No one who belongs to this congregation could possibly make that oft-repeated criticism so many people level at the Church, namely that all the Church wants is your money.

At the same time, it will not do to completely ignore this topic, since God does bring it up from time to time in His Word, and since, as we all know, money is necessary to keep our doors open. So, let's talk about it for a bit.

Are Christians expected to give money to support the ministry and mission of Christ's Church. Yes. Absolutely, they are. You simply cannot read the Bible and come away with any other conclusion. In the Old Testament, God required His people to tithe. They were to give ten percent of all that they had back to God (cf. Lev. 27:30; Num. 18:26; Deut. 14:24; 2 Chron. 31:5). This was not a suggestion, but a command. It was God's Divine Law and was meant to remind His people that all that they had belonged to Him. They were merely stewards (or, managers) of God's goods. It was also a Law put into place to provide for the needs of the priests and the Levites, so that they could perform their duties, and so that they could provide for themselves and their families.

The question often asked is, "Does the Old Testament tithe still apply to Christians today?" No, it doesn't. Christ has fulfilled the Law and all of its legalistic demands. In Him, we are free. Thus, the New Testament nowhere commands, or even suggests, that Christians submit to a legalistic tithe system. However, that doesn't mean that Christians are not expected to give. They most certainly are. But, unlike in the Old Testament, this is an expectation motivated by the Gospel, not a command from the Law. It is expected that Christians will give of their time, talents, and yes, treasures (money), not because they have to, but because they are thankful for what their Lord has done for them, and because they desire to support His ministry and mission, so that others can receive what they have received.

So it is that St. Paul can state that believers should set aside a portion of their income in order to support the church (cf. 1 Cor. 16:1-2). A percentage is not given, or even recommended, but the expectation is there that Christians will give. That's what believers in Christ do. They give, again, not because they have to, but because they are motivated by the fact that their Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, has given His all for them. It would seem odd, indeed, for a Christian to refuse to give money to support the very ministry by which they were brought out of the darkness and into the marvelous light of Christ.

How much Christians should give is left to them. They are to give as they are able. If they can tithe, great. If they can't, that's okay, too. Far more important than how much Christians give is the attitude with which they do so. As St. Paul says, "Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Cor. 9:7). The expectation is that Christians will give freely and willingly—even cheerfully. Why? Because it gives them joy to support Christ and the ministry of His Holy Church, for, in doing so, the Gospel will be proclaimed and the Sacraments administered, through which faith is created and sustained.

With all that said, each one of us should always be examining ourselves in this area. Are we giving as we are able? Are we giving because we are motivated by the Gospel and want to support it not only for our own edification, but for the edification of others? Are we giving in proportion to the blessings we have received from the Lord? Are we able to give more, but refuse to do so, because we care more about satisfying our own wants and desires than we do about supporting the mission of Christ's Church? These are questions we can only answer for ourselves.

Here at Peace, we are struggling to make our budget. This may mean that we are over-extending ourselves or it may mean that we are not giving as much as we are able to give. It could be a combination of the two. But, consider this: We have roughly 45 active "giving units" here. If each "giving unit" was to give \$48.54/week, our budget would be met. For some, that is simply not possible; others are able to give much more. One thing I know that would be helpful is if we all got in the habit of giving regularly, even when we're not able to attend at times. I am confident that we all share the fervent hope that our congregation would continue to be a beacon of light here in this community; a place where the Gospel is preached in its purity and the Sacraments are administered according to Christ's institution. So, let each of us examine our giving and determine to give as we are able, not because we have to, but out of love and thankfulness to our Lord, who has given His all for us. Lord, grant this unto us all! In Jesus' Name. Amen.

Ladies Guild

Ladies Guild Meeting

Our next meeting will be **Monday, May 3 at 7:30 pm.** Hostess will be Carol Zeile. All Ladies of the congregation are invited to attend our Guild meetings. If you are a confirmed female member of Peace, you are a member of Guild. We would sincerely encourage you to participate and be an active member of the Guild.

PLC Women's Prayer Chain

The updated list is posted on the Ladies' Guild Bulletin Board. All participants should have received a copy. If you wish to be added to the prayer chain as a caller, or if you wish to have yourself or someone else "sent through the chain," please see or call Marlene Miller at 463-3710.

Altar Flowers

There is a flower calendar for 2010 posted on the fellowship hall bulletin board. We are now working toward ordering altar flower arrangements that coordinate with and enhance the liturgical colors of each Season of the Church year. Depending on the dates, flowers may not always be displayed for a calendar month. Some Seasons of the Church year cross calendar months. If you wish to place flowers on the altar sometime during the year, please put your name on the calendar and contact the church office with any information that you wish to have included in the bulletin. If there is a specific date in the month that commemorates an occasion, please also enter that date. A bouquet costs \$25. We encourage two persons (families) to purchase flowers each month, one for each plant stand. Please make checks payable to Peace Lutheran Church, attach a note marked "Altar Flowers" and place in the Financial Secretary's envelope in the church office. Any questions may be directed to Carol Zeile. Thank you for helping to beautify our chancel.

PEACE LUTHERAN LADIES GUILD



For the next portion of the Lutheran World Relief project, the Ladies Guild is asking for your help in supplying the following personal care items:

hand towels, wash cloths, toothbrushes,
combs (wide tooth), metal nail files,
nail clippers (w/file attached),
band aids (1/2 to 2/4 "), soap (bath size bar)

Collection period: Ends June 30

LADIES GUILD SELLS CUTLERY

Rada cutlery is on display the 3rd Sunday of each month in the fellowship hall during the coffee hour. We have seven different items in stock: Paring Knife, Large Slicer Knife, Tomato Slicer, Serrated Steak Knife, Spatula, Pie Server, and Veggie Peeler. A product catalogue is available for viewing and orders may also be placed through the catalog.

COOKBOOK

Ladies, gentlemen and kids who love to cook, Peace Lutheran Ladies Guild are collecting your favorite recipes to put into a cookbook. It can be the simplest of drinks to complicated desserts and casseroles.

Please write them, type them or make a copy of them and give them to Coaline Luplow or Mary Jakolat in the office.

You can also e-mail them to the office or Coaline at luplow2@hotmail.com

Altar Care



May

Megan Brown

June

Coaline Luplow/Jennie Harmon

July

Lois Ramsey

Coffee Hostesses

May

2 Coaline Luplow
9 Gretchen Harrison
16 M.Isaksson/H.Meyers
23 Mary Jakolat
30 Lisa Messer

June

6 Tina Schafer
13 Peace Youth Group
20 Lois Ramsey
27 S.Greening/M.Brown

July

4 Carol Zeile
11 Andrea Elliott
18 Dorothy Trgina
25 Coaline Luplow



Ladies Guild Meeting Minutes

PEACE LUTHERAN CHURCH LADIES' GUILD MINUTES

APRIL 5, 2010

Officers and Committee Chairpersons

President: Coaline Luplow – Vice-President: Carol Zeile – Secretary: Lois Ramsey –
Treasurer: Sharyn Greening – Banner Committee: Gretchen Harrison –
Altar Committee: Carol Zeile – Kitchen Committee: Coaline Luplow and Lois Ramsey –
Sunshine Committee: Marlene Miller – Library Committee: Coaline Luplow --
Special Events Committee: Coaline Luplow and Lois Ramsey
Charitable Donations Committee: Dorothy Trgina

Call to Order: President Coaline Luplow gave the call to order at 7:00 p.m. and gave the opening prayer. Those attending were Coaline Luplow, Carol Zeile, Marlene Miller, Charlotte Dargie, Lois Ramsey, Dorothy Trgina and Mary Jakolat. The devotion, presented by Coaline, was "*Not a Lost Cause*", the Portals of Prayer reading for the day. Mites were collected.

Secretary's Report: The Secretary Report for March was approved as presented.

Treasurer's Report: In Sharyn's absence, Carol Zeile presented her report. The balance in the savings account is \$1,756.99. Since the March meeting, \$600 was transferred from Savings to the Checking Account. After expenditures, the checking account balance is \$578.22. Mite money totaling \$76.50 was given to the Congregation Care Fund.

Committee Reports:

- **Altar, Carol Zeile.** There was no reading from the LCMS Altar Guild Manual this month; the reading will resume in May. Carol addressed two concerns with the Flagon: 1) the lid becomes detached from the flagon because the pin falls out easily, and 2) there are visible scratches on the outside of the flagon. Checking prices in a church supply catalogue, it was quickly determined that flagons are very expensive because of the metals in them and purchasing a new one isn't feasible for Guild at the present time. Discussion then centered on options for having the vessel repaired. Marlene will be in Saginaw this week and will take the flagon to a Christian Supply Store for an assessment. Carol also mentioned the shortage of refrigeration space for the altar flowers, now that we have two arrangements on the altar each week. Storing one arrangement in the kitchen refrigerator poses problem. The ladies discussed options, which included purchasing another small refrigerator or purchasing a slightly larger unit that would have space for both floral arrangements. Comments were received about how nice the lilies looked with the gold paper and white ribbon.
- **Banner, Gretchen Harrison.** No report was given.
- **Kitchen, Coaline Luplow and Lois Ramsey.** Lois gave an update on the Coffee Fund. The balance on March 31 was \$99.67. Carol Zeile was reimbursed \$38.81 for supplies purchased for the reception following the Vigil of Easter.
- **Library, Coaline Luplow.** Nothing new has been added.
- **Sunshine, Marlene Miller.** More return address labels are needed. Mary will make a new supply.
- **Special Events, Coaline Luplow and Lois Ramsey.** The Vigil of Easter reception and the Easter Breakfast were both well attended.
- **Charitable Donations, Dorothy Trgina.** Dorothy showed us a quilt she is making, by recycling the material from a good find at a rummage sale. There was discussion about the LWR collection items. Items can be donated throughout the year.

Comments by Pastor: Pastor didn't attend the meeting, but sent a letter expressing appreciation to all the ladies who participated in the various activities and work projects during the recent holy season of the church.

Seminary Student Report: A current letter is on the bulletin board. A new student will be selected for next year.

Projects:

- Banner Storage discussion was tabled until more information is available.

Old Business:

- Constitution: The executive board met after last month's meeting and made the changes suggested by Megan Brown, our consultant. Action tabled until next month.
- Lent dinners/Easter breakfast: The events were well attended. About 50 people attended the Easter Breakfast. The menu was discussed, and some changes were suggested for next year. There were six strata casseroles and two pans of French toast; that will remain the same; we can reduce the number of coffee cakes by two. The amount of scrambled eggs will be increased from 2 to 3 dozen, and sausage patties will be added to next year's menu.
- Recipe Books: No recipes have been submitted yet. To remind people of the September 30 deadline for submitting recipes, Coaline will create some posters.

Ladies Guild Meeting Minutes Cont'd

- Rada Cutlery: Profit on the February catalogue sales was \$21.65 (\$63.50 in orders, less \$41.85, product and shipping); in-stock sales totaled \$7.75. \$71.25 was given to the Treasurer for deposit, and a reimbursement check of \$41.85 was issued to Lois. In March, \$12.50 was received from sale of in-stock items; catalogue orders totaled \$54.00, less product and shipping of \$36.45, leaving a profit on March catalogue orders of \$17.55. The next date for the cutlery display is April 18.
- Vigil of Easter: The Vigil of Easter Service was well attended and the Champagne reception, which followed, was well received. The one negative was the lateness of the hour, and Pastor Messer has indicated that next year the Vigil Service will start earlier.

New Business:

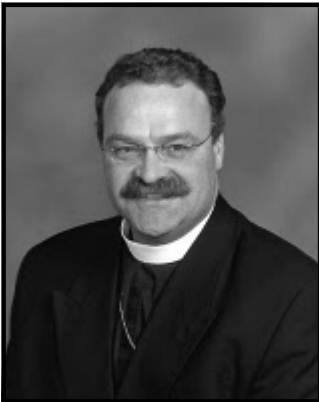
- Crucifix: Joan Burch, one of our dear shut-in members, indicated to Pastor Messer that she would like a crucifix to display on a wall of her home. After discussion, Marlene entertained a motion, supported by Lois, to purchase a crucifix in the maximum cost range of approximately \$25 (allowing for costs of shipping, etc.). Two ladies representing Ladies Guild will take the crucifix to Joan Burch. This action is taken as a way of reaching out and supporting our shut-ins.
- Bulletin Board: The Guild bulletin board in the fellowship hall was discussed. Someone from Guild needs to take responsibility for keeping the information current. Mary Jakolat, church secretary, stated that it would be helpful for her if Guild would tell her about events and information to be included in the weekly bulletins and *The Peace Post*.
- Youth Bake Sale: Coaline read a letter from Jon Penzien, youth leader, regarding the Youth Spring Bake Sale on Saturday, May 1, from 9 until 3 at WalMart. Jon extended an invitation to the ladies to participate by donating baked goods for this youth fund raiser.

Thank you to Hostess: Thank you to Charlotte Dargie and Marlene Miller for serving as hostess this evening.

Next meeting date is May 3, with Carol Zeile serving hostess.

Closing Prayer: There being no further business to discuss, Coaline adjourned the meeting at 7:45 p.m. and The Lord's Prayer was prayed in unison.

Respectfully Submitted,
Lois Ramsey, Secretary



REV. MATTHEW HARRISON TOPS NOMINATIONS

If you haven't heard by now, the official notice of nominations for the LCMS Praesidium was released in April. For the Office of President, Rev. Matthew Harrison, who our congregation nominated, received the most nominations by far, nearly twice as many as incumbent Rev. Gerald Kieschnick. Not only does Rev. Harrison have a chance this summer, but these numbers seem to indicate that he's the front-runner, and that is GREAT NEWS for the cause of confessional Lutheranism in the LCMS! Here's how the numbers pan out:

Rev. Matthew Harrison—1,332
Rev. Gerald Kieschnick (incumbent)—755
Rev. Herbert Mueller—503
Rev. Carl Fickenscher II—5
Rev. Daniel Gard—3

For First Vice President, the numbers are equally exciting for confessional Lutherans, as the two nominees receiving the most nominations total 1,537 (Rev. Herbert Mueller, Jr. - 809; Rev. Matthew Harrison - 728), with the incumbent Rev. William Diekelman garnering only 244 nominations.

Please keep the delegates who will be representing the congregations of our synod in your prayers as they prepare to attend the LCMS National Convention this July in Houston, TX (among whom will be Larry Elliott!). Pray that they will elect leaders and make decisions with the goal of returning our synod to its confessional Lutheran foundation. "It's Time" to elect a synodical president who is "At Home in the House of Our Fathers"!

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AT PEACE

Youth Confirmation Classes

- The last class for First Year Confirmation will be Saturday, May 8 at 10:00 a.m.; the last class for Second Year Confirmation will be Saturday, May 15 at 11:00 a.m. (Confirmation of Natalie Penzien on Sunday, May 23).

Sunday School and Adult Bible Class

- Sunday School and Adult Bible Class is offered **Sundays at 11 am** for all children, adult members of Peace, and guests. We are currently using **"A New Song Unto the Lord"**. (Note: The last day for Sunday School will be Sunday, May 23; it will resume again in September).

Together in the Word

- Our *Together in the Word* Bible Study meets on **Thursday mornings at 10 am**. 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 **Romans**.

Christian History 101

- Weekly Wednesday classes meet at 6 pm. We are currently studying "Christian History 101."



Happy Birthday to:

| | |
|-------------------|---------------------|
| 2 Natalie Penzien | 29 Brandy Pease |
| 4 LeRoy Isaksson | 29 Gordon Slick |
| 4 Daren Johnson | 30 Benjamin Elliott |
| 10 Mary Girard | 31 Aaron Messer |
| 21 Paige Harwager | |

Happy Anniversary to:

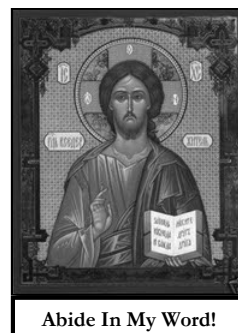
10 Dick and Dorothy Wiser

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

PASTOR MESSER IS BLOGGING!

www.abideinmyword.blogspot.com

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



PAROCHIAL REPORT

(as of 4/25/2010)

Membership at Peace

Baptized - 139; Confirmed - 119

Membership gains: 0

Membership losses: 4

Curt, Tammy, Jessica, and C.J. Oswald—Released (self-exclusion)







Financial Report

| | |
|-------------------|--------------|
| YTD Budgeted..... | \$ 37,128.00 |
| YTD Receipts..... | \$ 34,820.66 |
| Difference..... | \$ -2,307.34 |

Rev. Thomas C. Messer
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 (989) 388-2037—Cell
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 pastormesser@gmail.com
 www.abideinmyword.blogspot.com

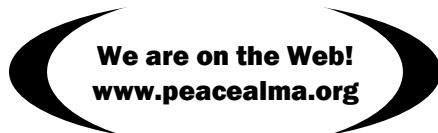
May 2010

Peace Lutheran Church
 325 E. Warwick Drive
 Alma, MI 48801
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 contact@peacealma.org
 www.peacealma.org

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|---|--|--|---|---|---|--|
| 2 Cantate (Easter 5) 8:30 - Choir 9:30 - Divine Service 10:45 - Fellowship 11:00 - BC, SS  | 3 6:30 pm - Peace Landscaping/Gardening 7:30 pm - Ladies Guild  | 4 <i>Pastor at Winked</i> 7 pm - Church Council | 5 6 pm - "Christian History" 7 pm - Divine Service <i>Feast of St. Philip and St. James, Apostles</i>  | 6 10 am - Together in Word 5 pm - Weight Watchers | 7 | 1 PYG BAKE SALE 10 am - 1st Yr. Conf. 11 am - 2nd Yr. Conf. <hr/> 8 10 am - 1st Yr. Conf. 11 am - 2nd Yr. Conf. |
| 9 Rogate (Easter 6) 8:30 - Choir 9:30 - Divine Service 10:45 - Fellowship 11:00 - BC, SS <i>Happy Mother's Day!</i>  | 10  | 11 | 12 6 pm - "Christian History" 7 pm - Vespers | 13 10 am - Together in Word 5 pm - Weight Watchers 7 pm - Ascension of Our Lord  | 14 | 15 11 am - 2nd Yr. Conf 7 pm - BOWLING Armed Forces Day |
| 16 Exaudi (Easter 7) 8:30 - Choir 9:30 - Divine Service 10:45 - Fellowship 11:00 - BC, SS  | 17 1:30 pm - Lunch Bunch  | 18 7 pm - Stewardship | 19 6 pm - "Christian History" 7 pm - Vespers | 20 10 am - Together in Word 5 pm - Weight Watchers 6:30 pm - SALT Comm. | 21 Peace Movie Night 6:30—Pizza; 7:00—Movie Movie TBD; look for info on SALT bulletin board | 22 10 am - SPRING CLEANING <i>(Please come and lend a hand)</i> |
| 23 Whitsunday (Pentecost) 8:30 - Public Questioning 9:30 - Divine Service (Confirmation) 10:45 - Fellowship 11:00 - BC, SS <i>Last day of Sunday School</i>  | 24 <i>Newsletter articles due</i> | 25 | 26 6 pm - "Christian History" 7 pm - Divine Service <i>Pentecost Monday & Tuesday (Observed)</i> | 27 10 am - Together in Word 5 pm - Weight Watchers 7 pm - Table Talk | 28 | 29 |
| 30 The Holy Trinity 9:30 - Divine Service 10:45 - Fellowship <i>No Adult Bible Study</i>  | 31  MEMORIAL DAY <i>Remember Our Veterans</i> <i>Church Office Closed</i> | June 1 | 2 <i>No Class or Service tonight</i> | 3 <i>No Together in the Word</i> 5 pm - Weight Watchers | 4 | 5 |

Peace Lutheran Church
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Mary's Home: 989-463-3067
Pastor's Home: 989-463-3093
Pastor's Cell: 989-388-2037



The mission of Peace Lutheran Church is to welcome all people into the fellowship of God's love by proclaiming the forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ and to nurture our members with God's Holy Word and Sacraments.

Serving in May

| May | ELDER | ACOLYTES | USHERS | GREETERS |
|---|---------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 2 - 9:30 am (Easter 5) | Terry Luplow | Sarah Messer Paige Harwager | Vern Jakolat Kevin Sellke | Charlotte Dargie Marlene Miller |
| 9 - 9:30 am (Easter 6) | Miguel Ortiz | Melanie Penzien Sierra Luplow | Gary Miller Daren Johnson | Yvonne Elenbaas Mary Girard |
| 13 - 7:00 pm (Ascension Day) | Miguel Ortiz | NA | Vern Jakolat | NA |
| 16 - 9:30 am (Easter 7) | Dave Zeile | Samantha Messer Myka Luplow | Jonathan Penzien James Sager | Dorothy Trgina |
| 23 - 9:30 am (Pentecost) | Larry Elliott | Morgan Johnson Tyrel Harwager | Chris Brown Daren Johnson | Sharyn Greening |
| 30 - 9:30 am (Trinity) | Terry Luplow | Aaron Messer Natalie Penzien | Phillip Schafer | Miguel and Sue Ortiz Vern Jakolat |
| June 6 - 9:30 am (Trinity 1) | Miguel Ortiz | Sarah Messer Paige Harwager | Jonathan Penzien Gary Miller | Lois Ramsey |

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