

Peace Lutheran Church

Volume 34 No. 2

February 2021



KOINONIA (FELLOWSHIP) IS IT TIME, YET?

⁴² And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. ⁴³ And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. ⁴⁴ And all who believed were together and had all things in common. ⁴⁵ And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. ⁴⁶ And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved. Acts 2:42-47 (ESV)

In the Third Article of the Apostles Creed, we confess that we are members of the Holy Christian Church and the Communion of Saints. As such, we confess that we are in fellowship (*koinonia*) with those who like us confess the Triune God.

The membership of the Holy Christian Church is known only by God as He alone can see into the hearts of those who confess Him. In that sense, the Church is invisible. However, there is a visible church as well. This is the church in which we hold membership and consists of many locations, many denominations.

The membership of the Communion of Saints consists of believers (saints) both on earth and in heaven. This again is in the realm of the invisible Church.

As members of Peace, we hold membership in all three expressions. We are a fellowship that gathers to worship the Triune God and to receive His Means of Grace – His Word (The Holy Bible) and His Sacraments (Holy Baptism and Holy Communion).

Since early March 2020, we have faced challenges to our fellowship. For a period of several weeks, we did not gather in-person as a fellowship. By God's grace, we were able to enjoy worship via services that were live-streamed. We also experienced a "spiritual fast" of not receiving Holy Communion.

Since May 30/31, we returned to in-person worship with many safeguards employed in regards to COVID-19. For several months there have been adjustments to facilitate "safe" worship for those attending. These "safety" measures have been shared with the congregation in writing.

Beginning in the Fall of 2020, we began to slowly employ facets of our ministry, intended to increase in-person participation. The Lord has richly blessed us despite the existence of the pestilence known as COVID-19. An additional worship service, Bible study opportunities, and other ministries are now in place. And, as you also know, we have been live-streaming our 10:45 A.M. service as well as Sunday school and Youth Confirmation classes.

We confess in the Meaning to the Third Article that the Holy Spirit calls, gathers, enlightens, sanctifies, and keeps the Christian church in the one true faith. It is the Holy Spirit who, again, gathers Christians together to be served at the Altar of Almighty God. As a fellowship, we realize our relationship with God and with one another.

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Realizing that COVID-19 is not going away, we need to reflect upon our involvement as a fellowship, as members of Peace, a part of the Church on earth. By God's grace, the vaccine that is now being distributed, the threat of COVID-19 might be controlled.

²³ Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. ²⁴ And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, ²⁵ not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. Hebrews 10:23-25

The question that comes to you... "Is it time yet?" Is it time to return to the fellowship of believers in-person?

I am concerned that, over this period of time, in-person worship has been replaced with other activities. I am concerned that live-streamed worship has replaced coming into the House of the Lord to enjoy fellowship with God and fellow believers.

I fully realize that we do have members with particular health – physical or mental – issues that legitimately cause concern. If this is your situation, then refrain from attending in-person.

Please consider what is preventing you from in-person worship. I am thankful for the many who have returned to the in-person fellowship. It is my hope that many more will begin the process of returning.

The Board of Elders, in their monthly meetings, assess where we are at and how we will continue to return back to what at one time was normal. Also, in February, the Elders will be tasked to contact all members of their "group" to encourage and elicit comments for the sake of the future.

One last comment... I rejoice over the many children who have returned for in-person Sunday school and the teachers that have come to serve them.

To God be the glory!

Pastor Schroeder



COMMUNION APPOINTMENTS If you are in need of receiving Holy Communion, you can call the church office, and one of the pastors will arrange an appointment with you. This is not intended as a substitute for attending worship.



PRE-LENT PRAYER SERVICE Divine Savior, North Fond du Lac, will host our LWML Zone 11 Prayer Service on **Saturday, February 13, 2021**, at 9:00 A.M. The service will last about an hour. A free-will offering will be received. Men, women, and children are welcome and encouraged to attend.

FROM THE WINNEBAGO COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT In an update from January 5 Update, I share with you the following information. As COVID-19 vaccine distribution begins, here are signs of potential scams:

You are asked to pay out of pocket for the vaccine

You are asked to pay to put your name on a waitlist or get early access

Ads for vaccines through email, telephone calls, or online

Marketers offering to sell or ship the vaccine for payment

Learn more at www.fbi.gov/coronavirus



Conflict Reconciliation

The theme I am running with as I spend time in God's Word with various leadership at Peace this year is Conflict Reconciliation. From family squabbles to fights in the schoolyard, we all experience conflict. Neighbors argue over fences, and disputes at work abound in our age, and even in the church, disagreements can turn nasty quickly. Even simple changes in things we are used to can cause a great deal of conflict between us. This is nothing new, as mankind has been arguing and fighting ever since our fall into sin in the garden. Cain killed his brother Abel out of jealousy; king David lusted after another man's wife, and so arranged for her husband's demise; Jesus own handpicked disciples argued about who was the greatest, even while the Lord was in their very midst.

We live in a world that is tainted by sin, and because of this, conflict is inevitable. We can expect that conflict will happen, and we can plan for what to do and how to act and react to conflict. To deal with conflict in the best way, we must learn how to use the forgiveness that Christ has won for us on the cross and go and be reconciled with others. Every Christian is called to be a peacemaker in his or her own life. In each vocation, we serve — as a parent, child, employer, employee, pastor, church member, governor, and citizen, we live as people reconciled to the Father through Jesus Christ. In all our vocations, we are Christian. As such, we continuously serve as ambassadors for the Son of God, who reconciled us to the Father.

St. Paul teaches us in 2 Corinthians 5:18-20, "*All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; 19that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. 20Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.*"

Conflict presents opportunities for Christ's ambassadors to act so differently from the world that people wonder, "Why did you respond to that conflict in such a way?" As God's Word instructs us: "*Conduct yourselves wisely toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.*" (Col. 4: 5–6). At times, we take our reconciliation to God for granted. In worship, we praise God for restoring our relationship through Christ, but afterward, we often act or speak in ways much more like nonbelievers in our daily lives. This is especially true in conflict. By nature, we tend to say and do things to get what we want rather than work to serve God and others first. The old Adam in us embraces the world's message to take care of number one first, referring, of course, to ourselves. Remember that the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6, in the Sermon on the Mount, says, *And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.* Then Jesus follows the prayer with the words, "*For if you forgive men for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.*"

Our sins are debts before God. We owe Him obedience, service, & thanksgiving, and yet so often, we fail to pay what is due. We neglect devotional time in God's Word. We don't go to Bible Study. We think of ourselves. We take His gifts for granted and then grumble when they are not consistently what we expect. When God permits a trial to enter our lives, we look to ourselves first, and in doing so, deny His love, care, & goodwill toward us. We behave as if the people around us are placed on earth **for us** and not **we for them**. We daily sin much, as the catechism says, and indeed deserve nothing but punishment. We are the servant with the **eternity** of debt, And God has forgiven us all our sins. He sent His son to absorb the cost in our place.

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The cross is the mark of payment and the resurrection Easter morning is the receipt marked "paid in full." Jesus has taken your sin away, forgiven you, and poured into your hands life eternal. We were headed for the debtor's prison of hell, and God forgave our enormous debt and restored us to life, privilege, and hope.

When someone sins against us, it is helpful to remember that our real enemy is not the person before us, but the devil, that old evil foe. That sinner is simply trapped by him and enslaved. They may be irritating, but they are not the true source of evil. Our brothers and sisters in the body of Christ also sin, through weakness, or by not realizing that what they do is sin. But even if they deliberately sin against us, when they ask for our forgiveness, when they seek reconciliation, we want to give it as freely and fully as God forgives us. We want to forgive from the heart. And even if they do not seek us out, we ought to seek out our brother or sister in Christ, that we may be reconciled. Anything less means we mark ourselves as hypocrites - those who just want to appear to be God's people.

Forgive as you have been forgiven, or you will be forgiven as you forgave -- or failed to forgive. From the heart is the standard Jesus sets before us. May God forgive us our heard-heartedness and unforgiving hearts toward others, and may He change us and soften our hearts so that we may forgive one another from the heart!

Healthy congregations not only abide in God's Word but also demonstrate maturity in the faith by practicing confession and forgiveness in daily life with one another. As Christ's Church, we seek to abide in Him, planted in His Word, Watered by His stream of Baptismal life. May His Word show forth a harvest, that we might enrich and cultivate lifestyles of reconciliation among us. We are forgiven! Let us forgive. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Prayer: Lord, you have said, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God..." Let us shine forth your light of forgiveness to our community, that they would ask what makes us different from the rest of the world. Let them see you through our actions and words, for our hope is built on nothing less Than Jesus' blood and righteousness; No merit of our own do we claim But wholly lean on Jesus' name. On Christ, the solid rock, we stand; All other ground is sinking sand. Amen.

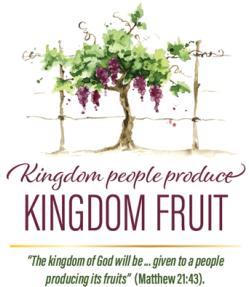
~Pastor Fitch



Peace uses Vanco as the service provider for our on-line giving program.

The program provides on-line giving and has many benefits to a member:

- ◆ Direct automatic withdrawal from your checking account, debit, or credit card.
 - ◆ Secure connection to avoid problems with lost or stolen checks.
 - ◆ Donations can be changed anytime and directed to various programs at church.
 - ◆ Reports easy to view and print out for donation summaries for your account.
 - ◆ Excellent way of maintaining social distancing.
- Members of Peace Can sign up by accessing the Peace website at:
<http://www.peaceneenah.com/home>



February 13 – "He Prayed With Them" will be the theme for the Pre-Lenten Prayer service as we prepare our hearts and minds for the Lenten season. This event will begin at 9:00 am, at Divine Savior Lutheran Church, North Fond du Lac.

February 13 (Saturday)- Peace Mission Guild Gathering. During the winter months, we are meeting on Saturdays at 1:00 pm! Come join us for a Bible Study on "How to Show Christ's Compassion to those who Face Chronic Conditions." This is a topic that has challenged most of us, at one time or another. We'll learn from scripture how Christ showed compassion and how we can give compassionate care to others. Please join us. Masks and social distancing guidelines will be observed.

February 27 – Women's Retreat at Peace. We understand that during these uncertain times, we want to remain safe. However, it is equally important that we nourish our spirit and mind. Please join us on February 27, 9 am - 3 pm, for "Joy With Jesus," a retreat focused on bringing joy back into our lives. More details to follow."

Mission Moment- A Place of Refuge This ministry, located in southern Wisconsin, reaches out to women and their families who are experiencing a crisis pregnancy. The \$20,000 grant will be used for a replacement vehicle to transport women to doctor visits, job interviews, worship, and other essential needs.



Jeanne 2-24

Special VOTERS' MEETING

SPECIAL VOTERS ASSEMBLY There will be a Special Voters Assembly on Sunday, February 7 following the 8:00 A.M. (Early) service. To be discerned is a question that has been posed to the member congregations of the LCMS. The question is, "Should the LCMS Synodical Convention be postponed to 2023?" There will be a brief explanation to be followed by a vote of "yes" or "no" by the assembly. The meeting should be brief and should not interfere with Sunday school or Adult Bible class.

Address changes? Phone number changes? Gone cellular....no more landline? Children away at college?

If you have moved or are going to be moving soon, **please** call or email the church office (admin@peaceneenah.com) or leave a note with your new address so we can keep our mailing lists up-to-date. We're also looking for your new phone numbers. Your help will be greatly appreciated, as we will be creating a new phone/address directory. If you are not receiving emails from the church about services, newsletters and other items please contact the church office also so we can get you on the list to receive these things.

STEWARDSHIP SERIES 2021 Beginning on the weekend of March 6/7, we will embark on a three-part Stewardship Series. The overall theme is "Faithful Stewards of God's Gifts." As in years past, there will be opportunities to make commitments of time, talent, and treasure. More details will be shared in the March Newsletter.



Compassionate Hearts Bake Sale

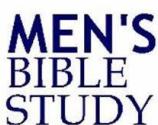
February 13th and 14th

The Board of Social Ministry will be sponsoring the Annual Compassionate Hearts Bake Sale after church services on Saturday, Feb. 13th, and Sunday, Feb. 14th.

All proceeds go to helping our congregation members needing financial assistance with their utility bills, transportation, food, etc.

Bakers are needed! Please consider baking for this much-needed cause. Items could include but are not limited to cookies, cupcakes, bars, cakes, pies, bread, candies, or anything you can dream of baking. Please have the items placed in wrapped, prepackaged containers. This will help to prevent the handling of the items and thus minimize the spreading of germs. Please label and indicate if the item(s) have any nuts, if the item(s) are egg-free, or have a different substitute of any kind. Please bring those tasty treats with you to church and drop them off before the service, or bring them on Friday, Feb. 12th at the earliest and drop them off in the kitchen.

There is no need to price the items as this will be a free-will offering.



Man Up! - The Quest for Masculinity - A Men's Bible Study @ Peace

What does it mean to *be* a man? Biblically, it means real, Godly, loving service & sacrifice.

In this Man Up! Bible Study, you're not going to learn to take down the feminists or to reclaim your God-given role and rights. We'll seek and learn Real masculinity, which starts with giving of yourself for the good of those around you and in your care. It's counter-cultural—and it's exactly how God designed biblical manhood.

This Bible & Book study is a call to fix your eyes and your hope on the Man upon the cross and to find in His selfless sacrifice the perfect example for manliness in our self-indulgent, self-centered society. That's where *Man Up!* really stands out in the crowd. Don't pick up these pages expecting to find an ideal man you should strive to be. This book is anchored in a different ideal: the person of Jesus Christ, God become man. What Adam lost in his rebellion, Jesus restored in His Incarnation. Jesus is the perfect man. His example sets the paradigm for perfect masculinity. *But more importantly*, His sacrifice obtains forgiveness and mercy for the rest of us men who are bound to fail in this God-given task to be good men.

Men in all stages of life will appreciate this refreshing perspective—whether you're searching for footing in this crazy culture, seeking a godly relationship with your wife, or looking for guidance on raising children. We will come together for fellowship and to learn together.

Men who are 9th Grade - ~100 years old are welcome to the Bible Study, and you can even invite others you know (inside or outside the church) to come join us as well. So, please come and join us for this Bible study, which is set to begin on **Thursday, February 25, 2021**, and will meet on every **2nd & 4th Thursday of the month** thereafter until we complete the Bible Study.

Loving embraces

Express your love and friendship with handcrafted bracelets.



What you need:

- Adult help
- Bowl of boiling water
- Wide wooden craft sticks
- Glass cup
- Markers, paint or decorative tape

What you do:

1. Pour about 3 cups of boiling water into a bowl. Soak sticks in the water about 30 minutes.
2. Remove sticks and slowly, gently bend them into a curve.
3. To maintain the shape, place curved sticks inside a glass cup overnight to dry completely.
4. Remove and decorate the bracelets, which make fun Valentine's Day gifts.

PUZZLE

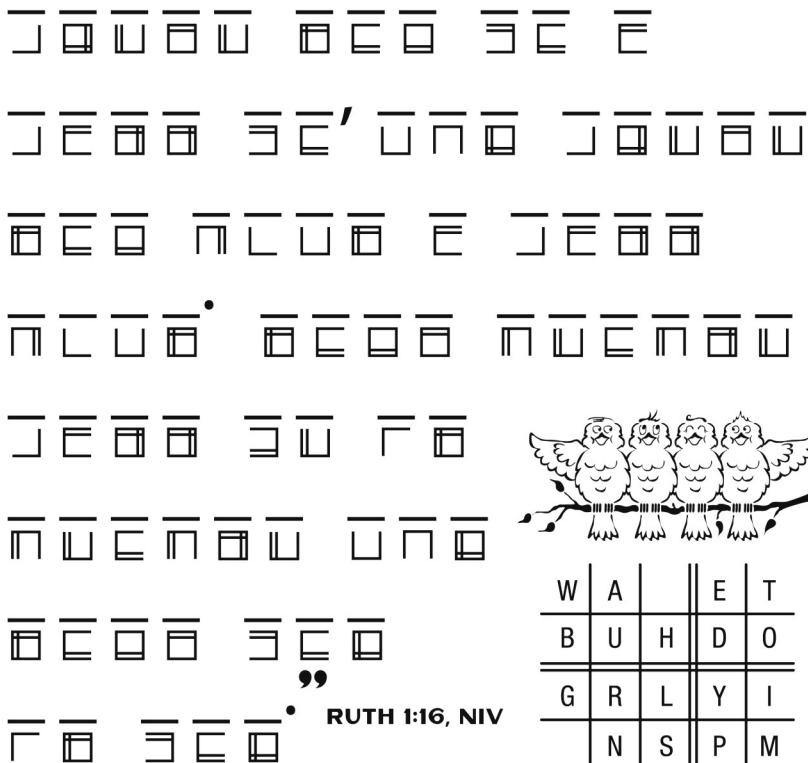


A famous friendship

In the Bible, Ruth and Naomi are known for their loving friendship.

Directions: Using the key, fill in the blanks to see what Ruth says to Naomi.

“



W	A	E	T
B	U	H	O
G	R	L	I
N	S	P	M

Answer: “Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God.” Ruth 1:16, NIV

What was the name of Moses' wife?

- A. Miriam
- B. Jochebed
- C. Zipporah
- D. Leah



Answer: C (See Exodus 2:21.)

MIDWEEK LENTEN, HOLY WEEK & EASTER SERVICES 2021
Lenten Theme: “Return to the Lord”

Due to Covid-19, at this time, we are not planning to hold Midweek Lenten Suppers, but this is subject to change as we move forward.

ASH WEDNESDAY: Wednesday, February 17 at 7:00 P.M. *

THEME: “A Call to Return”

MIDWEEK LENT 1: Wednesday, February 24 at 7:00 P.M.

THEME: “Return to Prayer”

MIDWEEK LENT 2: Wednesday, March 3 at 7:00 P.M.

THEME: “Return from Betrayal”

MIDWEEK LENT 3: Wednesday, March 10 at 7:00 P.M.

THEME: “Return from False Witness”

MIDWEEK LENT 4: Wednesday, March 17 at 7:00 P.M.

THEME: “Return from Denial”

MIDWEEK LENT 5: Wednesday, March 24 at 7:00 P.M.

THEME: “Return to the Kingdom of God”

MAUNDY THURSDAY: Thursday, April 1 at 7:00 P.M. *

THEME: “Return to the Table”

GOOD FRIDAY: Friday, April 2 at 7:30 P.M.

THEME: “Return to Truth”

EASTER SATURDAY – NO WORSHIP SERVICE

EASTER SUNDAY – SUNRISE: Sunday, April 4 at 6:00 A.M. *

THEME: “Return to the Church”

We are hoping that we will be able to hold the Annual EASTER BREAKFAST & EGG HUNT, but we plan to wait and see where things are at as we get closer to Easter. A decision will be made in the near future, and notice will be given once a decision has been reached.

EASTER SUNDAY – FESTIVAL: Sunday, April 4 at 8:00 & 10:45A.M. *

THEME: “Return and See”

*The Lord’s Supper will be offered in these services.

Lenten Theme: "Return to the Lord"

In the Book of Joel, the prophet paints a vivid picture of the Day of the Lord, the coming judgment of God. The imagery is bold and terrifying: hordes of locusts swarming over the land and decimating everything. Joel's prophecy has teeth even today as wars rage, natural disasters threaten and destroy, and our culture seems to be unraveling. But right in the middle of this frightening portent, we find a tender invitation from the Lord: "*Return to the Lord your God, for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love; and He relents over disaster*" (Joel 2:13). God's invitation and promise finds its fullness in Jesus Christ, who personifies and accomplishes all that God declares. During this season of Lent, we will consider the theme "Return to the Lord" and examine how the call to return played out in practical ways for the people who walked alongside Christ as He demonstrated and carried out God's grace & mercy on our behalf, taking God's wrath upon Himself, setting the stage for God to "*turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind Him*" (Joel 2:14). In each Midweek service, we will focus on a particular event in the Passion, with a special focus on the people involved in the event. Studying the surrounding events and the people surrounding Jesus helps us to see our own sinful nature, and therefore how we have turned away from the Lord (See Our Sin) and to reinforce and rejoice in God's call for us to return to Him with all our heart, and so receive the gifts and salvation Christ has won for us (See Our Savior).

Daily Devotions: Keep an eye out for Return to the Lord Daily Devotions to use during this Lenten time.

VITAL STATISTICS

Number of Baptized Souls: 453 Number of Confirmed Souls: 380 Number of Families: 241



PLEASE CONTINUE TO REMEMBER THE TRINITY FOOD PANTRY in Menasha! *Peace continues to support the Food Pantry...you may help by bringing your donations in and placing them by the north entry door on the rack or in the baskets. We will then be sure that it is delivered to the Food Pantry.*

Altar Guild



Altar Guild Meeting on Thursday, February 118, at 6:30 pm. Please join us in the sanctuary!

A daily prayer

Whatever happens today, dear Lord, help us remember that you are present. If we find ourselves in the shadows of disappointment or rejection or pain, let us see your comforting light. If we're in the radiant light of success or acceptance or wholeness, may we acknowledge your providence and grace. Wherever we are, grant us the assurance of your nearness. Amen.

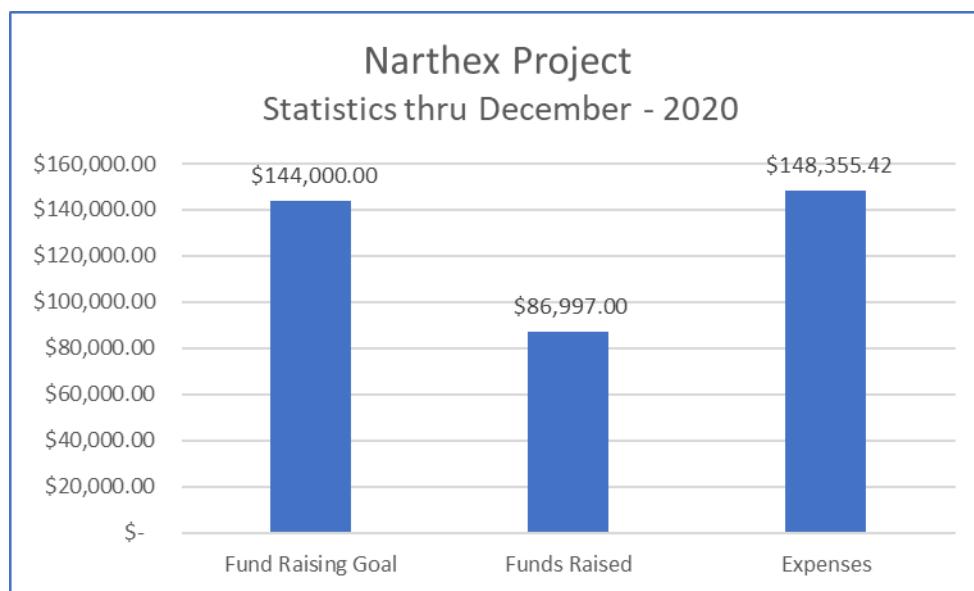


Financial Update - 2020 Year to Date through December

Operating Expenses	\$	400,902
Contributions	\$	393,308
Difference	\$	(7,594)

In addition to the Contributions received for the Operating Budget above, an additional \$28,361 was given in support of the Narthex project (Foundation for the Future Fund) and another \$30,109 for other designated funds.

Endowment Fund Balance: \$ 321,208



Expenses above do not include \$7,204 for painting of the Sanctuary & Fellowship Hall in 2018.

Foundation for the Future Fund (Narthex Project) Balance

\$ 16,912

Money Market includes proceeds from \$100,000 Loan.

LCEF Loan Balance is \$ 60,392

Monthly Loan Payment is \$931;

In 2020:

\$ 1,747 was paid as Interest (continuing Expense for the Foundation for the Future Fund)
\$ 9,430 was applied to reducing the Loan Principal

Peace Lutheran Church

Missouri Synod

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Rev. Ricky P. Schroeder

Pastor

Rev. Josiah Fitch

Associate Pastor



Peace Lutheran Church

NEENAH, WISCONSIN—LCMS

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Reaching Out . . . Serving Jesus . . . Celebrating His Love



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(920) 725-0625

e-mails

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assocpastor@peaceneenah.com

Web site:
www.peaceneenah.com

Worship Services

Sat. 5:00 p.m.

Sun. 8:00 a.m.

10:45 a.m.

Bible Study/Sunday School
9:30 a.m. Sundays