

# Peace Lutheran Church

Volume 36 No. 4

April 2023



## Re:VITALITY

### UPDATE: FORMING THE TASK FORCE

In regards to the Task Force, it is still in the process of being formed. This far, only one member at large has come forward. I am still seeking an additional 4 members to participate in this imperative work for our congregation. Thus far, the following members will be a part of the Task Force. Representing our Boards are Fred Kaun, Elders; Paulette Stecker, Evangelism; Ed Perkins, Stewardship; Lorrie Muth, Trustees; Kathryn Tesch, Social Ministry and Doc Harms, Education. Thus far, Rebecca Doyle has stepped up to serve as one of five members-at-large. Advisory members will be Pastor Fitch and Loren Wahl, the Chairman of the Congregation. Again, I need four additional members to step forward. I have asked two thus far to join in. If you are interested in serving and are not a part of any of the elected leadership, I'd like to hear from you.

Our first meeting will be on Tuesday, April 25<sup>th</sup>, from 6:30 -8:00 P.M. This will be an Orientation, including sharing a flowchart to accomplish the task.

Again, as I wrote last month, it is my fervent prayer that the Lord will guide the Task Force and grant sound discernment in their deliberations so that a realistic Strategic Plan can be created for consideration by the members of the congregation to be presented to the Voters in November. I invite you to be lifting up prayers as well.

It is my hope that we will be revitalized and that new life will come to our congregation so that we may continue with our Mission – “Reaching Out, Serving Jesus, Celebrating His Love.”

To God be the glory!

Pastor Schroeder

**OUR NEW HOME** Beginning April 1<sup>st</sup>, our new address will be 1623 Palisades Dr., Appleton, WI. 54915. Though we have an Appleton address, we are in the Village of Fox Crossings. We will no longer have a landline. So, you can reach us at the following phone numbers: Pastor: 262-224-4992, and Lynne: 262-224-4849. Neither Lynne nor I answer phone numbers that we don't recognize, so leave a message, and we will get to you asap and then add you to our contact list.  
Pastor Schroeder



Next Mom's of Peace meeting will be Tuesday, April 11, 2023.



## ON FAITH - Part 1

In my Newsletters over the next few months, I will be digging into the topic of FAITH. The goal is to examine what God tells us about Faith, ponder how it is obtained, explore how it grows, investigate its benefits & rewards, and peer into how we live out our faith.

The Bible is filled with references to & stories about faith, yet only 1 verse clearly defines it. Often called the 'faith chapter' of the Bible, Hebrews 11:1 says, "*Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.*" The writer to the Hebrews continues the chapter by listing believers who lived believing God would fulfill His promises, even when human reason & evidence seemed to work against their faith. Alongside listing men & women of faith, Hebrews 11 also reveals characteristics of the faith.

Before you continue reading: grab your Bible and put on your thinking cap! Read Hebrews 11 for yourself. See what God says about faith, and as you read, think on what these accounts tell you about faith. Hebrews 11:1 defines faith as a confidence that is deeply rooted in our innermost being. Such confidence is not easy to express to those without the experience of faith, though it seems obvious to believers. The ESV uses the words *assurance* & *conviction* to describe faith: "*Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.*" These 2-words emphasize the strength of faith for believers.

If I am *assured* of something, it's like having a guarantee, something secured now but not in my hands yet. Often, strong assurance is based on my knowledge of someone's past performance 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup>-hand. In the case of our faith, the assurance of salvation & eternal life, God has historically fulfilled many promises. Even though I have not yet tasted heaven in its fullness, I have experienced God's unconditional love in my life & have seen its effects in the lives of others around me. I know how overpowering His love & peace are, especially as they are often felt most profoundly in the midst of major crisis. God has assured me that He truly does work for the good of those who love Him. He has protected me & loved ones in dangerous situations when human reason dictated that serious injury or harm should have resulted. I rest assured.

When a person is *convicted* in a courtroom, the judge/jury is convinced that he or she is guilty of a crime. A convict has been proven guilty. The words *convict* & *convince* both come from the Latin word meaning - to conquer, to overcome the doubts of/persuade another by argument or evidence. The Holy Spirit works faith in our hearts as He conquers our doubts & fears, replacing them with the *conviction* that He who created the universe out of nothing can conquer any danger I face, just as He has already conquered sin, death, and the devil's power through Jesus' Cross, death & resurrection.

Hebrews 11:2-6 declare that faith alone pleases God. Abel made an offering to God that was pleasing, given out of his faith in, thankfulness to, and love for God. Cain went through the motions, making an offering to God, but without love or thankfulness, doing what was expected just because it was expected. He did not fool God. Without faith, no matter how sacrificial they may appear to be before others, our gifts do not impress God; as v.6 reminds us, "*Without faith, it is impossible to please Him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that He exists and that He*

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*rewards those who seek Him."*

Another aspect of faith is made clear in v.7: Faith obeys God. There were no seagulls flying overhead in Noah's landlocked region, yet he built the ark, trusting that God would provide the water to float the boat. Even when it meant suffering ridicule from friends & neighbors as he built a ship larger than a football field to house a pair of each kind of living creature & the food needed to feed them, Noah obeyed. God's Spirit was at work in him, and he completed the job God placed before him. In Romans 1:5, St. Paul writes of the obedience that comes from faith, as faith allows the believer to obey, even when such obedience looks like foolishness to the world. In v. 8-10, we see obedience that is even more amazing than that of Noah!

Noah feared & walked with God, but Abraham was raised worshipping the moon god of his father. Yet God called him to leave his friends, family, and all that he knew to go to a land that God would show him. Abraham had not experienced God's faithfulness, yet he obeyed. God promised to make a great nation out of him, and Abraham believed, clinging to that promise and looking forward to when it would be fulfilled.

Hebrews 11:12-29 teaches us that faith is tested. We're not told what was going through Abraham's mind when God announced that he was to sacrifice his long-awaited son Isaac as a burnt offering. Yet Abraham knew that Isaac was the fulfillment of some of God's promises and the one through whom many were yet to be fulfilled. Abraham never faltered in doing what God had commanded. In faith, Abraham faced reality, looking beyond it to see God & His promises. This test revealed his total reliance on God, and God provided a ram to sacrifice in place of Isaac. Faith is always tested & we, too, ought to expect it to be.

Faith realizes that not every promise is fulfilled today, and not every prayer is quickly answered with God's 'yes.' Heb. 11:20-22 shows that faith looks to the future for fulfillment: Most of Abraham's promised descendants were born after his death; When Joseph died in Egypt, he left instructions for his remains to be carried to his homeland in the future; The Old Testament believers never saw the Messiah, yet they looked to the future for God's promise to be fulfilled, giving glory to God as they trusted Him to follow through as He had promised. These and more were all blessed for trusting that it would certainly happen.

Verses 23-38 reveal to us that faith endures suffering. God's people suffered in Egypt, and Moses, who should have died under Pharaoh's orders 2x over, left the life of luxury & honor before men to live as a Hebrew. Moses returned when God commanded it, and he trusted God to assist him as He promised, even though he doubted his own abilities. He struggled against Pharaoh yet led God's people out of Egypt. He wandered in the wilderness with them for 40 years, dealing with their constant discontent. Moses' faith enabled him to live a rather miserable & frustrating 40 years! In fact, countless other Old & New Testament believers suffered for their faith, and Heb. 11:32-38 implies a list too long to recount individually, yet when the faithful suffered for their faith, they were blessed. Faithful believers endure suffering to be sure.

Miracles happen, and Heb. 11:30 helps us to understand that faith expects the unexpected. Jericho was conquered without the loss of Israelite blood, as the Lord caused the city walls to literally fall down. Believers saw hungry lions' mouths shut, faithful protected from infernos, even the dead raised! Faith

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expects the unexpected because faith believes that God is beyond human & natural limitations!! Finally, v.39-40 shows faith's ultimate fulfillment in the God-man, Jesus Christ, as He shows the Father's love to us. Our faith is rooted in the fact that Jesus fulfilled the requirements for our salvation, bestowing its benefits on all who believe in Him. The Holy Spirit inspired the writing of the Scriptures so that we can share the story of God's unfailing love, as St. John reminds us Jn 20:31, *"But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and that by believing you may have life in His name."*

*"Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen."* Faith is the God-given ability to trust deep in your heart that He will provide for all of your needs, knowing by the Spirit's instruction that God is the author of creation AND the means of salvation through Jesus Christ. Faith is more than a noun, more than head knowledge that Jesus is Lord. Faith is a way of life that spills into every aspect of our lives.

If Heb. 11 were the only word from God about faith & what it means to the life of we who believe, we would know a lot already. But God doesn't limit our understanding of faith to just these 40 verses. He reveals faith to us through His inspired writers, and next month we will dive into Coming to & Living in faith. To God alone be all glory & honor, worship & praise. Amen!

Pastor Fitch



#### 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday Fellowship Featuring Breakfast and Coffee Bar

Mark your calendars for April 30<sup>th</sup> and set your alarms to come to church a little early! Starting at 8:00am in the fellowship hall there will be breakfast and a full coffee bar including hot coffee, cold brew coffee, and a variety of flavoring syrups and other coffee add-ins. Come start your morning off right with a good breakfast and some great Christian fellowship. See you there!



**Easter Breakfast:** The Board of Education and Youth are preparing for this year's Easter breakfast. Let us do the shopping for you! In the narthex, you will find a board with envelopes with various items and their cost. How can you help? Take as many envelopes as you would like, put the suggested donation amount in the envelope, and drop it in the collection plate or return it to the office by April 2nd.

#### **HOLY WEEK, AND EASTER SERVICES 2023** **OVERALL THEME: "PROMISED TREASURES"**

**MAUNDY THURSDAY:** Thursday, April 6 at 7:00 P.M. \*\*THEME: "Water and Blood"

**GOOD FRIDAY:** Friday, April 7 at 7:30 P.M. THEME: "The Old, Rugged, Wooden Cross"

#### **EASTER SATURDAY – NO WORSHIP SERVICE**

**EASTER SUNDAY – SUNRISE:** Sunday, April 9 at 6:30 A.M. \*\*THEME: "The Oil of Joy and Gladness"

**EASTER BREAKFAST & EASTER EGG HUNT** – In Between Services

**EASTER SUNDAY – FESTIVAL:** Sunday, April 9 at 9:00 A.M. \*\*

THEME: "Welcome to the Promised Land of Milk and Honey"

Note: Holy Communion is being offered \*\*



**Several opportunities to serve, learn, and have fellowship with Christian Sisters!** It's Not Too Late! You can still attend a National Event held in Milwaukee! Six members of PMG have registered for this event already! See below to volunteer and get a discount on registration: **Are you a frequent traveler or brochure reader?** Working at the Information Kiosk would be an ideal way to help our attendees with the many tours available before and after the convention! For more information, contact Allison at [allisonlwmlmke23@gmail.com](mailto:allisonlwmlmke23@gmail.com) or go to <https://lwmlswd.org/events/other>.

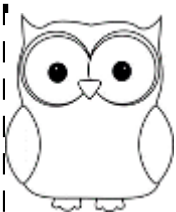
**April 1st & 2nd Mission Mites Collection:** The South Wisconsin District that we are a part of is currently working on funding Camp LuWiSoMo Camper Scholarships. This camp is not far away, located on the shores of beautiful Round Lake, just 5 miles east of Wild Rose, WI. The "Joyful Hearts Summer Camp" is for individuals with developmental disabilities, providing a quality 5-night summer camp experience in a safe, Christian environment. Campers take part in the usual summer camp activities, such as swimming, canoeing, archery, games, arts & crafts, worship, Bible studies, campfire, faith building activities, and many more, but each activity is modified based on the camper's needs. If you have enjoyed some time as a youth or adult at Camp LuWiSoMo, please consider giving to this project.

**April 10th (Mon.) @ 6:30pm:** Gathering including a Devotion connected to a Bible Study on being "Restored," refreshments, elections for VP and Secretary, and a Mission presentation.

**April 22nd – Zone 11 Spring Rally at Trinity, Menasha** Watch bulletins for more details and the PMG bulletin board in the center hallway.

**Mother's Day bulletins' proceeds** will be designated for the LWML SWD Female Church Worker Scholarship fund.

**"Where Friends Gather".** Friends are valued blessings in our life. It is important to acknowledge those friends who have made a positive difference to us, and to realize how we can impact others with our friendship. This evening allows women to share the joys of friendships and the desire for fellowship with other Christian women. Join us on **Monday, May 8 at 6:30 pm** in the Peace Fellowship Hall to celebrate friendship with women of all ages. There will be entertainment, light refreshments, sweet treats and gifts. Watch for more details and a sign up.



**YEAH OWLS YEAH!** The **OWLS** have landed and we're having a **HOOT!!!**  
**YEAH OWLS**

**Y**(young) **E**(especially) **A**(at) **H**(heart) **O**(older) **W**(wiser) **L**(livelier) **S**(saints).

Our April YEAH OWLS get together will be Thursday, April 20, 2023. We will be joined by Pete Christianson from the Larson-Winchester Lions Club, Inc. The Lions Club is the world's largest service club organization. He will talk about their ramp building program and their medical equipment locker where you can either drop off or borrow used medical equipment.

We begin at 11:00 AM with socializing and coffee. Lunch will be served promptly at 11:30 AM. For this month we will be having a Taco Bar. There will be a sign up for salads and desserts if you'd like to contribute to our luncheon. Signup sheets will be in the Fellowship Hallway 2 weeks prior to the April 20<sup>th</sup> meeting. Make sure to sign up. We'd love to see you there and you can even bring a friend.





**GIDEON SUNDAY** On the weekend of April 22 & 23, a representative of The Gideons International will be with us. The representative will share a brief message concerning their work during the time of the announcements. A Door Offering will be received at each of the services to support their ministry. Informational Brochures will be available to explain the work of The Gideons International further. Their work is best known as the ones that distribute Bibles through many different venues worldwide.

**A FRIENDLY REMINDER: WHEN HOSPITALIZED**, please contact the church office if you incur hospitalization. Hospitals no longer automatically call on your behalf unless you request contact to be made. Depending on the hospital and its policies, the pastors may be able to come to visit you.

**HOSPITAL VISITATIONS** In order to serve our members in their time of hospitalization, Pastor Fitch and I have divided up hospital visitations. I will be “on call” on Mondays and Wednesdays; Pastor Fitch will be “on call” on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays – Every week in the Bulletin News, the pastor “on call” will be shared with a contact number to reach them. This will begin on April 1<sup>st</sup>.

**EASTER BREAKFAST & EGG HUNT** will follow after the Easter Sunrise Service. Breakfast is from 7:30-8:45am.

**Confirmation thru Senior High Students & Families:** we need your help to make the Easter breakfast a success! We are asking for the following: Prep help on Saturday, April 8th from 9:00 am - 12:00 pm (build the egg bakes, assemble the pastry plates, decorate the tables, etc.); Pastries - each youth family is asked to bring a sweet side for the meal (coffee cake, donuts, kringle, etc.); please bring these on Saturday so that we can prep them for Sunday Serving and clean-up help on Sunday, April 9th; breakfast is from 7:30 am to 8:45 am.

**No Confirmation April 5<sup>th</sup>** due to Neenah’s Spring Break.

**CONFIRMATION EXAMINATION & RITE** will take place this year as part of the Saturday evening service on May 20<sup>th</sup>, with the Rite of Confirmation taking place as part of the Sunday Morning Service on May 21<sup>st</sup>.

Confirmands will share their own personal statements of faith in place of a public questioning. Please pray for them and their continued growth in their baptismal faith, even as they prepare to take their Confirmation Vows!

**Pastor Fitch** will be out of the office for vacation April 10-15.

**Both Pastors** Will be out of the office for South Wisconsin District Spring Pastors Conference in Manitowoc – April 17-19.

#### **VITAL STATISTICS**

**Number of Baptized Souls: 405**

**Number of Confirmed Souls: 349**

**Number of Families: 249**

#### **Released from Peace:**

Mike & Darla Blank– Grace Lutheran in Neenah (WELS)

Bob & Sami Patschke—The Core in Appleton (WELS)



## VBS 2023 "God's Living Water"

"The grace of our Lord overflowed for me." 1 Timothy 1:14

Who's ready to dive in to this year's Vacation Bible School? This year will be focusing on Jesus, The Living Water, and how we are all covered in His soul-quenching grace. Planning is well underway and we would love your help! Are you good in the kitchen?

Creative with arts and crafts? Are you musically inclined?

Please contact Betsy Ehlert, (920)-750-0910, if you are interested in getting involved.



THANK YOU. The Social Ministry Board would like to thank and acknowledge the outpouring of support from congregation members generously donating personal care items for The Family Hygiene drive. The donations are in need for families within the Fox Valley. The Compassionate Heart Bake sale held in February was also a huge fund raising success to provide financial assistance to our members in need.



UPCOMING SAVE THE DATE : May 20 Treasure in the Trunk Sale in church parking lot. Each year the focus is to raise funds for medical related costs/issues. We have recently heard of an organization called, Bo's Heavenly Clubhouse, through Cindy Bottine. It is a non-profit organization that provides support for grieving parents, siblings, family that have experienced the death of a child. Help is provided through grieving and healing process, host support groups and help with funeral costs of child under 18 years of age in state of Wisconsin. This organization was started by a mother who lost a 10month old son. From reading their mission statement, testimonials, complete description in other services provided it really impresses the need to help organizations like this to be in existence. There is a great website for all to check into [bosheavenlyclubhouse.org](http://bosheavenlyclubhouse.org) for more complete information. We can all start preparing for the sale by getting our spring cleaning, downsizing done by 20 May so we can have a great sale

Since we have been created in the image of God, we are to reflect the Owner's will in every aspect and relationship of our lives . . . *reaching out in His love, serving as Jesus did, and celebrating in every circumstance.*

### Our Financial Answer to God's Love

**\$40,222 February Budget** (Anticipated Expenses)

\$33,175 Actual February Income

\$36,949 Actual February Expenses

(\$3,774)

**\$80,443 YTD Budget** (Anticipated Expenses)

\$71,805 Actual YTD Income

\$73,793 Actual YTD Expenses

(\$1,988)

*"Stewardship that begins in the right place can, by the leading of the holy Spirit through the Gospel, produce an understanding of stewardship that is liberating. The desired result is faithfulness."*<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Excerpt from *Stewardship Basics*, 2017 The 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*



**e-mails**

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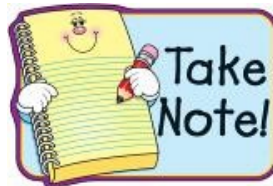
[www.peaceneenah.com](http://www.peaceneenah.com)

**Worship Services**

**Sat. 5:00 p.m.**

**Sun. 9:00 a.m.**

Bible Study/Sunday School  
10:30 a.m. Sundays



The Church office will be closed  
Good Friday, April 7th