

Peace Lutheran Church

Volume 36 No. 5

May 2023



Re:VITALITY "SHIPWRECKED?"

From my childhood, I remember the sitcom Gilligan's Island". Many of you might recall this program. What an amusing story of 7 castaways who found themselves shipwrecked on a deserted island. The trip began as a simple two-hour cruise but ended in disaster. Try as they will; they could never get off the island. The series does conclude, seasons later, with their rescue. Although humorous as it was, no one liked to be shipwrecked. The episodes made it very clear that they wanted to be back home, living out their lives.

In Acts 27, another shipwreck is spoken of. I encourage you to take time to read this chapter and then reflect on the following comments.

Let's first examine the nature of the shipwreck... Paul is in the process of being taken to Rome, where he, as a citizen of Rome, would appear before Caesar and await his judgment, his fate. He is a prisoner in chains when he boards the ship.

Rather than listening to common sense and sound advice, the ship departed for its journey to Rome. Disaster strikes. There are attempts for self-preservation. Cargo is tossed overboard. In an attempt to save themselves, it is even proposed that the prisoners on board, including Paul, should be killed.

Though the ship is wrecked, there are some amazing results. All of the passengers, some 276 lives, are spared, including St. Paul. Paul would eventually board another ship and make it to Rome.

This was especially good news for Paul. While in prison in Jerusalem, where Paul's trek to Rome began, Jesus had appeared to Paul and was assured that he, Paul, would be led to Rome, where he would have the opportunity to preach the Gospel. Though it would seem all would be lost, God would not allow a shipwreck to interfere with His plan for Paul.

Praise be to God for having preserved Paul and for having fulfilled His promise. Paul would make it to Rome, and the Gospel would be proclaimed though eventually, after Paul's appeal, he would be martyred at the command of the Caesar.

When I consider the events of the Fall of 2022, I would liken it to a "shipwreck." The financial crisis could have easily put an end to the ministry of our congregation. But God would not allow for it.

Rather, by His grace and mercy, by the leadership's actions, and by the faithful members of the congregation – that's YOU! – a pending disaster was addressed, and the ministry of the congregation was able to continue.

By God's grace and the work of your leadership, we are able to keep moving forward, "Reaching Out, Serving Jesus, Celebrating His Love." The process of Re:Vitality will help us to move forward intentionally. It is hoped that by God's blessing that we will be able to "set sail" once again and become a vibrant, thriving ministry.

To God be the glory!

Pastor Schroeder

SEMI-ANNUAL VOTERS ASSEMBLY – Is May 23, 2023 at 6:30 p.m.



RETURNING – THE PASSING OF THE OFFERING PLATES Beginning on the first weekend of May, the passing of the offering plates will be reinstated. This is the last of our “traditions” to be reinstated since the outbreak of COVID. This decision was made by the Elders in their April meeting.

CIRCUIT-WIDE ASCENSION DAY SERVICE On **Thursday, May 18th**, the congregations of our Circuit will gather to celebrate the Ascension of Our Lord. The service will take place at **7:00 P.M.** Trinity Lutheran Church, 303 Broad Street, Menasha, WI, will serve as the host. Rev. Dr. Nathan Meader, SWD Mission Executive, will be our guest preacher. There will be a Mass Choir made up of choirs from congregations of the Circuit. Pastors of our Circuit congregations will be participating in the service. The offering, to be gathered as you enter the sanctuary and to be presented to the Lord as a part of the service, will be forwarded to SWD Missions. Come and join fellow brothers and sisters in Christ of our Circuit in celebrating this great event of our Lord Jesus Christ and of His Church.

OUR NEW HOME We are now in our new home. Our new address is 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 will then subsequently add you to our contact list. Pastor Schroeder

WHEN HOSPITALIZED / VISITATIONS Please contact the church office if you incur hospitalization. Hospitals no longer automatically call on your behalf unless you request contact to be made. 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” 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.

Thank You!!!

To our Board & Council members, their families, and the many hands that went to work to feed our bodies, even as we prepared to be fed spiritually by our Lord's Word in Worship this Lenten season. Your work among us is very much appreciated!!

To the Youth & Families, Board of Education, Erin Johnson, Lorrie Muth, and all of the many hands that worked together to make sure that our Easter Breakfast went off ever so well!! Thank you especially to the Haldiman family for leading out/coordinating the Breakfast this year!!

Thank you to Miss Caitlyn & Miss Betsy for leading the ever-so-precious littles on an easter egg hunt in the narthex! It is wonderful when we have the opportunity to lift them up! Thank you, Lord, for bringing us together and enlivening our Fellowship as we received your gifts to us, preparing us to go and share with others.

Confirmation Weekend this year is May 20th & 21st. During the Saturday evening service, the Confirmands will read their Faith Statements before the congregation, and on Sunday they will make their Confirmation vows in our midst and before our Lord. Please pray for them as they take up their baptismal faith with their own hands, and that the Lord would keep them in life-long Baptismal Grace!

Recognition of Graduates will take place on Sunday, May 28th.

Youth to Assist in Worship the weekend of May 27th & 28th. The Youth will be Greeting, Ushering, Reading the Readings, etc. Please continue to encourage them as we come together to receive all good things from our Lord's hand!



ON FAITH – Part 2: “Coming to & Living in Faith”

In Acts chapter 9, we see the amazing encounter Saul of Tarsus had with the risen Christ. Saul was a rising star among the Pharisees, who was determined to see Christians destroyed. On his way to Damascus to root out any who called on the name of Jesus as Savior & Lord, he was confronted by the very one he was persecuting, was struck blind, and sent to await the arrival of Ananias, one of the very people he sought to destroy. This event profoundly effected Saul, and his murderous heart was transformed as he experienced a total rebirth! Saul, the Pharisee, became better known as Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, an evangelist to much of the known world, with the Holy Spirit inspiring him to write many letters to the churches of his day. This experience extended beyond St. Paul. In Romans 1:17, Paul declares, *“The righteous shall live by faith.”* Living in faith becomes the way of life for us as believers, as in Baptism, God gives all Christians new life. More than something we as Christians *do*, this is a blessing bestowed when the Holy Spirit works faith in our hearts.

In Galatians 2:20, he writes, *“I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”* Paul could no longer separate himself from his faith in Jesus, and his life would never be the same. Faith became his new way of life, and he could no longer look around without his faith impacting what and how he saw. God in Christ had taken him over, and he was a new person. The cross of Christ became the sort of *corrective lens* or *eyes of faith* through which he saw the world.

When we view the world through the *eyes of faith*, everything comes into focus. We begin to see the world as it is, and we become aware of all that God does for us. We see the need for God’s love in the lives of unbelievers, and we aim at sharing His love so that they too can see Him clearly.

The thought of sharing our faith with someone else makes some Christians nervous. They worry if they will say the right thing, wonder if the time is right, and fret over the results of their sharing or lack of. Yet that uneasiness over sharing one’s faith is quite unfounded. There’s no reason for us to place such a burden & anxiety on our shoulders. Even the apostle Paul admitted in 1 Corinthians 2:3-5, *“I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.”* God uses us in our weakness, and our frailties speak to His strength.

The most articulate and expressive speaker can do nothing to further God’s kingdom unless the Spirit is working in the hearts of the listeners. We find this clearly demonstrated in Ephesians 2:8-9, *“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.”* Christians share the message of God’s salvation with others. Romans 10:17 states, *“So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.”* Every Christian has the privilege of helping broadcast God’s message, but our responsibility ends as the Holy Spirit takes over. The Spirit is the one who works faith in the hearts of unbelievers, and does so purely by grace, not because of any deserving qualities within the individual. One does nothing to *earn* a gift, one can only receive or reject the generosity of the giver.

Ephesians 2:9 shows that the one who shares their faith is not the one who works faith & new life in someone else. The faith sharer is simply the medium through which the message is delivered, and the gift is God’s message of salvation through Jesus Christ. At most, the faith sharer might be considered to be the gift wrap! In no way does the gift wrap indicate the quality of the gift, therefore

the faith sharer acknowledges that faith is God's gift, not something he or she has accomplished in the heart of the unbeliever. The faith sharer cannot boast of his or her 'conquests' for Christ, as it is only by the Holy Spirit's work that another individual comes to faith.

The Holy Spirit works through Word and Sacraments to bring faith to unbelievers. For some people, faith begins when they hear the Word of God being preached, whether in a formal worship service, or in the quiet witness of a Christian neighbor who daily lives according to faith until the unbeliever asks, "what is it that makes the difference in your life?"

The accounts of the Gospels reveal that many came to faith just by observing Jesus and what He did. After Lazarus was raised from the dead, many put their faith in Jesus. The Book of Acts is filled with many accounts of people wanting to be baptized after hearing the disciples preach and seeing their boldness for Christ. This tells us that knowledge is important. Without it, faith falters. We could imagine knowledge as the fertilizer of faith. In Acts 8:30-31, the disciple Philip encountered an Ethiopian who needed Philip to explain the scriptures: *"Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, 'Do you understand what you are reading?' and he said, 'How can I, unless someone guides me?'"* Once the Ethiopian understood that the prophet Isaiah was talking about Jesus, he asked to be baptized.

However, if faith were only a matter of gaining knowledge, we would have little need for the Holy Spirit's input. God makes it clear in Scripture that the Holy Spirit works faith in human hearts. The Jewish Christians in Galatia insisted that Gentile Christians had to follow certain Old Testament requirements. St. Paul responded to this falsehood in Galatians 2:15-16: *"We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners; yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified."* St. Paul continued in Galatians 3:3 by clearly pointing out the influence of the Holy Spirit in beginning faith: *"Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?"* Paul makes it clear that faith begins with the Spirit's work, not by human accomplishment.

In 2 Thessalonians 2:13, Paul reiterates that people are saved through faith, which is activated and maintained in a person's life by the Holy Spirit's working through God's Word & Sacraments: *"But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the first fruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth."* The work of the Holy Spirit is to bring people to faith, and then empower them daily to put their faith into action in obedience to God's will as revealed in His Word. St. Paul counsels us as Christians how to live so that the light of salvation shines through us. In 2 Corinthians 3:3, he reminds us, *"You show that you are a letter from Christ delivered by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts."*

"Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1). Faith is the God-given ability to trust deep in your heart that He will provide for all of your needs, including the very words you need to speak in sharing your faith with others. You can know & trust 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.

Next month we will dig deeper into FAITH, exploring how it grows and investigate its benefits & rewards. To God alone be all glory & honor, worship & praise. Amen!

Pastor Fitch



Mothers Day Bulletins. Show your appreciation and love for your favorite Mom's, by submitting their names for the Mother's Day Bulletin. (members and others are welcome) The forms for the Mothers Day bulletins will be available in the weekly bulletins and/or on the counters in the church. A minimum \$1.00 donation per name is requested. Deadline to submit names will be May 8, 2023. Contact Barb Kaun at 920-720-9689 with questions.

The Funds generated by the 2023 Mother's Day booklet have been designated for the Female Church Worker Scholarship Fund (Lutheran Women's Missionary League South Wisconsin District). To be eligible, a woman must be a resident of South Wisconsin District enrolled in one of our synodical institutions preparing for full time church work in a called position.

"Where Friends Gather". The women of Peace, friends and family are invited to attend the Spring Women's Event, Monday, May 8, at 6:30pm in the Fellowship Hall. An evening of sharing, laughter, encouragement, a humorous skit, and of course sweet treats, are sure to lift your spirits. Women of all ages value the importance of friendships, especially when we journey together with the Lord, "Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as you are doing." 1 Thessalonians 5:11. Sign up on the board next to the fellowship hall.

If you have any questions, contact Judy Daley(414)-418-8101.

Peace Mission Guild is planning some informal events for the summer, to encourage fun and "sistership".

Save the dates and watch for details.

June 14(Wed)- Unusual Olympics

July 26(Wed)- Picnic in the Park

August 12(Sat)- Neenah Farmers Market



BIRTHDAYS
THIS MONTH

| | |
|----------------|------|
| LuAnn Thorson | 5-2 |
| Ashley Fitch | 5-4 |
| Barb Duffeck | 5-8 |
| Carolyn Wagner | 5-11 |
| Kris Belongia | 5-23 |



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 May YEAH OWLS get together will be Thursday, May 18, 2023. We will be

joined by Kim Molitor from Windward Wealth Strategies, Inc. Kim was very helpful to Kris Belongia after Joe's passing and helped her with the details/contacting of entities that need to be contacted following the death of a loved one. Kim will speak about items we should have prepared and listed, and documents needed and ready in case of death. 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 Potluck Luncheon. There will be a sign up for the item you'd like to bring if you're able to contribute to our luncheon. This will be our last OWLS luncheon until September. Signup sheets will be in the Fellowship Hallway 2 weeks prior to the May 18th meeting. Make sure to sign up. We'd love to see you there and you can even bring a friend.

SCRIP NEWS:

HELP WANTED:

Are you interested in helping with the Scrip program here at Peace?
Would you like to help with....

- selling scrip after church services?
- picking up gift cards at local vendors when scrip is ordered?
- helping jumpstart electronic sales with Raiseright App?
- learning how to reconcile each week's sales?

If you are interested in one or more of these areas...please contact Kathy Ehlert.



SCRIP PROGRAM CHANGES:

We wanted to let you know about some changes in the Kohl's Cares Fundraising gift card program through the local Scrip gift card centers.



Please be aware of the following:

- **Kohl's physical gift cards and eGift cards are temporarily unavailable from RaiseRight, effective immediately.**
- You can continue to use all Kohl's gift cards and eGift cards previously purchased from RaiseRight in Kohl's stores and on Kohls.com.
- Kohl's physical gift cards and eGift cards should be available to order from RaiseRight soon.

NOTE: These new cards cannot be applied to Kohl's Charge Card account balances.

SUMMER 2023 SCRIP ORDERING DATES:

In an effort to reduce costs, we will be limiting the number of times SCRIP cards are ordered during the summer months. Our program sales usually decrease in the summer months so in order to reduce the amount spent on shipping costs, SCRIP cards will only be ordered twice a month for June, July, and August. We will make an effort to have cards available for purchase, but if you can look ahead and plan to order accordingly, we can have cards later in the weekend after ordering. We appreciate your cooperation and participation in our SCRIP gift card program which currently supports our Youth Group and Lutheran Education Scholarships. If you have any questions, please contact Kathy Ehlert.



Singing for Mother's Day Reminding all Sunday School Families that all kids will be singing Sunday, May 14th, for Mother's Day. Please have kids in the Fellowship Hall by 8:40 a.m. so that they can get their beautiful singing voices ready.



Prayer Partner Ice Cream Social "Here's The Scoop!" An ice cream social is planned for the confirmands to finally meet their prayer partners! 8th graders and families are invited to come to the Fellowship Hall following Confirmation Class May 17th



VBS 2023 "God's Living Water"

Who's ready to dive into this year's Vacation Bible school! Planning is well underway and we need your help! A planning meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 4th at 6pm. Please join us to discuss snacks, crafts, lessons, decorations and more!

Prepared by Loren Wahl, Congregation Chairman, March 31, 2023

\$40,222 March Budget (anticipated expenses)

\$42,630 Actual March Income

\$37,825 Actual March Expenses

\$ 4,805

\$120,665 YTD Budget (anticipated expenses)

\$114,283 Actual YTD Income

\$111,618 Actual YTD Expenses

\$ 2,665

Summary: 2023 YTD, our income slightly exceeds our expenses.

Good news: Compared to 2022 YTD, income is up 3.9% and expenses are up 2.5%.

Bad news: 2023 YTD income is below budget (anticipated amounts).

Bad news: Cash reserves are very low. Our weekly budget is \$8K. On March 31, 2023 cash reserves in the general fund were \$6k. Week-by-week we exist on the cusp of the general fund unable to pay next week's bills. This low amount creates a high risk.



Treasure in the Trunk update: There are sign up sheets in the hallway seeking volunteers for this event. If you are not able to be present on May 20 for the event but have items for the sale you can place them in the room next to the library. If donated items are not sold they will go to Able Light (Bethesda) after the sale. Additional ways to help is placing a sign in your yard to help promote the sale. Tell your family and friends to come check out the bargains. We are looking forward to another fun day to share in fellowship and great bargains to raise funds for Bo's Heavenly

VITAL STATISTICS

Number of Baptized Souls: 405

Number of Confirmed Souls:

348 Number of Families: 249

Death:

March 27, 2023

Phil Doucette

Funeral:

April 5, 2023

Phil Doucette

Birth:

March 16, 2023

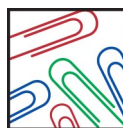
Cillian Scott Coady

Parents: Tyler & Rachel Coady

April 16, 2023

Isaiah Walter Nemecek

Parents: Nick Nemecek & Hanna Piepenbrink



Office Hours

The Church office will be closed on Friday's starting June 2nd.

Office hours will be:

Monday-Thursday: 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

Also Grace will be on vacation May 11-29th back in the office Tuesday, May 30th.

Kathy Ehlert will be filling in while she is



Next Mom's of Peace meeting will be Tuesday, May 9, 2023.

Peace Lutheran Church

Missouri Synod
1228 S. Park Avenue
Neenah, WI 54956-4252
(920) 725-0510

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

pastor@peaceneenah.com
assocpastor@peaceneenah.com

Web site:

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 Monday, May 29th
for Memorial Day.**

