

# Peace Lutheran Church

Volume 36 No. 6

June 2023



## Re:VITALITY

### “DRY BONES?: FROM DESPAIR TO REVIVAL”

Read Ezekiel 37:1-14.

Two challenges comes to us while here on earth... Overconfidence and Despair. Both have the propensity to lead to disaster.

The children of Israel had become overconfident. It lead them to reject their God and brought on themselves devastating consequences. They found themselves as a conquered people exiled to a foreign land as a result of a total defeat. Their beloved city Jerusalem and the temple to be completely destroyed. Despair was consuming them.

It is in this context that God once again speaks to His people through a vision of His servant, the prophet Ezekiel. The vision is entitled, “The Valley of Dry Bones”.

All is dead, the vision of dry bones is shown to Ezekiel. Imagine the vision as he saw it. No skin, no breath, only dry bones. A question is posed to him as you read in the text. Ezekiel speaks correctly in that only God knows and can make the dry bones live.

Indeed, God does just that. He assembles the bones and gives them the breath of life. New life is brought forward all by God’s power through His Spirit. Ezekiel is a witness to this great miracle.

The purpose of this vision was to remove despair and usher in revival. The House of Israel would be restored by almighty God. He would work this on behalf of His people. He, namely God Almighty, would restore His people. They would return to Jerusalem. The walls and city would be restored. The temple would be rebuilt. Israel would be revived.

This wonderful vision addresses our overconfidence that often leads to rejecting God resulting in despair. Yet, He brings new life to us in the forgiveness of sins. We are revived. His Word and Sacraments re-establishes us and we are once again restored in our relationship with us.

The same can be applied to our congregation. We went through a time of despair. By God’s grace He will revive us and we can once again go forward revived by Him. This is the essence of the process of Re: Vitality. The Task Force is now fully established and have met. The members of the Task Force are as follows:

**Facilitator:** Pastor Schroeder

**Members-at-Large:** Rebecca Doyle, Susan Hardwick, Salli Nickolai, Luke Pelger, Don Daley

**Board Representatives:** Board of Elders: Fred Kaun, Board of Education: Hillard “Doc” Harms, Board of Evangelism: Paulette Stecker, Board of Trustees: Lorri Muth, Board of Stewardship: Ed Perkins, Board of Social Ministry: Kathryn Tesch

**Advisory Members:** Chairman of the Congregation: Loren Wahl, Treasurer: Karmen Haldiman, Pastor Fitch

We met for Orientation last month and will meet monthly to accomplish the work that is set before us. Before we begin any of the particular tasks, we are going to go through a Bible study prepared by the designers of the process. To be overconfident and think we can do this work apart from almighty God is simply nonsense. I will keep you informed of our progress. There will be a time when you will be asked to participate as a part of a thorough self-study. It is my prayer that when the opportunity arises that you will participate.

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 intentionally move forward. It is hoped that by God’s blessing that we will be able to “breathe new life” once again and become a vibrant thriving ministry.

To God be the glory!

Pastor Schroeder



### **ON FAITH – Part 3: “Growing in Faith: Blessings of Our Lord”**

Over the last few months, we’ve been diving into the topic of Christian “Faith.” This month we will conclude this dive by looking at how faith grows, and what a wonderful blessing of God it is that HE grows our faith in Him, which in turn increases our love for those around us.

Our Christian faith is always meant to be growing. If you look at Confirmation for instance, the goal of youth confirming their faith is about taking their baptismal faith up with their own hands. There is a hand-off of sorts from the parents who brought their child to the font to receive baptism, who made vows in their child’s stead, even as their Heavenly Father gifted them with His Holy Spirit. Confirmation is the beginning of personal discipleship for the young learner.

Scripture speaks fairly clearly time & again that faith does not remain static, but is meant to grow and develop. In his letter to the Thessalonian church, St. Paul compliments them on the evidence he’d heard of their faith maturing, *“We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers, as is right, because your faith is growing abundantly, and the love of every one of you for one another is increasing.”* (2 Thess. 1:3)

As a seedling grows into a tree, changes take place. The delicate/fragile seedling’s stalk can break and it can be easily bent to grow into a distorted shape. It is more likely to survive if it is protected and nurtured. Then, as it grows, it becomes stronger, its branches fill out and provide shade, it becomes sturdier to weather the elements, and in time it produces fruit.

The faith of a new Christian, whether a little child or a newly converted adult, is much like that seedling. An immature faith can easily be bent or broken by the forces around it. It needs to be protected & nurtured by God’s Word & Sacraments in an environment of faithful believers. In 1 Thess. 3:10, Paul confesses, *“We pray most earnestly night and day that we may see you face to face and supply whatever is Lacking in your faith.”* As faith grows, Christians share their growing faith, which in turn leads to more growth. As an evangelist, Paul had great appreciation for this, *“I pray that the sharing of your faith may become effective for the full knowledge of every good thing that is in us for the sake of Christ.”* (Phil 6) Mature faith holds up to the storms of life and does not waver even when the future looks bleak. In Romans 5:3-5, Paul explains, *“We rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.”* As we grow in our faith in Christ, those around will see the evidence of that growing faith through the Christian love we show to others. Paul commended the Colossians for their faith, writing, *“We herd of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints.”* (Col 1:4)

Faith grows by the power of the Holy Spirit as He works through study of God’s Word and the encouragement & influence of other believers as together they share God’s Word in Worship & Fellowship. God declares the importance of knowing His Word in Deuteronomy 11:18-21, *“You shall therefore lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall teach them to your children, talking of them when you are sitting in your house, and when you are walking by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates, that your days and the days of your children may be multiplied in the land that the LORD swore to your fathers to give them, as long as the heavens are above the earth.”* God’s people need to take His command literally, and seek to do as He instructs. One of the most heinous temptations of Satan, the world, and our sinful flesh is to think we know everything about God’s Word & the message it brings, or that we are able to reach a point where we know ‘enough’. We can never assume that children will learn about God when they are ready, or that our own personal Bible study is not important to our lives as Christians. However, we can rejoice that God makes His Word clear in Scripture, and that He calls & Commands us to study His Word of life with one another, and that He promises to bless us through studying His Word together. We can be assured that time spent in Bible Study is never wasted!

On top of that, God has placed the Christians that surround us in our church, workplaces, community & neighborhoods are there for a reason. St. Paul often comments on how Christians build one another up in

*(Continued on page 3)*

faith, acknowledging that other believers uplifted him in his own faith walk. He knew that he had an impact on the faith of others, and often spoke of how much he desired to meet together, *"For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gifts to strengthen you—that is, that we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, both yours and mine."* (Rom 1:11-12)

Faith grows through imitating Christ, and even the lives of the faithful. Not that even faithful believers are sinless, but Christian leaders & mentors do much teaching by their example. Paul writes in 1 Thess. 1:6-8, *"And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the word in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit, so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. For not only has the word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia, but your faith in God has gone forth everywhere, so that we need not say anything."* And the writer of Hebrews stated, *"Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith."* (Heb 13:7)

When Christians become complacent in their faith, the danger of falling away from Christ is apparent. Hebrews 6:1-12 warns believers of not desiring spiritual maturity, which can lead to spiritual death. Some people are content with the basics and fail to see the importance of exercising their faith by putting it into action.

*"Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity... So that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises."* (Heb 6:1,12) *"If you are not firm in faith, you will not be firm at all."* (Isaiah 7:9)

Although we can't see if someone else has faith, God admonishes each of us to look at our own hearts and appraise our faith regularly, so that we may be lead to spiritual growth & action. We are justified by faith alone, but not by faith that is alone. Faith in Jesus Christ results in Christlike action. We can't earn salvation by works, and God doesn't need our works, but our neighbor does. Those around us need God's love to overflow from us to them, which happens as we actively do good for others, especially when they don't deserve it. And sometimes we do falter in our faith, drift away from God, and our lives spin off-course. Yet, when this happens, God calls us to repent and turn from our destructive course to once again take up Jesus' invitation, "Come to Me." If we never review our faith or ignore the warning signs (lack of concern for others, actions that show no love), disaster can result. Paul wrote to Timothy, *"By rejecting this, some have made shipwreck of their faith."* (1 Tim 1:19) Yet, when we see the warning signs, we can have hope that God has not abandoned us! God even uses our weaknesses of faith to benefit others.

Faith protects against the attacks of Satan, who will not rest until he's done as much damage as he can to God's creation, and he measures his victory in souls that refuse/reject saving faith in Christ. Faith arms us for battle with Satan, the world, & our sinful flesh, enabling us to rely on power that is not our own. St. Paul writes in Ephesians 6:16, *"in all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish the flaming darts of the evil one,"* and in Romans 5:1-2,

*"Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God."* Faith keeps our priorities in line with God's priorities of saving the lost and giving us peace. *"Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen."* (Heb 11:1) Faith trusts that God will provide for all of our needs, including the words we need to speak in sharing our faith with others. 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. To God alone be all glory & honor, worship & praise.

Amen!

Pastor Fitch



**ONE LAST TIME - 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 land line. So, you can reach us at the following phone numbers: Pastor: 262-224-4992, and Lynne: 262-224-4849. Neither Lynne and 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

Continued on page 4

**ONE LAST TIME - 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.  
Pastor Schroeder

**SUMMER PREACHING SERIES** This summer we will embark on a series entitled, “The Doctrine of Vocation: Serving Our Lord in all We Do”. The source for this series is from Luther’s Small Catechism: The Table of Duties. This will be the last series based on Luther’s Small Catechism as in previous summers we have covered all of the other parts. There will be a short break in the series in early July when we celebrate Ministry to the Armed Forces Sunday.

**NEW BIBLE STUDY OFFERINGS** Beginning in June, new topics will be offered. They are the following:

**Thursday Mornings** – The Letters of John (1-3 John) under the overall theme, “Love and Hate, Light and Darkness”. It is based on the following Bible passage... “We love because He first loved us.” 1 John 4:19. This class meets at 9:30 A.M. It will not meet on Thursday, June 8 due to Vacation Bible School.

**Sunday Mornings** – II Corinthians under the overall theme, “God’s Sufficient Grace”. It is based on the following Bible passage... Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. But He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you.” 2 Corinthians 12:8–9 This class meets at 10:30 A.M. following worship.

The **Saturday morning** Bible class will take a break during the summer and will resume in the Fall.

**Congratulations to our 2023 High-School & College Graduates:** Jordon Donnelly(HS), Dylan Florek(HS), Caleb Meunier(HS), Julian Donnelly(C), Nick Johnson(C), Kaileigh Nickel(C), and any others connected to our congregation! We recognized these blessed individuals on Pentecost Sunday, May 28<sup>th</sup>. High School Grads received a couple of gifts from the church that will assist them in surviving college. Please keep them in your prayers as they continue in their studies and that they continue to shine the light of Christ wherever they go.

**Congratulations once again to our 2023 Confirmands**, who made their Confirmation Vows on Sunday, May 21<sup>st</sup>. Please keep Preston, Jack, Brenden, Liam, Alison & Justin in continual prayers that we would together shine the light of the Gospel here in Neenah and throughout the world!

#### **VITAL STATISTICS**

**Number of Baptized Souls: 402**  
**Number of Confirmed Souls: 345**  
**Number of Families: 247**

#### **Adult Confirmation**

Karen Perkins  
Brian Hagens  
Casey Vickman

#### **8th Grade Confirmation**

Preston Davies  
Jackson Florek  
Alison Sommer  
Justin Sommer  
Brenden O’Brien

#### **Baptism**

May 7, 2023  
Cillian Scott Coady  
Parents: Tyler & Rachel Coady

May 14 2023

Isaiah Walter Nemecek  
Parents: Nick Nemecek & Hanna Piepenbrink

#### **Released from Peace**

Gary & Tina Wunsch  
Immanuel Lutheran Greenville

Tom Formella  
Asked to be released



**Mother's Day Booklets.** The Peace Mission Guild expresses their appreciation to Peace members for their contributions to the Mother's Day Booklet. It was wonderful to see the expressions of thoughtfulness toward our Mom's. A donation of over \$1,700 will benefit the Lutheran Women's Missionary League – South Wisconsin Female Church Worker' Scholarship Fund.

**Father's Day Booklets.** Father's Day is June 18, and you have the opportunity to show your love and appreciation to the Dad's of family, friends and Peace. Information sheets will be available in the bulletins May 27/28 and June 3/4, and available at the Information Counter until the deadline, June 12. All Proceeds from the Father's Day Booklet will be donated to the Lutheran Schools Scholarship Fund at Peace.

**Peace Mission Guild- Where Friends Gather.** Thank you to the women of Peace, family and friends who attended the May 8<sup>th</sup> event. The 40+ participants enjoyed laughter, fellowship and nourishment for the body and soul. Thank you to the Pink Ribbon Rebels who shared their experiences about their Equestrian Drill Team and their efforts to promote cancer awareness. The freewill offering of \$220 will be used to purchase Script grocery cards to assist local cancer patients and families.

**Where Friends Gather...part 2.** Peace Mission Guild will continue to encourage and support our sisters with some informal activities this summer. **Wednesday, June 14,** we will host an unusual and unique type of "Olympics" for women of all ages to enjoy. No physical activity or coordination are required. We will meet at church at 5:00pm for a Taco bar. Then, let the games begin!! Watch for a sign up near the Fellowship Hall. If you have questions, feel free to contact any of our PMG officers – Judy Daley, Dawn Johnson, Rebecca Thomas, Monica Jeske, or Barb Kaun.

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

**LWML National Convention, June 22-25, 2023.** The National convention is being hosted in Milwaukee, with the theme, "Celebrate the Lord of the Nations". Psalm 33:12-13 will serve as the goal statement and objective of the 4-day event, reminding us, "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, the people whom he has chosen as His heritage! The Lord looks down from heaven; he sees all the children of man." We are blessed to have 8 women from Peace who will be attending and volunteering at this spectacular and inspirational event.

For more information and to join the fun visit <https://www.lwml.org/2023-convention>.

In addition, thank you to Jim and Tina Smith for making a donation/ being a sponsor for the Tee up for Mites Charity Golf Scramble, at Western Lakes Golf Club, Pewaukee. There will be 8 members from Peace participating in the charity golfing event on June 21.

Please keep all of them in your prayers for safe travel and an uplifting experience.



**YEAH OWLS YEAH!** The **OWLS** have landed and we're having a **HOOT!!!** **Y**(young) **E**(especially) **A**(at) **H**(heart) **O**(older) **W**(wiser) **L**(livelier) **S**(saints). Will be on vacation and will meet again in September, watch the bulletin news and August newsletter for more information.





## 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? 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 or sign up on the VBS board in the middle hallway.

**COME JOIN US!** Who: Any Child Age 3 through 6<sup>th</sup> Grade, When: Monday, June 5 through Friday, June 9, 2023. Where: Peace Lutheran Church – 1228 S. Park Ave., Neenah, WI. How to Register: Send/Bring a registration form to the office or register online by scanning the QR code or by visiting <https://vbsmate.com/PeaceNeenahWI>. Any Questions? Contact [peaceneenahvbs@gmail.com](mailto:peaceneenahvbs@gmail.com). We can't wait to see you there! Come join us as we dive into God's Word together and discover how we are covered in His soul-quenching grace and lean about His overflowing love and salvation! Let's jump into *God's Living Water!*



### Want to donate items for VBS Week?

There is a need for some **kitchen and food items** for the week of VBS. Some of the items include Pretzel sticks, Carrots, Celery, Ranch Dip, Blue Jell-O, sugar, butter, PAM, Hot Dogs, Buns, Chips, Watermelon, Water, Ketchup and Mustard, among other things. The amounts needed are listed on the sign up sheet in the middle hallway. **Sign up if you are able to help.**

When you are ready to bring those donations to church, you can **put them in the kitchen labeled "For VBS."** Thank you for considering to help our VBS Outreach.

**VBS Training Dates:** Anyone involved with VBS **must attend one** of the following training dates. If you have any questions, please contact Betsy Ehlert.

**Thursday, June 1 - 10:30am or 6:30pm,**

**Saturday, June 3 - 9:00am**



### SCRIP NEWS - 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 the following 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



**Looking for women golfers of Peace** who want to spend an enjoyable afternoon golfing with other Peace women. Golfing takes place at Winagamie Golf Course Mondays at 2:30pm. Please contact Kris Belongia at 920-233-3999 or Monica Jeske at 920-202-1313 if you have questions.



## 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.



**TREASURE IN THE TRUNK Update:** Thank you to all members that turned out to support our sale. From the venders, cashiers, help set up/take down, donated items to sell, congregation members placing signs in their yard to promote the sale, and individuals making purchases we are truly grateful and blessed in the ability to make a donation of \$1,102.91 to Bo's Heavenly Clubhouse in memory of Alayna Bottine.

We had received a list of items that the organization uses to help support their mission, and several of the items were donated after the sale. As with other sales of the past we were additionally blessed to have a sunshine day with the opportunity to do fellowship amongst participants and outreach to the community.

Thank you Judy Daley for preparing a list of Peace activities to the end of the year, the cashiers handed out this information at check out.



**COMPASSION GARDEN:** The planting is scheduled for 25 May 2023. Todd Lueke will be coordinating the garden this year. Volunteers are always needed to help nurture an abundant crop of vegetables so please reach out to Todd if you would like to assist in any way – if you don't know the difference between a plant and a weed this is an opportunity to learn with hands on training provided. Thank you to Jim Hoelzel for making wood supports for the bean plants – this will make the task of picking them MUCH easier when ready for harvest. To God be the Glory.

**Donations needed:** Milwaukee Prisoner Outreach, South Wisconsin District, is in need of items for hygiene kits to distribute to prisoners upon their release. There is a collection bin in the back hall for SMALL sized soaps, tooth brushes, tooth paste, shampoo, lotions, etc. the size that are from hotel/motel rooms. If you are doing any travelling and don't use those items please bring back to donate.

**Calling all Puppeteers!** The puppets are excited to get out, sing and dance for the Lord during VBS, June 5-9. We are always looking for new members. If you are going into 5<sup>th</sup> grade next year and older, you are welcome to join in the fun. Please call/text Judy Daley, 414-418-8101 if you have questions or are interested.



Prepared by Loren Wahl, Congregation Chairman, April 30, 2023

**\$40,222 April Budget (anticipated expenses)**

\$54,166 Actual April Income

\$35,162 Actual April Expenses

\$19,004

**\$160,888 YTD Budget (anticipated expenses)**

\$168,412 Actual YTD Income

\$146,780 Actual YTD Expenses

\$ 21,632

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

**Good news:** Compared to 2022 YTD, income is up 16% and expenses are up 2.1%.

**Bad news:** Cash reserves are very low. Our weekly budget is \$8K. On April 30, 2023, cash reserves in the general fund were \$25k. The target is to have cash reserves equal to 2-3 months of expenses. This low amount creates a high risk.

**Restricted funds:** We have \$75K in restricted funds and \$288K in the endowment fund. But these monies cannot be used to pay ordinary expenses like utilities, insurances, and wages.

**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](mailto:pastor@peaceneenah.com)  
[assocpastor@peaceneenah.com](mailto:assocpastor@peaceneenah.com)

**Web site:**

[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



Monday, June 5 through  
Friday, June 9, 2023.  
9:00 A.M - 11:45 A.M.

***LET'S DIVE IN!***