

Read Romans 12:9-21. I personally have found this portion of Scripture to serve as a great resource and reminder as to what I as a Christian is to be about. It is a wonderful reminder to us all as to how the "world" can identify us as a Christian. Such "Marks" set us apart and can serve as a witness to those who may not know what a Christian is and/or looks like in real life.

Below you will find some thoughts concerning the Scripture reading.

Romans 12 starts in this way: "I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. ² Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect." (vv. 1-2)

Recognized by St. Paul is the "mercies of God." Only in light of this, can the Christian enact the "Marks of a Christian." Realized is that only by God's mercy can one, though "in the world," be not "of the world." Those who are not Christian, cannot hope to live the "marks" as it is contrary to unregenerate people. It should also be said that it is difficult even for the Christian, having been shown mercy, to live them out perfectly as there is always temptation to act otherwise.

Consider verses 9-13: All of the verses that follow (through verse 21), address "brotherly love". In essence they speak to the command to "Love our neighbor", the summary of Commandments 4-10. Note the "opposites" that are expressed. The positive expresses Christian love, whereas the negatives are what comes natural as human beings. Indeed, each could be explained in depth, but I will let you contemplate its meaning. These are especially easier to express in the Christian community but should also be expressed for those who are not a part of the community.

Now consider verses 14-18: The reality that faced the Christian community was persecution. Persecution came from two camps - Judaism and Rome. Again, the mark of a Christian is seen in alien behavior to those who were persecuting the Christians. Rather than separating, to engage. At the same point in time, the Christian is to do all in his or her power to live in peace. Easier said than done. When Paul faced opposition, he did all that he could to move on and wait for another time. Behavior would set the Christians apart and perhaps even endear themselves to those who opposed them.

Finally, consider verses 19-21: This is probably the hardest way of expressing love. To not take vengeance. Rather, the Christian is called to let God handle any injustice. Again, where there is opportunity, the Christian is called upon to offer charity. It is for this reason that Christians found favor in the sight of many outside of the faith. They did not pay evil with evil.

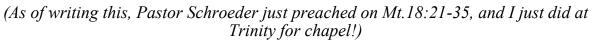
Think about the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ who suffered injustice. Though He could have "smote" His enemies, He prayed, "Father forgive them." If that were not enough, He even imparted Paradise to a repentant sinner who was hanging beside Him. Even the centurion at the foot of the cross-saw Jesus' witness and was brought to faith.

Dear friends, imagine how difficult it was for the Christians in Rome to have received these words. Only because they had received the mercy from Almighty God could they implement these words of instruction. So is the case for us today. We have received God's mercy. Now we live it out expressing mercy and love as our witness as Christians. Who knows how many may see the witness and be drawn to Jesus.

To God be the glory!



Please read Matthew 18:21-35 & 2 Corinthians 5:16-21



In The Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6, Jesus teaches us to pray, "And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors." Jesus then follows by explaining, "For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."

As people who are reconciled to God through Jesus Christ, every Christian is called to be a peacemaker in their life. Our Lord calls us as Christians – as 'little Christs,' to serve as ambassadors for the only Savior from sin, death & hell. As 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; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God."

Our struggles & conflicts with others are opportunities for us as Christ's ambassadors to act so differently from the world that people wonder, "Why would you respond to this situation in that way?" 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).

We often take our reconciliation to God for granted, praising Him in Worship for forgiving us & restoring our relationship with Him, yet we so often then turn to think, act, or speak in ways revealing hearts set more on worldly wants, over & against our Lord's heavenly gifts & perfectly will for our lives. This is especially true in conflict. By nature, we covet what others have and expect them to do for us, rather than serving God and others first. The old Adam in us embraces the world's message to take care of the Idol of Me/Myself/I first.

Have you ever known anyone you thought just didn't deserve to be forgiven? That's what Jesus' "Parable of the Unforgiving Servant" in Matthew 18 is about! The King having mercifully forgiven a servant's HUGE debt, the same servant brings misery on himself by holding a small debt against a fellow servant. Jesus says, "So shall My heavenly Father also do to you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart." The message is clear: God is the king; we are His servant who stands forgiven an incredible eternity of debt, whom our King sends out to be forgiving of others.

We owe everything to God: honor, obedience, service, thanksgiving, all we are & have. We are to surrender all to Him, including laying down our grudges. Yet we fail to obey & honor Him, neglecting His gifts of Word & Sacrament, thinking of ourselves first. Like Israel in the wilderness, God supplies us enough to fill our bellies & even share, yet we take God's gifts for granted and even grumble as He provides more than our needs. Then, when God permits fiery serpent-like trials to enter our lives to discipline us and turn back to Him, we look to ourselves, denying His loving care & forgiveness shown in Jesus' cross, death & resurrection. We act as though the people He has placed around us for our mutual benefit are here to get us what we want, or else. As the catechism says, we daily sin much, indeed deserving nothing but punishment. He sent His son to pay the debt in our place, His cross as mark of payment, His resurrection promise as the receipt marked "paid in full." Jesus took your sin away, forgives you, and is pouring eternal life into you! When we were bound for debtor's prison in hell, God forgave our enormous debt, and restored us to life & hope.

There are other servants of the King who have run up a debt with us. They've said or done things we didn't like that offended us. They are guilty of doing us wrong & hurt us, some perhaps by accident, others may seem to be offensive deliberately & truly evil to us, "they don't deserve my forgiveness!" Either way, "they hurt me & I'm angry with them; "They owe me!" Yet their debt to us is microscopic compared to our God forgiven sin-debt.

So, now we're back to the question: <u>Have you ever known anyone who just didn't deserve to be forgiven?</u> There are people like that! People who enact evil & wicked things deliberately, who set themselves as our enemies, and if possible, our destroyers. They just don't deserve to be forgiven! <u>But neither do we</u>. When God decided to work our salvation, we didn't even want it! We didn't feel our need, or really care that God sent His Son to pay the price of our sins by dying for us on the cross. Yet God did what we needed done so that we could escape the awful consequences of sins we hadn't even committed yet. "For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person-though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die-but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:6-8)

Sin runs to our very nature. We <u>do</u> evil daily, we <u>speak</u> evil all the time, we are <u>entertained</u> by it, and <u>think</u> evil continually. If we say to ourselves, "Oh no! Not me!" St. John reminds us, "If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us." (1 Jn. 1:9) God's Word frequently teaches us that heart of man is evil continually. To say your sin is any less constant or enormous than God's Word says, is to call God a liar. Yet, He's still forgiven you all that debt!

Having been forgiven, now when someone sins against you, you too must forgive, or you reject God's forgiveness for you. Jesus says, "So shall My heavenly Father also do to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart." When someone sins against us, it is helpful to remember that our real enemy is not the person before us, but sinful flesh & the devil. That fellow sinner is trapped in the flesh & enslaved. They may be irritating, but they are not the true source of the evil. Our brothers & sisters in the body of Christ also sin through weakness or by not realizing that what they have said or done has hurt. But even if they have deliberately sinned, we as spiritually mature siblings are to seek them out, not to berate them and fall into further sin, but to reconcile with them as Christ bids we do. We want to forgive as freely & fully as God forgives us. We want to forgive from the heart, even if they do not seek us out.

Forgive as you have been forgiven, <u>or you will be forgiven as you forgave (or failed to forgive)</u>. From the heart is the standard Jesus sets before us. May God forgive us, and soften our hard & unforgiving hearts toward others, that we may forgive one another <u>from Christ filled hearts!</u>

As Christ's Church, we seek to abide in Him, planted in His Word, Watered by His stream of Baptismal life, and fed at His Table. Abiding in God's Word, let us demonstrate mature faith by practicing confession & forgiveness in daily life with one another. May His Word bring forth a bountiful harvest in us, and may we together be: Reaching Out, Serving Jesus and Celebrating His love! *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 church & community, that others would see our forgiving hearts, and ponder what makes us different from the rest of the world. Let them see Jesus in 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.



"Uncluttered Hearts" is the theme for the November pre-advent tea sponsored by Peace Mission Guild. Save the date Monday, November13th, at 6:30p.m. Light refreshments will be served along with a brief program focused on making room for God during the upcoming Advent and Christmas season. All confirmed women of Peace are invited.



5th Sunday Fellowship Featuring Doughnuts and Coffee Bar

Mark your calendars for October 29th and set your alarms to come to church a little early! It might look a little different than the previous 5th Sunday fellowships, but starting at 8am we will still have doughnuts, hot coffee, cold brew coffee, and a milk bar for the kids! Come start your morning off right with a good breakfast and some great Christian fellowship. See you there!



A big Thank You to our Pastors and Peace Family for all the prayers, visits, cards, meals, rides and more that were given to us during our recent recoveries from a fall (Mike) and hip replacement surgery (Lori). Everything helped us get through some difficult days.

DECEMBER HOLIDAY SCHEDULE 2023 In conversation with the pastors and the recommendation of the Board of Education, and on account of the calendar for 2023 the Board of Elders have decided on the following schedule for the special services for December 2023...

Saturday, December 23 - 5:00 P.M. Worship and Holy Communion

Sunday, December 24 – 9:00 A.M. Sunday School Children's Christmas Service – No Communion

Sunday, December 24 – 7:00 P.M. Candlelight Service – No Communion

Monday, December 25 – 9:00 A.M. Worship with Holy Communion

Saturday, December 30 – 5:00 P.M. Worship with Holy Communion

Sunday, December 31 – 9:00 A.M. Worship with Holy Communion

As you can see, there are no services on Sunday, December 24 at 4:00 P.M. or on New Year's Eve, December 31 at 6:00 P.M.

The Elders will review the schedule for Christmas and New Year's in 2024.

Re: VITALITY TASK FORCE: AN UPDATE

The Task Force continues to do their work of preparing a Strategic Plan for 2024-2026. At our last meeting we reviewed the demographics of our area and the Summary Report of Interviews. It was also decided that our work will be plotted out over the next several months to complete the Strategic Plan.

I was overly ambitious to think that the work could be done by the November Voters Assembly. The Plan will be ready for the Voters in May 2024. The workshop sessions were parceled out over the next few months to give better attention to the task and to include as many of the Task Force members.

Please continue to pray for the Task Force as it moves forward and completes its task. Pray that the Lord will guide and give discernment for the advancement of His kingdom and the future ministry of our congregation.

Pastor Schroeder



Peace Mission Guild started the new and exciting "year" with 21 women attending the meeting on September 11. Judy Daley led a Bible Study titled "Created for God's Work". LWML Convention attendees shared memories from that event.

At the Mission Guild meeting on October 9, the Bible Study will be "An Age of Grace". All women of Peace are encouraged to attend and friends are welcome as well.

Zone 11 Fall Rally will be held on Saturday, October 21, at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Oshkosh. The rally is being hosted by the ladies of Good Shepherd and Trinity Lutheran, Oshkosh. Registration beings at 8:45am. The meeting will start at 9:15am with a devotion. Gifts from the Heart donations will benefit Sleep in Heavenly Peace Ministry, Oshkosh. They are looking for twin size bedding (new, unwashed and in original packaging) – sheet sets, bed in a bag, blankets, mattress pads, sheets, pillow cases.

LWML mission moment

Serving God's Children with Special Needs — Journeys Lutheran School, Milwaukee, WI -\$100,000 The mission of Journeys Lutheran School is to serve God's children age eight to 21 with special needs such as attention deficit disorder, learning disabilities, autism, anxiety, trauma, emotional behavior disorder, and obsessive compulsive disorder. This grant will help purchase two vans to transport high school students enrolled in the School-to-Work Internship Program and students taking elective classes at nearby Martin Luther High School.

Birthdays for the month

Doris Andre	10/14
Linda Jensen	10/25
Jody Gawron	10/27
Patti Marohn	10/29





Peace Mother's group has begun this year! This year we are using the MOPS international theme of "Say Yes!" We kicked off by discussing how to be friend discomfort, become easily delighted, and be here now. So often in this life we succumb to worry, but instead we should trust in the Lord to fulfill and provide for all our needs.

Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life? Matthew 6:26-27 NIV

For our mothers, please join us on October 5th for a playdate from 9-11 am at Riverside Park in Neenah. Our next meeting will be October 11th from 9-11am where we will discuss infant loss in honor of those families who have suffered the loss of a child. We are in need of loving caregivers to help watch children during our meeting time. If you are interested in caregiving please contact Rebecca Doyle at 810-357-7742. For our October meeting we will also host a costume exchange. If you would like to donate a costume or are in need of a costume, please reach out to Rebecca Doyle.



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 next get together is Thursday October 19, 2023. Coffee fellowship begins at 11:00 AM with lunch served promptly at 11:30 AM. At noon we will have our program. This month we will be joined by a local Pharmacist. He will speak on senior medications, interactions with foods and over-the-counter

medications, allergic reactions, ways to decrease medication errors, and answer many medication questions. Signup sheets will be in the Fellowship Hallway 2 weeks prior to the October 19th meeting. Make sure to sign up. We'd love to have you join us and you can even bring a friend.



LWML SUNDAY We will be celebrating LWML Sunday on the weekend of Saturday, September 30 & Sunday, October 1. There will be an "Ingathering of Mites" Special Offering as has been our custom.

Thank You! GIVING THANKS... Lynne and I would like to express our thanks for your love expressed with the celebration of Stefan's 40th birthday and Lynne's surgery. The words of

encouragement, cards, meals, and gift cards were overwhelming. May the Lord bless you for your expressions of love to the glory of God!



Reformation Sunday, October 29th – We will have the joyous opportunity to have the kids sing in Worship, 3rd Grade youth will receive their own personal Bibles, and we will have the Confirmation of one of our Youth! What a blessing it will be to gather together as the family of Christ to welcome

another brother in Christ to our table, even as we welcome our Lord to be present in our midst!!

GUEST SPEAKER: REV. DR. GREG SELTZ The Rev. Dr. Greg Seltz will be our guest preacher on the weekend of October 14 & 15. He is the Director of the Lutheran Center of Religious Liberty (LCRL) located in Washington D.C. LCRL is a Recognized Service Organization (RSO) of the LCMS. He serves as a liaison and representative of the LCMS and keeps us informed as to what is happening in reference to those things related to Christian freedom. He is not a lobbyist. Some of you may know him as he was for a period of time the voice of the Lutheran Hour. Dr. Seltz will also have the Bible Class Hour to share with us more concerning the work that he does. LCRL is supported via our Missions budget.

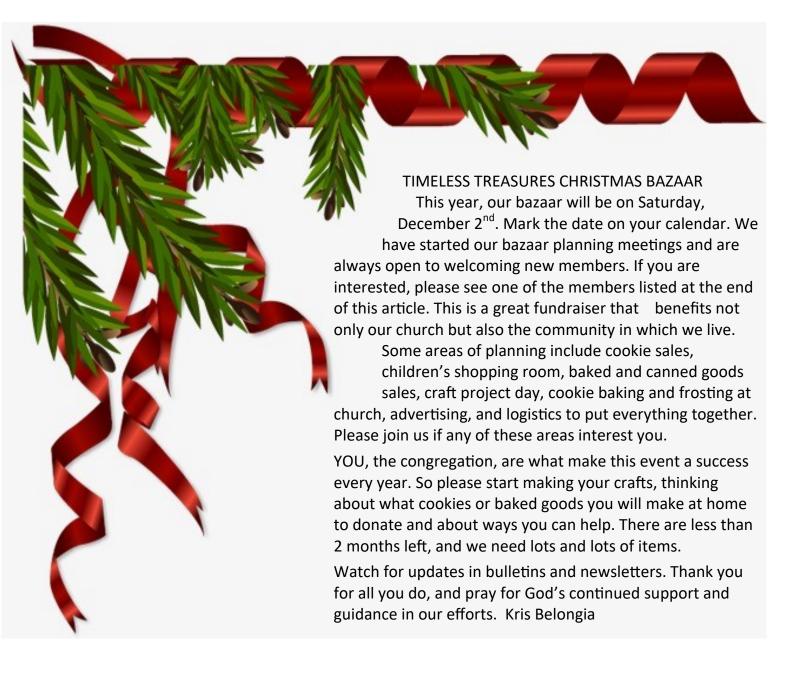
Fall Pastor's Conference – Both Pastors will be in Wisconsin Dells for the South Wisconsin District Fall Pastor's Conference Monday, October 23rd thru the Morning of Wednesday, October 25th.

Sr. High Youth – On October 22nd we will gather as Youth & Parents together to discuss & plan events for the next few months, and into 2024. Pastor Fitch has also sent information home with the Youth about a Higher Things gathering taking place in June 2024 at Concordia University Wisconsin, which we can also discuss at this meeting.



Sunday School Christmas Service – With Christmas Eve being a Sunday this year, the Boards of Education & Elders have decided to try something a little different with our Children's Christmas Service. The service will take place on the morning of Christmas Eve (Sunday, December 24th) at 9:00AM in place of our usual Sunday Divine Service, with Betsy Ehlert being the director this year. Information should be coming home with Sunday School students sometime over the next few weeks in October, so that families may be more able to make this part of their Christmas plans. Keep your eyes peeled as we prepare to celebrate our Lord's Nativity together as His people!

NOMINATIONS As is our custom and per the Constitution and Bylaws of our congregation, a Nominating Committee has been formed to secure nominations of candidates to serve as Officers and Board members for 2024. Should you be contacted to serve, please prayerfully consider accepting the nomination. Your gifts of time and talent are needed in order for us to continue the work that the Lord has called for us to do. Together we can pursue our mission to, "Reach Out, Serve Jesus and Celebrate His Love.





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.

In thankfulness to God's love we have supported the following missions:

January - Lutherans for Life

February - Cindy Wrucke, LCMS - Eurasia

March - Camp LuWiSoMo

April - Wisconsin Family Council/Wisconsin Family Action

May – Lutheran Heritage Foundation

June – Joint Seminary Fund

July – Trinity (Menasha) Food Pantry and Lutheran Center for Religious Liberty

February, May, and August – Amy Formella with LBT





Prepared by Loren Wahl, Congregation Chairman, September 15, 2023.

\$40,222 August Budget (anticipated expenses)

\$35,262 Actual August Income \$36,730 Actual August Expenses \$ -1,468

\$321,775 YTD Budget (anticipated expenses)

\$311,764 Actual YTD Income \$291,068 Actual YTD Expenses \$ 20,696

Summary: August 2023, expenses slightly exceeded income.

Results: 2023 YTD income is \$312K compared to 2022 YTD income which was \$273K Results: 2023 YTD expense is \$291K compared to 2022 YTD expense which was \$294K



Number of Baptized Souls: 403 Number of Confirmed Souls: 349 Number of Families: 246

Funeral:

August 9, 2023 Ray Zanto

August 16, 2023 Rae Tipler

Joined Peace by Profession of Faith

Alexzandria Ginnow



Sunday School - October 2023

Reaching Out, Serving Jesus and Celebrating His Love.

Sunday School year has begun. Our classes meet in the Fellowship Hall at 10:30 am for an activity/ music, bible study in classrooms at 11:00 am and pick up at 11:30 am.

We would like to introduce you to our current volunteers:

Co-Sunday School Superintendents: Caitlin Vanden Bloomer, Betsy Ehlert

P-K: Rebecca Doyle, Ashley Fitch

Gr. 1-4: Jared Bahn, Ranee Bahn, Jody Gawron

Gr. 5-8: Luke Pelger

High School: Erin Johnson, Lorrie Muth

Substitutes: Tom Ehlert, Kristina Ehlert, Emily Ehlert

Hall Roamer: Kathy Ehlert

2 Sunday School children will be singing on October 29 for Reformation Sunday -please meet in the Fellowship Hall at 8:40 am.

After church, we will meet in the Fellowship Hall at 10:30 am.
Our October Fellowship will be Reformation related fun on Reformation Sunday!

Keep an eye out for updates for Sunday School in the weekly Bulletin News

Any questions? Please contact Caitlin Vanden Bloomer or Betsy Ehlert.





Thank you to members of the congregation for donating to the School Supply Collection. Trinity Lutheran received and expressed gratitude for items to donate to children in need.

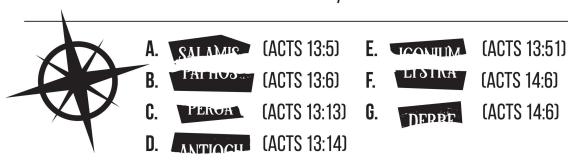


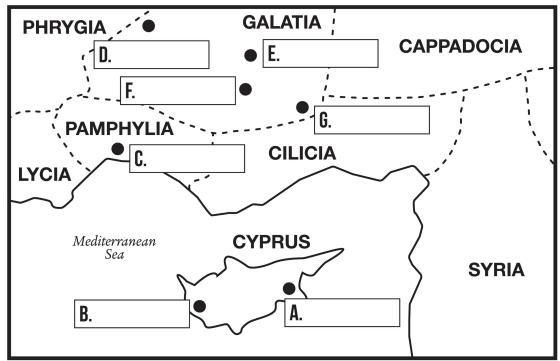


CITY SEARCH

God used Paul to spread the Gospel to many cities during his first missionary journey. Can you find them all?

Directions: From the fragments, guess each city and locate it on the map. Use the Bible references to help.





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



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



Don't forget to "Fall" back with your clocks before you go to bed on Saturday, Nov. 4th.

Daylight Savings time end on Nov. 5th.



Trunk 'R' Treat – Will take place on October 28th & beginning at 6:30pm (following Saturday 5pm Worship). A Sign-Up sheet will be posted in the Fellowship Hallway soon!