

January 2024

Vol. 37 No. 1

Peace Lutheran Church



THE LIFE OF CHRIST: EPIPHANY

"The Life of Christ" is the theme of the first "half" of the Church Year. It begins with the beginning of the Church Year, with the Season of Advent, and concludes with the Season of Easter. All of the Lessons celebrate the Life of Christ, the Head of the Church.

Over my many years of ministry as a pastor, I have relished our liturgical calendar and its related practices. Though a man-made tool, it guides us on a journey that is both purposeful and meaningful. It serves as an outline for the sake of celebration and instruction.

Last month, we looked at the seasons of Advent and Christmas. This month, we look at the Epiphany Season.

Epiphany is one of the three oldest celebrations of the Christian Church. It is celebrated as the Gospel being proclaimed to the Gentiles. The Epiphany Season begins on January 6th and is celebrated through Transfiguration Sunday, the last Sunday of Epiphany. It is of varying lengths due to the onset of the Lenten Season.

The Epiphany of Our Lord begins with the visit of the Magi or Wise Men. Read Matthew 2:1-12. The Star that was witnessed in the East announced the birth of the One born King of the Jews. It may have taken at least a year for the Wise Men to complete their journey and witness the baby boy, Jesus. They left behind their treasures – treasures fit for a King – and went home. Nowhere in the Bible, is there an exact testimony as to how old Jesus was when He and His custodial parents were visited.

The balance of the season bears witness to how Jesus revealed Himself as the promised Messiah, as the Son of Man and Son of God. It is bookended with the Baptism of our Lord and the Transfiguration of Our Lord. At both events, a declaration from heaven is made – "This is My Son....". The Gospel Lessons for the season relate to Jesus revealing Himself in His teachings and His ministry of healing. Miracles and other such "signs" attested to the truth of His claims as to who He was. John reminds us that though Jesus performed many signs, etc., those that are recorded were for the purpose of bringing people to know that He was the Son of God in their midst and believing they would be saved. (cf. John 20:30-32)

Still to this day Jesus is revealed in the Holy Bible. Still, to this day, the Holy Spirit opens hearts and causes us to believe the testimony of God's Word. As we continue to, Reach Out, Serve Jesus and Celebrate His Love", may many more be brought into a relationship with Jesus – Son of Man, Son of God.

Next month - "The Life of Christ: The Seasons of Lent and Holy Week.

To God be the Glory!

Pastor Schroeder

SANCTITY OF HUMAN LIFE SUNDAY 2022 On Saturday, January 20, and Sunday, January 21, we will celebrate Sanctity of Human Life Sunday. The theme will be "Just As...I Am".



My Father's House - Luke 2:41-52

It's Epiphany 2024, Our Christmas Worship Celebration is over. Wait! That's not right... Our Christmas Celebration has begun! We have now come into another calendar year of celebrating & worshipping Christ's Incarnation! We have just shy of a whole year of celebration left, before we begin our rejoicing again! That is, unless Christ returns first. Either way, we've now begun the part of the church year where we look deeply at Jesus own life here on earth, from His meager beginning to His Glorious Resurrection & Ascension, including that time Mary & Joseph lost Him for a few days.

Time & time again I've heard a story told by many parents: How they lost their child! Almost every parent has had the experience of losing track of *at least* one child. You take your eye off them for a second at the mall or in the grocery store, suddenly *poof!* they're gone. The panic a parent feels when a child goes missing even for a few seconds is real. I've experienced this myself with Kessidy, my own parental instinct kicking into overdrive as I frantically searched for her. Each time I've heard such a story, at the point when the child is finally found, the parents often said they didn't know whether to hug them or scold them, and they often did both! They do it out of their great love for their child. As parents, we are overjoyed & relieved to know everything is okay. Whether you've been in the situation before or not, I bet you can imagine the fright & feeling of your son or daughter vanishing.

With this in mind Please read Luke 2:41-52...

Now, having imagined such an experience in your mind, you can imagine how Mary & Joseph felt when they lost track of the very Son of God, not for just a few minutes, but for 3-days! They had journeyed to Passover Feast in Jerusalem with 12-year-old Jesus, and were on their journey home, yet without them knowing, Jesus remained in Jerusalem. Now, they would have traveled in large groups of many relatives, and they most likely expected Jesus must be walking along with His cousins or other relatives, so they probably wouldn't have seen the need to check on him until they had gone a day's journey. 3-days later, they find Jesus back in Jerusalem. Of all the things to wonder had happened to him, where he was, what he was doing... **He was in His temple, among the teachers, amazing them with His wisdom.** Their 12-year-old son was in the temple, sitting among the teachers, and **HE** was amazing **them** with his wisdom. Mary's reaction is understandable, given the circumstances. "Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, your father and I have been searching for you in great distress." And here is where we want to pay very close attention: Jesus answers her, **respectfully** saying: "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" These are Jesus' first words as recorded in the Gospel of Luke, and they are bursting with meaning. They tell us about **who** Jesus is, as well as the work that He came to do. Mary had said, perhaps without realizing it, that she & his father had been looking for him. Jesus gently reminds Mary, and the readers of Luke's Gospel, that His true Father is His heavenly Father.

These words reinforce what was taught earlier in Luke's Gospel, that the child born to Mary is the "Son of the Most High," who "increased in wisdom and stature." As true God, Jesus certainly is all-knowing, yet this was not true of His human nature by itself. As true Man, our Lord Jesus Christ could grow, increasing in wisdom even as He could feel heat & cold, hunger & thirst, even sleep, just like every one of us. He was "made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest." Not only do we learn something about Jesus' Divine Nature, but we also learn from these words something about the work He came to do for us as the Christ. "I must be in my Father's house." Already at the age of 12, Jesus understood His role & purpose in this world: He has come to do the will of His Father, to be about His Father's business. And that means being in Jerusalem, being in the Temple, and eventually returning to Jerusalem to become the true Passover Lamb for us, to die on the cross to save us from our sins, to become a **sacrifice** for the sins of the whole world, and then rise again from the dead. He became man in order that He might **suffer** His Father's wrath in our place. His purpose in coming was not to **be** served but **to serve** up His life as a ransom for many. His words, "I must be in his Father's house," are packed with meaning. Mary & Joseph didn't yet understand what Jesus meant by being in His Father's house. But one day, they &

Jesus' Disciples would understand, and their testimony would change the world. At age 12, Jesus was already moving toward saving us. Christ's words & deeds were constantly met with misunderstanding. Yet there is a lot of confusion & misunderstanding about Jesus today, even among Christians, even with us! Are we any different than Mary & Joseph or Jesus' disciples?

Our misunderstanding of Christ's words comes not because His Word is unclear but one of the many effects of sin. We tend to think of sin only as a moral blot on our souls, yet sin has also darkened our minds & our ability to perceive & comprehend spiritual things. St. Paul alludes to this when he says that sinful man cannot perceive the things of the Spirit of God. The entire world suffers from this malady.

For this reason, it is necessary for Christ to open our eyes & enlighten our minds. It is necessary for Christ to give us what we are lacking by nature: the wisdom of His cross, a stumbling block to the Jews, foolishness to the Gentiles. This wisdom shows the wise as fools, teaching that man is counted righteous before God, not because of himself, but righteousness attained only through faith in Christ Jesus, won for us on Calvary.

To use St. John's language, in our baptism, we have been *"born not by the will of man, nor of the will of the flesh, but of God."* Only when God grants us this wisdom of the cross can we find **joy** amidst suffering, **strength** in times of weakness, and **life** even in the face of death. If anyone is baptized, he has been given the Holy Spirit and is made an heir with Christ of the Kingdom of God. *Like the disciples who were gathered in Emmaus on the evening of Christ's resurrection,* your eyes have been opened by the Spirit of Christ. He whom the world knows not has been made known to you! To know Christ as your Redeemer & Savior from sins is to have wisdom beyond worldly comprehension, for it came not from man or from flesh, but from God. This wisdom equips you to face the challenges & difficulties that come your way this new year and always as you grasp hold of the gifts God has given and continues to give to you. And much like a garden, our souls need constantly to be nourished by the spiritual dew that is God's Word. We are wise to take every opportunity to study & hear God's Word.

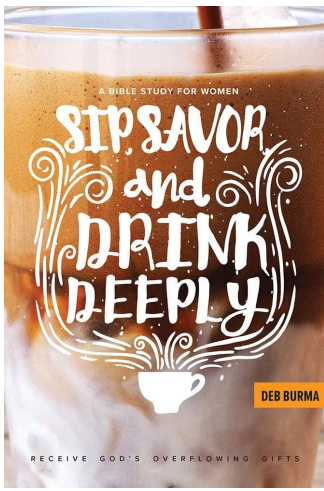
Our Church offers many opportunities to grow in the knowledge of Christ. Remember, Christ Himself *"grew in wisdom and stature!"* I've been an LCMS Lutheran for over 38 years; I had 4 years of Seminary, including Vicarage, and I have now been a pastor for almost 8 years! Does that make me Learn-ed enough? Not by a long shot! And I should hope not. I pray that I am always growing in the Lord's knowledge & wisdom. Even Jesus went to His Father's house, listened to the teachers & discussed God's Word with them.

We don't need to ask, "Where is Jesus today?" or wonder if we must search for Him far and wide. We need not live in fear and distress like a parent who has lost their child. He is with us always, each & every day, strengthening us in Himself, reminding us through our Baptism & the Lord's Supper that we are His. Without Him, we are truly helpless, troubled & troubled until we find Him where He *always* promises to be present among us: in His Word, on His altar & in His Font. He is the Gift that continues to be given to us all year round. Jesus, Immanuel, is with us each & every day! Merry Christmas AND Happy New Year! Prayer: Heavenly Father, our souls are truly restless until they rest in Jesus. Our minds are darkened until they are enlightened & renewed by His Spirit. Our consciences & hearts are troubled until they are absolved & forgiven in His blood. We pray for your peace that passes all understanding. We pray that you would grant us your wisdom, wisdom not of this world but that only comes down from above. Heavenly Father, grant us these in the name of and for the sake of your Son Jesus. Amen.

Pastor Josiah Fitch

Isaiah 26:3 – *"You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you because he trusts in you."*

John 1:14 – *"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth."*



Women's Bible Study: Sip, Savor and Drink Deeply
We will then take a short break at the beginning of January with the holiday season wrapping up, but will resume on January 17th.
Ashley

November 2023 YTD Income & Expense for the January Newsletter
Prepared by Karmen Haldiman, Treasurer, December 15, 2023.

\$40,222 November Budget (anticipated expenses)

\$36,304 Actual November Income

\$36,429 Actual November Expenses

\$ -124

\$442,441 YTD Budget (anticipated expenses)

\$416,374 Actual YTD Income

\$411,696 Actual YTD Expenses

\$ 4,678



Summary:

While we have more income than expenses and are operating in the positive, our ratio has dipped, and we encourage people to continue to give to the church.

After our loans were paid off, the leftover money from the parsonage proceeds were invested in two certificates of deposits (CDs): one for \$100,000.00 with Old National Bank that matures on 1/2/2025, and one for \$86,386.95 with LCEF that matures on 4/12/2025.

Membership Statistics

Death:

December 2, 2023
Ray Rast

Committal

December 6, 21023
Ray Rast

Transferring back to Peace: Allen Brieschke

Released: Dustin Nap

Total Baptized members: 401
Total Confirmed members: 346
Households: 243
Men: 185
Women: 218



Peace Mission Guild (PMG) offered a breakfast get-together in December that was attended by over 30 women. The program was "10 Gifts that Jesus Gives Us at Christmas". It was an enjoyable time for everyone.

Mites will be collected on January 6-7.

Please join us **on Saturday, January 13, at 1:00 pm** for our January meeting at church. (We meet on Saturday afternoons in January and February.) A Bible Study on "Family Matters – Women in Christ's Genealogy" will be led by Jody Gawron.

Save the Date: On Saturday, February 17, there will be a women's retreat at Peace from 9:00 am-3:00 pm. The theme is "God's Quilt of Comfort, Wrapping up in Psalms." The cost is \$20 per person, which includes a light breakfast, lunch, and materials. Watch for more information in the bulletins and February newsletter.

LWML-SWD Winter Getaway is being held Friday-Saturday, February 2-3, at the Marriott West, Waukesha. The theme is "Growing Together – Mentoring Workshop". The retreat speaker is Darcy Paape, author and executive director of the Women's Institute at Concordia, Wisconsin. The Gifts from the Heart is for female students and church workers. Please check out the central hallway's PMG bulletin board for more information and registration forms. Additional information can also be found at lwml-swd.org under events.

LWML mission moment

Mobile Kitchen — Forged by Fire Services, Gulf Coast Region, U.S. - \$85,000

They provide warm meals, bottled water, and spiritual care to people in times of need following a disaster or economic downturn. This grant will allow the purchase of a mobile, self-contained kitchen trailer unit to provide meals in communities affected by a disaster. The mobile kitchen will benefit smaller communities in need that larger organizations often overlook.

Birthdays for the month

Lynne Schroeder	1/3
Marlene Weissahn	1/15
Jan Erdmann	1/24
Judy Evans	1/26
Cheryl Rivas	1/27



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 January YEAH OWLS get-together will be on Thursday, January 18, 2024.

Coffee fellowship begins at 11:00 AM, with lunch served promptly at 11:30 AM. At noon, we will have our program. Kim Patterson, Marketing Director of CarePatrol NE, will join us this month.

She will discuss Senior Care Solutions. This will include Senior Care options and how Senior Care has changed. Also discussed will be the average price of Senior Living and how CarePatrol can help you navigate a move to Senior Living. Signup sheets will be in the Fellowship Hallway 2 weeks prior to the January 18th meeting. Make sure to sign up. We'd love to see you there, and you can even bring a friend.

Odds 'n' Ends

Welcome,

New Members

New Member Breakfast & Welcome -

On January 14th @ 8 am, there will be a New Member Welcome & Breakfast for those who joined Peace in 2023. They will enjoy a time of Food & Fellowship. New Members will receive an invitation, as will members on various church Boards, so that New Members can meet members in leadership and learn about ways that we can joyfully serve our Lord together.

THE LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR (L.Y.N.)

FUND For several years, members of the congregation have been helping each other through the LYN Fund.

This Fund was started many years ago as a vehicle to facilitate anonymous financial gifts from member to member. Not even the pastor knows who forwarded the gift. This is an excellent way of helping an individual or family in times of crisis. Envelopes with instructions can be found on the bulletin board in the middle hallway across from the library. This has been used often since its inception. If you have any further questions, please contact Pastor Schroeder.

CELEBRATING LUTHERAN SCHOOLS On Saturday, January 27, and Sunday, January 28, we will be celebrating Lutheran Schools Week.

We enjoy a partnership with the various parish schools in our area. Member students of our congregation receive scholarships to offset the cost of tuition for elementary and high school education. Though the number of member students varies from year to year, our support of these students and schools continues.

Pastor Keith GeRue, Associate Pastor and Principal of Trinity Lutheran Church and School, Menasha, will be serving as our guest preacher. Pastor Schroeder will be serving as liturgist. Pastor Fitch will be preaching at Trinity. Special music will be provided in the Sunday service by the students of Trinity, Menasha.

A Special Door Offering will be gathered at Peace for the Scholarship Fund that is used at Peace for member-students of Peace.

ATTENTION ALL ELECTED AND APPOINTED LEADERSHIP:

On Sunday, January 7, all elected and appointed leadership will be installed for the year 2022. This includes newly elected/appointed leaders as well as those who continue serving.

You can find our live stream service on You tube, just go to the you tube page, put in **Peace Neenah** in the search bar, click on Peace Neenah, then live and you will see the service. You can also click the subscribe button and you will be notified when there are new services on our page. Another option is to open up the attached bulletin news and click on there it says Youtube: Peace Neenah and that will take you right to the page.



Meet our new missionaries, after the retirement of Cindy Wrucke earlier in 2023.

Rev. Samuel and Erica Bobby, serve through The Lutheran Church $\frac{3}{4}$ Missouri Synod (LCMS) in Riga, Latvia. Rev. Samuel teaches at Luther Academy, the seminary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia.

Benjamin and Rebecca Helge serve the Lord through The Lutheran Church $\frac{3}{4}$ Missouri Synod (LCMS) in the Eurasia region, Czech Republic. Benjamin reaches out to the community by teaching conversational English to people of all ages. Working with a Czech team to plant a church, he prepares resources and training materials for the church, organizes English Bible camps in the Czech Republic and Poland.

Chelsea Irwin, serves as missionary coordinator for volunteer opportunities. Based out of Cesky Tesin, Czech Republic, she works with LCMS missionaries and local church partners to place and send volunteers to serve in Eurasia. Chelsea seeks to challenge volunteers to live out the Great Commission by viewing each day as a mission trip.

Support for LBT missionary Amy Formella will continue as well.

Join your hearts with all of theirs and pray for their ministries on our behalf giving all glory to God.

Stewards of Humanity

Parents, and at times grandparents, are to be good stewards of the children God has placed in their care. **Katy Faust**, founder and director of the children's rights organization ***Them Before Us*** and author of [Raising Conservative Kids in a Woke City](#), available from Issues Etc., carefully expresses how to carry out this responsibility.

Visit <https://issuesetc.org/2023/09/21/2643-helping-children-resist-progressive-indoctrination-katy-faust-9-21-23/> to gain insight in a down-to-earth, informative podcast. Parents and guardians must live out the values they wish to instill in the young, being mirrors that reflect God-revering habits, providing the support system that youth can rely on to listen when they question what the world around them conspires in contradicting their conservative thinking and training.

The Rev. Dr. Espinosa, author of *Faith That Shines in the Culture*, conveys this thought by writing, "As Christians, we understand this truism demonstrating that what we receive will lead to the reflection of what is now ours. We are like that stone splashing in the middle of a pond, causing the radiation of concentric circles upon the water. The pond that receives the stone must reflect what has entered it. Similarly, Christians have received Christ, so we don't go out into the world, only representing ourselves. Because we have received Christ, we now represent and reflect His entire Church and, more importantly, the fact that Christ is not just for Christians but for all people in the entire world. This pattern is inevitable, whether we like it or not. Indeed, there really isn't anyone who is an island unto themselves. What we are, impacts other people—either positively or negatively."

"... parents have a very high calling from God. They are called to be stewards of the greatest gift: the gift of life. Parenting thus gives us a keen insight into all our stewardship. Parents know that they have been given a great treasure in their children, a treasure that does not belong to them, yet for which they feel a great deal of responsibility. Truth be told, every gift we have been given is like this because everything we have — whether our own personal skills and powers or our wealth and time — is all from God. He entrusts it all to us so that we can use it all and take care of it all for His great purposes."¹

As members of the Church, may the ripples we send out in our lives, positively impact all who are observing as we represent not only ourselves but Christ to our families, friends, and fellow workers.

¹ LCMS-Stewardship-Ministry-Newsletter-Article-January-2024

FROM THE BOARD OF STEWARDSHIP...

We Are God's Fellow Workers

In the next couple of months, we will begin our stewardship emphasis titled **Fellow Workers on God's Team**. The theme verse is found in the Apostle Paul's first letter to the Corinthians when he speaks about the division in the church regarding whose style of leadership the people would follow. The people were arguing over whom they would follow. Paul used an agricultural metaphor to exhort the church to unity. In this metaphor, some were choosing to follow Paul, who planted, and some Apollos, who watered. Paul tells them that only God makes things grow, so only He should be glorified and worshipped, not mere men. Paul goes on to say, "*For we are God's fellow workers. You are God's field, God's building*" (1 Corinthians 3:9).

(Continued on page 8)

Just as Paul and Apollos were God's fellow workers, He wants us to be His fellow workers. God uses trustworthy, faithful people who are willing to commit their time, talents, and money to participate in His eternal plan. As God's fellow workers, our lives rise to a whole new level of significance.

Through our own initiatives, we are not able to become God's fellow workers. It is the work of the Holy Spirit Who sanctifies us so we might lead Godly lives as His workers. In the words of the Apostle Paul, *"You were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God"* (1 Corinthians 6:11). Our spiritual lives depend entirely on the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit comes to us through God's Word and Sacraments. By abiding in Christ's Word and receiving His Sacraments, we abide in Him and He abides in us. His abiding in us empowers us to bear fruit as God's fellow workers.

After Jesus had miraculously fed the 5,000 with five loaves of bread and two small fish, the people who had eaten asked how they could do the work or be God's fellow workers for the Lord. They were surprised by the answer Jesus gave them which is found in John 6:29: *"This is the work of the Lord, that you believe in Him Whom He has sent."* God is at work within us. As long as we remain connected to Jesus through faith, we receive God's power. By grace, we understand that it is power given to us. Through our borrowed power, we are strong in Jesus.

May God use and empower us to be His fellow workers.



Sunday School - January 2024

Reaching Out, Serving Jesus, and Celebrating His Love.

Sunday School students continue to be at work. 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.

In December, we continued our bible stories in the Preschool area, the completion of the study of the Lord's Prayer in the younger classrooms, and Apologetics in the Jr. High Class. We also reviewed the Christmas story during our Happy Birthday Jesus party and in telling about Jesus' birth to the congregation during the Children's Christmas Service on Christmas Eve.

In January, we look forward to more learning and fun fellowship activities. We will begin our study of the 10 Commandments.



January 7th - Sunday School teachers meeting right after Sunday School at 11:30 am

January 21st - Sock Hop

January 28th - Pastor GeRue will be at Peace to preach as Pastor Fitch visits Trinity, Menasha. Children from Trinity will also be singing during the worship service and are welcome to join us for Sunday School that day.



We will once again be having a Sock Hop during the Sunday School hour on January 21st from 10:30 am - 11:30 am. The congregation is welcome to join us as we take some time for some fellowship, music, and even some dancing.

Keep an eye out for updates for Sunday School in the weekly Bulletin News. Any questions? Please contact Caitlin Vanden Bloomer or Betsy Ehlert.

Re: VITALITY TASK FORCE: AN UPDATE

Our last meeting was composed of two sessions. Each building upon the other. After working through some “unfinished business” of Session 4: Core Values, the Task Force embarked on Sessions 5 & 6.

In Session 5, the Task Force fashioned a Purpose Statement based on what was uncovered in their work of identifying Active Core Values and Aspirational Core Values. You might recall that I had written last month that the Task Force evaluated 15 Core Values found in Lutheran congregations.

Of the 15, the Task Force identified Active Core Values. These are those that were easily identified in the current ministries of our congregation. Identified were the following:

Youth Ministry and Education, Outreach, Human Care / Mercy Work, Active Royal Priesthood, Christ-centered worship, Missions, Lutheran Doctrine, Christian Growth (Catechesis), Christian Marriage and Family, Church Worker Wellness, and Sanctity of Human Life

Interestingly enough, these are all represented in the Values Statement that was adopted by the congregation in 2011/2012.

After identifying the Active Core Values, the Task Force identified Aspirational Core Values. These are those that were desired but not readily identified in the ministries of our congregation. Identified were the following:

Christian Growth (Catechesis), Witness / Evangelism, Prayer, Sanctity of Human Life, Christian Marriage and Family, Whole-Life Stewardship, Active Royal Priesthood, Human Care / Mercy Work, Youth Ministry and Education

Note that there is some overlap. Even these Core Values are incorporated in the Values Statement of 2011/2012.

It is from this that a Purpose Statement was drafted. It reads as follows:

Peace Lutheran Church exists to make disciples of Jesus Christ by **reaching out, serving Jesus, and celebrating His love** to the Fox Valley and surrounding community through His Word and sacrament. Using God’s gifts, we serve His Kingdom by **engaging our community** through outreach activities that include consistent Biblical worship experience, fellowship, and education.

It was suggested that this might become the new Purpose Statement in our Constitution and Bylaws, pending approval of the Voters Assembly at some time in the future.

After completing Session 5 and having drafted the Purpose Statement, the Task Force moved to evaluating/crafting a Mission Statement. This was the essence of Session 6. The Mission Statement was to summarize the Purpose Statement in as few words as possible: 7-10 words.

It was agreed that there was no need to propose a new Mission Statement. Therefore, our current Mission Statement will remain, “Reaching Out, Serving Jesus, Celebrating His Love”.

At the next meeting, having completed many tasks already, the work will focus on drafting the Strategic Plan. Pray that the Lord will guide and give discernment for the advancement of His kingdom and the future ministry of our congregation. Pastor Schroeder



BEGINNING IN JANUARY 2024 - RE:VITALITY BIBLE STUDY This study will be offered beginning the week of Sunday, January 7. Following the model that was used a couple of years ago when the WOKE study was offered, this will be the topic for the Sunday morning, Thursday morning, and Thursday evening Bible studies to be completed by the end of February. This will allow the members the flexibility to attend any of the three offerings that best fit their schedules. This study will help us understand the Biblical basis of strategic planning. The Task Force felt that this was a good foundation to build off of as they entered their work early on.



Thank you to our gracious hosts for Midweek Advent Meals! Thank you to the Senior High Youth for providing a Delicious Pulled pork Menu; Thank you to the Peace Mission Guild for cooking up a tasty & belly warming Soup Dinner Variety; Thank you to the Church Council for preparing scrumptious Lasagna and sides Meal! What a blessing in the Lord you are to us and to the nourishment of our bodies as we prepared for the Lord to nourish our souls in Worship!

Pastor Fitch, Ashley, Kessidy, Eliana, Benjamin, Japheth & Samuel, give thanks to the Lord for all of you. We are sooo blessed by our Lord through your hands with encouraging words and the wonderful cards & gifts on our behalf. We are looking forward to a new year of serving with you, our cherished family at Peace, here in Our Lord's Kingdom! Thanks be to God! Merry Christmas, Happy New Year, and God's Peace be with each of you & your families in 2024!!

A WORD OF THANKS FROM PASTOR AND LYNNE...

Thank you to all of you who remembered us during this Christmas Season. Your cards, gifts, and greetings are greatly appreciated. May the Lord richly bless you for your generosity!

GIVING THANKS Thank you to all who planned and assisted with the Very Neenah Christmas, Bazaar, and Live Nativity. Thank you to our Sunday School Ministry for such a wonderful Christmas Eve service. Thank you to those of our Adult Choir for providing their voices throughout the Advent season and especially for our Christmas Eve Candlelight service. Thank you to all who assisted in decorating the church and providing Poinsettias for the Christmas season. So many of you have assisted in the Gospel Proclamation – the Ministry of God's Word – what a blessing you have been to His glory!

Our heartfelt thanks to the congregation to all who remembered us this Christmas with many gifts, cards and greetings. We wish you all a blessed, happy and healthy New Year. Grace & Eric Schmall



Social Ministry

Thank you to all who made Christmas gift donations to Harbor House. A large selection of items will hopefully add joy to individuals this Christmas.

Perhaps the most significant gift that can't be wrapped is the blessings and prayers we send with our love and caring.

MISSION BUDGET ALLOCATIONS – 2024

Below you will find the mission projects that will be supported by our congregation for 2024. Actual \$\$\$ will be posted on the Missions Bulletin Board across from the classroom adjacent to the library after the turn of the year (first week of January 2024). Thank you to all who participated in voting. May the Lord bless these intentions as we partner for the sake of the Proclamation of the Gospel. The Board of Stewardship.

Synod / District: \$16, 580

World Missions: \$12,440

Amy Formella (LBT–Sierra Leone)
Rev. Samuel and Erica Bobby (LCMS-Latvia)
Benjamin and Rebecca Helge (LCMS-Czech Republic)
Chelsea Irwin (LCMS-Czech Republic / Eurasia)

Other Missions: \$16, 580

Joint Seminary Fund
Hmong Ministry - Oshkosh - SWD
Camp LuWiSoMo - RSO
Lutherans for Life (LFL) - RSO
Trinity (Menasha) Food Pantry
Harbor House (Fox Valley)
Pillars (Fox Valley Homeless Assistance, Warming Shelter)
LCMS Disaster Relief
Lutheran Heritage Foundation - RSO
WFC-WFA
Lutheran Center for Religious Liberty (LCRL) – RSO
Undesignated

A year that whispers Jesus

For author Nancy Tichy, a small holiday gift once sparked big-picture thoughts about Christian living. One December she received a kitchen towel with the message "I want a Christmas that whispers JESUS." That prompted thoughts of what it's like to have an entire year that whispers Jesus.

For starters, that involves daily quiet time, devotion and prayer. "Sometimes I wake with the thought of a person on my mind," writes Tichy. "I'm quiet with this impression, interceding for the family member or friend until it has lifted. Could this be a whisper from our Savior?"

Many other daily occurrences are "worthy of [Jesus'] whispered response of love," Tichy points out. That's true whether we're distracted by tasks and troubling thoughts or buoyed by encounters with contentment and joy. "For me," she writes, "whispering is part of intimacy, and that is what I want to make a hallmark of the coming year. I want closeness with our Savior that enables me to hear from him, even when he whispers."

Peace Lutheran Church

Missouri Synod
1228 S. Park Avenue
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(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

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www.peaceneenah.com

Worship Services

Sat. 5:00 p.m.

Sun. 9:00 a.m.

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

