



Herald of Peace

January 2021

Peace Lutheran Church,
1301 Ave. D, Billings, MT 59102

(406) 252-5504
peacelutheranbillings.com

Making Christ Available to All by Rejoicing, Renewing and Reaching Out

Peace Lutheran Church Mission Statement

Leadership Directory

Pastor: Rev. Will Sappington
prsappington@gmail.com
office 252-5504 Home 647-8568
Office Manager: Dean Jenson
peaceoffice1301@gmail.com
252-5504
Youth Director: Vanessa Stieger
peacelcyouth@gmail.com
office 252-5504 cell 698-5576
Intern Pastor: Josh Wyman
internpeace@gmail.com
252-5504

Treasurer	Steve Frank
Worship Accompanists	Robin Goodheart Sue Vigesaa
Bells of Peace	Julie Draeger
Altar Guild Treasure	Molly Johnson
WELCA Treasurer	Connie Hausauer

Church Council

Dewey Anderson
Mike Brown
Robin Felton
Wendy Goodheart
Holli Miller
Tony Pecarina
Jody Pierce
Dan Quanbeck
Bryan Peterson
Nate Sider
Linda Strosky
Nancy Taylor

Worship Schedule

Saturdays: 5:00 pm
Sundays: 10:00 am
Education Hour: 11:00 am
Sunday Channel 7 at 9:00 am



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.



Time

After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!"

Mark 1:14-15

There are a couple of different words for time in Greek.

Chronos refers to the ticking of the clock or the turning of the calendar page. The normal flow of time. This is the time you pay attention to at the end of a game and the clock is running out. (Just another reason why baseball is the greatest game. There is no clock in baseball.) I fight with Chronos time constantly. I waste it. I demand more of it. I am aware of Chronos far more often than I would like to be.



Kairos normally. That moment just before a car crash that seems to go into slow motion. Talking with an old friend and you lose track of time. More importantly Kairos time is when you recognize God is working in your life. It can be a moment or a season. Kairos time for me is a beautiful realization of where

Prayer Concerns of those we prayed for December 2020

We Believe in Prayer For praise and thanksgiving ...

Elizabeth A. Eaton - Presiding Bishop, ELCA

Laurie Jungling - Bishop - Montana Synod;

For people around the world in need ...

Needs of our neighborhood coping with

Covid - 19 virus

President Donald Trump (requested by Peace member)

Christine & Scotty Soileau – Quantico, VA. (member of Peace)

For illness or injuries .. of members

Nancy Whitmer

Ron Zech

Howard Albers

Doris Berg

Frank Mosdal - hospice care

Kathy Gilbertson

Hank Tungstall - healing

LaWanda Sherseth - healing

Annette Reich - Tender Nest

John Modde - recovery

Kathleen Gregg - healing

Larry Heiser –

For illness or injuries .. of family and friends.

Karen Anderson - healing

Denise- Bonnie Hovik Clausen's daughter in law

Kim Anderson - friend of Jo Pates, Illness

John & Rosanne Mode - John's son JC kidney cancer starting Chemo

John & Rosanne Modde - Rosanne's Wayne , bone cancer

Jon - healing

John, for peace and healing

Mary - comfort

Dorothy

Briana, Lucas, Todd and Kendra

Jim Zeiler, brother of Sharon Hedden, healing

Jenny - Rick & Barb Olson daughter, cancer

Malcom - 6 yrs. old with a brain tumor

Rako Zech & family, Ron's Zech son - cancer diagnosis

Gary Fink - healing

Ann Strecker - friend of Rick & Barb Olson - healing

Laura Fisher (Jodi Peterson's cousin) cancer

Shawn Hanser

Bud Leuthold - friend of Joy Lindberg leukemia

For those grieving...

Mary Mosdal, family and friends on the death of Frank Mosdal

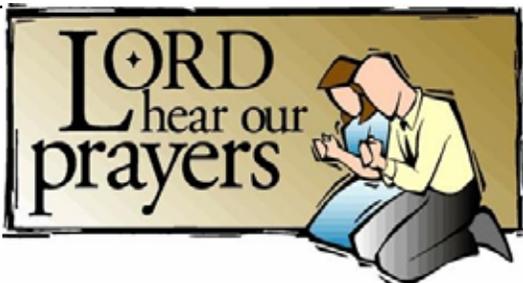
With sincere gratitude

During the last month Marge and I found how much the members of Peace Lutheran meant to us. We have not been to church because of COVID but you didn't forget us. Your thoughts, prayers and phone calls meant so much to us and gave us strength through the time of loss of my mother. For 2 years she wanted to make this journey. She passed in comfort and pain free, Praise the Lord! A special thank you to Pastor Will for going above and beyond the call of duty when his plate was full when we needed him most.

Until we meet again, may the Lord bless you and keep you.

Ken and Marge Peterson

Prayer Concerns is a published list of those on the prayer chain, who have given permission to publish their names. If you are interested in praying for these, as well as others, please join the prayer chain. They have leaders who call or email. Please call Lone Bloom at 652-2441 or Lisa Grimsley (698-4121).



Congregational News

A Day in the Life of the Intern

For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope. -Romans 15:4

For the majority of my life, I never participated in the tradition of New Year's Resolutions. Some years, I would write down the traditional ones; eat healthier, work out more, get good grades, etc., but after January 6th, I would never look at them again. However, when I met Anna, that all changed. She took her New Year's Resolutions very seriously, and on our first New Year's together, she made me sit down and really think about what things I wanted to do in the coming year. When I really took it seriously, it changed how I saw the practice entirely.

While the biggest change from December 31st to January 1st may truly be simply having to reteach yourself what year to write as you date different documents, the change in the year does provide a space where reflection and hope collide. Traditions like New Year's Resolutions not only raise the question of what have I done and what would I like to do, but who have I been and who would I like to be? When midnight comes on New Year's Eve, the slates of our previous year have been wiped clean, and we are free to go and be whoever we want to be as we enter the New Year.

This space of reflection and hope is a space that we as a society celebrate every December 31st, is a space that we as people of faith are called to live in, and to live out every day. New Year's Eve is not the only time that we reflect like this, but we do so every Sunday during our time of Confession and Forgiveness. As a community, we center ourselves around the experiences we have had, and the places we may have fallen short, and our slates are instantly wiped clean by the amazing gift of grace given to us through Christ. This grace frees us and calls us to go into the world and to bring this good news of hope and love to those around us.

My New Year's Resolution this year is to celebrate New Year's all year long. To rest in this space where reflection and hope collide. To continue to reflect on who I have been, and who I would like to be. To remind myself that I am good enough, because my slate has been wiped clean. To hope and dream about what the world could be, and to live out the ways that God is calling me to bring the Kingdom of love and grace to the world around me.

God Bless,
Josh



H A P P Y N E W Y E A R !



Congregational News

con't from pg. 1

I see the Spirit at work through my gifts and your gifts.

Jesus invites us to look at time differently. Even though Jesus never had to contend with calendar alerts buzzing at him, Jesus knew time was simultaneously precious and flexible. We decide how we are going to spend our time. "The time has come," Jesus said. We are called to ask, "The time for what?"

about going from one month to another or one year to another. The issues we face on December 31st will still be with us January 1st. So, what are we called to do? What is it time for today?

We will also have joys and celebrations. My prayer is for a move toward normalcy. My prayer is for vaccinations and resuming gatherings. My prayer is for health and safety. My prayer is that

A garden shears and you need to regain strength? No matter the season you find yourself in, the

Peace,
Will +

Peace Lutheran Church Annual Meeting

Peace's 2021 Annual meeting will be held on Zoom at 11am on Sunday January 31st.

If you have trouble connecting or have questions contact Pr. Will.

Sunday Zoom Details:

Video:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81450876624?pwd=Z25qaS9tKzIKbHIYL3hTZ1ZQQzRVZz09>

Meeting ID: 814 5087 6624

Passcode: peace

Telephone:

Dial by your location

+1 253 215 8782

Meeting ID: 814 5087 6624

Passcode: 755419



Mission and Service News

Mission & Service Committee Happenings

The Mission and Service committee hopes that you had a wonderful Christmas and wishes you a fruitful start to the New Year! With a new year comes opportunity to serve those in need.

Here are tidbits from your Mission and Service committee. Please consider praying for where you can personally serve others, and pray for those that will actively participate.

- ➔ **A big THANK YOU** goes out to everyone who supported the Family Promise family Peace Lutheran Church sponsored! Your generosity was overwhelming.
- ➔ **Peace members** continue to support St. John's United through mending projects and sewing PPE.
- ➔ **Family Promise Diaper Bank-** If you have interest in supporting this ministry, you can call 294.7432 for more information, or diapers can be sent to 10 S 26th St., Billings, MT 59101. Other Family Promise support opportunities include:
 - Gift cards/gas cards- families need gift/gas cards for job searching and transportation for work, school and daycare.
 - Cleaning supplies- families in shelter are at a high risk for contracting COVID-19
 - Monetary donations- ensure Family Promise's ability to support families in need
Donations can be made at: <http://familypromiseyv.org/donate.html>
- ➔ **Souper Bowl of Caring-** Our annual time of giving will take place on February 7th. The way to give will look a little different this year. We would ask that you mail in or drop off whatever you feel compelled to contribute. We will still be able to support this great cause as a congregation.

Our committee looks forward to serving the Peace congregation again in 2021. Do not be afraid to let a committee member know of new opportunities to serve that you may learn of. As a reminder, our committee meets the second Monday of each odd numbered month at 12:30 p.m. on Zoom until further notice. Please feel free to join us if the Spirit so moves you.



Peace Quilters

The quilting meetings are still waiting to begin again, It has been a long time since we have met to build quilts and see each other. Hopefully we have found projects to do at home to help pass the time. This is beginning to look like this will be a lost year for the LWR quilting program.

The School Kits are coming along well. As of now we have enough bags waiting to be filled. So I think this is on hold for a few months. It seems ALL is on hold!!

Stay safe, Elaine

Worship News

January Worship Themes

We journey through Luke's Gospel and see fishing stories, absentminded parents, baptisms, and healing.

(Sermon focus texts are in bold.)

January 2nd & 3rd Second Weekend after Christmas "Defying Expectations"

Readings: Psalm 147:12-20; **Luke 2:41-52**

There are many things that society tells us we are supposed to do, and a lot of pressure that comes with living up to these expectations. What did Jesus do when confronted by the expectations of his day, and how are we to respond?

January 9th & 10th Baptism of Our Lord "Give!"

Readings: Psalm 29; **Luke 3:1-22**

"What do I do now?" John arrives on the scene with words of challenge and an invitation to baptism. They people ask him about what comes next. The answer is a total life change.

January 16th & 17th Second Weekend after Epiphany "Tight Fists and Open Hands"

Readings: Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18; **Luke 4:14-30**

When Jesus tells the people that he has come to fulfill an Old Testament Prophecy, they become elated and excited for all he would do for them. But how do they respond when Jesus talks about serving the people outside of their community? What does it look like for Jesus to be the savior of the world, and not just the savior for us?

January 23rd & 24th Third Weekend after Epiphany "Job Description"

Readings: Psalm 62:5-12; **Luke 5:1-11**

Recently I was asked to fill a specific role on a board. My first question was, "Do you have a job description?" Jesus asks these fisherman to enter into a new way of living. Before they even ask Jesus tells them what they will be doing. Fishing for people. Sounds easy, right?

January 30th & 31st Fourth Weekend after Epiphany "Work"

Readings: Psalm 111; **Luke 6:1-16**

Every single day we navigate a complex web of rules and regulations. Children have to be told what the rules are while adults are supposed to know them. Jesus is accused of not knowing or ignoring the rules. Jesus points to a higher rule. The rule of love.



Compline Worship

Mid-Week Worship Service at Peace!!!

Everyone is invited to tune in 7pm Wednesday evenings.

Go to Website peacelutheranbillings.com

and join in the live stream of worship

January 6 - Evening Song

January 13 - Compline

January 20 - Celtic Evening Liturgy

January 27 - Holden Evening Prayer

**Holden
Evening
Prayer**

Marty Haugen

Education and Youth News

DYUWY`DU`g`

As of now, we are not planning on meeting for Peace Pals for the time being. Although, we are working on something special for the Peace Pal kids in 2021. Thanks for being patient. Stay safe and do what you can to help your neighbor!

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There will be no in-person Youth Group through for the time being. We will keep you updated as we move forward. Thank you for your patience!

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We are shifting gears for Confirmation. On November 11th, we started an online version of Confirmation in Google Classroom. Each week, there will be a new slideshow lesson and video presentation. Throughout each month, there will be check-ins with the group and 1 on 1 with Vanessa. We are planning to do Confirmation in this way at least for the time being.

The awesome thing about Confirmation being online is that anyone can join us! No matter what age you are, if you'd like to join us for Confirmation or have questions, you can contact Vanessa at peacelcyouth@gmail.com to get more information.

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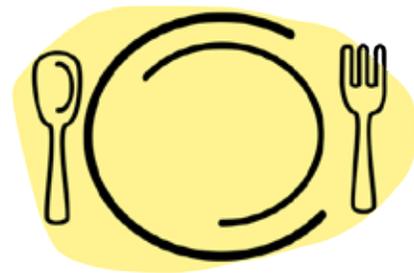
Friends! It's been a while since I have done Children's Messages during our Worship Services. I'm happy to tell you that the Children's Messages are back! If you miss the Message, you can always find it on our past live streamed services on our website and Facebook page.

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Since we haven't been able to eat dinner together, I thought I would remind you of our awesome Dinner Prayers that we used to sing! Here is one of them!

Johnny Appleseed

*THEEEEEEEEEEEEE! Lord is good to me
and so I thank the Lord For giving me
the things I need
like the sun and the apple seed
the Lord is good to me
Amen, amen, amen amen amen!
AWWWWW-MENNNNNNN!!!!*



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Man, what a year it was! I'm so glad to have been able to do some fun things with you throughout the year, even though it was quite different than usual!

You all have been a highlight of my year. Thank you for your support and love.

Peace,
Vanessa



Congregational News

In Person Worship Suspended

At the November Council meeting it was voted unanimously to suspend in person worship as Covid cases climb alarmingly. This decision will be revisited each month at the regular Council meetings. We will continue livestreaming worship and broadcasting on Community 7.

2021 Offering Envelopes

Your 2021 offering envelopes will be available for pickup during regular office hours. The envelopes are located just inside the parking lot door next to the elevator. Please call the office if you have any questions



thankful
grateful
blessed

Christikon Clips January 2021



Watch this month for Christikon brochures on opportunities for youth. It's not too early to start thinking about this summer.

Youth brochures will be mailed to every young person in grades 4-12 in our congregations this month. Those brochures will detail some very special deals for registering early for camp. We hope to serve even more people from our member congregations in 2021! Early registrations have been very strong so get registered earlier than later!

Save the date: Christikon Benefit Auction is scheduled for April 18th.

Too few of our nation's young people (not to mention adults) have significant outdoor experience. Christikon combines spirited outdoor experience with a community experience that helps open people to the life of faith. Think about joining the Christikon life this coming summer. It can do a world of good...

It is the mission of Christikon to awaken and nurture faith in Christ—exploring God's creation and the adventure of life together.



January 18th

I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made straight and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together. ...

"The first question which the priest and the Levite asked was: 'If I stop to help this man, what will happen to me?' But... the good Samaritan reversed the question: 'If I do not stop to help this man, what will happen to him?'"

"I have the audacity to believe that peoples everywhere can have three meals a day for their bodies, education and culture for their mind and dignity, equality, and freedom for their spirits."

Acceptance Speech at Nobel Peace Prize Ceremony, December 10, 1964

~ Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. ~

Community News

Christmas Message from the Bishop

We are never alone

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton

Presiding Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

The room was spare and dimly lit. We sat on folding chairs in a circle—young Honduran women and some of us from the ELCA. We had come to Honduras to observe the work of AMMPARO (Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities). This is the ELCA's strategy to help youth who have been forced to flee their home countries because of violence, abuse, extortion by gangs and extreme poverty. Amparo is the Spanish word for shelter or refuge.

In this case, AMMPARO partnered with the Lutheran World Federation and the Mennonites to resettle returned migrants—those who had tried to seek asylum in the United States but had failed or had been denied and deported back to Honduras.

One by one they told us their stories of fear and desperation. Not a one undertook the long and dangerous trek north on a whim. They told us about the abuse they had suffered, about family members who had been killed by gangs, about the inability to make a living because of the extortion by organized crime. They talked about the bitter sadness of leaving home and family, and the uncertainty of the future.

I remember one young woman in particular. She was pregnant when she tried to migrate to the United States. She had the baby somewhere along the way. She was far from home, mostly alone and desperately wanted her mother to be with her. None of this is what she had hoped for when she was growing up. Circumstances beyond her control had forced her into this new and strange existence. She and her baby were now back in Honduras—but not at home. Home was too dangerous.

Remember last Christmas? Remember all of the preparations, the travel to be with family? Remember the holy beauty of the Christmas Eve liturgy and receiving Christ's grace and forgiveness at his table? The shopping and Christmas caroling? The in-person gatherings? All that has changed.

The pandemic hasn't forced us from our homes but into our homes, sheltering in place, isolated. Not together, but physically distanced. Not gathered with family and friends, but forced apart because of the threat of infection. Forced by circumstances beyond our control into this strange existence. Oh, there will be Christmas carols piped into grocery stores and other essential services, but they will be painful reminders of how life used to be.

We are reminded of the experience of the exiles in Babylon: "By the rivers of Babylon—there we sat down and there we wept when we remembered Zion. On the willows there we hung up our harps. For there our captives asked us for songs, and our tormentors asked for mirth, saying, 'Sing us one of the songs of Zion!' How could we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land" (Psalm 137)?

I told the young Honduran woman about another young woman who was forced to leave home because of a government decree. She, too, was pregnant and made a long and difficult journey. She, too, was far from home and without her mother when the baby came. She had to find shelter wherever she could. This wasn't what she had hoped for when she was growing up. Circumstances beyond her control had forced her into this new existence.

That young woman was Mary and the child was Jesus. Precisely in our distress, in our dislocation, the Lord shows up. Emmanuel—God with us—makes his home in the very places we find foreign or isolating. The young Honduran woman, and all of us, can find hope because of the birth of Mary's child. There is no God-forsaken place and we are never alone— not in hospital rooms, or sheltering in place, or Zoom calls or on dangerous roads.

Many of us will not be physically home for Christmas, but we are truly home in Christ.

Congregational News

Church E-mail Addresses



Pastor Will

prsappington@gmail.com

Church Office

peaceoffice@bresnan.net

Intern Pastor

internpeace@gmail.com

Youth Director

peacelcyouth@gmail.com

Check out the web site:

peacelutheranbillings.com. Web site is updated with, up to date calendar, newsletter in color, Youth page, and photo page.



Church Council Minutes

The approved church council minutes are available at the bulletin board outside the church office. Thank you

The Facebook logo, consisting of the word "facebook" in white lowercase letters on a blue rectangular background.

Find us on facebook:
Peace Lutheran Church, Billings MT

Simply Giving Program - Would you find it helpful to have your offerings taken from your bank account as you do other monthly drafts? Thrivent Financial for Lutherans sponsors a program called Simply Giving which offers this service for people who wish to have offerings transferred electronically to Peace Lutheran Church account. For those who travel, this is particularly helpful in keeping up with their intended offerings, and it will keep you from having to make up the difference later. Contact the church office for more details.



Congregational Life Committee

The Congregational Life Committee is responsible to touch the lives of the people of Peace Lutheran Church by involving them in the life and ministry of the church. One of the most visible responsibilities is fellowship following worship services. We moved from asking service committee members to bring cookies, etc., to providing doughnuts. So, the duties have been reduced and only one or two people are needed for each Sunday. We will continue to assign monthly service committees as we have done in the past. If we have a potluck or other congregational function during the month, the committee may be asked to help. A committee chairperson will be assigned each month and will ask committee members to help with the fellowship/coffee following Sunday worship.

January Serving group

Molly Johnson, chair
Keith Johnson
Amy/Jeff McGough
Nola McCafferty
Doris Berg
Dick Berg
Rhonda Sappington
Monica Aalgaard
Gayle Kingston
Jean Graham



The Church Office has a new e-mail address.

peaceoffice1301@gmail.com

Congregational News

Currently Suspended

2020 Circles & Bible Studies:

Everyone is welcome!

Martha Circle

Meets Third Wednesday, at 10:00 am
in the Fellowship hall

Deborah-Katie Circle

Meets 2nd Saturday at 10:30 am
at Peace

Ruth Circle

Meets second Tuesday at 11:30 am
at Hardees on 24th

Peace Lutheran Church Council

- President - Tony Pecarina
- Vice President - Dewey Anderson
- Secretary - Linda Strosky
- Dewey Anderson - Abundant Life, Property
- Mike Brown - Property
- Robin Felton - Education/Youth
- Wendy Goodheart - Worship
- Holli Miller - Congregational Life
- Tony Pecarina - Education/Youth
- Jody Pierce - Education/Youth
- Dan Quanbeck -
- Bryan Peterson - Mission & Service
- Nate Sider - Education/Youth
- Linda Strosky - Mission & Service
- Nancy Taylor - Mission & Service



Men's Breakfast and Bible Study

Meets every

Wednesday at 6:30 am in the
Fellowship Hall. New-comers
and one-timers are
always welcome

Meeting on Zoom

Boards/Committees

St John's Ministries

- Rich Robbins
- Rhonda Sappington

Christikon

- Kaia Sappington
- Mike Brown
- Erl Barsness

Lutheran Center

- Rhonda Hanson
- Debbie Sider

Endowment Trustee

- Ed Popp
- Molly Johnson
- Bernie Mason
- Rhonda Hanson
- Dean Welliever

Nominating Committee

- Dean Welleiever
- George Simek
- Chuck Sider
- Linda Strosky
- Holli Miller



Questions about Council Activities? If

you have any questions or comments
regarding any council action - pending or
complete - please contact

President Tony Pecarina
Vice-President Dewey Anderson

RELIEVE EDITORIAL STRESS:

**TURN IN
YOUR ARTICLES
EARLY!**

RE M I N D E R :

**DEADLINE FOR
NEWSLETTER
ARTICLES IS**

January 21st

Catch
Worship
Service
Broad-
cast on
Community
Channel 7
Sunday Mornings
at 9:00 am





January 2021

1 Give thanks and praise that God knows intimately our complexities, failures, accomplishments, questions, goals and hopes, and still looks upon us with loving kindness, newness and a desire for us to thrive as individuals and communities.

2 Pray for our companion churches and international leaders as they confront multiple waves of the pandemic. Ask the Spirit to fill them with hope, resilience and reassurance that our faith in the presence and love of God, which we share as siblings in Christ, will unify us in caring for one another and in doing God's work in the world, using our diverse gifts, cultures, languages, resources and perspectives in every circumstance.

3 Give thanks and praise to God that we are children of God, knowing and testifying to the good news that Jesus Christ became flesh and lived among us, and that we have seen the glory of God's only son, full of grace and truth for the world.

4 National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month We remember and pray for victims of sex trafficking, involuntary servitude, debt bondage and forced labor in our nation and around the world, and we ask God's guidance in caring for victims and actively working to end this abuse, injustice and oppression.

5 Pray for Bishop Elizabeth A. Eaton, members of the ELCA Church Council and the Conference of Bishops. Give thanks for their humble service, their faith in Christ, their leadership and gifts, and their commitment to wrestle with difficult decisions and issues for the sake of the church and the world.

6 Epiphany As people of faith, we are not immune from wondering about God, Jesus Christ and the Spirit. Pray that God will be patient with us, illuminating the truth of who we are as baptized children of God and the reality and certainty of the good news of Jesus Christ, the true Son of God, our Savior, Messiah, Redeemer and teacher.

7 As the pandemic continues, pray for doctors, nurses, emergency responders and health care workers who need renewal, strength and our gratitude and recognition as they continue to serve at great personal risk and sacrifice for the sake of our health and well-being.

8 Give thanks for the people in our lives who inspire hope, faith and courage, and whose words and actions touch us, teach us the meaning of grace and move us to become bearers of mercy in the world.

9 In Christ we have received forgiveness of our sins and salvation through God's unfathomable grace, showered upon us every day. Praise God!

10 Give thanks for God's love and forgiveness in baptism, which marks the beginning of our journey with our siblings in Christ to share the good news, serve all people, grow the church and strive for peace and justice in the world.

11 Pray for parents, students, employees and business owners whose plans and routines change day by day and week by week due to the uncertainty of the pandemic, that they might be hopeful, resilient and able to adapt, change and endure.

12 Pray for our faith-based schools, early childhood education programs and day care centers as they provide experiential education, social interaction, stability and calm for the youngest of our children, who are often most vulnerable during times of uncertainty and anxiety.

13 God is mighty, majestic and eternal throughout the universe, generously sharing strength and blessings with us. Give glory and thanks to God, and shout for joy!

14 Ask God to help us practice justice, generosity and care for creation, sharing our resources with others who have few or who have lost resources or productive land as a result of natural and human-caused disasters.

15 Pray for the young adults who have applied for a yearlong journey in international service with our companion churches and organizations through the ELCA Young Adults in Global Mission (YAGM) program, which will resume in 2021-2022 after a time of sabbath during the pandemic.

16 Thank God for our special relationship with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), a full communion partner with the ELCA since 1997; pray for the church, its members and its leaders, and pray that together we will find strength and new resources for the work of sharing the gospel and serving our neighbor, especially in these uncertain and challenging times.



January 2021

17 Jesus invited Philip to follow him as a disciple, and Philip, in turn, invited Nathanael. Ask God to help us be faithful followers, students and, at the same time, disciples eager to invite others to join in God's good work in the world.

18 Martin Luther King Day Today we remember the life, ministry, sacrifice and activism of Martin Luther King Jr. Pray that his life and the legacies of others who have fought for civil rights and social reform will inspire our own commitment and persistence in working for racial justice, dismantling racism and combating white supremacy.

19 We may argue about what is legal, what we are entitled to or what we have the right to do with our bodies and lives. But Paul reminds us that we have been made one with the body and spirit of Christ; we "were bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body." Pray that the Spirit will guide us to live with humility and deference for who we are in Christ and in obedience to the ways and desires of God.

20 Inauguration Day As members of society and the church who represent varied political affiliations and perspectives, pray together for our nation's newly elected president and vice president, that the Spirit will grant them wisdom, strength, commitment to serving all people, a deep understanding of justice and mercy, and the courage to enact change for the well-being of our communities and nation.

21 Pray for the ELCA World Hunger Leadership Gathering, an online event happening right now that gathers ELCA World Hunger leaders for learning, networking, sharing ideas and planning for our common ministry to address hunger and its root causes.

22 Pray for reconciliation, understanding and renewal in our divided nation so that we might work together for justice, compassion and generosity, serving our neighbors in need and the well-being of our communities as they struggle with vexing, deep-rooted problems. Ask the Spirit to inspire and guide our lives so that our values, decisions, actions and words reflect the gospel, the teachings of Jesus and the ways of God, who is good, gracious, merciful and just.

23 Praise God that, as small and insignificant as we might be in the vast universe, we are wonderfully made and God knows every little thing about us and our human ways.

24 In Scripture we read about Jesus' simple, personal and compelling invitations to Simon, Andrew, James, John and the other disciples to drop everything and follow him. Pray that when God calls us to follow and serve, we will respond with faith and trust, even if we do not yet know where God is leading us or what God is calling us to do.

25 Pray for ministries, nonprofit organizations and agencies that serve the daily needs of communities, families and individuals; pursue justice and equity; build resilience to cope with disasters and crises; accompany immigrants and refugees; and bring the hope and love of Christ where there is despair and weariness.

26 When, like Jonah, we are reluctant to forgive, practice mercy or share the gospel with those we deem undeserving, ask the Spirit to help us discern God's ways, grace and mercy for all people, and to act boldly without personal bias.

27 Lydia, Dorcas and Phoebe, witnesses to the faith Praise God for the witness and ministry of women of the early church. Give thanks for women of all ages and backgrounds who, responding to God's call, continue to use their gifts, life experiences, knowledge and passions to grow the church, serve all people and be bearers of hope and healing in the world.

28 Give thanks for the Lutheran liturgy and worship practices that equip us for daily life, helping us to praise God, listen to God's word and experience unity in the body of Christ.

29 Give thanks for the self-sacrificing generosity of people who demonstrate their gratefulness for God's gift of life and their concern for their neighbors' well-being by donating blood, plasma and even organs.

30 Remember in prayer those who continue to struggle with unemployment, underemployment and job searching as a result of the economic and health impacts of COVID-19.

31 Though our creeds do not speak of Jesus' teachings, miracles or example, give thanks that, through Scripture, the Spirit reveals Jesus to be the source of our redemption and a trustworthy guide, instructing us how to live with one another, serve our neighbor and do God's work in the world today.

Peace Lutheran Church

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January