



# Herald of Peace

February 2020

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](mailto:prsappington@gmail.com)  
office 252-5504 Home 647-8568  
Office Manager: Dean Jenson  
[peaceoffice@bresnan.net](mailto:peaceoffice@bresnan.net)  
252-5504  
Youth Director: Vanessa Stieger  
[peacelcyouth@gmail.com](mailto:peacelcyouth@gmail.com)  
office 252-5504 cell 698-5576  
Intern Pastor: Melissa Johansen  
[internpeace@gmail.com](mailto: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  
Susan Finn  
Wendy Goodheart  
Holli Miller  
Tony Pecarina  
Jody Pierce  
Dan Quanbeck  
Bryan Peterson  
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.

### **Prayer Pathways**



*Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.*  
**Romans 8:26-27**

February is a month of transitions for us at Peace. We will move from the season of Epiphany to the season of Lent. Hopefully we will move from frigid temperatures to the first hints of Spring too.

I'm inviting you to make another transition with me as well. Will you join me in being more intentional about time in prayer? During the season of Lent we will focus on some significant prayers we find in scripture and ways we can engage in prayer. I am also inviting everyone to join with us in making Lutheran Prayer Beads.



Last fall as Intern Pastor Melissa and I attended the Intern Cluster Retreat we were led in an exercise of making and using Lutheran Prayer Beads. I approached this opportunity with some trepidation, but I was soon fully immersed in the wonderful opportunity.

## ***Prayer Concerns of those we prayed for January 2020***

### **We Believe in Prayer For praise and thanksgiving ...**

Elizabeth A. Eaton - Presiding Bishop, ELCA  
Jessica Christ - Bishop - Montana Synod;

### **For people around the world in need ...**

New Members to come to Peace  
Needs of our neighborhood  
Visitors to Peace Food Pantry  
President Donald Trump (requested by Peace member)  
Christine & Scotty Soileau – Quantico, VA. (member of Peace)

### **For illness or injuries .. of members**

Hank Tungstall - healing  
LaWanda Sherseth - healing  
Annette Reich - Tender Nest  
John Modde - recovery  
Kathleen Gregg - healing  
Ken, Carol Hoefner and family  
Larry Heiser –

### **For illness or injuries .. of family and friends.**

Briana, Lucas, Todd and Kendra  
Melissa healing  
Ruby and family

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  
Micah Hilario, son-in-law of Linda & Gary Branae, (Lois Gorseth friends) has been diagnosed with ALS  
Shawn Hanser  
Emily - prayers for strength  
Bud Leuthold - friend of Joy Lindberg leukemia

### **For those grieving...**

Nola McCafferty & family on the death of her daughter Pamela  
Lynn Heide & family on the death of her son Bruce

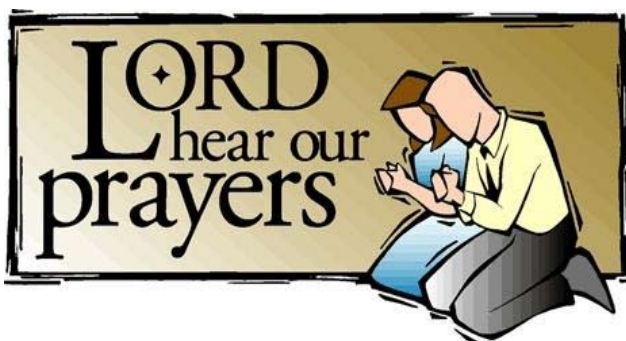
## ***With sincere gratitude***

**T**he Heidi family extends our deep appreciation to the Peace family for the loving concern and prayers on our behalf during the difficult days following Bruce's death. Having Pastor Will and Peace members beside us gave us strength and courage, God's peace and blessings to you. Lyn Heidi and family.

**P**ease Lutheran Church; Thank you for your gift of \$413. Your generosity and support of our Ministry is very much appreciated. The people of Our Saviour's at Rocky Boy wish you joy and happiness in the new year. We will always keep you in our prayers. Sincerely, The Congregation of Our Saviour's Lutheran Church - Rocky Boy

**D**ear Congregants - Thank you so much for your continued support of our homeless and at risk youth. I appreciate your generosity as well as your continued prayers for my students. I know that it does make a difference! Thanks Again, Sue Runkle Homeless Education Liaison BPS

**P**rayer 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 Ione Bloom at 652-2441 or Lisa Grimsley (698-4121).



## Congregational News

### *A Day in the Life of the Intern*

I'm excited to share that I'm in the beginning stages of planning my internship project and I can't wait to see what we all learn together through my project! My project will be centered around planning and facilitating worship and Communion within the context of a meal. I have seen and experienced the transformation that can happen for individuals and communities of people when they gather around food. So much of Jesus' ministry happened around and through food and we all share the need to eat. I'm eager to create a space where we can connect with one another and come to know God in a deeper way. I'm looking forward to exploring what we can learn about each other and how we experience a sense of God's abundance by worshiping around a meal, slowing down Communion, and seeing the interconnectedness between the ordinary and the holy.

The nature of this internship project is a bit nebulous. I anticipate that it will grow and morph over the next few months, so at least at this point there aren't a lot of concrete details to share. I do know that there will be a variety of meals in a variety of contexts with a variety of forms of worship that I hope everyone who wants to will be able to participate in.

I hope you will help me shape this into something that is meaningful for all of you. I'll be looking for people who would be willing to host a meal-centered worship experience. Hosting might look like preparing a five-course dinner in your home, it might look like opening your home to a group and ordering pizza, it might look like reserving a table/private room at your favorite restaurant and inviting some people, it might look like coordinating a potluck brunch, or it might look like anything else you can imagine related to a meal. I'll also be looking for people who would feel comfortable helping to lead some of the liturgy or simple songs in the midst of our worship. There will also be ample opportunities for you to come to a meal, bring your finest culinary offerings, and/or help prepare the meal. I'll post a sign-up sheet on my office door for those who are interested in hosting or helping to lead/facilitate- or just let me know how you might be interested in joining me in this project!

Can't wait to experience God's abundant love and forgiveness through feasting together with all of you!

Peace,  
Intern Pastor Melissa

### SOUP SUPPERS ARE COMING

Do you have a favorite soup recipe or want to try out a new recipe? Lenten soup suppers are coming beginning March 26th with Ash Wednesday. Look for the purple binder on the table in the narthex to either



bring soup for 30, simple dessert, rolls, or clean up. Many hands make light work. Soup will be served at 6:00 with worship to follow at 7:00. Come fellowship with us and share your food.

*Create in me a clean  
heart, O God;  
and renew a right spirit  
within me.*

Psalm 51:10

## Congregational News

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These simple beads have been a blessing to me in times of intentional prayer. They can be used as a way to focus or expand the scope of prayer. They act as a physical reminder to take the time to pray. I'm hoping that you will join with me in making a strand of beads and using them during Lent. (You could even make a couple and give some away as an invitation to others to join with you!)

Why are we making prayer the focus for Lent in 2020? It is my sense that if I polled the community at Peace many would say that their prayer life is something they would like to improve. Some would say they aren't very comfortable with prayer. Others would say they just don't know where to start. A couple might ask, "Isn't prayer the pastor's job?"

Prayer is our opportunity to tune into the voice of the Spirit of God. For me prayer is a time of centering, refreshing, wrestling, and questioning. Paul writes in Romans 8 that God knows what we are praying even when we do not use words. This Lent we'll use sighs, words, hands, and beads. Come and join us.

Peace,  
Will +

### Lenten Worship Schedule

The season of Lent begins with our Ash Wednesday service on February 26<sup>th</sup> this year. This service reminds us of our human frailty with the imposition of ashes with the words, "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

During the season of Lent we will gather each Wednesday evening for soup supper at 6:00 pm. Worship will begin at 7:00 pm.



**Feb. 26<sup>th</sup>** Ash Wednesday

*When You Pray:* Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

**Soup Host:** Various Circles

Offering - Lutheran World Relief

**Mar. 4<sup>th</sup>** *Hannah's Prayer:* 1 Samuel 1:9-18

**Soup Host:** Congregational Life - Offering - Friendship House

**Mar. 11<sup>th</sup>** *Hezekiah's Prayer:* 2 Kings 20:1-6

**Soup Host:** Men's Breakfast - Offering - Christikon

**Mar. 27<sup>th</sup>** *Mary and Martha's Prayers:* John 11:17-35

**Soup Host:** Youth/Education - Offering - Amani for Africa

**Apr. 3<sup>rd</sup>** *Jonah's Prayer:* Jonah 2

**Soup Host:** Church Council - Offering - Freedom in Christ Prison Ministry

**Apr. 10<sup>th</sup>** *Simeon and Anna's Prayers:* Luke 2:25-38

**Soup Host:** Mission and Service - Offering - Billings Public Schools Homeless Education



## Worship News

### February Worship Themes

*Jesus continues his ministry and the people are amazed.*

**(Sermon focus texts are in bold.)**

**February 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup>** Fourth Weekend after Epiphany "New Life"

**Readings:** Psalm 15, **Mark 5:21-43**

*It is remarkable to see the many ways Jesus heals the people who come to him or are brought to him. Some he heals from a distance while others he touches. This week two more remarkable healings happen. How are you being healed?*

**ELW Setting 4**

**February 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup>** Fifth Weekend after Epiphany "Reality"

**Readings:** Psalm 112:1-9; **Mark 6:1-29**

*We get a reality check as the Gospel of Mark shifts from the excitement of the arrival of Jesus and the Kingdom of God to reality that many people will be unmoved by or hostile to the message Jesus brings. Where do we find hope as we continue to bring God's message of love and forgiveness to the world?*

**ELW Setting 10**

**February 15<sup>th</sup> & 16<sup>th</sup>** Sixth Weekend after Epiphany "Rules"

**Readings:** Psalm 119:1-8; **Mark 7:1-23**

Jesus was constantly getting into trouble. I often tell my children, "Don't poke the bear." Jesus must have worn out many sticks poking bears. Why does Jesus do this again and again? Because bears we let take charge are not as scary as we think they are. These bears are not worth worrying about. Come and see!

**Country Gospel**

**February 22<sup>nd</sup> & 23<sup>rd</sup>** Transfiguration of Our Lord "Perspective"

**Readings:** Psalm 2; **Mark 8:27-9:8**

Jesus' disciples experience a literal and figurative change in perspective as Jesus' holiness and splendor are displayed in his transfiguration on the mountain top. We along with Jesus' disciples get some further clarity about who Jesus is and the suffering and death that await him.

**ELW Setting 8**

**February 26<sup>th</sup>** Ash Wednesday

"When You Pray"

**Readings:** Psalm 51:1-17; **Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21**



Compline Worship  
Service

### Mid-Week Worship Service at Peace!!!

Everyone is invited to  
attend

Compline (night prayer)  
service

The Second Wednesday  
of the month

February 12th at 7:00 p.m.



February 26<sup>th</sup>  
Soup supper 6:00 pm  
Worship 7:00 pm

## Mission and Service News

### Upcoming Mission & Service Opportunities to Watch For

The Mission and Service committee continues to offer many opportunities to serve others in this New Year. Please consider praying for where you can personally be doing God's work with your hands and talents.



**Souper Bowl of Caring-** Our annual time of giving will take place on February 2nd. Come support your football favorite for the big game while supporting a great cause.



**All Congregation Day of Service** Join us Sunday February 23<sup>rd</sup> for our next day of service of making sandwiches for the Salvation Army.



ALL CHURCH DAY  
OF SERVICE



**Lenten Offerings** - Ash Wednesday is February 26. Our Lenten offerings will be supporting Lutheran World Relief, Friendship House, Christikon, Amani for Africa, Prison Ministry, and Billings Public Schools Homeless Education.



Our committee looks forward to serving the Peace congregation again in 2020. 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. at Peace Lutheran Church. Please feel free to join us if the Spirit so moves you.

**Living Lutheran Magazine** Please check the sign up in the narthex to renew your "Living Lutheran" subscription. New subscribers add your name, address and zip code to the list. The price is \$8.95 for the year. Make checks payable to Peace and either drop in the offering plate or in the office. Please note that it is for your subscription. **Deadline is Feb. 25th** Thanks

**Living Lutheran** signifies this church's living, daring confidence in God's grace. The magazine features:

- **Stories and commentary** from the 3.5 million members and 9,300 congregations.
  - **Resources to help** you deepen your faith.
  - **Monthly reflections** from Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton.
- Coverage of religious news, events and social issues.

As a partner in God's mission, Living Lutheran shares with the ELCA's diverse membership the stories of God's people living their faith.



**D**o you regularly attend worship and are you willing to be trained to use the new AED and to perform CPR? We are looking for 9 more people to join in this training that will be scheduled for a Saturday morning that works for the people who are willing to participate. Contact Will for more information.

## Congregational News



### Cookies for College Students

We will be packaging treat boxes for our college students to be delivered around Valentine's Day. If you would like to contribute goodies, please leave 2 dozen individually wrapped goodies in the kitchen by Sunday, February 9<sup>th</sup>. Your contribution of love to our college students is greatly appreciated. If you have questions, please contact Dean Jenson or Sharon Schatzke.

### Opportunities for Studying God's Word

There is a place for you!

#### Circles:

**Ruth** meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tues. of each month at 11:30 am at Hardees on 24<sup>th</sup>

**Deborah Katie** meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of each month at 10:30 am at Peace

**Martha Circle** meets the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday at 10 am at Peace

**Men's Breakfast:** Every Wednesday at 6:30 am join the men in the fellowship hall for breakfast and Bible study

#### Bible Studies:

**Mid-Week** Evening Bible study is the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesdays of each month at **7:30 pm during Lent**

**Thursday Morning Bible study** meets at 9 am in the library area



### Christikon Clips February 2020



**Christikon Youth Camp Brochures** have been mailed to every young person in your congregation who are in grades 4-12. The brochures detail some very special possibilities, and some very special deals for registering early for camp. Save by registering before March 15. Additional brochures are available from your church office.

**Family Adult Brochures** will be out soon. Watch for yours in the mail or at your church.

**Do it online!** You can use the Internet to register for all camp sessions at Christikon, or to make a gift, or to find out more about this special ministry. Go to [www.christikon.org](http://www.christikon.org).

**Save the date: Christikon Benefit Auction** at the Billings Depot is coming on Sunday, April 26<sup>th</sup>. Early this year!

Too few young people (not to mention adults) have significant outdoor experience. Christikon combines spirited outdoor experience with focused community experience, helping to open people to the deeper realities of 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.***

**Doughnuts and Coffee;** What a great time of fellowship we have after Sunday worship with Coffee and Doughnuts. We are looking for sponsors each week to defray the cost of the Doughnuts. The cost is \$32 per week. If you are interested the sign-up sheet is located in the narthex. Thank you!!



**Fat Tuesday is February 26<sup>th</sup>!** Join us from 5:30-7pm for pancakes, great fun, and great music. Invite your friends to this Peace tradition. There is no cost, but a free will offering will be received.



## Congregational News

### Church E-mail Addresses



#### Pastor Will

[prsappington@gmail.com](mailto:prsappington@gmail.com)

#### Church Office

[peaceoffice@bresnan.net](mailto:peaceoffice@bresnan.net)

#### Intern Pastor

[internpeace@gmail.com](mailto:internpeace@gmail.com)

#### Youth Director

[peacecyouth@gmail.com](mailto:peacecyouth@gmail.com)



### Bible Studies

**The Regular schedule for Women's Circles returns:**

**Ruth** Circle meets on the second Tuesday at 11:30 am at Hardees on 24th

**Martha** Circle meets on the third Wednesday of the month at 10:00 am in the fellowship hall

**Deborah/Katie Circle** meets Second Saturday at 10:30 am at Peace

**C**heck out the web site:

[peacelutheranbillings.com](http://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

**facebook**

**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.

### February Serving group

Holli Miller, chair  
Rod Miller  
Julie/Dave Draeger  
Kellie/James Kintzing  
Kathleen Gregg  
Alecia/Marlon Besel  
Casey Miller  
Lisa and Kevin Donovan  
Sandie/Tom Schillinger



# Congregational News

## 2019 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

Dewey Anderson

Mike Brown

Robin Felton

Susan Finn

Wendy Goodheart

Holli Miller

Tony Pecarina

Jody Pierce

Dan Quanbeck

Bryan Peterson

Linda Strosky

Nancy Taylor



## 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**

## 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

## Questions about Council Activities? If

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

President Dewey Anderson

Vice-President Dean Welliever

RELIEVE EDITORIAL STRESS:

**TURN IN  
YOUR ARTICLES  
EARLY!**

RE M I N D E R :

**DEADLINE FOR  
NEWSLETTER  
ARTICLES IS**

**March 20<sup>th</sup>**

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



## Education and Youth News

### Fat Tuesday

**Date: February 25th, 5:30-7:00 PM**

Lent is right around the corner, and that means it's almost time for Fat Tuesday! Come celebrate with us while we listen to great music and eat some awesome food!



### Peace Youth's Spring Fundraiser

**Date: March 27th, 6:30 PM**

Our Spring Fundraiser is back! Please join us on March 27th for a night of fun while supporting Peace Lutheran's Youth Program. \$8 gets you into the fundraiser and provides your dinner! Before and after dinner, you will have time to browse over the silent auction items. Then, you will want to save room for dessert! At the end of the night, we will have our dessert auction where your table picks out a dessert to bid on together!

P.S. We are looking for a few desserts for our end of the night auction! If you are interested in baking one for us, please let Vanessa know!

P.P.S. We are looking for a few silent auction items! Please let Vanessa know if you are interested in donating.

Thank you for your support in this fun event!

### Vacation Bible School

**Date: June 1st-5th**

We have a date for this year's Vacation Bible School! Join us June 1st-5th from 9:00 AM to Noon for another week of fun. Stay tuned for more information!

### Peace Pals

*Wednesdays at 5:30 PM*

Have you heard about how much fun we have at Peace Pals? Peace Pals is our Wednesday night youth group for elementary aged kids. We start off the night with singing, then do highs and lows, our story, and we end with a game. It's a blast!

February 5th- *The Annunciation*

February 12th- *Mary Visits Elizabeth*

February 19th- *Jesus Is Born*

February 26th- *Simeon and Anna*

### ReFuel Meals

*Wednesdays at 6:30 PM*

February 5th- Corn Dogs

February 12th- Lasagna\*

February 19th- Breakfast for Dinner

February 26th- Soup Supper\*

*These are our suggested meals for the month of February. If you want to be our chef for one of these weeks, you can pick the meal! Please let Vanessa or Will know if you are interested in cooking.*

### Confirmation

*Wednesdays at 7:00 PM*

It's not too late to start Confirmation with us! Confirmation at Peace Lutheran is on Wednesday nights over the course of three years. It's a ton of fun! We start the night with Highs and Lows, talk about the weekly lesson, have great conversation, and play games! This month we are going over:

February 5th- *David and Nathan*

February 12th- *Solomon\**

February 19th- *A Split Kingdom*

February 26th- *Ash Wednesday\**

## Community News

### Words from the Bishop:

#### *Blessed are the Followers*

So, what does it mean to follow Jesus? I hope you saw an image of what following Jesus can look like in last week's Spotlight on Project Hope in Columbus, MT. And I encourage you to keep your eyes and ears open for other glimpses of what it means to follow Jesus in this world.

Often, when we're asked the question "What does it mean to follow Jesus?" we think first about what we do? After all, we're the ones who are called to follow; therefore, we should be doing the work of following, right?

But actually following Jesus is first and foremost something God does, not us. Following Jesus starts with Jesus himself – his invitation, his call, his promise, his gift. Only in the receiving of God's gift in Christ do we begin to participate in the following.

This comes clearer to us in the first verses of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. "Blessed are you," Jesus says to various groups of people. Think again about what it means to be blessed: to be filled with the life and love of God into the depths of our hearts, minds, bodies and spirits. To be blessed is to receive the vitality of God's wholeness, abundance, and unconditional love into our being. To be blessed is to be given pure grace.

I invite you to look at those beatitudes in Matthew 5:1-12 and ponder what Jesus' blessing means to those he calls to follow him. Here are just a few of Jesus' blessings:

- "To you who are poor in spirit: the kingdom of heaven, God's own abundant life and love given in me (Jesus), has entered your life.
- To you who are mourning: the comfort I bring fills you with the peace of God's own abundant life and love.
- To you who are meek: the earth that I save will empower you with God's own abundant life and love.



- To you who hunger for right relationship with God and neighbor (righteousness): that right relationship is fulfilled through God's own abundant life and love.
- To you who seek to make peace: you are God's beloved child, filled with God's abundant life and love.
- To you who are persecuted as you try to live out your right relationship with God and neighbor: the kingdom of heaven, God's own abundant life and love given in me (Jesus) has entered your life.
- To you who are reviled and persecuted and slandered with all kinds of evil falsely simply because you follow me: rejoice and be glad because you are filled to overflowing with God's own abundant life and love."

Following Jesus begins with God's blessing given to us in the life, death and resurrection of Christ. It is only through the abundant love and life of Christ received into our lives that it is possible to follow him. Through Jesus we receive forgiveness and are restored to living relationship with God. Through Jesus we are given the compassion to love our neighbors. Through Jesus we receive faith, hope and love. Through Jesus, the Spirit inspires (in-spirits) us with all the strength, support, wisdom and blessing we need to follow Christ into the world -- always in it, never of it.

But you know what? There is another gift we receive when we follow Christ. "Rejoice and be glad," Jesus proclaims in the last beatitude. This is a promise, not a command. And in it Jesus promises that in following him, even as we move toward the cross, there is joy and gladness. But more about joy in following Christ in next week's article.

God's blessings of life and love be upon you always.

Bishop Laurie



## February 2020

**1** *Black History Month* Give thanks for the gifts, accomplishments, influence and witness of our African descent neighbors and siblings in Christ — we stand together to glorify God as partners in the gospel, doing God's work in the world together. Though we are unified as siblings in Christ, we ask God to guide and help our church as it recommits to the work of racial justice, socioeconomic equity, racial reconciliation and ending racism.

**2** Pray that God will soften our hearts and focus our love on our neighbors in poverty and food insecurity, communities grieving for victims of violence, people in regions of conflict and war, refugees and immigrants, and people who are persecuted or disparaged.

**3** Ask God to deepen our understanding of the peace that God desires for the world. Pray that the Spirit will inspire us to be bold peacemakers grounded in God's vision of peace, the gospel and love for our neighbor.

**4** Pray that when we are embarrassed or hesitant to speak of the crucified and risen Christ, our faith in God's love and the gospel message will encourage and embolden us to be confident yet humble witnesses in the world.

**5** We are scattered around the world as siblings in Christ, seeking and affirming our unity in the mystery of the Trinity and the good news of Jesus Christ. Explore the World Council of Churches Ecumenical Prayer Cycle, which enables us to journey in prayer throughout the world every week of the year, affirming our solidarity with Christians everywhere.

**6** Pray for ELCA outdoor ministry leaders who are seeking young adults to serve in summer programs across the country. Ask that the Spirit be at work in young adults and move them to respond to God's call to serve and share their faith, skills, gifts and enthusiasm with children, youth and adults.

**7** Pray that our hearts will be open to doing what God asks of us: to hold to what is good, to do justice, to love kindness and to walk humbly with God.

**8** Give thanks for pastors and seminary students who respond to God's call to serve as federal chaplains, ministering to inmates and staff at federal prisons and to staff, patients and their family members at Veterans Affairs medical centers.

**9** As children of God, we are the salt of the earth and light of the world, bearing witness to God's love and mercy. Pray that we will understand how our good works, words and faith — even when unseen or unappreciated in our lifetime — can have profound, far-reaching impact.

**10** ELCA Young Adult Ministry offers inspiration, opportunities and resources to young people aged 18 to 30. Pray for churchwide staff and leaders across the church as they work with young adults to form faith, discover identity and gifts, discern vocation and develop servant leadership.

**11** Pray for church leaders as they gather for the Ignite the Church Conference in Orlando, Fla., an annual event that fosters conversation among leaders and inspires the church to live out its tradition of renewal.

**12** Give praise and thanks to God for being our light and strength throughout our baptismal journey of following God's ways; for being generous, merciful and compassionate; and for sharing the good news of Jesus Christ.

**13** The light and warmth of God's love is welcome nourishment for our faith and spirit. Pray that God's love will move us to provide both spiritual and physical light, warmth and shelter for people who long for hope and relief during these dark, cold days of winter.

**14** Amid our worries and turmoil, we ask for God's help in seeking freedom for the oppressed, sharing our food resources with the hungry, sheltering the homeless and attending to the cries of people in poverty.

**15** Pray that we will take to heart Jesus' teachings that love is not weakness and that power does not equal force or superiority. Pray that we will follow Jesus' example by being humble, loving servants in the world and will trust in the power of the Holy Spirit at work in us and through us.



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**16** Trusting in God's grace and forgiveness, pray that we will be repentant and humble when we consider our daily actions, words and thoughts, as well as what we fail to do. Ask God to redirect our lives so we might follow God's ways and commandments, resist comparing ourselves to others and avoid citing cultural norms to rationalize contrary behavior.

**17** Pray for our president, legislators and other public servants, that their decisions and actions will be guided by a spirit of compassion and justice, a commitment to peacemaking and building relationships globally, and a determination to work across ideologies and political divisions for the well-being of our communities and of people in need.

**18** Give thanks for ELCA Global Mission programs, relationships, opportunities and partnerships with global companions that bring us together as the body of Christ for doing God's work in the world.

**19** Give thanks for the happiness we experience when we walk in the ways and wisdom of God.

**20** Stewardship is more than annual pledge cards, balanced budgets and financial responses to God's love — it's a way of life. Pray that we will recognize and give thanks for the breadth of resources and assets — time, talents, possessions and money — God has entrusted to our care as individuals, families and congregations, and that we will discover ways of using everything we have to live out God's call to love God and our neighbors.

**21** We are "God's servants, working together" for the sake of the world, sharing the gospel and growing the church. Pray that we will be of one mind and spirit as God's humble servants, and that we will see accomplishments, growth and change as the result of God's presence and power working through us.

**22** Continue to pray for immigrants and refugees, who often experience daunting challenges and loneliness as they pursue sanctuary and a welcoming place to rebuild

their lives in this country. Give thanks for the work of congregations, synods, individuals and agencies in welcoming and accompanying immigrants and refugees as part of the ELCA's AMMPARO strategy (Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities).

**23** Pray that the Spirit will sustain our awe, gratitude and reverence for our savior, Jesus Christ, the Son of God and our true source of hope and life.

**24** Remember in prayer the thousands of people left homeless after Hurricane Dorian struck the Bahamas this past September. Pray for the long-term relief and recovery of people impacted, and for the extensive rebuilding of their communities and infrastructures by Lutheran Disaster Response in partnership with the Florida-Bahamas Synod, its congregations, and other agencies.

**25** Give thanks for the Deaconess Community of the ELCA and for women who have responded to God's call in a variety of roles and settings in the church and world, proclaiming the gospel through ministries of mercy and servant leadership.

**26** Pray that we will always be attentive to the presence and work of the Holy Spirit in the world and that we will be moved by the Holy Spirit to be bright, shining witnesses, bearing the hope and promises of God.

**27** God is great and awesome, forgiving and a lover of justice. Give glory and praise to God!

**28** Creation, humanity and nature are knitted together intricately by our Creator in ways that sustain all life and enable the earth to thrive. Pray that we will repent for what we have done to harm or unbalance creation, and that God will grant us wisdom and insight for restoring creation and treating it with care and respect.

**29** Give thanks for ELCA missionaries and young people serving in the ELCA Young Adults in Global Mission programs in Egypt, Israel, Jerusalem/West Bank and Palestine. Pray that God will bless and further their work with our companions in the Middle East and North Africa, especially in finding nonviolent paths to peace and justice.

# Peace Lutheran Church

Non-Profit Organization

1301 Avenue D

Billings, MT 59102-3196

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



*God's Work.  
Our hands.*



**Lent begins with  
Ash Wednesday on  
February 26<sup>th</sup>.  
6:00 pm Soup Supper  
7:00 pm Worship**