

Peace Evangelical Lutheran
Church of Tacoma
2106 South Cushman Ave
Tacoma, WA 98405

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THE CALL TO PEACE

Volume 17 ▪ Issue 4 ▪ Winter 2021

Special Advent and Christmas Worship and Faith Opportunities

Celebrate God's love and grow in faith in Jesus this Advent
and Christmas! Christ is born!!



Advent Daily Devotionals

Make your way daily through Advent using a daily devotional and Advent wreath.

Adults and Youth: Use the "Living Well Through Advent" resource by Living Compass together with an Advent wreath of 5 candles. It's about practicing patience with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind. We are including this as a link in regular all-church emails.

Families with Children: Use the Jesse Tree daily devotional booklet with daily ornament symbols together with an Advent wreath to help the Advent journey come alive by hearing stories and learning about people in Jesus' family tree in the Bible. If you are interested in Jesse Tree materials and Advent candles to use at home, please contact Pastor John.

World Hunger Advent Resources - Calendar and Weekly Devotional

Explore and engage ways to end hunger using a daily Advent calendar (contact Pastor John) and/or weekly devotional (see link in all-church emails).

Longest Night / Blue Christmas Zoom Service - Tuesday, December 21

7 pm: On the longest night of the year, join a contemplative service of lament and healing during a time of year that is hard for some of us. Email Pastor John for the Zoom link.

Christmas Eve Worship - Friday, December 24

5 pm: Children's Christmas Eve Worship for Families (in person & live stream)

Join a child-friendly celebration of Jesus' birth!

7 pm: Christmas Eve Worship (in person with overflow seating & live stream)

Celebrate Jesus' birth with candles, carols, and the message of God's incarnate love! Limited seating in sanctuary; please RSVP. Overflow seating in multipurpose room.

Interested in Learning More about Faith in God and Service through Peace Church? Want to Become a Member of Peace?

Join a Saturday class on **December 4** from **10 – 2:30 pm** called "Foundations of Faith and Peace" exploring marks of being a follower of Jesus and what it means to serve him in and through Peace Lutheran Church and Community Center. This class is in person, wearing masks and social distancing. Lunch provided. Interested? Talk to Pastor John. **New members will be received in worship on Sunday, December 19.**

Annual Congregational Meeting Sunday, December 12, 9:45 am (online via Zoom) Agenda:

- Community Center Board Member Presentation and Update
- Election of Council Officers and At-Large Council Positions
- Adoption of the 2022 Ministry Plan (Budget)



Faith Opportunities for All on Sundays 10-10:45 am (Zoom):

- The **7th-8th grade** Feet to Faith confirmation class, and
- The **adult education** class.

Children: During 11 am worship, we offer a children's worship time in the multipurpose room. Each week we post Godly Play Bible story videos with wondering questions on our YouTube channel for families to use at home.

Middle & high school: A middle and high school youth "Change Makers" group meets Wednesdays at 6 pm.

Questions? Please contact Pastor John.

Community Bible Study Pastor John and Pastor Jae lead a Community Bible Study using Zoom on **Thursdays, 1-2 pm**, on the Bible readings for worship the following Sunday. We read scripture, share conversation, and pray as we listen for God to speak to us and through us. Email Pastor John for the Zoom link.

Christ in Our Home Would you like to receive a copy of the daily devotional "Christ in Our Home" for October -December? Pick one up Sunday morning or contact to church office and it will be mailed to you.



Peace Lutheran
Church



Pastor John's Reflection



“On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food...”
– Isaiah 25:6

“But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.”
– Amos 5:24

These two scripture passages came to my mind in the Future Directions Information sessions we shared as a congregation in November.

Martin Luther visits Peace again Reformation Sunday.

During the pandemic, a Future Directions Team of diverse leaders of Peace Lutheran Church journeyed with questions like these: As followers of Jesus, how is God calling our church to do God's work, to love God and love our neighbor, at this time and in this place? How is God calling us to do justice? How is God calling us to witness to the good news of God's love in Jesus to others into the future? A foundational commitment to anti-racism and a group of recommendations have arisen from this Future Directions discernment process. The Future Directions Information sessions were an opportunity for our whole church to hear about these, to learn, to ask questions, and to begin to discern what part we will play in living these out as part of this faith community.

My highlight in the Future Directions Information sessions was the video created by Brendan Nelson spotlighting beloved deceased member of Peace, Ms. Ruby Williams, who founded and led our Community Meals (then known as the Feeding Program). The video featured audio of Ruby's son Carvin, Ruby's recorded voice, and pictures of community meals, Ruby, Carvin, and family. In our sessions we reflected on Ruby's story and the vision God's given our church to be a “diverse community of faith in the Hilltop where all are welcome, a community that is Spirit-filled, compassionate, healthy, reconciled, and just.” To me, Peace community meals are a parable of God's kingdom in our midst. Like the vision from Isaiah 25 of a future banquet, God welcomes all people to these meals of grace. The meals bring together a diverse collection of people sharing nourishing food and fellowship, serving one another with compassion. Ms. Ruby used her gifts of hospitality, encouragement, and compassion to build community and lift up the gifts of others to serve. She got other congregations and individuals connected to serve. The meals have been foundational to Peace Community Center and to our community outreach today. In our sessions, somebody said, Ruby set up opportunities for all of us to serve in different ways. Somebody else said they could see all five aspects of our Vision statement in our meals. Somebody else pointed out that even though healing in a time of neighborhood gang violence wasn't the expressed purpose of the meals, God was doing it behind the scenes, reconciling and working justice.

God's justice is about fixing what is broken in community, making things right in society God's way. Justice is relational. It's about people living in right relationship with God, one another, and God's creation. God is just and loving, and we are called to do justice and live in love. That's at the heart of our Future Directions.

We're entering the seasons of Advent and Christmas, when we welcome again the good news of God's love come to us in person in Jesus, the baby born in Bethlehem. Jesus is God incarnate, God “with flesh on,” and we're called as a church and as individuals to incarnational ministry, living God's good news in and through our lives.

I'm excited to see where God will take us as we seek to live out these Future Directions in the new year!

God's peace and joy! *Pastor John*

From the Church Council



Blessings, my Peace Siblings,

Are you getting ready to celebrate a season of gratitude? Our times can often make us feel anything but gratitude!! Author and blogger, Christine Aroney-Sine, tries to inspire followers of Jesus to find creative ways to intertwine the sacred through all of life. Sounds like ‘gathering to scatter’. She encourages us to make gratitude a lifelong practice, a habit of awareness that can reshape our understanding of ourselves and the world we in which we live. “The practice of gratitude is one of the tools we all need to cope with the exhaustion and looming burnout that besets us.”

When I think about Peace Lutheran Church, my ‘grateful list’ gets long. God has blessed us with a long history in Hilltop and with a legacy, a present and a future of loving and serving God and neighbor. It's not always perfect or easy. Think of some of the ministries that happen through Peace. There are many, many, many, people who serve in so many ways, often behind the scenes, for whom we can be grateful. Who are some that come to mind for you? Be grateful!

Among so many more, we can be grateful at this point for the vision of the Future Directions Team as we seek to continue loving and serving God in this time and place. Be grateful for the unique ways God has gifted you and be motivated to let God use us, people like you and me, to use our gifts going into the future.

May God's Spirit encourage us, in spite of our difficulties, to be habitually grateful in all things and to serve Him joyfully. Make this a real season of gratitude, even and especially in these times. Grateful to and for all of you!! God's peace and blessings,

Carol Watson, Church Council President

Worship & Faith Resources During COVID-19

Worship In-Person: Each Sunday at 8:30 and 11 am. We're limiting the number of people in the sanctuary for each service. If you're planning to come to worship in person, please RSVP using the online link on the church homepage.

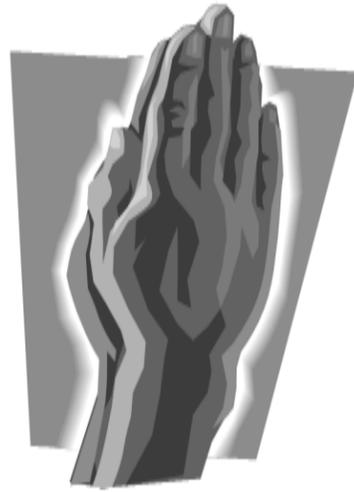
Worship Online: 11 am live stream each Sunday on the church Facebook page; worship video posted later on the church Facebook page and YouTube channel. Find links on our homepage.

During this COVID-19 pandemic, our prayers are with families who have lost loved ones, all who suffer, and all who respond in care. Please check the church website www.peacelutherantacoma.org, Facebook page (Facebook Peace Lutheran Tacoma), or YouTube channel for worship and faith resources.



Philippians 4:6

⁶Do not worry **about anything**,
 but in everything
by prayer
 and supplication
with thanksgiving
 let your requests be made
known to God.



Remember in Prayer

Those who celebrate...

- All God's children giving thanks this Christmas for God coming in Jesus to know us, love us, & save us
- The newly baptized: Reymanii Perez, Lyla Gedde, and Avery Bard
- The Peace community as we reach out to Hilltop families, especially in community meals, affordable housing, academic support, enrichment opportunities, mentoring, & faith offerings for all

Those who are hurting...

- All affected by the pandemic especially the ill and families, medical professionals, public health workers, governments and agencies working to stop this health threat, our congregation and community
- Communities of color impacted disproportionately by COVID-19; all who suffer racial injustice
- The hungry, all suffering economic poverty, the incarcerated, those without homes, all without hope...
- All who grieve the death of loved ones, for comfort and hope in Christ
- All who are ill, facing surgery, recovering from hospitalization, for healing
- All who struggle financially, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually, for hope
- All who are living in crisis
- All who live midst violence, war, or unrest, especially the people of Syria, Afghanistan, South Sudan, Central African Republic, Haiti, Iraq, and the Holy Land. For refugees fleeing war and poverty...

Our work...

- Our affordable housing ministry
- Our ministry of sharing Jesus' love with children, youth, and families
- Our work for justice and peace in our world, building bridges among people

Partners in mission & service...

- Peace Community Center - tutoring, mentoring, supporting Hilltop families
- Our global partners: Davis family in Africa, Rev. Jane Kagochi in Kenya, our companion synod in Namibia, the church in South Sudan, Sevigny family in Japan, the church in China, House of Prayer Navajo Lutheran Church in AZ
- Living Stones prison congregation
- Faith Action Network leading in advocacy for justice for all, and for political leaders

Inreach, Care, and Card Ministry



I write this with sorrow in my heart as I lost my soul mate, Mark. We met when we were very young (8) and we instantly bonded. I could look into his eyes and see the love he had for me. 40 years later we reunited. I must share with you, that when Mark came off the respirator (last time) and of course still very sedated, the nurse said do you know who this is, and with the biggest grin on his face, he said "Jeanie". The love I felt was so unmeasurable. I will miss him intensely, but I know he is with the Lord that he loved. Thank you all for your prayers.... Miracles??? Your prayers did bring miracles, and God did heal him by taking him home. Mark has had a long painful battle since being electrocuted. Please thank God he is free of pain. Please join me to celebrate his life on December 11, 2021, at 1 pm at Peace. If you are inclined to give a gift, please give it to Peace to finish up the sacristy that he has been working on. I have a couple of cabinets to finish that he started.

I will begin Celebration cards after the first of the year, and I need to get back to creating which brings me a lot of happiness. Keep safe and if you have not been vaccinated, please really soul search why not.

Peace and love to all. Please take care of each other,

Jeanie Correa, Inreach Ministry



Women's Ministry

Women's Bible study here at Peace has been on hold during COVID. This coming January it will resume on the second Tuesday of each month at 10 am in the multipurpose room. Masks will be required and we will not have coffee or food. We will have a special time of learning more about the Bible and we will certainly have wonderful fellowship with one another. Please invite others to join us. I look forward to seeing each of you in the new year.

Peace and blessings to each of you,

Teresa Jackson, Women's Ministry

Children's Ministry

Children's Worship Time Is Back! During 11 am worship, we offer a children's Bible story time in the multipurpose room. This is our special Godly Play telling of Bible stories with figures and materials that help the story come alive for children, together with wondering questions and response time using art to help children experience God and wonder about God's message for them. How it works: at 11 am worship, after the scripture readings, children are invited to the multipurpose room for Children's Worship time and will return later in the worship service.

Kids at Peace Is Returning Soon! Starting Friday December 3, we will offer again a special children's faith time after school from 4 - 5:30 pm at Peace. Elementary children are welcome! At 5:30 pm, families are invited to enjoy the grab and go community meal we serve. For more information about Kids at Peace, please contact Brendan Nelson and Kamari Carroll.

Peace Family,

I'll admit, I don't really like change. All change feels like loss to me, even if it's just the changing of the seasons. But time marches on, whether I like it or not.

Just as I hate goodbyes to seasons, I even more hate goodbyes to people. Partings are painful, whether they occur at the end of a visit or the end of a season. People move on, and sometimes they even move on to Heaven. Letting them go, releasing them to God, is essential.

I do trust God in all of this. But even though trusting Him is getting easier after experiencing so many years of his faithful goodness, many goodbyes still remain etched with my tears.

In the midst of changes and goodbyes, I've discovered that God is calling all of us to live with an expectant heart. Expectant of goodness. Expectant that the best is yet to be. Certain that though we don't know what is coming, He does, and He promises to be right there with us.

His promise in Hebrews 13:5 to never leave or abandon us, not ever, is one that, when pondered, fuels our joy and our strength to press on. He'll never leave? Never?! That's right: never ever.

I can't see what is around the corner, but He can. And regardless of what comes, His beautiful presence can fill it all. I pray these words give you comfort during what has been a very challenging year for us all.

I look forward to our journey together in 2022!

Brendan Nelson, Director of Children, Youth and Family Ministry



Love to the Local, the Remix - Youth Servant Learning Week



Jen, Davis and their two daughters, Tovah and Elami, are from Peace Lutheran and are serving overseas in Uganda, Africa. Davis is currently in Florida awaiting knee replacement surgery. Please pray for them.

Check out their blog at davisandjen.blogspot.com

Dear Friends and Family,

Greetings from Florida. For those of you who have never been, Florida is almost as friendly as Uganda, but has more snakes and worse cellphone coverage. I'm adjusting.

I wanted to update you all on our current situation, and to ask for your continued prayers during this time.

In August, after consultation with our surgeon, we made the decision that it is time to replace the knee. While my leg is much stronger, the architecture of the bone remains too weak to function as it should. So, in an online consultation we made our plan with Mayo Clinic – to return to the US on October 15th for a 2-stage surgery to replace the knee and be all done with operations by the end of 2021....

Plans went into effect – I was most grateful for someone replacing me at work while I am away; a church in Florida has lent us a house to use; a supporter had a car for us; and Mayo clinic booked me for an appointment on October 19th. Unfortunately, this is where the plan didn't go as planned...

Instead I've been told that the earliest date for surgery is December 17th, and then I will need to wait 8 weeks before the second surgery in February... I am still hoping to be back to work in Africa by April. Hmm...

Not what I planned for. Not what I hoped for. I trust that God has a plan and that his timing is perfect. For now I am spending my time at rest. May God keep my spirit at peace! I do have books to read, fish to catch, a bike to ride, and bacon to cook – but if you ever want to connect, feel free to give me a call. (908) 536-8623.

Jen, thankfully, had stayed in Uganda until we knew a surgery date. She is working at her counseling internship and plans to come back with the girls (who are in school in Kenya still) on November 29th to join me back in the US.

That's the update. Thank you for your love and support.

God Bless,
Davis

PS. I attach below a picture of the local wildlife that I took on one of my walks. This is an armadillo. I have learned from experience that if you can pick them up. I have also since learned (not from experience) that armadillos can carry leprosy. Florida makes me a little afraid. It's not like Africa.



Follow us: <http://davisandjen.blogspot.com/> (copy & paste into your browser)

Peace Community Center



Dear People of Peace,

Now that the school year is in full swing, we have already witnessed history in the making. The Bobcat Scholars celebrated a historical moment as Hilltop Heritage Middle School revealed the new school sign! It was a fantastic leadership opportunity for our Scholars to represent their school and the Bobcat Scholars Program. Each Scholar who attended the event did a fantastic job living out our program core values: respect, honesty, active participation, and appropriate use of program space. Our Scholars stood alongside fellow Hilltop Heritage staff, administrators, and community leaders, including our city Mayor, Victoria Woodards. As the community celebrated the new school name and sign, we witnessed the middle school students' energy and inspiration becoming a part of the Hilltop history. Peace is looking forward to the progressive transformations that inspire our Scholars and their future.

We have always been eager and supportive to ensure the Peace pathway of success for our Scholars. This year, we are also looking forward to another progressive transformation. Our new partnership with Boeing for our STEAM enrichments during our after-school programs, elementary to high school, has launched this Fall. Currently, we are working on a variety of engagement tools for this program such as a career guidance workshop for female high school students to work with the female employees of Boeing. For the start of the Fall academic year, our Elementary McCarver Scholars explored the possibilities of STEAM projects by engaging in a bridge building activity.



We wish everyone a wonderful holiday season and look forward to the upcoming holidays. Thank you for your continuous support and generosity for our programs here at Peace Community Center and the many ways that you help build trust and great relationships with our Scholars and their families. You make our programs possible and we are grateful that you stand with us! Visit our website at <https://peacecommunitycenter.org/> (copy and paste into your browser) or email miranda@peacecommunitycenter.org.

In Partnership, *Miranda Martens*, Interim Development Director

Who's Who on the Peace Lutheran Church Staff

- Pastor: John Stroeh, ext 101, pastorjohn@peacetacoma.org
- Director of Children, Youth & Family Ministry: Brendan Nelson, ext. 103, brendan@peacetacoma.org
- Pastoral Intern: Jae Bates, jae@peacetacoma.org
- Music Director: Twylla Moore, twylla@peacetacoma.org
- Vision and Call Fellow: Kamari Carroll, kamari@peacecommunitycenter.org
- Temporary Office Coordinator: Damishe Greenwood-Walker, ext. 100, plcadmin@peacetacoma.org
- Finance Coordinator: Jenny Haferbecker, jenny@peacetacoma.org
- Nursery Care: Rebecca Valencia
- Custodian: Ana Sanchez, ana@peacetacoma.org

Music Ministry

Hello Peace Family,

It's been another year and with all that's going on in the world, I'm reminded of the scripture from Philippians 4:8: "Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable, if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things."

Lately, during my daily walks, I'm reflecting on good thoughts during the week. On Monday, I thought of mindful memories where I'd had an Ah Ha moment. Tuesday I thought of testimonies I recalled where God demonstrated his goodness and power. Wednesday I thought about wonderful worship moments of singing psalms to the Lord. Thursday, I thought of thankful times where my life was spared. Friday, I thought of times where my faith faltered but God still came through for me. Saturday, I thought of suspenseful date nights with my husband John. Lastly, Sunday I thought of the sacrifice Jesus gave for me and the sacrifices I have made for my family.

A special thanks to all the musicians and song leaders that continue to share their gifts. Truly the Music Department would not be successful without you. My desire is that more musicians and song leaders are drawn to join in the coming year in worship as a community.



Twylla Moore, Music Director

Intern Pastor



Dear People of Peace,

I can't believe it's already wintertime. This fall has been a wonderful time of connection; especially as we have returned to safe, in-person worship opportunities. Throughout November, I had the amazing opportunity to connect with community members about the topic of forgiveness, reconciliation, and transformation. We spent 5 weeks exploring all three areas and reflecting on how God's spiritual forgiveness invites us into the challenging work of interpersonal forgiveness.

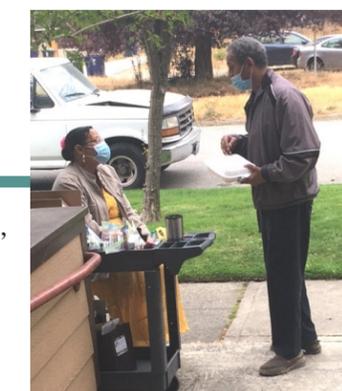
I'm looking forward to holding another Longest Night service on Tuesday December 21st for those who need a space to connect and process the challenges and lamentations we are all facing this holiday season. If you would like more information, please contact me at jae@peacetacoma.org.

God's peace,

Pastor Jae Bates, Intern Pastor

Community Hygiene Ministry

We are collecting winter hygiene items (hand warmers, travel size toiletries, lotion, socks, masks, gloves, emergency foil pocket travel blankets) to provide to the community. Please bring items to the church office. Questions? Contact Myrah Ballentine at 253-283-1665.



Check out Peace Lutheran Church on Social Media!

Check out the website: [Peace Lutheran Church](https://www.peacelutheranchurch.org/)

Find us on Facebook:

[Peace Lutheran Tacoma](https://www.facebook.com/PeaceLutheranTacoma/)

[Peace Lutheran Church Youth Ministry](https://www.facebook.com/PeaceLutheranChurchYouthMinistry/)

Instagram: [@peacelutheranchurch](https://www.instagram.com/peacelutheranchurch)

Want to catch up on what you've been missing?

Check our YouTube page:

[Peace Videos](https://www.youtube.com/PeaceVideos)

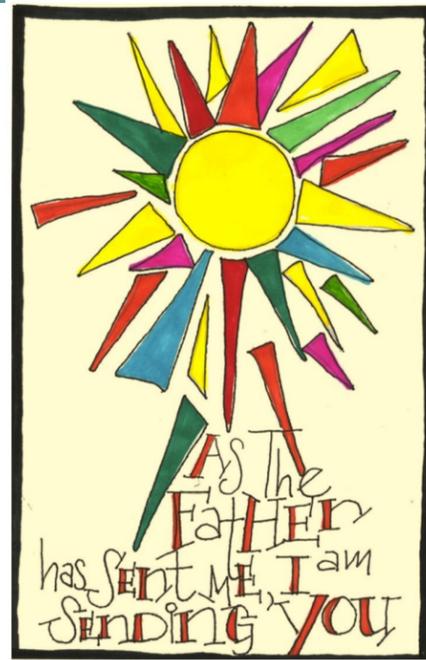
Stewardship Highlight: Gathered to Scatter

Hello, Peace friends and family.

I'm hoping all of you were blessed and encouraged during our stewardship journey last month. As we gathered to learn more about how our membership scatters blessings in the community and the world, we had time to reflect on our individual gifts and talents, and we are blessed with an abundance of these. Hearing from various members about their daily journeys with family and community as they scatter blessings was inspirational. I would like to continue this sharing, this gathering to share our stories with each other. Please take a moment to reflect on your special gifts and talents. Yes, we all have many. Can you make people smile? Are you a good listener or a story teller? Please share an experience, a story of how you were able to scatter a bit of joy and encouragement, and we'll make sure to pass it on.

Let's keep this going.
God's Peace & Love To All,

Melody Duke, Stewardship



What's Been Happening at Peace?



Sharing Bible study and faith reflection by Zoom



Harvest Fest Halloween costume contest!



Celebrating the baptism of Reymanii Perez!



Sandra Puckett and Charissa Carroll share faith reflections on All Saints Sunday about God's presence in grief.

Opportunities to Serve

Below are some opportunities for you to serve and be blessed through the Peace community.

Time and Talent:

- **Want to Assist Sunday Mornings for Worship?** We need greeters, readers, ushers, assisting ministers, song leaders, musicians, and tech helpers. Please contact Pastor John.
- **Community Resources Ministry** Want to support the Friday grab and go Community Meals? Provide and serve a meal for up to 60 people OR come at 5:20 pm to help prepare to-go boxes. Questions or to volunteer: contact Teri Jelinek (tljelinek50@gmail.com).

Treasure:

- **Want to Give Offering to Peace Through Auto-Deduction?** Contact Damishe in the office.
- **Thrivent Choice Dollars** Are you a member of Thrivent Financial? Do you have Choice Dollars to direct to a charitable organization? Please consider directing your Choice Dollars to Peace Lutheran Church or Peace Community Center by logging into your account on the Thrivent website.
- **Give to the Community Resources Ministry** Make a donation to help. If you have a Fred Meyer rewards card please link it to Peace. Go to www.fredmeyer.com, community rewards, and enter Peace Evangelical Lutheran Church or key in Fk117.
- **Give to Help Families for the Holidays** Want to help a family in need this season? Give a donation to Peace Lutheran Church noted "Holiday Help" or bring a gift card for Fred Meyer or Walmart to the Church office. Questions? Ask Pastor John.

Have you pledged your time, talent, & treasure to God for the work of the Church in 2022?

If you missed the opportunity or have not turned in your Commitment brochure, please drop it in the mail slot on the outside office door or send or email it to the church office. Didn't receive one? Please contact Pastor John who will email or send you a copy. Thank you for generously sharing God's gifts!

Mission Statement

Compelled by the love of God and our faith in Jesus Christ, Peace Lutheran Church, a diverse people of faith, in partnership with Peace Community Center, seeks to realize God's dream for the world through worship, learning, giving, and serving.

Core Values...

Serve with **COURAGE**
Embrace **DIVERSITY**
Cultivate **COMMUNITY**
Seek **JUSTICE**

Vision Statement

We believe God's **vision** for Peace is to be a **diverse** community of faith **in the Hilltop** where all are welcome—a community that is **Spirit-filled, compassionate, healthy, reconciled, and just.**

Welcome Statement

All are welcome at Peace! We are a diverse community of welcome for people of all ethnic and cultural heritages, ages and generations, educational and financial backgrounds, gender identities and sexual orientations, spiritual and religious preferences, gifts and abilities! Centered in Jesus and his love, we believe that every human being is created in the image of God, whose Spirit gathers us into one community of faith in our Hilltop neighborhood. You are a blessing to Peace! We welcome your presence, your gifts, your service, your leadership, and our shared life together in community!