

## **Annual Reports from the Congregational President and Pastor Peace Lutheran Church Annual Meeting, December 11, 2022**

### **2022 Annual Report from Congregational President Carol Watson**

“Peace is not a static place!”

One day after talking with Pastor John about all that was happening in and around Peace and preparing the list of items that needed to be included at our Council meeting for the month, I commented that “Peace is not a static place!” Being static is lacking movement, action, and change. It seems that Peace is always moving, taking action and changing. This year we have all witnessed movement, action and change. Praise God!

Rather than reiterate what you will see in the 2023 Ministry Plan Booklet, I encourage you to read it and give thanks for all that has and continues to happen at Peace and how we extend into the community at large. It is inspiring!

We are learning how to live in and with the reality of COVID while returning, carefully, to a more normal way of worship and gathering, using what we have learned over the past years. We can even see how God has been using this difficult time for good. New technology like the OWL has made it possible to conduct meetings via Zoom and in person. We continue to live stream worship services and reach people beyond our church, countrywide. We are beginning, again, to enjoy sharing meals together as a congregation and for those who are served through the Community Resources Ministry. We are thankful to all who are stepping in to make that happen. Van drivers are bringing folks back to worship. We are not static.

We see a new house being built that was just a dream a few months ago and is now almost ready to become a home for a family. We give thanks to the Affordable Housing Team for their incredible work and leadership in securing grants and funding that make this possible.

I count it a privilege to have served with and I give thanks for the 2022 Church Council and the many hours they have contributed in various capacities to be about the business of the Congregation, balancing practicalities with possibilities, leaning in to see that the work happens. Please thank these individuals: 2022 Council – Joseph Anderson, Gail Storrs, Pam Asadi, Craig Cogger, Michaela Cox, Teresa Jackson, Jeanie Correa, Melody Duke, Antonio Yune, Elyse McWilson. They are extraordinary blessings.

Thank you to all of you who are those dedicated ‘behind the scenes’ heart and soul individuals who keep things moving in so many ways.... for prayers offered, for rides given, for meals made and brought, listening ears, for hugs, for encouragement, and for shared tears and laughter. Peace is not static.

We are blessed by an incredible and dedicated staff who provide so much to all of us and so with great gratitude to God, we say thank you to Pastor John, Brendan, Jayna, Damishe, Twylla, Rebecca, Ana, and Jenny and we welcome Charissa Carroll to this team. It is wonderful serving with you and through your leadership, you keep us moving, acting and changing. Peace is not static.

As we look forward to 2023 and what might be in store for Peace Lutheran Church, I add this prayer by Pastor Janet Gwin: Open our eyes, Lord, to see what we have been given, to see what we might give and what you might make from it. Give us faith to see, not just the seed, but the shrub it will become. Amen

### **2022 Annual Report from Pastor John**

Dear People of Peace,

I’m reflecting on the theme of our stewardship emphasis this fall, “What’s in Your Hand?” At the burning bush in Exodus 4, God met Moses in his fear and reluctance with that question, “What’s in your hand?” God would use Moses’ staff and Moses himself—his gifts, his experiences, his personality, his life—the good and the bad—for God’s purposes. In a time of continuing challenges and fears, midst ongoing COVID concerns and calls for justice, God is asking us as a church that question today, “What’s in your hand?” God will use the time, talent, treasure, and experiences of all of us as a community for God’s purposes as we live into our Future Directions toward God’s vision 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.” I give thanks to God for you and your partnership in ministry at Peace Lutheran Church!

Our focus, prayers and energies this year have been put into worship and education, living into our Future Directions, our ministry of place in housing and community resources ministry, and our children's/youth/family/intergenerational ministry. 2023 will be an exciting year as a new Future Directions Action Plan Team will help us organize our work for God's ministry at Peace in the future. The 2023 Ministry Plan lays out the steps we've taken in Future Directions toward our vision, shares stories of our ministries this past year, and suggests ways we're moving forward. Please read it closely. **I share brief highlights of 2022 here.**

- **Spirit-filled Worship:** Spirit-filled worship on Sundays is the heart of our faith community. God meets us with a word of grace and power and sends us out to serve from there. Worship is now both in person and live stream (11 am), and we've added back more and more pre-COVID elements while also finding new patterns together. Total participation in both in-person and online worship each week averages 200 people, much greater than pre-pandemic attendance, which is a great blessing! Thanks to all who consistently lend their gifts and time to make worship happen!
- **Faith Education:** We resumed Sunday in person faith opportunities this year—children's Godly Play, 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grade Explorers, 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade Feet to Faith, and an adult/youth class. Community Bible Study and FOCUS Groups for adults and the youth ChangeMakers group met outside Sunday mornings.
- **Future Directions:** During the first 18 months of the pandemic, the Future Directions Team met in prayerful discernment, asking where God is calling our church to go in the future as we seek to love God and love our neighbor in this time and this place. The process culminated in a Foundational Commitment to Anti-racism and four Future Directions Recommendations adopted by Church Council. At the beginning of 2022, Brendan Nelson moved into a new role as Director of Community Engagement and Outreach, and we've now spent a year living into these directions. See the detailed report in the ministry plan. We're inviting all of us to pray for these Future Directions and "get in where you fit in" as we live into these directions in the future. Highlights of our Future Directions journey for me this year include the Lent Season of Prayer, Retiring the Jesus Statue, the Healing Racism Gathering, a Big Dream Grant from ELCA World Hunger, cohorts in land stewardship and housing directions, a growing relationship with St. Mark's Lutheran Church, the construction of a two-bedroom DADU (detached accessible dwelling unit), a new Resource Navigator, spiritual gifts classes and a "What's in Your Hand?" series.
- **Housing Ministry:** Our housing ministry is growing as we nearly complete the construction of a two-bedroom DADU (with the help of the ELCA World Hunger and Big Dream Grant) to bring the number of homes stewarded by the church to four. Special thanks to Chris Ferguson for spearheading the Housing Team—Chris will step down soon from this role. Soon four families will have affordable housing in our Hilltop neighborhood in which gentrification has displaced many long-term low-income families, especially families of color. The Housing team is discerning how to expand our housing ministry to make a greater impact in this time of affordable housing urgency in the Hilltop.
- **Community Resources Ministry:** Friday community meals are now back in person, a great blessing because sharing fellowship is a big part of this ministry. We share community resource information in areas such as housing, job training, health care, and VA benefits, and Charissa Carroll, our Resource Navigator (a position funded by new grants) walks with folks seeking greater sustainability. Teri Jelinek stepped down from her coordinator position, and Damishe Greenwood-Walker picked up those duties.
- **Children, Youth, and Intergenerational Ministry: Children/Intergenerational:** This year we resumed in person children's Sunday School (Godly Play), Children's Worship Time, Summer Bible Adventure (Compassion Camp), and many intergenerational special events (Easter Eggstravaganza, Harvest Fest, and Christmas Brunch). **Youth:** Youth ministry is going strong with the Feet to Faith Confirmation class, ChangeMakers serving learning group, and a monthly Youth Dinner. An in person Confirmation overnight retreat at the church in May and another Love to the Local servant learning mission week in July were powerful experiences for our young people growing and serving in faith. It was especially great that one of the youth, Elyse McWilson, led the Love to the Local week.
- **Men's and Women's Ministry:** Women's fellowship events and men's breakfast are happening again and had good attendance as folks have longed to share faith and fellowship together.
- **Intern Pastor Ministry:** Pastor Jae Bates completed his MDivX program at Luther Seminary and his pastoral internship at Peace midyear, and he now lives in Minneapolis.

### **Moving forward...**

- **Future Directions:** In 2023 we will continue to live into our Future Directions, grounded in the Foundational Commitment to Anti-racism, as we respond to God's love in love and service to God and our neighbor. A Future Directions Action Plan team will make action plans. We will work to strengthen our ministry in the Hilltop neighborhood, especially through housing and community resources ministry (ministry of place). We will deepen our offering of faith education and development lifting up the values of Jesus that are the core values of Peace (catechism of Peace) as we seek to understand, address, and dismantle racism. We will grow in understanding of each person's gifts and work to create opportunities for another to serve and lead (priesthood of all believers). We are in an exciting and challenging time as a church which will require courage and perseverance, an openness to learn and grow, and a willingness to lean in to listen and understand one another in our diverse community of faith.
- **Charissa Carroll Word and Service Rostered Ministry:** At the annual congregational meeting, we vote to approve Charissa Carroll for Word and Service Rostered Ministry in the ELCA!
- **More In-Person Ministry:** We hope and pray that we will be able to offer more in-person opportunities for ministry, fellowship, and service as we continue to prioritize our community's health and safety. Resuming Choir singing in worship will be a goal for the new year.

### **Here are a few other notable details of 2022 in ministry.**

- **Stewardship:** The Stewardship Team helped guide us into a deeper understanding of God as the giver of all we are and have and of our calling to live as good stewards of God's gifts. The fall "What's in Your Hand?" series culminated in Commitment Sunday in which we offered our giving plans (time, talent, treasure) for the church. To date Peace has received 35 pledges totaling \$255,132 toward 2023 ministry. Thanks be to God for the ways you serve God through Peace Lutheran Church and in daily life!
- **Church Council:** Thanks to Council for a good year. Carol Watson guided us through her second consecutive year as Council President and will step off Council. Thanks also to outgoing Council members Teresa Jackson (Evangelism/Outreach) and Jeanie Correa (Inreach). Thanks to Joseph Anderson (Vice President), Pam Asadi (current Treasurer), Gail Storrs (Secretary), Antonio Yune (Worship), Melody Duke (Stewardship), Elyse McWilson (Youth), Michaela Cox (Education), and Craig Cogger (Community Resources) who continue on Council in 2023! Welcome to new Council members!
- **Church Staff:** I'm grateful to serve in partnership with a strong church staff! Thanks to Brendan Nelson (Director of Community Engagement and Outreach), Twylla Moore (Music Director), Jayna Detweiler (Coordinator of Children's, Youth, and Intergenerational Ministry), Charissa Carroll (Resource Navigator), Damishe Greenwood-Walker (Office Manager and Community Meals Contact), Jenny Haferbecker (Finance Coordinator), Rebecca Valencia (Nursery Attendant), Ana Sanchez (Custodian), and Thomas Martin (Grounds). Please find opportunities to express your appreciation to church staff.
- **Conversations Around Race:** Representatives from Peace and other congregations meet for the purpose of growing in our relationships to help break down racial barriers and seek racial justice. We offered a Native American justice series and shared in a Pulpit Exchange and Worship Exchange this past year.
- **Evangelism/Outreach:** Ministries of outreach reach folks in our neighborhood, including Community Meals, the clothing closet, community events, and calling on neighbors.
- **Care and Card Ministry:** Care Ministers are active visiting, calling, bringing meals, and sending cards to those who are hospitalized, ill, confined to their homes, grieving, or lonely.
- **Global Mission:** The Davis family continues to God's mission in Uganda. They direct African Inland Mission's (AIM) "Central Region" serving the needs of about 100 missionaries in 6 African countries.
- **New Members** this year: 15. **Baptisms** this year: 4. **Confirmations** this year: 3.
- **Funerals/memorials** this year: 6. **Weddings** this year I performed: 1.
- **Peace Community Center:** Co-Executive Directors Deb Martinez and Shamiah Bullock lead the Center, partnering with the church to serve Hilltop youth and families through tutoring, mentoring, and support.
- **Pastors' Groups:** I attend Tacoma Ministerial Alliance meetings, a scripture study with urban leaders called "Preaching Peace," regular ELCA rostered persons meetings, and a national group of ELCA leaders called the ELCA Homelessness and Justice Ministries Network.

We are the hands of Christ, opened in love, extended in welcome, joined in worship, offered in service, and reaching for justice. We've come this far by faith! We trust God to lead us into the future!

God's peace, Pastor John