

# 2026 Ministry Plan

for

# Peace Lutheran Church

Tacoma, Washington

The congregation's plan for ministry,  
including the annual budget, initiatives, outcomes, and  
narrative insights about our mission, values, and vision



*"Peace on the Hilltop—Journeying into the Future Together"*

# Peace Lutheran Church 2026 Ministry Plan



## Introduction

The 2026 Ministry Plan is the missional story of our congregation. Just as individuals have stories of God's abundant care for them, our narrative Ministry Plan tells the story of how Peace's ministries make a measurable impact on changing lives and blessing the community.

In 2010 Peace Lutheran Church underwent a vigorous process of prayer, Bible study, congregation retreat, and task force discussions to discern God's vision for our ministry. God revealed an exciting vision, supported by a compelling statement of mission and strong foundation of core values. Since then, through prayer and discernment, God has revealed statements of welcome and land acknowledgment and a foundational commitment to anti-racism.

***Built around Peace's five-part vision statement, the Ministry Plan brings the typical line-item budget to life and celebrates what God is accomplishing through us.*** With the Future Directions discerned during the pandemic, we have more clarity of purpose as we live into God's vision, grounded in our foundational commitment to anti-racism and action plans. The Ministry Plan gives us focus and energy as we accomplish God's work in our community. It shows our investments of ministries and finances in ministry. We include our partnership in mission with Peace Community Center and updates on mission accomplishments.

God has been at work in powerful ways through Peace Lutheran Church in 2025. The **2026 Ministry Plan** continues to help Peace look forward in mission and move toward God's vision. ***We explore God's Vision for Peace through the five vision points. Ministry emphases in 2025 reflected in the 2026 Ministry Plan include living into our future directions, our anti-racism commitment and ministry of place in housing and community resources ministry, children's/youth/family ministry, and Peace Community Center's community engagement and strategic planning process. 2026 will be an exciting year as our two Future Directions Work Groups (Anti-Racism and Ministry of Place) help us continue to live out our action plans for God's ministry (including our housing feasibility study for expanding our housing ministry), we build our children's and youth ministry supported by two new staff people, and we partner with Peace Community Center as the Center moves from strategic planning to a new chapter.***

## A Narrative Presentation to the 2026 Budget

In the pages that follow, you will learn about many of the ministries and teams at Peace, and how they work together to serve. This narrative will help you see the personal impact of your giving and your service. Here at Peace, giving is more than paying bills and funding an institution, and serving is more than filling volunteer positions that every church expects. Instead, our giving and our service are doing the work of Christ, serving and growing God's kingdom here in the Hilltop, broader community, and the world. In other words, we don't give our time and money TO the church, but rather we give THROUGH the church to reach real people in real ways that make real differences in their lives, now and for eternity.

After reviewing the Ministry Plan, we hope that you will recognize that everything we have—and all that we are—is a gift from God, a gift that we are given to use in ways that contribute to God's own purposes. Further, we hope you recognize that how we spend and share our money and time says a lot about our core values and priorities. Your ongoing support, generosity, and service are greatly needed and appreciated, and will help us move forward, together, with our ministries here at Peace.

The Ministry Plan is funded and carried out through regular giving and service by the people of Peace, contributions from guests and visitors, church and community grants, and funds from Thrivent Financial and other company gifts. The Church Council recognizes and thanks all of you for your giving and service in support of our vision, mission, and ministries!

# Peace Lutheran Church Guiding Statements

## Mission

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.



## Values

We seek to realize God's dream for the world by living out these values:

1. (Serve with) **Courage:** We respond to God's call with boldness, creativity, and honesty, and engage the realities of life with perseverance and joy. (Joshua 1:9)

*"Be strong and courageous; do not be frightened or dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."*

2. (Embrace) **Diversity:** We invite and welcome, honor and respect people of all ages, cultures, and walks of life, and encourage people to use their unique God-given gifts and abilities. (Romans 12:4-6)

*"For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us."*

3. (Cultivate) **Community:** We listen, build relationships, grow in faith, and experience God's grace, as we work together in our urban Hilltop neighborhood and larger community. (Colossians 3:12-17)

*"As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."*

4. (Seek) **Justice:** We advocate for the dignity of all people by addressing basic needs, empowering through education, and working toward a socially just world. (Micah 6:8-9)

*"He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? The voice of the Lord cries to the city—it is sound wisdom to fear your name: Hear, O tribe and assembly of the city!"*

## Vision

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.**

***The 2026 Ministry Plan is organized around the five elements of our vision.***

If vision defines the future we are working toward, our Ministry Plan should reveal the resources of time, talent, and possessions necessary to get there... and it may reveal whether or not we are placing the appropriate level of resources in each area.



## 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 voice, your service, your leadership, and our shared life together in community!



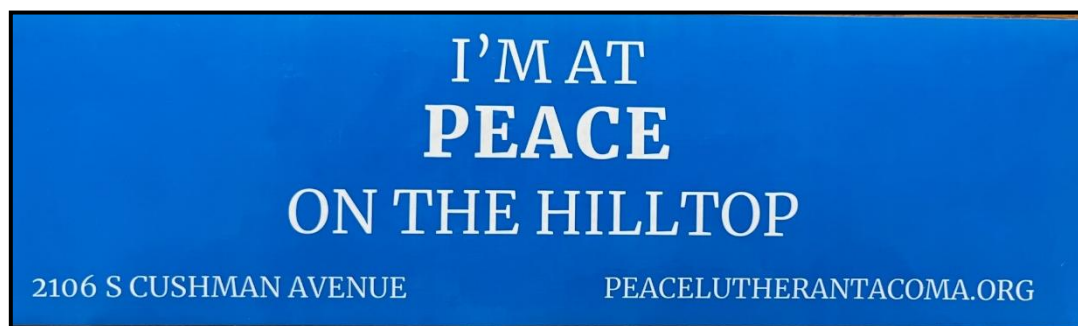
## Foundational Commitment to Anti-Racism

As followers of Jesus, we believe that God created all people in God's image (Genesis 1:27), Jesus breaks down all dividing walls (Ephesians 2:14), and the Holy Spirit connects and unites all people. The whole church looks forward to God's future when people will be gathered from all cultures and peoples in the reign of God (Revelation 7). This church names racism (individual and systemic) as sin. We affirm that the diversity of cultures is a God-given gift, and we seek to extend God's love to all our neighbors. We believe Jesus calls us to understand, address, and dismantle racism in individuals, communities, systems, and structures, joining God in bringing about justice for the oppressed and transformation of all society (Luke 4).



## Land Acknowledgment

Peace Lutheran Church is located on the traditional homelands of a living people, the Puyallup people of the coast Salish nation. This is a statement of honoring as well as a confession of the deep injustices our country and the church have perpetuated against Native American people and a call to stand in solidarity and seek God's justice.



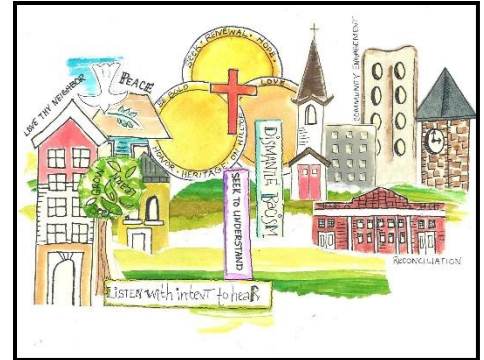
## Visioning and Future Directions

**A Verse for Discerning God's Vision** — Proverbs 29:18: "Where there is no vision, the people perish."



Vision gives hope and purpose for people and community, what we need to truly live! We are reminded of the vision statement of Peace Lutheran Church every Sunday in worship. God is calling us 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. A Future Directions Team met for 18 months during the pandemic to discern what that means for Peace Lutheran Church as we walk into the future. Our context is changing with the gentrification of the

Hilltop neighborhood with accompanying displacement of long-term residents (especially families of color), and there is a deep need for racial justice in our diverse community and nation. God is good and God is faithful, and God continues to give us energy to move into the future with hope and a strong sense of calling. The congregation has embraced a Foundational Commitment to Anti-Racism and four Future Directions that guide us as we live into God's vision in the coming years as a multiethnic, multigenerational, economically diverse church. Brendan Nelson's church staff position as Director of Community Engagement and Outreach was set up to help us move forward toward these Future Directions.



### Where have we come so far this year, and where are we going in our Future Directions?

In 2023, a Future Directions Action Plan Team under the facilitation of Bill Hanawalt, working closely with Brendan Nelson and Pastor John, met to create an action plan for our Future Directions with action items including timelines, outcomes, leadership and accountability, and resources needed, all undergirded by our Foundational Commitment to Anti-Racism. Two work groups emerged out of this process to help our congregation put these plans into action – an **Anti-Racism Work Group** facilitated by Julia Kagochi with Pastor John as church staff support, and a **Ministry of Place Work Group** facilitated by Bill Hanawalt and Joey Ager with Brendan Nelson as church staff support. You are invited to discern how you will be part of living out these Future Directions. As we always say at Peace, "Get in where you fit in!"

#### Overarching Future Direction: Anti-Racism

***Our Foundational Commitment to Anti-Racism: As followers of Jesus, we believe Jesus calls us to understand, address, and dismantle racism in individuals, communities, systems, and structures, joining God in bringing about justice for the oppressed and transformation of all society.***



#### Future Direction: Catechism of Peace

***The Catechism of Peace is how we teach our Christian faith in the context of our community and embed theology that is crucial to our congregation living out our faith, like loving our neighbor, justice, anti-racism, reconciliation, and other areas.***

#### Taking action through the Anti-Racism Work Group:

The Anti-Racism Work Group's goal is to strengthen the congregation's commitment to anti-racism while moving the work forward. Since the group began meeting in September 2023, it has reviewed congregational anti-racism survey responses from Spring 2023 and then put effort into increasing educational opportunities for church members, engaging RiseWithUs consultants for training for church leaders and the whole congregation in cultural humility and inclusivity, creating the resource book library, and developing an equity toolkit that church leaders can utilize during decision and policy making. In 2025, the work group helped support the use of the toolkit in church ministry, facilitated many learning sessions for anti-racist learning and growth, and put forth many lists of micro-actions to take in challenging times.

## Actions this Year Toward These Future Directions:

- **Lenten Sunday Morning Education Series:** The Anti-Racism Work Group led a Sunday Lenten series viewing and discussing the movie *Origin*, based on the book *Caste*, which explores the hierarchies that wound the human spirit and divide us from each other. We discovered together that Lent, a season of self-reflection and commitment to transformation, is an opportune time to face the truth of our societal and cultural sins of discrimination, racism, and caste and, through the power of God's Spirit, help us commit to living into hope for a more life-giving future for ourselves and everyone.
- **Learning Opportunities on Inclusivity and Belonging:** Julia Kagochi and the Anti-Racism Work Group led several Sunday forums in the fall to encourage further growth, including a series on Microaggressions.
- **Docuseries:** A documentary film and discussion series explored identity, power, and social justice.
- **Micro-Actions Lists:** Twice a month, Julia Kagochi puts out a new list of seven positive micro-actions people can take to make a difference in our nation at a time in which many are feeling overwhelmed.
- **Anti-Racism Toolkit:** The Anti-Racism Work Group is helping to support the use of the new toolkit to help us apply an equity lens to our life and work together. We continue to expand the use of the toolkit in the decision-making, policies, and ministries of our church.
- **RiseWithUs Training:** RiseWithUs consultants AJ and KJ Williams have created video trainings with an accompanying workbook in cultural humility and inclusivity for us to use as a congregation into the future.
- **RiseWithUs Coaching with Pastor John:** Our consultants have begun to meet regularly with Pastor John to support him in navigating the real-time challenges, questions, and dynamics that come with leadership—especially in spaces committed to equity, transformation, and care.



## Anti-Racism Action Plan:

| Action   | End Goal   |
|--|--|
| <b>Integrating our Foundational Commitment to Anti-Racism</b>      |  |
| Initial Survey of Congregation                                     | Gain understanding of how our congregation members understand and interact with our commitment to Anti-Racism.   |
| Create Anti-Racism Decision Making Screen                          | Council, Staff and Volunteers have a tool to support anti-racist decision making.  |
| Assess current church functions with Anti-Racism commitment        | Look at worship, community ministries, policy, education, leadership groups, outreach, structures, etc.  |
| Strengthen Racially Diverse Leadership (Places of Decision Making) | Increase engagement and leadership of our Black, Brown, Indigenous, and People of Color at Peace.  |
| Integrate Commitment to Anti-Racism in Church Education            | Commitment to Anti-Racism is thoroughly embedded in church teachings (new member class, confirmation, Council orientation, Sunday School (children, youth, and adults), small group ministries, and preaching) |
| Determine Anti-Racism Training Offerings                           | Individual members & congregation grow in knowledge of anti-racism and cross-cultural communication & relationships.   |
| Individual Learning Library  | Develop resources for individuals to grow in their commitment to and knowledge of anti-racism  |



## **Future Direction: Ministry of Place**

*The Ministry of Place is how we build relationships with our changing neighborhood to serve and learn as well as to invite our Hilltop community into the life of the church.*

## **Future Direction: Priesthood of All Believers**

*The Priesthood of All Believers is how we support the discipleship and leadership development of all participants in our Peace community of faith.*

## **Taking action through the Ministry of Place Work Group:**

The Ministry of Place Work Group is responsible for stewarding Peace's embodied presence in the Hilltop of Tacoma, in particular through the work of the affordable Housing ministry, Peace Community Center, the Community Meal and Resources ministry, and other projects. We believe Peace is at its best when we live into our identity as a neighborhood church: we are called to incarnational presence here in the Hilltop where we work to be good neighbors. We recognize that our neighbors are often impacted by housing insecurity, economic instability, displacement and gentrification, violence and other challenges. We acknowledge that to be good neighbors in a diverse, multicultural neighborhood we must confess the structural sin of racism - and the church's historic complicity in that system - and live into our foundational commitment to anti-racism. Our work team is responsible for nurturing the community ministries rooted in at Peace, stewarding their growth and sustainability, and connecting them to Peace's future direction.

## **Actions this Year Toward These Future Directions:**

- **Housing Ministry:** The church stewards four houses and provides affordable housing for four families in our gentrifying Hilltop neighborhood. A Housing Team meets to guide the day-to-day operation of our housing ministry, under the leadership of Brendan Nelson. This past year we completed many repair and maintenance projects, especially at the three older houses. The Ministry of Place team is helping our congregation vision for the future in housing ministry.
- **Housing Feasibility Study:** As part of our ongoing journey of discernment and visioning in housing ministry, Peace Lutheran Church put out a Request for Proposal for a feasibility study funded by an Enterprise Partners grant. Liminal Land Consultants were chosen and are leading a diverse team from Peace in this feasibility study. We are exploring the kinds of housing we might build on the available land in our care to support our neighbors in need.
- **Community Resources Ministry and Resource Navigator:** We continue to offer a free community meal every Friday evening throughout the year, partnering with congregations and community groups to provide and serve meals. Our Peace Café on Fridays 3-7 pm is a warm, welcoming gathering space. Through Resource Navigator Deacon Charissa Carroll, we have supported individuals in need toward a more sustainable livelihood. The goal is to walk alongside and equip individuals struggling with economic poverty to take positive steps toward greater economic sustainability. Deacon Charissa is stepping down at the end of this year (2025), and we will be inviting volunteers to take greater responsibility on Fridays. We're grateful for her service and bless and send her and Malcolm and family on their way as she starts a new chapter on her own in grief and life coaching.
- **Stewardship Series:** The Stewardship Team planned our fall series themed, "Stewards of God's Love: Down, In, and Out." In Sunday faith education and worship we explored scripture, shared faith reflections, and heard personal stories from people at Peace about God's love flowing down to us, in and among us, and out into the world through us. God invites us all to share the time, talent, and treasure God's entrusted to us to be about God's work in the world. Talk with Brendan about church serving opportunities.
- **Ministry Leaders Meetings:** Brendan Nelson is facilitating regular meetings of ministry leaders at Peace for sharing, support, and stronger partnership.
- **Many New Small Groups:** In 2025 we've added many new small groups for Bible study, fellowship, prayer, and spiritual growth, including a men's weekly breakfast, four women's Bible studies, and the For a Time Such As This group.



## Ministry of Place Action Plan:

| Action  | End Goal   |
|---|--|
| <b>Strengthening our Ministry of Place &amp; Activating people to Serve our Community</b> |  |
| History of Hilltop and Church   | Be able to share the full story of the history of Peace Lutheran Church and our Hilltop community.     |
| Codify Housing Ministry & Future Vision   | Have a full plan for growth of housing ministry, sustainability, etc.                                  |
| Redefine partnership with Peace Community Center  | Create a plan for ways to strengthen partnership at all levels (communication, collaboration, etc).    |
| Discover Gifts  | Members of church and community are knowledgeable of their gifts and how they can serve the community. |
| Activate People for Local Service   | People are serving the local community, with anti-racism lens, to strengthen justice and vibrancy.     |

## Housing and Community Resources Ministries

**A Verse for Community Development** — Jeremiah 29:7: “But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.”

Peace Lutheran Church is taking intentional steps to strengthen our ministry of place in community development. In **Housing ministry**, with the addition of the two-bedroom small home (DADU) we built in 2023, we now steward four houses (a 1-, 2-, 3-, and 4-bedroom) and offer affordable housing to four families with connections to the Hilltop who have been affected by the displacement that has come with gentrification. This is a justice ministry. A Housing team oversees our housing program, renovation and maintenance of the houses, and family support for tenants. The Ministry of Place Work Group is helping us vision for future ministry in housing. In **Community Resources ministry**, we offer a year-round Friday Community Meal program and Peace Café with community resources and resource navigation, coming alongside individuals who seek longer term sustainability for their families. This is a step beyond charity toward individual and community development, grounded in justice.





# Children's, Youth, and Family Ministry

**A Verse for Children's, Youth and Family Ministry** – 1 Thessalonians 2:8: Paul writes, "So deeply do we care for you that we are determined to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you have become very dear to us."



2025 was a year of transition in church staffing in children's and youth ministry. A Vision and Staffing task force of children's and youth ministry leaders met for several months to vision for the future and determine church staffing needs in these areas of ministry. We have now hired Manis Pierre as part-time Youth Minister and Annabell Davis-Bloom as part-time Children's Minister.



**Children's Ministry Vision:** Children and families of all backgrounds and walks of life feel welcome, safe, and loved; encounter and experience the wonder and love of God in Jesus through regular worship, dynamic Bible stories, engaging prayer, and caring relationships; learn and grow in faith surrounded by gracious and welcoming community; discover their God-given gifts; and use their gifts to serve God, the church, the neighborhood, and the world. We center and celebrate children; create opportunities for children to give and serve in worship, the life of the church, and the larger community; equip families to pass on faith at home; and encourage our church to open our arms and to receive the gifts children offer.

## The Purpose of Youth Ministry at Peace Lutheran Church:

The purpose of Youth Ministry at Peace Lutheran Church is to create, nourish, and strengthen relationships between youth and God, youth and family, youth and congregation, and youth and peers so that through these relationships they may hear and experience the good news of God's love in Jesus which will create, nourish, and strengthen their faith in community.

## 2026 Youth Ministry Goals:

- Provide young people with opportunities to grow in faith, serve meaningfully, discover gifts, and be known.
- Create intentional connections between youth and caring adults in trusting, faith-filled relationships.
- Inspire youth by our examples while challenging them to strengthen and deepen their faith.
- Ignite within youth a passion for Jesus, a love for neighbor, and a commitment to church community.
- Invest in youth and support them in being prepared for life, relationships, service, and leadership.



## Regular Children's Ministry Opportunities:

- Sunday School 9:45-10:45 am Godly Play (Ages 4 through 3rd)
- Children's Worship Time during 11 am Worship

## Regular Youth Ministry Opportunities:

- Sunday School 9:45-10:45 am (4th-6th Explorers, 7th-8th Feet to Faith Confirmation)
- Youth Dinners as hosted by families
- Movement towards one on one youth to adult mentor relationships
- Periodic Service projects for youth to serve the community; i.e. Make and Serve the Friday Community Meal, Yard clean up, Peace Gardening, and more!



**Children's Ministry Leadership Team:** A team of children's ministry leaders is now leading and doing our work, with Andrew Wright as liaison and convener. Our new Children's Minister will join this team.

**Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policies:** This year a team from Peace put together a comprehensive handbook with protection policies to guide us forward in seeking to ensure safety and security for our community.

**Classes for Children and Youth:** Our classes for children and youth explore the Bible while connecting with how we interact with the world each day. We focus on compassion, love and joy for God, ourselves, and each other. Classes for children and youth:

- **Godly Play** opens children up to experience the wonder of God's love expressed in Bible stories and to respond with creativity and reflection.
- **Explorers** bridges the gap between children's ministry and the youth group and helps youth expand their understanding of the Bible through engaging, powerful lessons scripted just for them.
- **Feet to Faith Confirmation** is a two-year program of study and service with fun and challenging ways to help students grow in faith in God.



## Sabbatical

**A Verse for Sabbath Rest** — Ezekiel 20:12: "And I gave them the Sabbath, a day of rest every seventh day, as a symbol between them and me, to remind them that it is I, the Lord, who sanctifies them, that they are truly my people."

In an effort to nurture wholeness and wellness in ministry for rostered and full-time staff, Peace Lutheran Church provides a sabbatical leave after every six years of service in the congregation, recognizing that church staff have a need for on-going renewal, growth, education, and spiritual deepening. A sabbatical is a time for rest and renewal.

### Pastor John's Sabbatical in Summer 2025

In February 2025 Pastor John reached the milestone of having served Peace Lutheran Church for 18 years, and he was granted a third three-month sabbatical. He was away on sabbatical with his wife Leigh and their children this past summer. They spent time at a Christian retreat center (Holden Village), visited friends and



family across the United States, traveled to Cambodia and Thailand for a global experience. Pastor John took intentional time for retreat, reading, prayer, and spiritual growth, guided by his spiritual director. He explored the gift and calling of hospitality in Christian life and in our community at Peace Lutheran Church.



### Damishe Greenwood-Walker's Sabbatical Coming in 2026

In 2026 our Operations Manager Damishe Greenwood-Walker is being granted a one-month sabbatical, per our new Staff Handbook sabbatical policy for full-time administrative staff, after her many years of service to Peace Lutheran Church. We will plan for coverage for her position duties while she is away, and we pray she has a restful, renewing experience.



## ELCA Multiethnic/Intersectional Church Cohort Participation

Peace Lutheran Church is participating in a new network through our larger church.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) Multiethnic/Intersectional Church Cohort is a dynamic network of ministry leaders, congregations, and partners committed to building a church that truly embodied God's vision of inclusion, justice, and belonging. Rooted in the ELCA's ongoing call to become a more diverse and equitable denomination, the cohort created intentional space for reflection, learning, and collective action around race, culture, identity, and intersectionality within the life of the church.

This network recognizes that the ELCA's mission was enriched by the many cultures, languages, and stories that made up its body. Through the Multiethnic/Intersectional Church Cohort, leaders explore how congregations could move beyond diversity statements toward authentic relationships, structural transformation, and spiritual renewal. The cohort has brought together pastors, lay leaders, and community partners from across the country who represent a wide range of racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds, forming a learning community where each person's lived experience became a source of wisdom and strength.

At the heart of the cohort is a commitment to intersectionality, the understanding that our identities such as race, gender, age, sexuality, class, and ability do not exist in isolation but overlap to shape our experiences in the world and in the church. Participants engaged this framework both theologically and practically, asking what it meant for ministry, discipleship, and leadership formation. The cohort provided tools to help congregations address barriers to belonging, dismantle systems of oppression, and celebrate the richness of God's creation as expressed in human diversity.

The network gatherings have been a vital part of this experience. The first network gathering was held in San Diego, where participants built deep connections through storytelling, worship, and dialogue centered on racial healing and cultural identity. The second major network gathering took place in Chicago, where the focus turned toward systems change, congregational transformation, and strategies for cultivating belonging in diverse ministry contexts. Both gatherings created sacred spaces of truth-telling, joy, and collaboration that helped equip leaders to return home and embody the work within their local congregations and communities.

Throughout these sessions, whether in person or virtual, the cohort emphasized spiritual grounding, storytelling, and collaborative practice. Leaders shared how they were cultivating spaces where all people could see themselves reflected in worship, leadership, and mission. They also learned from one another's models for community engagement, bilingual or multicultural ministry, and advocacy for justice. Many congregations involved in the cohort shared that this experience deepened their understanding of hospitality and transformed their ministries from transactional outreach to relational partnership.

The ELCA Multiethnic/Intersectional Church Cohort also serves as a platform for mutual accountability and hope. It challenges the wider church to confront the realities of racism, exclusion, and privilege while affirming that transformation was both possible and holy work. Participants often described the experience as spiritually renewing, a place where leaders could be honest about challenges, celebrate progress, and find strength in the collective witness of a church striving to live its baptismal calling.

Looking ahead, the next phase of this journey will continue at Peace in February 2026. We will host the next network gathering to continue the work laid in San Diego and Chicago, and continuing to move the ELCA toward becoming the beloved community, a church that not only welcomes all people but is transformed by their presence.





## Partnership with Peace Community Center



### A Word from the Peace Community Center Board of Directors:

In 2025, the Peace Community Center Board of Directors focused on strategic planning as the next step in relaunching the Community Center's work in the Hilltop community. The Board gathered a group of individuals made up of Peace Lutheran Church and Hilltop community members to lead this process.

As the strategic planning process began, the Board of Directors reaffirmed its fundamental commitment to the Hilltop neighborhood, despite changing demographics and gentrification, and to work in partnership with Peace Lutheran Church to accomplish its purpose. With these two commitments in place, the next step was a community engagement process to listen to community members and partners to inform how the Center should move forward. Through focus groups, individual interviews, and a survey, over 150 people provided their thoughts and perspectives, including members of Peace Lutheran Church, the Peace Café community, former staff and service members, donors and volunteers, and community partners. You can view the full community engagement report at [www.peacecommunitycenter.org/strategy](http://www.peacecommunitycenter.org/strategy).



Themes that emerged from the community engagement process include:

- **Transitions** - The Center and neighborhood are changing. People love the Center's work with young people but also see the challenges that families and individuals face to continue to call the Hilltop home.
- **Place and People** - The Center in partnership with the Church is a safe and relational community, which many feel is a distinguishing characteristic.
- **Tensions Exist** - There is a challenge between serving young people (the Center's historic work) and the more recent housing affordability work of the Church. There is a question about how the Center's historic programs fit within a changing neighborhood and the public schools taking on after-school programming more directly.
- **Organization and Structure** - Relational culture is vital to community members, program participants, volunteers and church members. There is strong encouragement to strengthen the overlap between Church and Center from both Church and community members.
- **Housing and Education** - People value youth and education, but there is a growing concern that many housing issues impact young people and their families. Community members and partners are particularly focused on housing and broader economic needs of the Hilltop community.

As the Board reflected on what it heard through the community engagement process it came to the following foundational four commitments:

- **Centering Community** - Advocating for the Hilltop, celebrating its story of justice and diversity.
- **Faith Mission** - Living out a faith that does justice, grounded in our tradition of service and equity.
- **Safe Space** - Fostering authentic relationships and belonging, where everyone is seen and heard.
- **Accountable Partnership** - Listening and learning with our community as a trusted partner.

In addition, the Board recommitted Peace Community Center to **supporting young people and families** - and because a safe and stable home is essential for young people and families to thrive, the Center is committed to working to address economic inequities and build housing stability with our community.

During the remaining months of 2025, the Board is committed to finalizing a full strategic plan that outlines further steps to relaunch the Center's work in 2026 and beyond. The Center plans, as a first step, to formalize what partnership looks like with Peace Lutheran Church by engaging with the church staff and council. From this common understanding of partnership, the Board plans then to move towards hiring staff to lead the relaunch of the Center.

Thank you for all the ways you have continued to express your deep care for and commitment to the Peace Community Center - your prayers, your financial contributions, and your hopes for the future are gratefully appreciated! Please reach out to us if you have any questions ([directors@peacecommunitycenter.org](mailto:directors@peacecommunitycenter.org)).

Peace Community Center Board of Directors

Kerri Pedrick, Joanne McWilson, Sarah Detweiler, Pastor John Stroeh (Ex Officio)

## God Blesses Us to Bless Others

Our support for other ministries: God entrusts us with time, talent, and treasure to be used wisely and in God's service to the world. These mission areas and ministry partners outside the Peace congregation are supported financially by Peace Lutheran Church.

### **Southwestern Washington Synod of the ELCA \$21,000**

Peace sends 5% of non-grant income to help fund synod operations and new mission starts and to support the larger work of the ELCA.

### **ELCA World Hunger \$1,000**

A comprehensive and sustainable program using multiple strategies—relief, development, education, advocacy—to address root causes of hunger and poverty domestically and globally.

### **Peace Community Center \$16,800**

Our church, as an integrally connected partner in ministry, gives 4% of non-grant income to help fund PCC's operations.

### **Lutheran Community Services Northwest \$1,000**

A nonprofit human services agency serving individuals, families, and communities throughout Washington, Oregon and Idaho.

### **Associated Ministries \$200**

An ecumenical organization partnering with churches and interfaith communities to unite people of faith to build stronger communities. A.M. is an intermediary of funding sources for poverty, housing, and hunger relief, while also providing vital human services.

### **Tacoma Ministerial Alliance \$200**

A network of Christian leaders working together to offer biblical, civic, and professional involvement for addressing social issues of interest in our local community.

### **Davis African Mission \$3,000**

Peace church members "Davis" and Jennifer Davis and daughters, Tovah and Lami serve Christ in Uganda, Africa, by directing and supporting over 100 missionaries in six different African countries.

### **Living Stones Prison Congregation \$500**

Ministry partner and Lutheran congregation sharing the gospel of Jesus behind the walls of Shelton's Washington Corrections Center.

### **Rock City Church \$500**

Ministry partner and multiethnic, multigenerational Lutheran mission start on Tacoma's east side.

### **eliseo Foundation \$500**

Formerly Tacoma Lutheran Retirement Community, for which Peace Lutheran Church has been an ongoing partner congregation.

## **Our Partnership with the Peace Community Center:**

### **Our Vision:**

We envision a vibrant community where youth and families are life-long learners who use their diverse gifts to cultivate love, justice, and peace for generations to come.



### **Our Values:**

Community – Justice – Wholeness  
– Learning – Joy!

### **Anti-Racism Statement:**

Peace Community Center is committed to confronting systemic racism and all forms of oppression to promote personal growth, social justice, and reconciliation.

### **Faith Rootedness Statement:**

Peace Lutheran Church birthed Peace Community Center out of faith and a deep commitment of love for the Hilltop neighborhood, gifted Peace Community Center to Tacoma, and continues to closely partner with Peace Community Center to serve Hilltop youth and families today.

## A Community that is SPIRIT-FILLED

“When you send forth your **Spirit**, they are created; and you renew the face of the ground.”  
-- Psalm 104:30

God’s vision for Peace is to be a community that is **Spirit-filled**. God’s Spirit blows in us and through us, giving us energy and power and direction and renewal for ministry and mission. God’s Spirit fills us in worship, learning, giving, and serving. God’s Spirit calls, gathers, enlightens, sanctifies, and keeps us in faith in Jesus Christ, as Martin Luther writes in the Small Catechism. God’s Spirit is behind all we are and do as a community. God’s Spirit unites us in our great diversity in an interdependent community of faith. We seek to create spaces and places open to the blowing of God’s Spirit, and we encourage each person to discover and use their individual and unique Spiritual gifts, those abilities and strengths given to each of us through God’s Spirit for building up the body of Christ (the church) and serving God in the world. As we journey into the future, we ask, “Where is God’s Spirit leading us?”

### Our Investments:

|                          |                          |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Adult Gospel Choir       | Sunday School            |
| Adult Education          | Summer Bible Adventure   |
| Altar Guild              | Stewardship Team         |
| Children’s Ministry      | Women’s & Men’s Ministry |
| Community Bible Study    | Musicians                |
| Confirmation             | Youth Ministry           |
| Evangelism               | Children’s Choir         |
| Special Worship Services | Sunday Worship           |
| FOCUS Groups             | Small Groups             |
| Sidewalk Ministry        | Men’s Breakfast Group    |
| Bible Studies            | Evangelism Scholarship   |
| Davis African Mission    | Women’s Fellowship       |
| Prayer Chain             | Women’s Bible Study      |
| Worship Committee        | Retreats & Mission Trips |
| Worship Leaders          | Neighborhood Calling     |
| Liturgical Arts          | Prayer Ministry          |

Note: Volunteers serve in all of these ministries.  
**Blue text** denotes ministries with budgeted funds.

|                         |                  |
|-------------------------|------------------|
| Blessing Others         | \$13,755         |
| Staffing                | \$89,922         |
| Activities              | \$3,754          |
| <b>Facilities/Admin</b> | <b>\$14,308</b>  |
| <b>Total</b>            | <b>\$121,740</b> |





## A Community that is COMPASSIONATE

“As God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with **compassion**, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience.” -- Colossians 3:12

God’s vision for Peace is to be a community that is **compassionate**. For Jesus, the primary quality of life centered in God is compassion. Jesus’ words in Luke 6:36 can be translated, “Be compassionate, just as your Father is compassionate.” In the Bible, compassion is the ability to feel the feelings of another person at a deeper level than your head and then act accordingly. Compassion is about an open heart, empathy, and action. Compassion means being nonjudgmental and inclusive of all people and reaching out in care to help those who are vulnerable, struggling, or suffering. Compassion leads to works of charity and justice. Compassion includes ministries to those not yet part of the worshiping community (outreach) and to those within the worshiping community (inreach).

### Our Investments:

|                            |                              |                          |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Emergency Assistance       | Nursery Care                 | Intergenerational Events |
| Van Ministry               | Outdoor Game Day             |                          |
| Care Ministry              | Visitation                   | Crisis Ministry          |
| Meal Train Ministry        | Servant Events               | Clothes Closet           |
| Christmas Adoption         | College Care Packages        | Sunday Breakfast         |
| Community Meals/Peace Café | Community Resources Ministry |                          |



Note: Volunteers serve in all of these ministries. **Blue Text** denotes ministries with budgeted funds.

|                         |                 |
|-------------------------|-----------------|
| Blessing Others         | \$5,089         |
| Staffing                | \$65,723        |
| Activities              | \$7,662         |
| <u>Facilities/Admin</u> | <u>\$10,452</u> |
| <b>Total</b>            | <b>\$88,925</b> |



## A Community that is HEALTHY

“For I will restore **health** to you, and your wounds I will heal, says the Lord.” -- Jeremiah 30:17

God’s vision for Peace is to be a community that is **healthy**. The Hebrew word *shalom* suggests the kind of holistic health God intends for God’s people: peace, harmony, welfare, well-being, community, and salvation. A healthy community has spiritual, physical, emotional, social, mental, and financial health and well-being grounded in God. This means cultivating healthy relationships among members of the family, neighborhood, faith community, larger community, and world. It means environmental health and a healthy relationship with all of God’s creation. It means promoting the health of church staff.

### Our Investments:

|  |                   |                   |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|
| Pastor’s Premarital Counseling           | Fellowship        | Health Ministries |
| Intergenerational Ministry Opportunities | Organic Mentoring |                   |

|                         |                  |
|-------------------------|------------------|
| Blessing Others         | \$7,339          |
| Staffing                | \$84,028         |
| Activities              | \$6,612          |
| <u>Facilities/Admin</u> | <u>\$13,049</u>  |
| <b>Total</b>            | <b>\$111,028</b> |



## A Community that is RECONCILED

“So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who **reconciled** us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of **reconciliation**.”

-- 2 Corinthians 5:17-18

God’s vision for Peace is to be a community that is **reconciled**—to God and one another. As forgiven children of God, reconciled to God through Christ, we are called to be reconcilers in the world. God’s grace comes to us in Christ to bring us into relationship with God, and God’s grace is shared in our diverse community to bring us into relationship with others across all barriers—generation, ethnicity, culture, class, gender, politics, theology, sexual orientation, and anything else that divides. We’re called to be bridge-builders and ministers of reconciliation and God’s liberating message of forgiveness.

### Our Investments:

#### Cultural Humility/Inclusivity & Anti-Racism Training

Diverse Leadership

Youth & Adult Conversations

Conversations Around Race

Servant Learning Experiences

|                         |                 |
|-------------------------|-----------------|
| Blessing Others         | \$15,472        |
| Staffing                | \$51,179        |
| Activities              | \$5,687         |
| <u>Facilities/Admin</u> | <u>\$9,634</u>  |
| <b>Total</b>            | <b>\$81,973</b> |



## A Community that is JUST

“He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do **justice**, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?” -- Micah 6:8

God’s vision for Peace is to be a community that is **just**—that is marked by the quality of God’s justice. God’s justice is about dignity and fairness for all in this world, an equal distribution of resources so all have their basic needs met. Seeking God’s justice means fixing what is broken in institutions and societies, systems and groups that oppress others either intentionally or unintentionally. It means working so that all people might be able to reach their God-given potential and so that all families might be self-reliant. It does not foster dependent relationships but seeks interdependent community. It recognizes that all people have value and assets and gifts to share with others. It is about Christian community development in the Hilltop, seeking that our neighbors have affordable housing, living-wage jobs, decent health care, and good education. It is more than charity, which treats symptoms of problems with a handout. Justice gives a hand up and more, addressing root causes of injustice and advocating on behalf of the vulnerable for systemic change; for example, advocacy with decision makers toward eliminating the opportunity gap in education for low-income and underrepresented students, increasing access to affordable housing for low-income residents, dismantling racially unjust policies and practices in hiring, housing, and healthcare.

### Our Investments:

Community Resources Ministry

Housing Ministry

Faith Action Network / Advocacy

Bread for the World

Holiday Bazaar

Social Justice Ministry

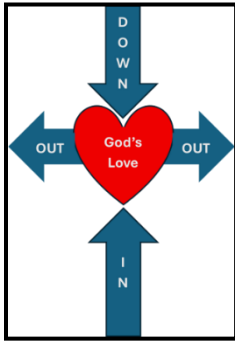
Peace Community Center

Plaehn Scholarship

|                         |                 |
|-------------------------|-----------------|
| Blessing Others         | \$10,845        |
| Staffing                | \$71,135        |
| Activities              | \$4,035         |
| <u>Facilities/Admin</u> | <u>\$11,456</u> |
| <b>Total</b>            | <b>\$97,471</b> |



# 2025 Highlights of Our Journey toward Our Vision at Peace



## Stewards of God's Love: Down, In, and Out

Stewardship was alive and well in the Peace Church community in 2025, as evident in the submissions from many of our leaders in their efforts to serve as seen in this report. During our October stewardship celebration, we focused on God's love coming **down** to us with the many blessings of gifts and talents, our work with **in** to nurture these gifts among us and the active flowing **out** of love from our Peace family to our community and to the world. Our inspiration came to us from the larger community of the ELCA through their Stewards of God's Love direction. As we reflect on the central passage: "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is

like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself'" (Matthew 22:37b-39), our direction becomes clear. God's love has come down to us, works within us and flows out to the world, not just for our three-week celebration series, but throughout the year. In times such as these, the work is more important than ever. Thanks be to God and thanks be to the hearts and hands of our stewards. – Melody Duke

## Summer Bible Adventure – The Commandments

A burning bush, Moses, Jesus, and a few disciples helped us learn about God's commandments. We heard wonderful stories from our Moses about strange times in the desert, escaping from Egypt and climbing up a mountain, then coming back down with stone tablets. Later, our Jesus shared with us one new commandment - to love one another - and had a humorous time helping our Moses understand that the ten were all accounted for in the one. We had five unique craft stations with wonderful helpers engaging the children in creativity and conversation, as well as interactive sing-along songs that made learning fun for everyone. Many thanks to all the folks who made a meaningful and joyous day for our families! – Andrew Wright



## Two-Day Summer Youth Intensives – Love to the Local and Day of Fun

We kicked off this summer's Love to the Local service experience with a meaningful devotional led by Lynn Longfield and Sally Perkins. Together, we reflected on the question, "Who is our neighbor, and how are we called to serve and pray for them?" Then we headed into a full day of learning and service at Thrive International. At Thrive, we spent the morning gaining a deeper understanding of the experiences of families seeking refuge and asylum in the United States. Our group then helped clean the hallways of the hotel where more than 100 families currently make their home. In the afternoon, we hosted a carnival for the children of these families—complete with ring toss, temporary tattoos, and cotton candy. It was amazing to watch our church's youth come to life as they served with joy, kindness and patience. By the end of the day, every child—both from Thrive and from our own group—was smiling. We continued the experience on day two with a fun activities that build connections and pushed boundaries, at the home of Ben and Lisa Flesher on the Key Peninsula. We built sandcastles, played games, enjoyed a delicious lunch, and spent the afternoon out on the water. From kayaking and paddle boarding to tubing in the chilly Puget Sound, our youth pushed themselves, supported each other, and shared a whole lot of laughter. Across these two days, every young person stepped outside their comfort zone—whether by hosting a carnival game for 75+ children, leading a lunchtime circle discussion, trying a new water activity, or simply reaching out to make a new connection within the group. A huge thank you to Rob and Siri Preston, Ben and Lisa Flesher, Kathy Hanawalt, Elise McWillson, Brendon Nelson, Sally Perkins, and Lynn Longfield for pouring time, love, and leadership into this year's Love to the Local. It would not have been possible without your support. – Nora Hanawalt



## Feet to Faith Confirmation Youth Retreat

I had the opportunity this spring to share the chaperoning duties with Pastor John for the Feet to Faith Retreat. I can say that our youth can communicate their thoughts in a very special way. I was impressed by how well they included each other. They remained engaged for the whole retreat and even though some of them didn't want to watch the movie *Parent Trap* before bed the first night they all watched it until the end. The retreat gave them a way to see each other in a new way. I had a great time. – Pam Asadi



## Peace Café: A Place for Community Connection



Every Friday, Peace Lutheran Church opens its doors and its heart to the community through Peace Café, a weekly gathering centered on food, fellowship, and compassion. What began as a simple meal has grown into a welcoming space where neighbors, friends, and families come together to share nourishment, conversation, and hope. The Peace Café embodies the spirit of hospitality that has long defined Peace Lutheran's ministry in the Hilltop neighborhood. Each Friday afternoon, volunteers, church members, and community partners work side by side to prepare and serve warm, homemade meals to anyone who walks through the doors. There are no requirements and no questions asked, only the invitation to come, eat, and belong. For many guests, the meal is about much

more than food. It is a place of connection and community, where people greet one another by name and where stories are exchanged across tables. Neighbors who may otherwise feel isolated find encouragement and care, while volunteers discover the joy of serving others in love. The atmosphere is casual, lively, and filled with laughter, the clinking of dishes, and the steady rhythm of kindness at work. Beyond providing nourishment, Peace Café also connects guests with resources and services. Representatives from local organizations occasionally attend to offer information on housing, health, employment, and other forms of support. These connections help address deeper needs while honoring the dignity and worth of each person. The community meal is a weekly reminder that everyone has a place at the table. It reflects the heart of God by loving neighbors, to sharing in one another's burdens and joys, and to live out faith through action. At Peace Café, everyone is fed in body, mind, and soul. – Brendan Nelson



## Resource Navigation

“Do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.” Hebrews 13:16 Peace Lutheran is a community church, a place of warmth, connection and assistance. At Peace we know that we are called to share God's peace and God's resources with others. It is good and right when we notice a fellow siblings suffering, cold or hungry to share what we have with them. Resource navigation at Peace happens through relationships, phone calls from people in the community, partnering with community organizations that also want to serve those in need. Resource navigation is practicing presence and ensuring that every person that we encounter leaves feeling seen and valued. While our resources at times have been limited, our love and care have remained abundant. Over the last year we have had the opportunity to partner with different organizations to provide extra food, gift cards utility bill assistance, housing support, free life & grief coaching, hot meals, showers, toiletries, tents, cold weather gear, sleeping bags and many other practical resources. There are many churches and organizations in the Hilltop area that love to serve and serve our neighbors well. We have been so grateful for their partnership and donations. We give to others because God has given to us. We serve others because God sent his son Jesus to model the life-giving work of humility and serving others for us. We love because God has first loved us. Our neighbors, those in need, those suffering, those that feel lonely and forgotten are on God's heart and on ours too. The beauty of meeting with and sharing with those in need is that they are also givers. I have been greeted with the most radiant smiles, warmest hugs, have been given gift after gift of presence while playing a board game during Peace Café, having a conversation filled with laughter and wisdom while serving milk and juice at a community meal, seeing the sweet smiles of little ones as their eyes grow bigger with excitement when they discover that there is a sweet treat for dessert. We give, yes. and we receive much more in return. – Deacon Charissa Carroll



## The Holiday Bazaar

Again this year our annual Holiday Bazaar provided a wonderful day of fellowship, bargains, food, and community. Items for the sale were donated by people choosing to pass on what they no longer needed to be sold for a very affordable price for those in need. The Holiday Bazaar earned a little over \$1200 for our church's Emergency Assistance Fund which helps people pay toward their electric bills. So many blessings come from this event—volunteers who help experience the joy of meeting new people in our community, see shoppers find special items, smiles of kids shopping for gifts, and families posing together for a holiday photo. It shares in many ways the gifts that God has given us to share with others. Anyone involved in making this bazaar happen or who shop at it are blessed. – Teresa Jackson

## Anti-Racism Toolkit

The Anti-Racism Equity Lens Toolkit was developed to help Peace live more fully into our foundational commitment to equity, inclusion, and belonging. It offers a framework and set of tools to help individuals and ministry teams slow down, reflect, and approach decisions with greater awareness of bias, barriers, and



opportunity. The toolkit includes four lenses: decision-making, faith education, budgeting, and recruitment. Each lens guides groups through intentional questions and rating scales to assess where we are and where we need to grow. Using an equity lens is both a process and a practice that helps us make decisions that honor all voices and reflect our call to justice, compassion, and community. As we move into the 2026 Ministry Plan, Peace will begin to more intentionally apply this toolkit across ministries and groups. Teams will use the equity lenses to guide planning, evaluate new and existing programs, and consider how resources and relationships are shared throughout our congregation and community. By practicing these habits together, we aim to make equity-centered decision making a natural and consistent part of how we do ministry, shaping a church culture that listens deeply, acts with humility, and continues growing in God's vision for an anti-racist and inclusive community. – Lenora Sneva

## Anti-Racism Docuseries (Film and Discussion Series)

In 2025 as we explored strategies for fulfilling our foundational commitment to anti-racism, the Anti-Racism Work Group provided a series of thought-provoking films that explored power, identity and justice. They were shared with our congregation as well as the Hilltop community. We began with “Origin”, the movie based on Caste, by Isabel Wilkerson and tried to comprehend the difference between racism and caste. Over a series of weeks we viewed 45 minute segments and had deeply revealing discussions that were educational and sometimes emotionally tender. Then we embarked on a journey through three documentaries: 1) Since I Been Down, 2) Honor Thy Mother, and 3) Israelism. These explored the harsh sentencing laws of incarcerated youth, (many from the Hilltop) and their creative fight for restorative justice, Indipino children and their struggles around identity, displacement, community and reconciliation and how two young American Jews have conflicted thoughts about Palestinians and the deepening generational divide over Jewish identity. We were fortunate to have either the director, producer or a group connected to the piece to join us and help lead us in follow up discussions on each of the films. Their presence enhanced and added value to those discussions with all of the attendees. – Diane Powers



## Anti-Racism Micro-Actions Lists

### EVERYDAY MICRO ACTIONS

WITH THE HOPE OF EMPOWERING AND ENCOURAGING OUR CHURCH FAMILY DURING THESE TERRIFYING AND DIFFICULT TIMES, THE ANTI-RACISM COMMITTEE IS SHARING 7 IDEAS FOR RESISTANCE EVERY FIRST AND THIRD SUNDAY SERVICE. THESE ARE EVERYDAY MICRO ACTIONS WE CAN TAKE THAT COLLECTIVELY MAKE A HUGE IMPACT IN OUR COMMUNITY.

01 October is **Filipino American History Month**! Come learn, honor and celebrate the Filipino community on **Thursday, October 16 at 3-7pm** at the WA State History Museum. The theme this year is “**Today**,” which means alive or life in Tagalog, so this FREE community event will explore how the Filipino community lives and finds joy in Washington state.

Bonus: Julia Kagochi will be there to facilitate a panel of incredible Filipinos exploring what it looks like to build a life well-loved while pushing back against powers who expect the community to assimilate or be silent.

02 **NEED TO KNOW:** Elections are coming!!! Here are a few things to remember as Tuesday, November 4 comes close.

- Oct. 9 & 10 – Voters’ pamphlets are mailed
- Oct. 17 – Ballots mailed; Drop boxes open
- Oct. 27 – LAST DAY to register online or by mail
- Nov. 5 – Election DAY! Ballots need to be returned by 8pm.

If you would like to register, please follow the [link attached here](#).

The Anti-Racism Work Group began compiling the micro actions lists in March 2025 when many of our Peace family members would ask and wonder, “what can I possibly do?” The shift in the political climate this past year created a wave of uncertainty and fear in our community, and many questioned if there was anything they could do to make a difference when all the injustices in the world felt overwhelming. However, inspired by our Lenten series focused on Isabel Wilkerson's Caste: The Origins of Our

Discontent, we sought out ways we can collectively repair the cracks in our foundation, one micro action at a time. According to Wilkerson, “we are the heirs to whatever is right or wrong with it...The cracks won’t fix themselves. Any more deterioration is on our watch.” The Anti-Racism Work Group wanted to empower and encourage our Peace community that despite these scary times, we can resist and do something that can create a powerful impact. These micro actions ranged from local rallies people can attend to local grassroots organizing they can support and volunteer for. God has entrusted us with the gift of compassion and fortitude. Together, we have the collective power to push for the changes necessary to build a world where every person is valued, loved and welcomed.

– Julia Kagochi





## Ministry of Place

The Ministry of Place, our Housing Ministry, and the feasibility study with Liminal Land Consultants all tie back to one simple truth: Peace is called to show up for our neighborhood in real, tangible ways. Over this past season, the Ministry of Place has helped us look closely at how our land, our buildings, and even our daily rhythms can serve as instruments of care. We've been asking what it means to hold space for healing, to welcome people with dignity, and to honor the stories that have shaped Hilltop for generations.

Through listening sessions, conversations with our neighbors, and the steady work of hospitality, we're discovering that place is not just where we stand; it's what we steward. Out of that reflection, the Housing Ministry has continued to grow with purpose and urgency. We know the realities facing our community: families being priced out, elders struggling to stay rooted, and young people searching for stability. Our Housing Ministry is leaning into these challenges with compassion, asking how we can use what God has entrusted to us—our land, our partnerships, our presence—to support long-term affordability and create pathways for our neighbors to stay in the Hilltop. This is about more than housing; it's about belonging, stability, and hope. To move wisely, we partnered with Liminal Land Consultants to complete a feasibility study on how Peace might approach future affordable housing efforts. Liminal's work has given us clarity, helping us understand our options, our capacity, and the steps ahead. Their guidance is helping us see what's possible, what aligns with our mission, and how we can move from vision to action. Together, this work reminds us that God is still shaping Peace into a place where people can be known, supported, and rooted. And we're committed to staying faithful to that call. – Brendan Nelson

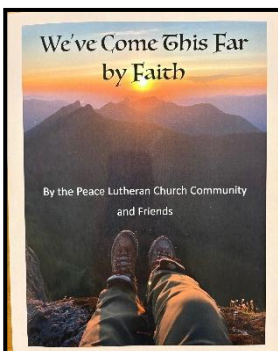
## For a Time Such as This

Throughout history, moments of crisis and uncertainty have prompted communities to look toward the church for guidance, comfort and hope. Those who are part of the Body of Christ are called to witness to the hope, justice, and compassion offered by Jesus. As disciples of Christ, we are compelled to call ourselves and the community around us to remember our shared humanity, to act in love, and to offer the world a vision of a better future. Experiencing a growing concern around the anti-immigrant, racist and divisive policies of our national government, and dismayed at the pulling back of national and international aid to vulnerable populations, in the spring of 2025 a group at Peace began to coalesce around the question, "How should we, as Christians, respond at such a time as this?" Taking our cue from the story of Esther (see Esther 4:14) *For a Time Such as This*, or FATSAT, gathers once a month. Our goals are to:



1. Center ourselves in Scripture and Prayer
2. Commit ourselves to non-violent strategy and action
3. Share and articulate our common faith and values effectively
4. Study what Christians before us have done during times of upheaval and stress.
5. Examine opportunities in our own community to share our faith and values, take concrete visible action in the community, and speak truth to power.
6. Identify places of hope in our church and community and share that hope with others
7. Support and encourage each other in staying the course

We share leadership, focus each meeting on themes of **Lament**, **Hope** and **Action**, and encourage each other in living lives that witness to the Gospel values and vision of Beloved Community our faith teaches us. FATSAT meets every second Sunday of the month, 12:30pm – 2pm, following the 11am worship service and brief fellowship time. Questions? Contact me at [Lynn.Longfield@hotmail.com](mailto:Lynn.Longfield@hotmail.com). – Lynn Longfield



## Writing Group and Peace Devotional Book

A lot has happened for our Peace Writing Group during 2025! A project that began over two years ago is now complete: our second book of devotional stories and poems. It's called *We've Come This Far By Faith*. It's truly amazing, and you can get one from the church office. This project was the brainchild and passion of our beloved Shari Shelton, who went to be with the Lord in July. She guided, coaxed, encouraged, and bullied us into submitting our work and putting the book together. She didn't get to hold the finished hard copy, but did examine the digital copy and took it to the publisher the week before she died. When we miss Shari, we can at least read her works in print as part of our book. Thanks to Shari and all our writers! The group looks forward to continuing to meet together, and we hope you will join us if interested. – Gail Storrs



## Peace Garden

The Peace vegetable garden provided a variety of vegetables for the Friday community meals again in 2025. The harvest season started with lettuce in May, followed by tomatoes, onions, winter squash and collard greens. Members of the Peace community of all ages worked with me (garden coordinator) to plant, irrigate, weed, and harvest throughout the season. We began renovating the garden beds in the fall, removing weeds, digging in compost and lime, and planting cover crops to improve the soil for next season. Because fresh vegetables are expensive for people on a tight budget, we plan to have some of the vegetables available at Peace next summer and fall for folks to bring home. We plan to grow lettuce, spinach, peas, onions, carrots, summer and winter squash, tomatoes, kale, and collards. We will need more folks involved in the garden to make this plan a success, including harvesting and cleaning the vegetables, preparing them for community meals, and distributing them on Sunday mornings. Please consider helping with the garden from time to time in 2026. Work will begin around early March to start preparing the beds for planting. We welcome both experienced and new gardeners to join us. Please contact me for questions or more information. – Craig Cogger



## Women's Retreat

The women of Peace held a retreat this May at Seabeck Conference Center. We studied portions of the beginning of Genesis in a manuscript Bible study fashion. We met in five groups and made observations about the text. We marked up repetitions and patterns we saw and wrote down some questions. We discussed the passage extensively, threw out our wonderings and discussed even more. It was intense and everyone seemed engaged! Then we moved onto application. What a deep time of study that has become a launch for future Bible studies. We discussed

the ways in which the Bible has impacted us as well as how we feel about reading the Bible. Our goal was to see ourselves in God's story, open new paths of reading and studying the Bible, and experience God through it. And to see that the Bible is engaging and God's word is speaking to us today! It was a wonderful weekend filled with lots of conversation, walks, a gathering around a fire pit, engaging crafts, and an amazing talent show. We've got talent, folks! Everyone had fun. To God be the glory! – Women of Peace Ministry Team

## Luke Manuscript Women's Bible Study

The Luke Manuscript Bible Study offers a wonderful opportunity to grow nearer to God and to one another. The gathering embodies one of the main reasons I was drawn to Peace years ago: authenticity. It feels very much a safe place where, in vulnerability and openness, we can share ideas, experiences, and life situations, and ask difficult questions. The study opens with the placement of the Christ candle, opening comments, prayer, and a time of silence. The leader gives background information, followed by independent reading from the printed text which has removed chapter and verse numbers, section headings, and footnotes to minimize distractions. After marking (each with our own brand-new set of colored pencils!) significant passages, words, phrases, themes, and patterns, we discuss observations and questions. Next, individuals pray and journal, then come together to share two ideas that speak to them. Our time ends with prayer. I am so grateful to have signed up for one of the four small groups for the twice monthly meetings which will run September through May. I can sense a strengthening of my faith and of seeing the world through God's eyes. We look to the Living Word as the Holy Spirit reveals what God would have us learn and apply in our lives in service to our Lord Jesus. The study truly aligns with our stewardship theme: Stewards of God's Love: Down, In, and Out. – Kit Thompson

## The Peace Gospel Choir

The Peace Gospel Choir received a new director to work under the Minister of Music in February. That director is me, and since then I've tried to channel my 10 years of teaching choir in schools and 10 years of active membership in a gospel choir into Peace with the Lord's guidance. Gospel music offers a variety of ways to point people to the good news of Jesus Christ, including for those that sing it. So I've continued to follow those that came before me in using the artistic gifts that were born and raised in me to lift hearts with music and be obedient to the call to serve in this way. The Gospel Choir has therefore been rehearsing most Thursdays and participating in two Sunday worship gatherings a month. Choir membership is increasing and the lines of communication have been frequently used and available to all. Discussions about setting up a "choir room" space, bringing in guest gospel clinicians, and other ministry development ideas have taken place. Our repertoire is building and our ministry has been well-received and effective. Praise be to God! – Michael Green



## Additional Opportunities for Serving at Peace

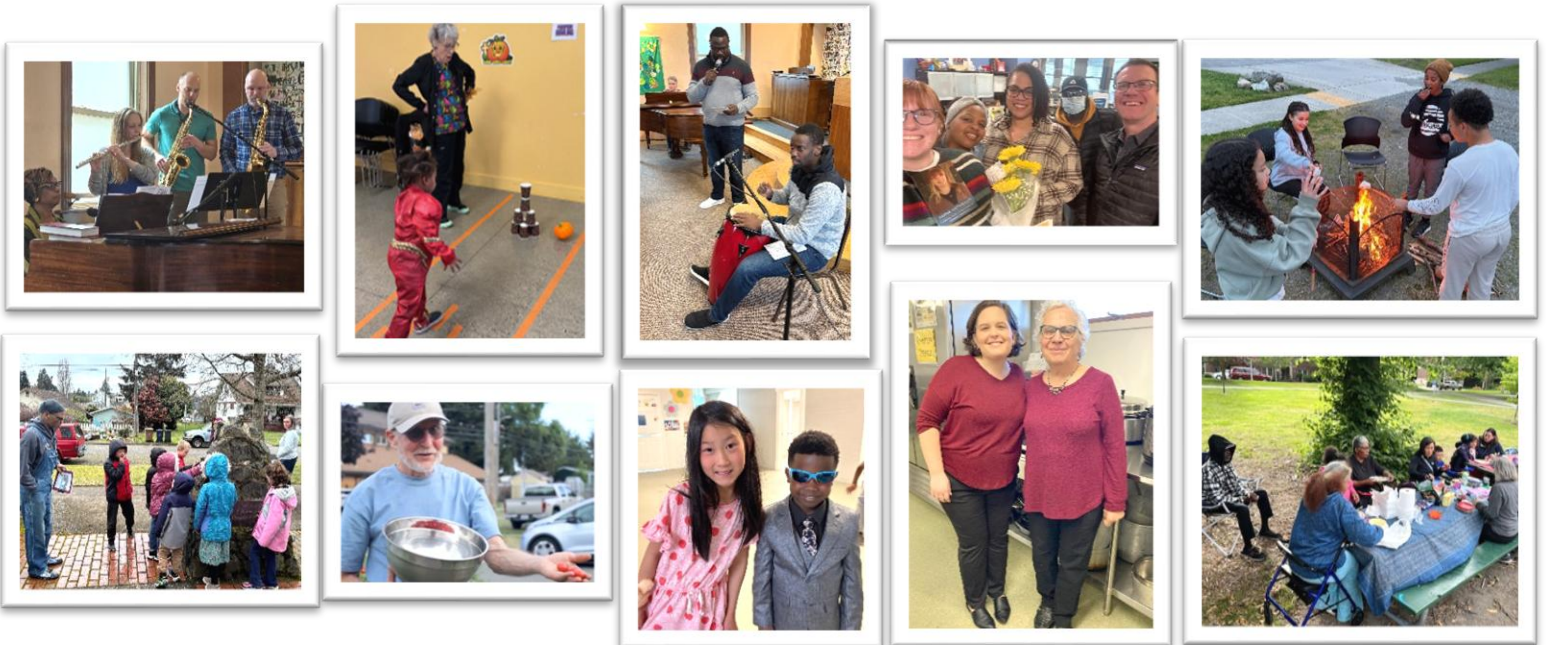
“Jesus sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, ‘Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and **servant** of all.’” -- Mark 9:35b

True service to God is being ready to help wherever necessary. Behind-the-scenes service is necessary and important to the work of the church. There are many opportunities to serve God through the church that provide administrative support to ministries, keep the church financially sound and organized, and maintain the facility and grounds.

|                                  |                      |                |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|----------------|
| Sunday Morning Offering Counters | Facility Maintenance | Groundskeeping |
| Finance Team                     | Newsletter           | Office Support |

### 2026 Church Ministry Plan by VISION Area

|                         | Spirit-Filled | Compassionate | Healthy   | Reconciled | Just     | Budget %  |
|-------------------------|---------------|---------------|-----------|------------|----------|-----------|
| <b>Blessing Others</b>  | \$13,755      | \$5,089       | \$7,339   | \$15,472   | \$10,845 | 10%       |
| <b>Staffing</b>         | \$89,922      | \$65,723      | \$84,028  | \$51,179   | \$71,135 | 72%       |
| <b>Activities</b>       | \$3,754       | \$7,662       | \$6,612   | \$5,687    | \$4,035  | 6%        |
| <b>Facilities/Admin</b> | \$14,308      | \$10,452      | \$13,049  | \$9,634    | \$11,456 | 12%       |
| <b>Total</b>            | \$121,740     | \$88,925      | \$111,028 | \$81,973   | \$97,471 | \$501,137 |
| <b>% of Budget</b>      | 24%           | 18%           | 22%       | 16%        | 19%      | 100%      |



### Our 2026 Ministry Plan concludes with an invitation:

Every single one of us has a special place here at Peace, doing God’s work. Through which part will you serve and “love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your mind and with all your strength”?

**Mark 12:30**

## Peace Lutheran Church 2026 Budget

|  | 2026 Proposed<br>Operating Budget | Comments                            |
|--|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Our Support (Giving and Other Income)</b>   |                                   |                                     |
| Individual Giving                              | 420,000                           |                                     |
| ELCA Partnership Grant & ELCA Hunger Grant     | 18,500                            |                                     |
| Synod Match Grant, Synod Shalom Grant          | 20,000                            |                                     |
| Community Grants (Neeb, Bamford)               | 12,500                            | Unconfirmed for 2026                |
| Interest & Facility Rental & Other Income      | 24,900                            |                                     |
| <b>Total Support</b>                           | <b>495,900</b>                    |                                     |
| <b>Ministry Investments:</b>                   |                                   |                                     |
| <b>Mission</b>                                 |                                   |                                     |
| Benevolence, SW Synod/ELCA                     | 21,000                            | 5% of Individual Giving             |
| Peace Community Center                         | 16,800                            | 4% of Individual Giving             |
| Davis African Mission                          | 3,000                             |                                     |
| World Hunger                                   | 1,000                             |                                     |
| Lutheran Community Services                    | 1,000                             |                                     |
| eliseo (Tacoma Lutheran Retirement Community)  | 500                               |                                     |
| Rock City                                      | 500                               |                                     |
| Living Stones Prison Congregation              | 500                               |                                     |
| Associated Ministries                          | 200                               |                                     |
| Tacoma Ministerial Alliance                    | 200                               |                                     |
| <b>Total Mission</b>                           | <b>44,700</b>                     | Represents 11% of Individual Giving |
| <b>Ministry Activities</b>                     |                                   |                                     |
| Staff Continuing Education Funds               | 1,500                             |                                     |
| Sabbatical Fund                                | 5,000                             |                                     |
| Anti-Racism Training                           | 5,000                             |                                     |
| Seminars/Retreats                              | 600                               |                                     |
| Summer Bible Adventure (Vacation Bible School) | 750                               |                                     |
| Adult Education                                | 300                               |                                     |
| FOCUS Groups                                   | 300                               |                                     |
| Van Ministry                                   | 4,000                             |                                     |
| Children's Ministry                            | 1,250                             |                                     |
| Youth Ministry                                 | 1,250                             |                                     |
| Intergenerational Ministry                     | 1,250                             |                                     |
| Women's Ministry                               | 1,250                             |                                     |
| Men's Ministry                                 | 500                               |                                     |
| Confirmation Ministry                          | 250                               |                                     |
| Nursery  | 100                               |                                     |
| Music Ministry                                 | 1,000                             |                                     |
| Fellowship/Evangelism                          | 700                               |                                     |
| Celebrations                                   | 400                               |                                     |
| Bishop's Convocation / Synod Assembly          | 1,200                             |                                     |
| Sunday Breakfast                               | 500                               |                                     |
| Staff Appreciation                             | 500                               | new                                 |
| Peace Café                                     | 2,500                             | new                                 |
| Housing Ministry                               | 2,100                             | 0.5% of Individual Giving           |
| <b>Total Ministry Activities</b>               | <b>32,200</b>                     |                                     |



|   | 2026 Proposed<br>Operating Budget | Comments   |
|---|-----------------------------------|--|
| <b>Salary &amp; Benefits</b>                      |                                   |  |
| Pastor Salary / Housing                           | 107,753                           |  |
| Pastor's Social Security Allowance                | 8,243                             |  |
| Pastor's Benefits (Med/Dental/Disability/Pension) | 16,380                            |  |
| Church Staff Travel Reimbursement                 | 1,000                             |  |
| Dir. of Comm. Engagement & Outreach Salary        | 81,827                            |  |
| Dir. of Comm. Engagement & Outreach Benefits      | 12,383                            |  |
| Operations Manager Salary                         | 36,155                            | Shared with PCC; total is \$60,258               |
| Operations Manager Benefits                       | 6,036                             | Shared with PCC                                  |
| Youth Minister Salary                             | 20,280                            | new  |
| Children's Minister Salary                        | 7,488                             | new  |
| Music Director Salary                             | 18,889                            |  |
| Choir Director Salary                             | 4,636                             |  |
| Finance Manager Salary                            | 12,600                            |  |
| Nursery Attendant Salary                          | 2,317                             |  |
| Future Staffing                                   | 20,000                            | new  |
| Payroll taxes                                     | 24,000                            |  |
| <b>Total Salary and Benefits</b>                  | <b>379,986</b>                    |  |
| <b>Supplies/Office Administration</b>             |                                   |  |
| Office supplies and stamps                        | 3,000                             |  |
| Worship supplies                                  | 1,000                             |  |
| Computer hardware/software                        | 4,250                             |  |
| Information Technology                            | 3,500                             |  |
| Copy machine                                      | 3,000                             |  |
| Kitchen supplies                                  | 450                               |  |
| Janitorial supplies                               | 100                               |  |
| Bank charges                                      | 4,500                             |  |
| <b>Total Supplies/Office Administration</b>       | <b>19,800</b>                     |  |
| <b>Building and Grounds, Insurance</b>            |                                   |  |
| Utilities   | 3,750                             | Includes electricity, gas, water, sewer, garbage |
| Phone/Internet                                    | 1,700                             |  |
| Cleaning Service                                  | 4,500                             |  |
| Building maintenance                              | 1,000                             |  |
| Grounds maintenance                               | 1,800                             |  |
| Security  | 200                               |  |
| Elevator  | 500                               |  |
| Insurance/taxes                                   | 11,000                            |  |
| <b>Total Building, Grounds, Insurance, Other</b>  | <b>24,450</b>                     |  |
| <b>Total Ministry Investments</b>                 | <b>501,136</b>                    |  |
| <b>Budget surplus or shortfall</b>                | <b>-5,236</b>                     |  |