

Peace Evangelical Lutheran Church
2106 South Cushman Ave
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THE CALL TO PEACE

Volume 21 • Issue 2 • Summer 2025

Summer Bible Adventure! “The Commandments”

1 day only! Saturday July 19, 10 am - 3 pm

Children & families, learn about God’s commandments starring Moses and Jesus, do activities, have fun, share food. **Free!**



Sabbatical Plans

Peace has granted Pastor John a three-month sabbatical after six more years of service as pastor to our congregation. He, his wife Leigh, and children Luke and Joy will be away **June 9 – September 6, 2025**. We’ll bless and send Pastor John and family on their journey in worship on Sunday June 8 and welcome them back on Sunday September 7.

What is a sabbatical? In an effort to nurture health and wellness in ministry, Peace Lutheran Church grants rostered and full-time program staff a three-month period of leave every six consecutive years of full-time ministry. A sabbatical gives Pastor John time away from the rigors of pastoral ministry to reflect on the call to ministry, his relationship with God and God’s people, and theology and practice that will sharpen congregational ministry. This sabbatical will be a time of rest and renewal for Pastor John and an opportunity to reflect on the theme of Christian hospitality and its importance in our ministry at Peace as well as pay attention to his own personal growth as person and pastor. He will bring back his learning to our congregation when he returns, renewed and enriched for ministry.

How will the pastoral work get done? Director of Community Engagement and Outreach Brendan Nelson and Deacon of Congregational Care and Community Resources Charissa Carroll will be pastoral point persons during the sabbatical. Two resource pastors, Rev. Lynn Longfield and Rev. Jim Riede, will support them. Pastor John has lined up preachers and Holy Communion presiders (with permission from our Bishop) for the summer. Our church is in good hands. The congregation had meaningful experiences during Pastor John’s last two sabbaticals and took more ownership of our worship life, mission, and ministry, which is the work of our whole church, not just the pastor. The sabbatical is a great time for the whole congregation to step in and serve where needed and to support church staff and leaders in Pastor John’s absence. So please, “get in where you fit in”!



Peace at the Park

**Wednesdays June 25 and July 30, 5:30-7:30 pm,
Wright Park, 501 S I St, Tacoma**

Everyone is invited to gather at Wright Park with Peace friends, neighbors, and the community. Bring your own picnic food items and your own utensils. Kids, enjoy the spray park and playground. If you want, bring outdoor play items (balls, games, etc.) to share.

Peace Lutheran Church Worship — Summer Schedule Starts June 22

We worship Sundays at 8:30 & 11 am. If you are experiencing symptoms of illness, please stay home and worship online. Join live stream Sunday worship at 11 am on the church Facebook page (worship video also available later on the YouTube channel).

Summer Worship Schedule: June 22 - September 7:

9 am Breakfast & Fellowship, 10 am Worship
(one worship service only - also live streamed)

NOTE: We will not have an Outdoor Worship service this summer.



**Peace Lutheran
Church**



Pastor's Reflection

People of Peace,

"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." — Ezekiel 20:12

We read in the Bible about God's weekly gift of the Sabbath, a day off work, a day for rest and relationship—nurturing loving relationships with God and our loved ones. Sabbath-keeping is a way of life, a rhythm of our lives that makes space for rest, worship, and healthy relationships and that shapes us as God's people living in trust and gratitude to God. Summer can be a time to explore ways to make Sabbath-keeping a regular part of our lives, as we are able given our particular life and family circumstances.

The word Sabbatical is related to Sabbath. A sabbatical is a break from work for an extended period for the purpose of rest and renewal. I am grateful that Peace Lutheran Church has granted me a sabbatical after six more years of service to our congregation as pastor. Just as the Sabbath day is a day of rest after six days, a sabbatical is three months of rest after six years. It is meant to give pastors time away from full-time pastoral ministry to reflect on the call to ministry, the pastor's relationship with God and God's people, and theology and practice that will sharpen congregational ministry.

I will be away from Peace from June 9–September 6 on sabbatical. Through experiences, reading, prayer, and conversations, I will reflect on the theme of Christian hospitality and its importance in our ministry at Peace as well as pay attention to my own personal growth as person and pastor. Please pick up a sabbatical overview sheet on the Welcome table for more details. During my time away, I will periodically update our congregation with photos and reflections. Please keep me and my family in your prayers.

Our congregation will also be on a journey this summer as different preachers from our church will share sermon messages on Sundays and lots of folks serve in my absence. It's a great time to "get in where you fit in" at Peace and serve! And I invite you to reflect on the gift and calling of Christian hospitality and how we receive and practice it at Peace.



Docuseries *Since I Been Down* film discussion at Peace

Pastor John

We're entering the season of Pentecost in the church year, the season of growing in faith by the power of the Spirit. I pray that you will let God's Spirit be at work in your life this summer, that you will explore Sabbath-keeping, find regular rhythms of rest and renewal, and practice hospitality in our amazing faith community!

God's peace,



Feet to Faith Youth Retreat at Point Defiance

Peace Summer Calendar

June

June 1st (Sunday)	Blessing of Peace Graduates
June 4th (Wednesday)	6:30 pm Docuseries: <i>Israelism</i> film showing and discussion
June 8th (Sunday)	Confirmation Sunday - Pentecost! Sabbatical Sending Blessing for Pastor John
June 15th (Sunday)	End of School Year Blessing, Church Leaders and Helpers Thank You
June 22nd (Sunday)	9:30 am Father's Day Breakfast
June 25th (Wednesday)	Summer Worship Schedule begins: 9 am Breakfast Fellowship, 10 am Worship
	5:30-7:30 pm Peace at the Park (Wright Park)

July

July 19th (Saturday)	10 am – 3 pm Summer Bible Adventure for Children
July 30 (Wednesday)	5:30-7:30 pm Peace at the Park (Wright Park)

August

September

September 7th (Sunday)	Sabbatical Return Blessing for Pastor John
September 14th (Sunday)	Rally Sunday! Regular Worship Schedule resumes; Sunday School starts again

Opportunities to Grow in Faith



Faith Opportunities Sundays 9:45-10:45 am

- + 4 year-olds to 5th grade Godly Play Bible time
- + Adult & Youth class:
 - June 1: Faith and Immigration: Welcoming the Stranger, led by Lorena Guerrero
 - June 8: Confirmands share faith reflections and receive the blessing of the church
 - June 15: No class—enjoy Father's Day breakfast

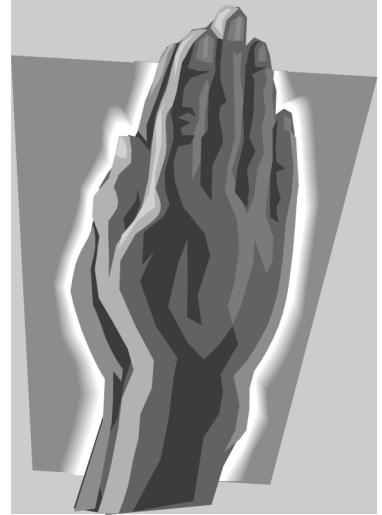
Community Bible Study Pastor John leads a Community Bible Study in the Conference Room and online on **Thursdays, 1-2 pm**, on the Bible readings for worship the following Sunday. We read scripture, share conversation, and pray as we listen for God to speak to us and through us. Email Pastor John for the Microsoft Teams link. The Community Bible Study will take a summer break June, July, and August.

Christ in Our Home Would you like to receive a copy of the daily devotional "Christ in Our Home"? Pick one up from the table outside the sanctuary, or contact Damishe in the office.

Anti-Racism Book Resource Library Check out the book cart in the multipurpose room with anti-racism books to borrow for your personal growth and deeper understanding.

Philippians 4:6

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



Remember in Prayer

Those who celebrate...

- All graduates of Peace Church & Center
- Confirmands: Tula and Tess Kagochi
- Pastor John and family on sabbatical this summer, receiving rest and renewal in God
- The Peace community as we reach out in love to Hilltop families this summer

Those who are hurting...

- All who suffer racial injustice
- The hungry, all suffering economic poverty, the incarcerated, those without homes, all without hope...
- All who grieve the death of loved ones
- All who are ill, facing surgery, recovering from hospitalization, for healing
- All who struggle financially, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually, for hope
- All who live amidst violence, war, or unrest, especially the people of Gaza, Ukraine, Afghanistan, Syria, Sudan, Haiti, Iraq, the Holy Land, and Central African Republic

Our work...

- Our church as we live into our Future Directions, grounded in a commitment to anti-racism
- Our ministries in community development, especially in affordable housing
- Our ministry of sharing Jesus' love with children, youth, and families
- Our work for justice and peace in our world, building bridges among people

Partners in mission & service...

- Peace Community Center in this time of transition and visioning for the future
- Our Southwestern Washington Synod of the ELCA, electing a new bishop at the assembly June 13-14
- Our global partners: Davis family in Africa, Rev. Jane Kagochi in Kenya, our companion synod in Namibia, the church in South Sudan, the church in China, Sevigny family in Japan, House of Prayer Navajo Lutheran Church in AZ
- Living Stones prison congregation in Shelton
- Faith Action Network leading in advocacy for justice for all, and for political leaders

For the complete list, see Sunday's bulletin.

Community Engagement and Outreach



Dear Peace Family,

As we step into the heart of summer, I'm filled with gratitude and excitement for all that God is doing through our ministries at Peace. This season has been one of growth, learning, and deepening our commitment to serving our neighbors with love, dignity, and hope.

Peace Café continues to be a beacon of hospitality and compassion in our community. What began as a simple idea has become a powerful ministry of presence and nourishment. Every cup of coffee, every shared conversation, and every warm meal served at Peace Café is a reminder of God's grace at work. We are not just feeding people, we are feeding souls, building relationships, and creating a space where everyone feels seen and valued.



Our housing ministry is also moving forward in powerful ways. We know the deep need for safe, stable housing in our city, and we remain committed to being part of the solution. Whether it's through advocacy, emergency support, or walking alongside our neighbors in times of transition, we are showing up with faith and compassion. The path isn't always easy, but with your prayers and encouragement, we're building hope one step at a time.

And perhaps most inspiring of all is how God continues to open doors for partnership. We're connecting with other churches, local organizations, and leaders who share our vision for justice, equity, and radical hospitality. These partnerships multiply our impact and remind us that we're never alone in this work. Together, we are stronger. Together, we are the body of Christ in action. None of this would be possible without you, the beloved community of Peace Lutheran Church. Your faithful support, prayers, and encouragement are the foundation that keeps us grounded and moving forward. From the bottom of my heart, thank you. Thank you for believing in this ministry.



Thank you for showing up. And thank you for trusting that God is doing a new thing right here in our neighborhood. Let's keep walking together, guided by peace, powered by love, and rooted in hope.

Blessings,

Brendan Nelson, Director of Community Engagement and Outreach

The Peace Café and Community Resources Ministry



Beginning this year, we have sunset our April and October meals and are focusing on the Friday meals. We have been blessed to have every Friday filled through June. The team is planning to have more community resources on Fridays.

Fridays at Peace is a one-stop shop of sorts. Our schedule is as follows:

- **Peace Café** is open from **3-5 pm on Fridays (meal 5:30-6:30 pm)**. Community members can come in to relax, share drinks, refreshments, fellowship.
- **Community Meals** is open from 5:30 - 6:30 pm.
- **Peace Clothing Closet** is open from 6-7 pm.

As always, thank you to all of the volunteers, donors, churches, and group partners who took the time to prepare and help serve the meals.

The meals ministry grows because of your generous giving, love, and support. If you would like to support the ministry by providing a meal or volunteering, please contact Damishe Greenwood-Walker at (253) 383-1317 or email plcadmin@peacetacoma.org or Brendan Nelson, Director of Community Engagement and Outreach at brendan@peacetacoma.org. If you are in need of assistance with resources, please email Charissa Carroll at charissa@peacetacoma.org.

Thank you for your prayers and generosity.

Community Resources Meals Team

Gospel Choir

Dear Peace Family,

The Peace Gospel Choir has continued to contribute strong ministry and fellowship to Peace Lutheran. We've welcomed an increase in rehearsals and Sunday-sangin', most often singing twice a month at 11:00 am worship service on 2nd and 4th Sundays and holding rehearsals every Thursday of the month minus 4th or 5th Thursday. Choir rehearsals remain to be at Peace from 6-7 pm. The choir has been successful singing with both instrumental tracks and live instruments, and in a variety of styles and tempos.



We had a powerful turn-out and display from choir members at the Easter services this year, so much so that we had to be creative in how we made room for the Gospel Choir to stand and sing at the front of the sanctuary! It was a pleasant challenge to have that we would not mind having on more Sundays. The choir sang for all musical parts of the service from beginning to end that day, making it very inviting for the rest of God's people to lift their voices to celebrate Jesus. I am quite proud of this and what we've been accomplishing this year so far.

If you want to or--even think you want to--be a part of the choir, please reach out to me at thegreenlife@hotmail.com and let's discuss how God may want to use your VOICE. No audition or singing experience required. I've felt very welcomed and supported in my new role with the Gospel Choir and I'm sure you will too!

Be Blessed,

Michael Green, Gospel Choir Director

Stewardship

Spring is here, and signs of hope and renewal are all around us. The leaves are greening, the flowers are budding and blooming, the birds are loudly and joyously announcing their approval and the bees are renewing their work to feed the world and offer us a sweet product of their work.

This is the stewardship of God's creation. Many thanks to our Peace family stewards as we tend gardens, nurture souls, provide sustenance to the hungry, encourage those among us with a word or a smile or a hug, offer a helping hand to those in need and joyously announce our approval with all manner of praise.

This is the light that shines in times of darkness. This is the hope we all receive and share.

Melody Duke, Stewardship

Opportunities to Serve

Regular Offering to Peace: Thank you for your generous and ongoing giving of financial support to Peace Lutheran Church! Please share your offering in person Sundays in the Offering box or send offering by mail or electronic means or donate on the church website. If you would like to set up regular online giving, contact the church office (253-383-1317).

Breakfast Providers Needed: Able to provide a Sunday breakfast at Peace? Sign up at the Welcome Table. Questions? Ask Teresa Jackson (253-407-1151).

Feeling Overwhelmed Living in Our Nation and Want to Respond? Find helpful suggestions for taking positive action in our regular all-church emails. See lists of 7 micro-actions.

Kitchen Work Party: If you like to clean and organize, please come **May 31 at 10 am** for a major reset of the Peace kitchen. Talk to Rebecca Foster rffoster10@outlook.com for more info.

From the Church Council

Dear Peace Family,

As a council these last couple of months we've been continuing to grow in our roles—especially those of us who are new to council or new in our position. All of us are praying for discernment as we seek to support and guide the life and ministry of Peace.



We've been learning more about our Housing Ministry and Ministry of Place, we've been keeping in touch with the Peace Community Center Board with regular visits from the board to our council meetings, and we've continued work on a Child, Youth & Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy that we plan to have ready and in place later this year to help support staff, volunteers, and all in our Peace community. We're excited to take the lead on some upcoming Friday Community Meals too; a council tradition of giving and receiving that I particularly love.

As you know, Pastor John and family will be away on sabbatical this summer. We'll be praying for him as a council, and as the whole church. Although Pastor John will be gone, we will continue to have our Peace Staff and each other for support. And don't forget us! Your council is here to hear your concerns, pray for you, care for ministries at Peace, and to provide encouragement too. Reach out when you need us!

In faith and fellowship,

Gretchen Duggan, Council President

Music Ministry

Greetings Peace Family,

Summer is around the corner and school will be out soon. Family vacations will begin and the weather is beginning to change.



Michael Green has joined the staff as Choir Director and is doing a wonderful job with the adults and children. It's been a pleasure working with him and enjoying the flavor he brings to the Music Department. All the talent in this church is truly amazing. Peace is a special place.

Shout Outs to the volunteers who help keep the Music Department going. Kathy Hanawalt, Antonio Yune, Gretchen Duggan, Siri Preston, Brad Wills, Sarah Perkins, Major Whitten, Irene Manley, all the video and sound technicians.

The Music Department is always looking for volunteers to participate in Sunday service so if you're interested, let me know. I can be reached at twylla@peacetacoma.org or (253) 592.2473.

God's Grace,

Twylla Moore, Music Director

What's Been Happening at Peace Lutheran Church?



Lent Hilltop Prayer Walk to the All Lives Are Precious monument



Easter Cross



Easter Sunday Worship! Christ is risen!



Mother's Day at Peace



Youth harvesting lettuce for salad for a Community Meal at Peace

Who's Who on the Peace Lutheran Church Staff

Pastor: John Stroeh, 253-383-1317 ext 101, pastorjohn@peacetacoma.org

Director of Community Engagement & Outreach: Brendan Nelson, 253-383-1317 ext 102,

brendan@peacetacoma.org

Deacon of Congregational Care & Community Resources: Charissa Carroll, ext 104,

charissa@peacetacoma.org

Music Director: Twylla Moore, twylla@peacetacoma.org

Choir Director: Michael Green, thegreenlife@hotmail.com

Nursery Attendant: Brianna Miller, brianna@peacetacoma.org

Operations Manager: Damishe Greenwood-Walker, 253-383-1317 ext 100, plcadmin@peacetacoma.org

Finance Coordinator: Jenny Haferbecker, jenny@peacetacoma.org

Children's and Youth Ministry Update

We are currently in a transitional time in staffing for children's and youth ministry; we do not have a paid church staff person with these responsibilities. In this interim time, many folks have stepped up to serve and lead. You may feel God nudging you to get involved in children's and youth ministry at Peace.

Children's Ministry: A Children's Ministry Committee led by Andrew Wright is planning, coordinating, and leading the work of children's ministry. Thanks to all who are serving on this team, including Joel Detweiler, Paulie Jacobson, Lea Green, Leigh Wong, Jeanie Correa, and Siri Preston! Adult volunteers are teach-

ing Godly Play with children each Sunday and leading Children's Worship Time during 11 am worship. Kathy Hanawalt is tending the Pew Pals for use in Sunday worship. Michael Green is leading the Children's Choir. Lent and Easter were a special time for children at Peace. Leigh Wong, Jeanie Correa, and Paulie Jacobson led a special Lenten midweek children's Prayer Journey with Jesus to the Cross during Wednesday evening gatherings. Jeanie Correa coordinated the annual Easter Egg-stravaganza with the Easter story, Easter craft, brunch, and egg hunt. Andrew Wright and Jeanie Correa are spearheading Summer Bible Adventure which will be

July 19. Look for Peace at the Park gatherings at Wright Park this summer which are great opportunities for children and families to get together and have fun outside. Kids at Peace are hearing and reflecting on Bible stories, growing in their faith, and serving God! Thanks be to God for all the caring adults in our intergenerational community! Interested in serving in children's ministry? Contact Andrew Wright wright.andrew.g@gmail.com.

Youth Ministry: The Feet to Faith confirmation year for mostly middle school youth ended with a wonderful overnight retreat at the church, and Confirmation Sunday is June 8! Thanks to Nora Hanawalt, youth representative on Council, for her leadership, especially as we vision and plan for youth ministry. Nora designed and implemented a youth activity survey, serves on the Vision and Staffing Task Force, and is helping youth ministry happen. Bill and Kathy Hanawalt led a youth activity brainstorming hour with youth on a recent Sunday morning, and they have stepped up to coordinate monthly Youth Dinners for youth of Peace in the homes of Peace families on the fourth Sunday of the month from 5-8 pm. Brendan Nelson and Bill and Kathy Hanawalt are leading a two-day service and fun experience for youth this summer. More details to come!

Staffing: Our Vision and Staffing task force has been meeting regularly to vision for the future and determine church staffing needs in children's and youth ministry. We have now put together two part-time job descriptions—a Coordinator of Children's Ministry and a Director of Youth Ministry. We will hire for both positions when Pastor John returns from sabbatical in September.

Child, Youth, and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policies and Procedures: Thanks to the Church Council for recently approving a refreshed set of policies to guide us in ensuring the safety and security for the most vulnerable among us and all who serve with them.

Inreach Ministry

Over the past year, our church community has quietly and faithfully kept things running—through kitchen help, event attendance, and hands-on work around the building. At our recent workday, volunteers made great progress on a few projects. There's still more to do—painting, organizing, and general upkeep—and every helping hand makes a difference.

These efforts may seem small, but they help create a space that feels welcoming and cared for. If you're able to lend a hand in the coming months, even briefly, it would be a meaningful contribution. Feel free to reach out to me directly—I'd be happy to help you find a project that fits your strengths and your schedule.

Pastor John's summer sabbatical is a great time of rest and renewal for him, and a wonderful opportunity for us to lean-in as a congregation. Let's strive to care for one another and our shared space, keeping the spirit of connection and service alive and well.

Rebecca Foster, Inreach Ministry



Women's Ministry

Women of Peace.

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!

If you are interested in studying the Bible with us, please contact Charissa Carroll, charissa@peacetacoma.org.

Blessings,

Women of Peace Ministry Team



Evangelism Ministry

Hello Peace Family,

2025 is starting off very well. Peace Cafe is going great! Community meals and the Peace clothing closet are every Friday, from 3 pm - 7 pm.

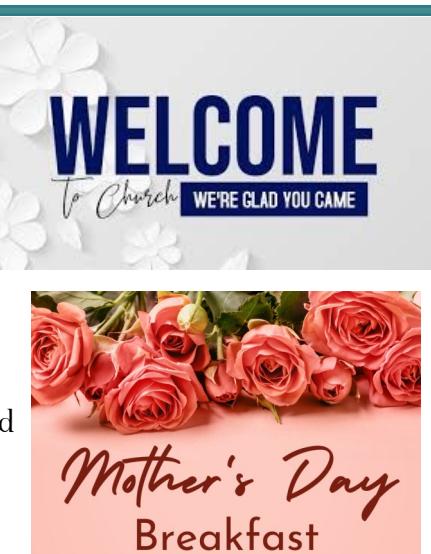
We have been welcoming lots of new faces in worship greeting everyone with a smile. Join us for worship Sundays, 8:30 am and 11:00 am.

The evangelism team has also passed out flyers to the community inviting them to church service. Our Mother's Day breakfast was great! The men's ministry prepared a delicious breakfast.

We are on the move for God. Lets continue to do kingdom work for God and our community. The spirit of excellence is upon us as we continue in love.

Peace & joy,

Neoma Clay, Evangelism Ministry



Peace Community Center



An update: Community engagement and strategic planning work has been conducted by advisory board participants and Peace Community Center board members and facilitated by Dr. Tali Hairston. Our next steps over the next three to four months involve reviewing the community's feedback and making decisions about the Peace Community Center's future direction. We've identified that Peace Community Center embraces its place-based approach to community service and development, celebrating its history of building community for

youth and young adults in the Hilltop neighborhood. It is deeply rooted in Lutheran tradition to be a community of service, love, and belonging for all, and we seek to discover our contribution to Hilltop's collective future.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLAN - ACTIVITIES:

- Community Leader Interviews: The board selected different community and organization leaders to conduct brief high-level interviews.
- Focus Groups: Similarly, groups of 6-10 convened for 50-to-60-minute discussions.
- Survey: Respondents to the online survey covered a broad range of issues and provided feedback.

RETREAT: In two four-hour sessions the committee met to examine the community engagement data. We listened to recorded interviews and focus groups, discussing relevant challenges and opportunities.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLAN - WHAT ARE WE LEARNING?

- Peace is a trusted partner with authentic relationships, social capital, and a strong support community.
- A complex or highly administrative program may take Peace away from what it does best: centering community and relationships.
- Programmatically, responding to opportunities that emerge from the core activity of centering community and building relationships needs to be revisited.
- Youth and young adult education means a lot to the Peace community. At the same time, a growing concern is a plethora of housing issues impacting young people and their families.

We will do more discernment work this summer and will finish our discernment work and share what we have learned this fall. Blessings, *Peace Community Center Board of Directors*

Mission Statement

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

Core Values...

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

Vision Statement

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

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).