

PRINCE OF PEACE LUTHERAN CHURCH BROOKFIELD, CT

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

**January 31, 2021
11:00 a.m. (via Zoom)**

- Call to Order: Jerry Nabozny, President
- Opening Prayer: Pastor Paul Lutz
- Adoption of Agenda
- Approval of Minutes of the January 26, 2020 Annual Meeting
- Pastoral Report: Pastor Paul Lutz
- Prince of Peace Financial Reports and the Proposed 2021 Program of Ministry/Budget: Rich Mercado, Acting Treasurer
- Vote on the 2021 Prince of Peace Budget
- Proposed 2021 Cemetery Association Budget: Rich Mercado
- Vote on the 2021 Cemetery Association Budget
- Election of Nominating Committee
- Lord's Prayer
- Adjournment

Prince of Peace Lutheran Church

Minutes of the Annual Congregational

Budget Meeting

January 26, 2020

The meeting was called to order by Andrew Confortini at 9:33 a.m.

Pastor Paul led us in prayer.

The agenda was adopted and the Minutes of January 27, 2019 were approved.

Pastor's Report: Current membership is 409, children, youth and adults. The average weekend attendance for the year ending in December is 5:00 p.m. - 21: 8:15 a.m. - 35; 11:00 a.m. - 62 and summer service at 9:30 a.m. 86. The number of individuals and families making contributions on record is 98. The average Sunday School attendance is 12 - 14.

Forward Leadership - Leading Change for Mission Renewal is a 12 month learning program from the New England Synod that combines health assessment, leadership training and practical experience in a collaborative environment.

(Think Forward, Face Forward and Move Forward) Members of this task force include - Steve Davies, Monica Walsh, Julie Parker and Heather Pontonio. An Accountability team is made up of Julie Parker, Nan Carlson, Phil Giubileo, Pat Fettingier and Casey Johansen.

Financial Reports and Proposed budget: Rich Mercado,

Acting Treasurer presented the Financial Reports and the Proposed 2020 Budget. Some figures are estimates or guesstimates due to recent changes and future unknowns. Motion made by Jerry Nabozny and second by Joe Golden to accept the Budget as presented. Accepted.

Misty Hollow Property - Andy Koehm reported that some research is being done on the possible sale of this property.

Cemetery Budget - This budget was presented (not much activity this past year) and approved.

Rich Mercado our acting Treasurer is hoping to retire from this long time task and a new Treasurer is needed. Many thanks for a job very well done. Ginger Coogle, our financial secretary has also retired and her tasks will now be done by Nicole Cable. Many thanks to Ginger for her time and efforts.

The Nominating Committee for new Council Members to be elected at our next Congregational Meeting in April were presented by Pastor Paul. The Committee includes Heather Pontonio, Chris Klauck, Marilyn Roginski, Monica Walsh and Joe Golden.

Jerry Nabozny made the motion to adjourn, seconded by Susan Lehmann. We closed the meeting with the Lord's Prayer at 10:24.

Respectfully Submitted by

Susan Lehmann

Council Secretary

PASTORAL WRITTEN REPORT

Dear Members of Friends of Prince of Peace,

Wow! What a year it was. 2020 will go down in the history chronicles as one of the most troubling years of all time.

We had not completed our first year as pastor and people when the COVID 19 pandemic turned our world and the church upside down. “Out of abundance of caution” was how we introduced everything we did or didn’t do as a congregation from March on. Gone were the familiar road maps of how to be the church. We spent a lot of time listening and learning from scientists about how the virus spread and what we can do to reduce its transmission. And, we spent a lot of time listening and learning from theologians and other congregations about how to be the church in this strange new world. We closed the building for a while – both Preschool side and church side. But we didn’t close the church. PoP continued to offer worship and provide ministry. Thanks to the knowledge and skills of Phil Giubileo and Heather Pontonio we began recording worship services that could be experienced from our website. Next, we learned how to Zoom and provide Sunday School, meetings, studies, and worship opportunities on this platform. We even continued some old traditions in new ways – outside parking lot worship, an Oktoberfest to Go, parking lot Christmas Caroling, a Zoom Christmas pageant, and other unique offerings. We experimented, tweaked, improved, and continued to praise God and care for each other and our neighbors as the church.

We also continued to lose members in 2020. Several households (5 officially, more unofficially) have left or retreated from involvement in congregational life. The reasons are many – theological differences with the ELCA, too many changes, disagreement with our response to the pandemic, now able to watch other church services online, etc. - but the result is the same. Our congregational family is smaller now than it has been in many years. This new reality saddens me. It is not what I hoped for nor what we’ve been working towards.

At a Council Retreat in the fall, we learned how having an intentional interim between the departure of a long-term pastor and the arrival of a new pastor can help better prepare a congregation for its next phase of ministry. The Council is considering which of the missed interim work items it would benefit us to accomplish and how to go about it. That may not reduce further departures but it will help us to develop some new, healthy, and forward-moving practices.

Like you, I am disappointed that some people no longer think of PoP as their church family. We will miss their participation in our life together. We will be different because of their departure. Notice I didn’t say we will be poorer or less or inferior because some households have left. I don’t think that will be the case. We will be different to be sure. And what the difference is will be up to us to decide. God has not abandoned us. Our call to be a vital and vibrant congregation under the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit still exists.

The question before us at the start of 2021 is what form will it take now that we are leaner and more agile? The Congregational Council, the Forward Leadership and Accountability Teams, and others see this as an opportunity to “reset” our ministry. What are the foundations of our life together that we can bring a renewed focus to? What are the essentials of Christian community that are now calling for our attention? What is our unique and holy mission and purpose in Brookfield that we are being empowered to continue? These are some of the questions that will guide us as God’s people in 2021.

In this congregational report you will see that some congregational ministry didn't happen at all or happened in a much smaller way in 2020. You will see that we are in the midst of an unplanned change in committee leadership, with new leaders still being identified. You will also notice a leaner program of ministry/budget suggested for this year. Some of the customary aspects of congregational life are absent and others are greatly reduced. All of this will help to "reset" our focus and ministry. We remain God's called, gathered, enlightened, and empowered people.

There is a reason for Prince of Peace that continues to direct and guide us, even in new ways with fewer disciples and resources. I remain confident that God will see us through this time of change, loss, and resetting of ministry. I thank you for your partnership in ministry and ask that you continue to pray for me, our leadership and Prince of Peace in 2021.

Faithfully yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul Lutz", written in a cursive style.

The Rev. Paul Lutz

PASTORAL STATISTICAL REPORT

MEMBERSHIP STATISTICS

	2020	2019	2018
Baptized Members	380	408	409
Confirmed Members	315	330	331
Associate Members	2	4	4
Active Non-Members	31	33	33

New Members Received in 2020		
	Baptized	Confirmed
Transfer	0	0
Affirmation of Faith	0	0
Confirmation		7
Baptism	3	
Total	3	7

Members Removed in 2020		
	Baptized	Confirmed
Statistical Adjustment*	17	13
Moved/Transfer/Requested	15	11
Death	1	1
Total	33	25

* Constitutional Option

2020 Pastoral Acts

Baptisms: Carson Brown* (9.18.20), Jackson Werner* (10.30.20), Luke Werner* (10.30.20)

Affirmation of Baptism: Cassandra Buzzell, Emma Cable, Ava Cantone, Andrew Confortini, Morgen Kleppin, Chris Mattera, and Riley Roksvold (8.1.20)

Marriages: none

Funerals: Alfred Parente (5.4.20)* Donald Peters (6.11.20), Diane Sammelwitz (10.10.20)*, Jean Wallman (9.4.20)*,

* non-member

PRINCE OF PEACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

FINANCIAL SUMMARY 2020/2021

2020

Covid-19 made 2020 a challenging year. In March when we went to lockdown, we had to suspend the monthly preschool fee to the church (contribution to overhead) of \$4500. While the April tuition had been collected, the school either refunded tuition (\$14,822) or applied it to the next school year which at the time looked questionable.

Under the Cares Act I was able to apply under the Payroll Protection Program (PPP) for a forgivable loan of \$95,948. Two thirds of this went to the preschool and enabled the school to maintain their payroll at 100% through June. Teachers were able to complete their programs for the year and start preparing for the next school year (work that may have been done in August). The remaining funds were applied to the church (\$35,079).

In August a decision had to be made for the next school year. With families backing out at enrolling their children (more refunds) Heidi Riddle and Debbie Nobes presented an informal budget to pastor and myself of a \$23,000 deficit and the question: Do we suspend operations for a year? I felt that this would mean the end of the preschool. I recommended and pastor and council agreed to a \$20,000 grant (not a loan) to keep the school going. There was too much risk to suspending operations. Both Heidi and Debbie took a 20% salary reduction. We should be grateful to both Heidi, Debbie and their staff for dealing with the regulations in keeping the school going. (I did the easy part; they are doing the difficult part).

With everything going on, the church was still able to have a \$8,000 surplus aided by the PPP funds. However, expenses were also drastically cut as we in affect had to suspend many of our activities. Total operating expenses (after preschool grant and PPP funds) were \$274,400 vs. \$357,638 budgeted.

2021

2021 budget is even more challenging. Actual pledges received were just over \$180,000 vs. \$244,000 for 2020. As a result, I increased the 2021 pledges by 25% to come up with a budgeted church income of \$228,000. However, I have no assurance if the number is too high or too low. This resulted in a projected deficit of **\$53,914** with a "bare bones" budget. This amount can only be dealt with by giving that will be higher than pledged income, a draw down on our reserves and/or receiving addition PPP funds on Round 2. I have applied for another PPP loan of \$76,178.

Our 2021 church income has been challenged by us not budgeting for 2021 any preschool fee (over \$50,000) and also affected by loss of members (\$50,000).

As the year goes on and we get the virus under control, we will see if the following school year the preschool can make a contribution (fee) to the church. Hopefully they will be able to at least operate at break-even for the next school year.

We will also look at the possibility of restarting the music program. Council will make the necessary budget adjustments as provided by the church constitution for the music program and other church programs. By mid-year we should have a clearer picture of where we stand.

(Financial Report Continued)

Church Investments

One bright spot for 2021 was our investments increasing in the financial markets. Council removed the designation on the contingency fund for capital improvements. While it has been designated for the replacement of the air conditioning system (\$40,000-\$50,000), we can draw down on the funds if necessary, for normal expenditures. As a result, some equity funds were reduced with the proceeds moved to a short-term bond fund as a hedge.

Thank you

I would like to thank our financial secretary Nicole Cable for her work on keeping our member contribution records up to date and accounting for the church receipts. Also, Trish Leary our bookkeeper for keeping the church financial ledger up to date with bill paying, payroll preparation and recording of financial activity. Rene our church administrative assistant for keeping me informed of messages relating to financial matters. And our tellers who served to make sure contributions mailed or dropped off at church are deposited on a timely basis: Marci Sharp, Joe and Marilyn Roginski, Susi Lehman, Polly Groff and Julie Parker.

Blessings,

Rich Mercado

Reports Attached: Pages 2-5 Budget Report
Pages 6-8 Statement of Assets, Liabilities and Fund Balances
Page 9 Cemetery Budget

(Under separate tab in weekly update)

COUNCIL

It has been a challenging time for the POP Church Council as we have wrestled with the dynamics of the COVID-19 pandemic and the changes that have taken place at POP over these months. Through it all the Council has been very engaged and committed to facing these challenges and finding new ways for POP to grow spiritually. The topics of transition and spiritual growth were key areas of discussion at our virtual council retreat in November where we examined ways to maintain connectivity and concentrate on building key ministries vital to the spiritual health of POP. Together with the help of many members of the congregation we have adapted well to the adversity and are moving forward together.

We also acknowledge the hope that is on the horizon as we emerge from the pandemic and are looking forward to returning to activities that are more familiar to us with opportunities for in person gatherings and fellowship. With that in mind, a major focus for the Council will be to prepare for a post-COVID church. As mentioned in my letter to the congregation in December, the Council together with the Forward Leadership Team (FLT) will meet in early February to identify key topics to discuss with congregation members in small group virtual meetings. We intend to ask members what they think God is calling us to be about as a congregation moving forward. These forums are high priority and we believe it will allow members to be very open and comfortable with the Council and FLT to ask the hard questions that will help shape our identity and enable us to focus relentlessly on our mission and purpose for the future. We are looking forward to this retreat and hearing from you our fellow brothers and sisters of POP.

In addition, we are moving forward with our efforts to sell the Misty Hollow property. We formed the Misty Hollow Task force consisting of representatives from the property committee (Steve Kleppin and Eric Zimmitti), council (Phil Curatilo and Susi Lehmann) and the congregation (Steve Davies and Patrick Fettingner). This task force is working to identify the avenue for sale that is in the best interest of POP. Although the COVID-19 pandemic is making this task especially challenging, I am confident that they will continue to work methodically and diligently to complete this task and I thank them for their commitment.

In closing, I would like to thank my fellow POP Council members (Doug Berendsohn, Nan Carlson, Phil Curatilo, Liz Davies, Tina Giubileo, Casey Johansen, Lorraine Lavery, Susi Lehman, Julie Parker and Kevin Peterson) for their time, diligence, hard work, leadership and support. I am very proud of this group and the love that they show for POP. We have a lot of work ahead of us but it is a great team of leaders to move our church family forward.

Respectfully submitted,

Jerry Nabozny

President

POP Church Council

CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL

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Doug Berendsohn	(860) 799-0552	dougberendsohn@gmail.com
Nancy Carlson	(203) 778-1171	nancsew@gmail.com
Phil Curatilo	(203) 312-0268	pcuratilo@gmail.com
Liz Davies	(203) 241-7818	elizdavies15@gmail.com
Tina Giubileo	(715) 797-6858	<u>tinagiubileo@yahoo.com</u>
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Executive Council meets the 2nd Wednesday of each month

Council meets the 3rd Wednesday of each month

FORWARD LEADERSHIP LEADING CHANGE FOR MISSION RENEWAL

In 2020 members of Prince of Peace (Forward Leadership Team members: Monica Walsh, Heather Pontonio, Steve Davies, and Accountability Team members: Nan Carlson, Patricia Fettingier, Phil Giubileo) and Pastor Lutz participated in this 12-month learning Forward Leadership initiative in the New England Synod. The Forward Leadership Community is a learning model that combines congregational health assessment, leadership training, and practical experience in a collaborative environment.

The purpose of the Forward Leadership Community is to strengthen the effectiveness of motivated individuals and congregations through congregational and community assessment, leadership development, and congregational renewal. Participants:

Thinking Forward:

- Objectively evaluate their current congregational ministry using the Congregational Assessment Tool (CAT) or Conversational Tool.
- Develop an action plan for their congregation based on the results of the CAT (Vital Signs Report) and a congregational consultation.
- Set long term and short-term goals for ministry, renewal and growth.

Facing Forward:

- Become students of principles that lead to excellence in the practice of ministry.
- Learn strategies and skills for implementing action plans, embracing congregational identity, negotiating conflict, facilitating change, and creating room for creativity and innovation.
- Grow in wisdom and understanding of how God is alive in their communities.
- Build up confidence in sharing one's faith stories, being invitational, and engaging the religiously unaffiliated in conversations about faith.

Moving Forward:

- Apply learnings in leadership development for use in their personal lives as well as in their congregations.
- Connect with others in a collaborative learning environment and strengthen inter-parish relationships within the learning cohort.
- Practice communications skills.
- Report their experiences back to the group as they implement changes and move toward goals.

Our Congregational team participated in 6 seminar sessions (topics: Adaptive and Technical Change, Crucial Conversations, Leadership Styles, Community Engagement, Hospitality) and one congregation consultation meeting.

In 2021 the team will meet with the Council to explore what learnings could be helpful in moving Prince of Peace Forward in healthy, robust and faithful ways.

PROPERTY COMMITTEE REPORT

Last year the congregation voted to put the Misty Hollow parsonage on the market. Prior to that the Property Committee and Council had begun evaluating the potential uses and values for that property, working with a local commercial realtor and an engineering firm. Then Covid hit which threw all assumptions up in the air. We are now renewing our efforts as we begin to emerge from the pandemic and market forces change. We hope to have a plan and path forward this calendar year. We continue to perform routine and annual maintenance on the building, obviously there is less use of the building as a result of Covid restrictions.

In addition, we continue to perform grounds maintenance, including landscaping, tree pruning and planting of replacements trees.

Please reach out to me with any questions or concerns: steven.kleppin3@gmail.com We're always looking for more volunteers!

Respectfully Submitted,

Steve Kleppin

Chair

ALTAR GUILD

This group is responsible for setting the altar and the sanctuary for the worship services each weekend. 2020 was an easy year for us without much going on in the church building. Hopefully in the next 6 months or so we will get back to our routine. There are usually 12 individuals in the group, three for each weekend of the month. We set the altar, paraments, communion, linens and flowers, after the service we either reset the altar or clean up. Recently we have had several resignations and need some new people to help us out. New members to the group will be trained and mentored and would not be working alone until they feel comfortable with the process. Presently Marci Sharp, Martha Holland, Cathy Fegley, Nan Carlson, Polly Groff, Julie Parker, Edith Sherman, Heidi Adam and Susan Lehmann are on this team. We are sorry to see Marilyn Roginski, Barbara Morris and Louise Kleppin who worked many years with us move on to other projects.

If you are interested in helping us, please contact me. Love to hear from you!

Susan Lehmann

Lleh45@sbcglobal.net

203-744-2033

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

Each year our stewardship campaign reminds us of the many ways that God blesses us. And out of gratitude for God's blessings, we respond by making a commitment to the ministries at Prince of Peace. We acknowledge that Jesus gives of himself to us, and we respond to his love by caring for others.

This year our theme was "Encourage one Another". The congregational wide process included preaching on the theme, bulletin inserts, email communication and letters to households. Generosity Sunday was Reformation Sunday, October 25, 2020, which included the first ever "Oktoberfest to Go" celebration and the creation of an amazing "Encourage one Another" video. Because we were unable to gather in person for worship Commitment cards were submitted through the mail.

A summary of responses shows that the majority of those who made commitments increased what they gave last year. Thank you! Some households continued with the same amount as 2020. Thank you! A few households needed to give less than they had before. Thank you! And several households decided not to make a financial commitment at all. We thank everyone for prayerfully consider a tithe and offering of record.

Special thanks go to our Stewardship Committee members: Glenn Christy, Monica Walsh, and Nan Carlson

Respectfully Submitted,
Pr. Paul Lutz

CARING MINISTRIES 2020 REPORT

Caring Ministries at Prince of Peace encompasses several programs which allow the members of our congregation opportunities to help each other and the greater Brookfield/Danbury community. There are many ways to get involved but we are always looking for new ways to be of service to others as we consider the needs of our community. During this past year, the different ministries had to make adjustments due to Covid 19, but the need for help was greater than ever.

The current programs that fall under Caring Ministries are the following:

Loaves and Fishes

The Loaves and Fishes Hospitality House is located at 40 Main Street in New Milford. This is a public charity that relies on donated funds, food, and supplies and faithful volunteers who prepare and serve daily meals and provide bag lunches to go for people in need. Members of Prince of Peace can volunteer to cook and serve on the second Sunday of each month. Currently, all meals are being prepared under strict Covid 19 guidelines and the patrons are taking their meals to go. We have four members of our congregations that organize the volunteers and plan the meals for POP, they are, Steve Davies, Casey Johansen, Donna Wright and Janet Hiser. Please contact one of them if you are interested in helping.

Daily Bread

The Daily Bread Food Pantry is located behind St. James Episcopal Church in Danbury and can be accessed from the church's rear parking lot on Terrace Place. Daily Bread is a very active food pantry which provides groceries to hundreds of people in need every month. With the repercussions of Covid 19 this past year, the number of food insecure families has risen tremendously. Much of the food at Daily Bread comes from the Connecticut Food Bank at a very low cost. Monetary donations are most welcome as the money can be used for the most needed items. These donations can be made on the POP website or the Daily Bread website. Food donations are also accepted and can be dropped off either at POP or at Daily Bread on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday 11:30 AM-1:30 PM. The POP Church Council is currently reviewing fundraising ideas for Daily Bread for 2021. Until Covid 19 arrived in March, there were several volunteers from POP that helped in the pantry on the days that food was distributed to the public. The system that was in place has been adjusted to stay Covid 19 safe and our volunteers are currently on hiatus. If you are interested in helping out at Daily Bread, please contact Liz Davies (POP) and I will help you set that up.

Masks and Scrub Caps

Prince of Peace congregation became involved in making face masks and scrub caps last March when a shortage of them became evident in patient care facilities. By the first week in April, we sent more than 100 to Danbury Hospital. We continued to distribute more than 2500 items to hospitals and Long Term facilities in Fairfield County.

Both women and men sewed items and put buttons on scrub caps. Scrub caps were made for people with long hair.

Masks and Scrub Caps (continued)

Monica Walsh formed a group in her neighborhood to make multiple masks. Diane Morey was a powerhouse in masks and caps, making more than 1000 herself! Nancy Carlson did some organization and distributed fabric and elastic. People in the community learned of our activity and contributed supplies as well as their sewing abilities. More than 10 Prince of Peace women and men were committed to this activity. We just received a request for masks and scrub caps from Regional Hospice and Home Care of CT. This will certainly extend into 2021.

Thank you to all of those who helped and prayed for the good of the group. There's no way we can name each person. It's amazing to see the power when we get together to do something worthwhile.

Nan Carlson

Meals and Rides for Congregation Members

Throughout the past year, there has been a need to provide meals to members of POP recovering from illnesses and surgeries. Rides were given to those in need for medical appointments. If you or someone you know, could benefit from a delivered meal or a car ride please contact POP or Liz Davies (POP) to arrange a plan.

Knitting and Crocheting

For many years POP has had a Knitting and Crocheting Ministry which has made beautiful baby blankets and infant hats given to both Danbury Hospital and Global Health Industries. These gifts are blessed by Pastor, along with quilts made by Naomi Circle, during the service on Mother's Day. In addition, scarves and hats are knit by this group for Seafarers International when they come into the CT ports. These gifts are added to the sailors' Christmas packages every year. This year there were 27 scarves and 27 hats made for the Seafarers and 25 baby blankets and 27 infant hats made for Global Health Industries. The W/ELCA was kind enough to fund the mailing of these gifts.

College Care Packages

Every year the College Care Package Ministry has provided fun boxes of goodies and practical items for the college students of POP. These boxes are usually sent during exam time as a special treat for the students and to remind them that their home church supports them and is thinking about them. Because of Covid 19 this past year, this program has been on hold. Hopefully it will resume at some point in 2021.

If you have any questions regarding the ministries mentioned or ideas for new ministries, please give me a call or email.

Thank you,

Elizabeth Davies

Council Liaison to Caring Ministries

PARISH LIFE

There is currently no Parish Life Committee. Please speak with Pastor Lutz for more information.

PRINCE OF PEACE CEMETERY ASSOCIATION

This was probably the quietest year ever in terms of cemetery activity. We sold but two cremation plots and had only 5 burials. No major projects were undertaken. Spring and fall cleanups were well attended by committee members. Weekly upkeep was handled by committee members also. Mowing and other ground keeping tasks such as crabgrass prevention and fertilization are handled by outside vendors.

The cemetery has 464 full plots. Of those, 306 have been sold, 10 are deemed not saleable because of underlying ground conditions leaving 148 full plots still available for sale. There are 213 cremation plots. Of those 138 have been sold, and 11 are considered unsaleable due to location. This leaves 64 cremation plots left for sale. Plot costs remain the same for 2021. Full plots are \$700 for church members and \$1000 for non-members. Cremation plots are \$300 for members and \$450 for non-members. Cremation plot openings are handled by committee members for a fee of \$250. Full plot openings are handled by an outside vendor in conjunction with the funeral home and family.

Work anticipated for 2021 includes the removal of a tree by the river and some grass rejuvenation.

Respectfully submitted,

Ernest Lehman

Chairman

Prince of Peace Cemetery Association

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION/FAITH FORMATION COMMITTEE REPORT

Lifelong faith formation is a lifetime journey with Christ, in Christ, and to Christ. It promotes maturity in faith through the ages and stages of life and addresses the diverse spiritual and religious lives, engagements, and practices of children, adolescents, adults, and families. Lifelong faith formation guides individuals and families in discerning their spiritual and religious journeys and life stage needs, and giving people an active role in shaping their own personal trajectories of faith growth.

Sunday School ministry continues to offer meaningful ministry to children and their families. The first quarter of 2020 included over 13 children regularly attending Sunday School classes with monthly all-family gatherings. We paused Sunday School March-August as families addressed life changes with COVID-19. Sunday School went online in September with 10 children regularly attending the 30-minute Sunday morning Zoom call. In 2021, Zoom Sunday School continues with hopes that the Brookfield Ecumenical Vacation Bible School returns this summer.

Confirmation: The start of the pandemic forced the Confirmation class of 2019-2020 to switch from in-person to zoom classes. After completing all their confirmation requirements the young adults (Cassandra Buzzell, Emma Cable, Ava Cantone, Andrew Confortini, Morgen Kleppin, Chris Materra, and Riley Roksvold) were confirmed at (our first) outside worship service on Saturday, August 1, 2020 at 5:00 pm. Confirmation continued in 2020. Our six students continued to meet for one hour on Tuesday evenings over Zoom to participate in get-acquainted games, discuss current events, review chapters from Everyday Spirituality, and to take a deep dive into Luther's Small Catechism. The Rite of Affirmation of Baptism/Confirmation is planned for Sunday, May 16, 2021.

Adult Faith Formation classes also hopped on Zoom during most of 2020. The Monthly Women's Bible Study explored studies from the WELCA's "Gather" magazine on "Just Love" and the Thursday evening book study is working its way through "Everyday Spirituality" by Bishop Jim Hazelwood. Some different adult learning activities are planned for 2021 starting in Lent. Keep your eyes open to the Friday Weekly email blast for the latest information. You are invited to join us for any of them. And if there is something in particular you'd like to learn more about, let Pastor Lutz know.

2020 Church-wide events included:

- The **Way of the Cross** event went virtual and encouraged all to remember the events of Jesus last days and included moments of personal reflection.
- Children participated in a meaningful pre-recorded **Christmas pageant** that was shared as part of an Advent season church service.

Work on this committee could not be achieved without our Sunday school and Confirmation parents, Jocelyn Dore, Stephen Dore, Lorraine Lavery, Tina Giubileo, Nicole, Cable, Liz Davies, Christine Buzzell, Allison Cantone, and Janet Lutz

If you are interested in participating, facilitating, and/or supporting Faith Formation at PoP, please contact Pastor Lutz.

Respectfully Submitted,
Pastor Lutz and Heather Pontonio

WORSHIP & MUSIC COMMITTEE

The Worship and Music Committee here at Prince of Peace assists our pastor in offering worship that is a lively and faithful telling of the Christian story in word, sacrament, and song. The committee's work includes planning for worship services, ministry through music including our church choirs, and arranging for paid and volunteer music staff.

Creativity and innovation have been at the center of the work of the Worship and Music Committee this past year. In 2020 the committee worked very hard to sustain our worship and music experiences despite a global pandemic, state regulations, and the need for social distancing to keep our members safe. The committee developed a variety of worship experiences throughout the year including virtual pre-recorded services, Facebook Live streaming service, indoor socially distanced service, outdoor worship and communion service, and most recently our online, live Zoom worship services. With the restrictions upon the committee, the furlough of the Choir directors and pause on choir ministries, novel music resources were explored including pre-recorded and virtual anthems. The committee strove to keep a balance between sustaining worship and music traditions here at Prince of Peace, while keeping the safety of our members at the forefront of our work.

A huge thank you to our 2020 Worship and Music Committee members for their dedication and flexibility working within the constraints of our pandemic. The following members participated in the committee during this past year: Heidi Adams, Barbara Bruno, Nancy Carlson, Susi Lehmann, Kevin Fay, Laurie Fay, Tina Giubileo, Marci Sharp and Pr. Paul Lutz. I also want to extend a thank you to Phil Giubileo, Casey Johansen, Janet Lutz, and Heather Pontonio for the countless hours they contributed to make our virtual and outdoor worship experiences a success.

As we look forward into 2021 the Worship and Music Committee's largest goal is to hopefully work toward returning to in-person worship and the return of robust choir ministry experiences. In working toward this goal, safety of our members will not be compromised, and we will continue to plan and carry out virtual, outdoor and socially distanced worship, communion, and music experiences until in-person worship can safely be done. We also hope with return of in-person worship to see growth of our musical ministry and being able to fill a permanent staff position for a church musician/organist. The committee also plans to continue to reflect on what strengths and possible new traditions have evolved out of the creative ways we have worshiped in 2020, including the benefit to our members with having a variety of worship options.

I invite any members who may be interested in learning more or want to join in the wonderful work of the committee to please reach out to me or any of our other committee members via email or phone.

Regards,

Tina Giubileo

Council Liaison and W&M Committee Chair

WOMEN OF THE ELCA

Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (W/ELCA) is an organization for all women of the church. Churches all over the world have projects and activities in which they participate as well as projects of their own.

Since the pandemic happened, many of the things we usually did...didn't happen.

1. Our annual retreat to Camp Calumet the end of March.
The 2021 retreat is scheduled for April 16-18....(fingers crossed)
2. Spring Gathering of the Naugatuck Valley Conference in April.
3. W/ELCA Triennial convention in Arizona in July (*rescheduled for July 2021*)
4. New England Synodical convention in October.
5. POP Craft Fair in November.

What did happen was:

1. The organization purchased shelving for a closet in the hallway and the Storage room (that is located across the hall from the kitchen). Joan Manka generously gave her time to "clean out" and "organize" this space.
2. The organization voted to give \$1,000 of the monies from the 2019 Craft Fair to the "Love Fund".
3. Paid for the mailing of 27 scarves and 27 hats to Seafarer's International and 25 baby blankets and 27 hats to Global Ministries.
4. Have a monthly Bible Study using the "Gather" (a W/ELCA magazine) and led by Pastor Paul. We purchased several copies of this monthly magazine and anyone can pick one up in the Narthex...many good articles as well as the Bible Study. We meet on the 3rd Wednesday of the month on Zoom at 10:00 a.m.

NAOMI CIRCLE is a group of several women from POP who meet each month (that is until the pandemic hit) to put together quilts that are sent to Lutheran World Relief to be shared around the world where needed. Members of POP donate material that is cut into squares so that they can be sewn together, and also donate bed sheets that are used for the backing. Twelve of the quilts, that were made before the pandemic, were sent off in December to be distributed. Karen Muller leads this Circle.

Marcí Sharp, President

Diane Morey, Treasurer

Edith Sherman, Secretary

PRINCE OF PEACE PRE-SCHOOL

The Prince of Peace Pre-School mission is to provide young children and their families a positive first school experience, offering the opportunity to interact with other children in a warm, caring and accepting environment that supports the development of wholesome social relationships. Our curriculum is based on the Connecticut Early Learning & Development Standards (ELDS) (www.ctoec.org), and is in compliance with the National Association for the Education of Young Children (www.naeyc.org) as a nationally recognized, high quality early childhood program.

In January 2020, we had 90 students enrolled in the Pre-School, were running 7 classes and had 16 staff members. On March 13th, the Prince of Peace Pre-School building closed for the 2019/2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The 2019/2020 school year was finished with remote learning, virtual stories and greetings and end of year drive by graduations. We were fortunate to receive PPP monies, thanks to the efforts of Rich Mercado, to allow for the school year closure. Over the summer, new regulations were provided to the pre-school from the Office of Early Childhood. Protocols and plans were created and the school was fitted with required safety equipment (entry shields, thermometers, hand sanitizer, touchless dispensers, etc.) in preparation for the 2020/2021 school year. We began the 2020/2021 school year with a delayed start date, to accommodate the public school delayed opening. We had 50 students enrolled and 14 returning staff members.

Closing out the 2019/2020 school year and opening the 2020/2021 school year would not have happened without the tremendous support received from Rich Mercado and Steve Murphy. I am incredibly grateful, thank you! I also thank Nan Carlson and her sewing group for making 14 staff aprons. All staff members appreciate their efforts and talents, as they don their aprons daily😊 Thank you to Christine Klauck for shopping and stocking the supply closet and Pastor Lutz for his continued support of the Pre-School. Additionally, the Prince of Peace Pre-School staff members have demonstrated amazing strength in managing the daily challenges they face as we operate during the pandemic, and I thank them for their extraordinary efforts and resilience. Finally, I am indebted to Debbie Nobes for her remarkable assistance in continuing to operate the school in these trying times.

I look forward to the New Year and hope for the continued operation of the school. All Prince of Peace Pre-School staff members have been identified to the State of Connecticut in preparation for receipt of the COVID-19 vaccine. I have begun to provide school tours for the 2021/2022 school year and hope to see increased enrollment numbers. Once vaccine rollout is complete, I invite Church members to contact the Pre-School office to visit our school and see us in action.

Respectfully submitted,

Heidi Riddle

Director
Prince of Peace Pre-School

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The Nominating Committee is comprised of at least three voting members of the congregation (typically those retiring from Council) and is responsible for identifying members of the congregation with good leadership skills who will run for Church Council at the May/June congregational meeting. Members of the Nominating Committee are elected for a one-year term and are not eligible for consecutive re-election.

FRIDAY NIGHT LIVE

Friday Night Live, a monthly gathering of members and friends to share food and fellowship met twice in 2020 before the pandemic hit. There were no meetings for the remainder of the year.

If there is interest in meeting over Zoom or restarting FNL later in 2021, please speak with Pastor Lutz.

YOUTH GROUP

Youth Group activities were suspended in 2020 due to the pandemic. If you have any interest in participating or being a leader of the Youth group in 2021 please contact Pastor Lutz.