

# **PRINCE OF PEACE LUTHERAN CHURCH**

## **BROOKFIELD, CT**

### **ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING**

**February 5, 2023**  
**11:00 a.m. (In-Person and via Zoom)**

#### **Call to Order**

- Opening Prayer
- Adoption of Agenda
- Approval of Minutes of the January 30, 2022 Annual Meeting
- Membership Report
- Highlights from the CAT survey results (Vital Signs)
- Prince of Peace Financial Reports and the Proposed 2023 Program on Ministry
- Vote on the 2023 Prince of Peace Budget
- Review of the revised Constitution
- Vote on the revised Constitution
- Vote on Treasurer Position as per the constitution
- Proposed 2023 Cemetery Association Budget
- Vote on the 2023 Cemetery Association Budget
- Election of Nominating Committee
- Lord's Prayer
- Adjournment

**Prince of Peace Lutheran Church  
Minutes of the Annual Congregational  
Budget Meeting  
January 30, 2022**

27 members were present at church, 14 members via Zoom.

Congregational Meeting was chaired by Lorraine Lavery, President, Church Council. Meeting began at 11:00 a.m. Opening prayer was given by Pastor Lutz.

Agenda was adopted and 2021 minutes accepted.

Members are encouraged to read the committee reports presented today.

**Pastor's Report:**

Pastor reported on new membership statistics. All people are welcome at church, whether they are members or not. No privileges, when requested, will be withheld regardless of membership.

**Financial Reports:**

Sincere gratitude was expressed for Rich Mercado's service for several years at Prince of Peace.

Rich served as Treasurer for ... He presented the budget for 2021 and 2022.

Priscilla Rivas-Mancione, new Treasurer was introduced to the congregation.

2021 Budget had a budgeted deficit of \$53,914 but we were able to receive \$76,177 from the Payroll Protection Program and ended with a surplus of \$80,840. We received two PPP contributions which are subject to forgiveness.

2022 Budget includes a deficit of \$66,966. Overall church Finances include available undesignated/unrestricted funds of \$143,854 generated from special giving and the Payroll Protection Program to cover this deficit.

The 2022 budget was presented in a motion and passed by a majority.

**Cemetery Budget:**

The Cemetery budget was presented by Rich and Ernie Lehman. 50% of income earned by the sale of plots is placed in a Perpetual Care Fund. Ernie extended thanks to Rich Mercado for his guidance. He was also grateful to those people who do clean-up of the cemetery property. Probate Court will file the budget. The motion to approve the budget was passed.

2022 minutes continued

Nominating Committee:

The following members were appointed to be members of the Nominating Committee:  
Heidi Adam, Susan Lehmann, Tina Giubileo, Julie Parker, Heather Pontonio and Mary Weisensee.  
They are responsible for identifying members of the congregation with good leadership skills who will run for Church Council at the May/June congregational meeting. These members are elected for one year and not eligible for consecutive re-election.

This motion passed.

Respectfully,

Lorraine Lavery  
Council Secretary

# PASTORAL WRITTEN REPORT

This may not be a typical Annual Report from the pastor—for a number of reasons: I am only serving part-time; I was only at Prince of Peace for four months in 2022; and I am the Interim Pastor, which carries a different role in the overall life of the parish.

But I can offer you some perspectives and a few statistics. The statistics of which I am aware of for 2022 are as follows:

Confirmed members received by Affirmation of Faith—9  
Confirmed members received by Letter of Transfer—3  
Baptisms—7  
Funerals—7

The perspectives I have to share are a little less tangible, but I would hope, still helpful:

Prince of Peace has “bottomed out”. Starting with COVID, Prince of Peace has dealt with a number of difficult circumstances recently. If one were to chart Prince of Peace on a graph, one would see a decline in attendance, a decline in giving, and a decline in membership. But I believe that graph has now bottomed out, and we are starting to see some positive changes.

My sense is that attendance is on the upswing, giving is slowly increasing, and the membership loss has abated. In other words, things are looking up. Prince of Peace is a long way from where it was years ago in terms of size and membership, but we have stopped shrinking! I believe that.

My perspective is that there is tremendous, new and exciting energy at PoP. This energy is powering new initiatives for service and outreach and education. I want to encourage all of you to be a part of this energy surge in the coming months. Good things are happening.

We still have significant concerns, of course. But these concerns can and will be addressed in a positive way.

In short, I am impressed by the ministry of the People of God at Prince of Peace Lutheran. I am honored and blessed to be a part of this new excitement. I look forward to the time I will be spending with you in 2023.

Blessings and Peace to each of you in the Name of Christ, the Prince of Peace!

Pastor Mark A. Grorud

# COUNCIL

The Council's job within the church is to envision, plan, implement, and annually evaluate our congregation's ministry and mission. Our team consists of Lorraine Lavery, Elizabeth Davies, Meg McLoone, Laura Duffy, Monica Walsh, Nancy Carlson, Heather Pontonio, Paul Adams, Meegan Lepler, Linda Burns, and Donna Vitetta.

The Council has had a busy and productive year. Some of the highlights that we have focused on include the following:

1. Updated the vision and mission statement
2. Approved 2 new community events at the church: Pancake Breakfast and Easter Egg Hunt
3. Said goodbye to Pr. Lutz and Welcomed Pr. Mark
4. Updated the Love Fund, Safe Church Policy, and Building Use Policy
5. Approved the updated Constitution
6. Worked on collaboration with other church leaders for our youth
7. Created and approved transition and call team
8. Created the Communications Committee and reinstated the preschool committee

Please reach out to a nominating committee member if you feel called to help serve on council next year. We are committed to doing God's work to serve others.

Respectfully,

*Lorraine Lavery*  
President  
POP Church Council

# CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL 2022-2023

Name	Phone Number	E-mail Address
Paul Adam	203-797-1950	
Linda Sutton Burns	203-743-1948	lindaburns1971@gmail.com
Nancy Carlson Assistant Vice President	203-778-1171	nancsew@gmail.com
Liz Davies Assistant Vice President	203-241-7818	elizdavies15@gmail.com
Laura Duffy	203-270-8644	l.duffy@charter.net
Lorraine Lavery President	845- 416-0900	marc.lorrainelavery@gmail.com
Meegan Lepler	203-482-6993	meegan.lepler@gmail.com
Meg McLoone Secretary	203-775-1724	mkloon@yahoo.com
Heather Pontonio	203-947-9744	heather.pontonio@gmail.com
Priscilla Rivas Treasurer	203 -830-9016	guanacaste@snet.net
Donna Vitetta	914-672-1209	donnavitetta@gmail.com
Monica Walsh	203-512-1166	mwalsh21@sbcglobal.net

## **WORSHIP & MUSIC**

The Worship and Music Committee here at Prince of Peace assists our pastor and director of music 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 ensembles and programs, maintenance of invested instruments and arranging for paid and volunteer music staff.

Creativity and innovation have remained at the center of the work of the Worship & Music Committee. In 2022 the committee continued to work very hard to sustain our worship and music ministry despite the continuation of the global pandemic, subsequent state recommendations, and the need for social distancing to keep our members safe. The committee diligently worked on reintegrating lost practices due to the pandemic, including the return of the sung liturgy, the integration of communion kits and the reinstatement of Holy Eucharist at the rail via intinction. As we moved into our 'new normal' we have also seen the return and growth of the Sanctuary Choir with new and old music alike, the Handbell Choir and the Youth Music program with its ongoing Mulder organ project.

Another new move we championed was a new service, Christmas Eve, Eve, Eve, Eve! This allowed families both within our congregation and the greater community the opportunity to share in the birth of Jesus, here at home, whereas otherwise they might have been traveling. We also experimented with a "lighter" service for Christmas Day. The committee also developed the Organ Task Force to address the concerns surrounding the condition of the pipe organ in the sanctuary, spurred on by a report from the Austin Organ Company received in the winter of 2021.

As we look forward into 2023 the Worship and Music Committee's goals include the continued growth of our worship experiences and the music ministry that supports them including the future status of the organ. We envision a continued offering of multiple options for members to join in both service and dialogue.

A huge thank you to our 2022 Worship and Music Committee members for their dedication to Prince of Peace and our future growth. The following members participated in the committee during this past year: Heidi Adam, Nancy Carlson, Susi Lehmann, Tina Giubileo, Marci Sharp, Brian Muller, Donna Vitetta, Pr. Paul Lutz, and Pr. Mark Grorud. On behalf of the committee, I also want to extend a huge thank you to Tina Giubileo, who stepped down this fall, for the countless hours she has contributed over many years, guiding, and keeping the committee moving forward despite the pandemic and changes. Her presence will be missed.

Finally, I invite any members who may be interested in learning more or want to join in the wonderful work of the committee, the choirs, the organ task force, or the altar guild, to please reach out to me or any of our other committee members via email or phone.

Regards,

Brian Muller  
Director of Music and W&M Committee Chair

# PROPERTY COMMITTEE REPORT

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It was a busy year for everyone, including the Property Committee. Early in the year the Parsonage property sale was completed. The sale of the property will be provided needed long term capital funds, among other things, for the Church. We don't know exactly what our new neighbors intend to do with the property, but we will be vigilant and work in a spirit of cooperating to ensure whatever happens next door works well with Prince of Peace.

You've hopefully seen the new sign at the bottom of the property. There were a lot of folks who worked on this from sign design to permitting, to installation. Hopefully it gives us more visibility!

Another large project was the replacement of windows in the preschool. That was long overdue. We had to make repairs to the furnaces due to wear and tear and continue to monitor our HVAC units, with an understanding that replacement will be needed in the future.

The Youth Room is being furbished which should provide a great gathering space!

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](mailto:steven.kleppin3@gmail.com) We're always looking for more volunteers!

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Respectfully Submitted,

Steve Kleppin  
Chair

## ALTAR GUILD

The Altar Guild has the responsibility of preparing the sanctuary for the Service(s) for each weekend and any special services scheduled. This includes caring for and changing the paraments and linens, the candles, including the eternal candle, the flower arrangements and dedications and communion plus cleaning up after the services. Usually, we have 3 people assigned to each weekend. Under the present circumstances, with one service and COVID and using the communion kits or intinction with one chalice, we have little clean up. When we return to "normal" bread and wine communion and additional services, additional help will be needed to cover the responsibilities. We need several recruits. They will be trained and not left alone until they are comfortable with the duties.

The committee includes: Heidi Adam, Nan Carlson, Cathie Fegley, Susan Lehmann, Julie Parker, Marci Sharp and Edith Sherman plus 'newbees' Donna Vitetta and Rebecca. If you are interested in learning more about the Altar Guild please contact Susan Lehmann at lleh45@sbcglobal.net or 203-744-2033.

Susan Lehmann

# STEWARSHIP COMMITTEE

## Stewardship Annual Report January 2023



This year's stewardship focus was to attend, grow, give, and serve. The stewardship campaign consisted of letters from Pr. Mark to the congregation, 4 guest speakers giving temple talks about the 4 main themes of this year, and a stewardship gathering where these 4 themes were put into practice at different stations around the fellowship hall. This year the members that helped with Stewardship were Monica Walsh, Nancy Carlson, Paul Adams, Heather Pontonio, Heidi Adam, and Meegan Lepler.

There were 39 pledges for 2022

There are 43 pledges for 2023

While collective dollar pledges didn't significantly increase, we did see an increase in members committing to the mission of this church. This is a positive step forward committing for the transition and growth of Prince of Peace.

This upcoming year is going to be exciting as we continue to find new and creative solutions towards our growth in our 4 stewardship focuses: grow, serve, attend, and give. Please consider helping us continue our stewardship focus throughout the year to help our church grow in these areas.

## CARING MINISTRY

The committee is composed of several people who supply transportation to people who have appointments and various needs throughout the year. Most people have necessary appointments with physicians and treatments in local hospitals. On occasions, we may go to Yale New Haven. We've supplied food to people after surgery or hospital discharge. We deliver floral arrangements when available to those who are recuperating at home or much needed cheer. Several members are willing to send appropriate cards or place telephone calls to help.

Communication of people with needs is very important. If you know of someone who could use some help, please don't hesitate to tell us. We do respect a person's privacy so be sure you speak to a person before referring or let us know if the matter is private.

Nancy Carlson

## SOCIAL MINISTRY

Prince of Peace members are dedicated to the surrounding communities. We are actively supportive of the Daily Bread Food Pantry in Danbury which services over 250 families each week. We bring food donations and encourage financial donations to the Pantry.

Several women from our church have constructed dresses for "Dress A Girl Around the World". This is an organization which operates under the philosophy that if you give a girl, who lives in poverty, a dress, she develops self-respect as a girl. Each dress pocket is given with a small toy or bracelet and a new pair of panties. These dresses have been distributed to Native American girls or various impoverished areas in Central America and Africa.

Contributions have been sent to Lutheran World Relief.

Nancy Carlson

2022 was another challenging yet rewarding year for Prince of Peace volunteers at Loaves & Fishes food pantry in New Milford. Previously, our church had 4 supervisors that led PoPs' volunteers at Loaves & Fishes each 2nd Sunday of the month. In 2022 we lost 2 long term Supervisors; Casey Johansen who moved and the unfortunate passing of Donna Wright. Presently, myself and Janet Hisser are supervisors, and we have a small group of volunteers consisting of some folks with L&F experience, and some new volunteers who have graciously stepped up to help with volunteering.

In past years Loaves & Fishes would typically serve hot meals and take out lunches to 20 to 30 visitors for the Sunday afternoon sessions. Since the pandemic, L&F now averages around 8 visitors per sitting. During the pandemic L&F had changed the format to handing out take-out meals with no inside sit-down service. Mid-year 2022 L&F switched back to the afternoon sit down hot meal format again. Attendance numbers remain low right now.

Anyone interested in helping with the Loaves & Fishes program can reach out to me at [sdavies1400@gmail.com](mailto:sdavies1400@gmail.com), or call 914-907-4509.

Respectfully submitted 1/7/23.

Steve Davies  
914-907-4509  
[sdavies1400@gmail.com](mailto:sdavies1400@gmail.com)

# PRINCE OF PEACE CEMETERY ASSOCIATION

The past year was a busy one for the Prince of Peace Cemetery Association. There were ten burials, eight of which were cremation burials handled by committee members. Plot sales increased this year over past years.

The cemetery contains 464 full burial plots. Of those, 298 have been sold, 10 are classified as "Do not sell" because of ground impediments leaving 156 full plots available. There are 213 cremation plots. Of those, 154 have been sold, 11 are classified as "Do not sell" because of location or ground impediments leaving 48 cremation plots available. The committee can revise these numbers if cremation plots continue being requested at the current rate by dividing up full plots. A full plot can be divided into 3 cremation plots. This was last done a few years ago when 4 rows of full plots from rows I, J, K and L were subdivided. There are 68 veterans buried at Prince of Peace.

After holding plot costs steady for almost ten years, the Cemetery Committee recommended to increase the price for cremation plots by \$100. The new prices, which will be in effect starting January 1, 2023, are \$400 for members and \$550 for non-members. The cost of full plots will remain \$700 for members and \$1000 for non-members. Cremation plot openings will remain at \$250. The cost for opening a full plot varies and is handled through an independent contractor. These charges are usually included in burial arrangements made with a funeral home. Additional information about the cemetery may be obtained by contacting Ernie Lehman or the church office.

No major improvements were done in 2022. In 2023 we plan to deal with weed growth along the inside walls of the cemetery and "rejuvenate" an area near the wall which has seen large dead patches after a number of years of dry conditions. Mowing, weed, and insect control will be handled by independent vendors. Weekly maintenance will continue to be done by committee members. One other quick note – even though we spent more than we earned with respect to our budget, our investment income more than covered that deficit. We were also blessed with a gift of \$15,000 from the estate of a family who has loved ones buried in the cemetery.

Current members of the committee are Steve Davies, Glenn Morris, Joe Roginski, Rich Mercado, Joe Fecarotta, Ken Carlson, Jim Sharp (Secretary) and Ernie Lehman.

Respectfully,

Ernie Lehman, Chairman

# 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** continues to offer meaningful ministry to children and their families. In 2022, Sunday School occurred during the 10am service with children joining their parents in church for the Eucharist. Throughout the year, 15 children regularly attended.

**Confirmation Class** started in October we launched a one-year Confirmation Class that meets every Thursday. There are 6 students from 6<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> grade in the class with plans to hold the rite of confirmation in June 2023.

**2022 Church-wide events** included:

- The **Way of the Cross** event was virtual and encouraged all to remember the events of Jesus last days and included moments of personal reflection.
- Children participated in a meaningful **Christmas pageant** that was shared during the Dec 11<sup>th</sup> church service.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Heather Pontonio

## NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The Nominating Committee is composed of six voting members of the congregation 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. Thank you to the 2022 Nominating committee who successfully assisted in identifying 5 new members and 1 existing member to run on council for this year. We welcome the new 2023 nominating committee members.

## **WOMEN OF THE ELCA**

In, March, seven Prince of Peace women bravely retreated to Camp Calumet. Nancy Tolmoff led the retreat. Information for the 2023 annual retreat, which will be held on March 24-26, will be in the February and the March Blueprints. The sign-up sheet will be posted in March on a table in the Narthex. (Mark your calendars as this is a great time to relax and enjoy the weekend with other women (and friends) from Prince of Peace. We have been going on this annual retreat over 30 years and would love to share it with those who have attended before and new members as well.

In October, Edith Sherman and myself attended the New England Synod of the Women of the ELCA convention at Camp Calumet. It was good to see friends that we hadn't seen in several years due to COVID.

Three on-going knitting/crocheting projects continue to keep our women's hands busy. The first one is for the "Prayer Shawl Ministry". Prayer Shawls are knitted, and prayers are said over the shawls as they are being knitted. The shawls are then given to individuals who are sick or in need of this special comfort. The second knitting project is blankets and caps for infants and toddlers that are sent to Global Health Ministries. The 3<sup>rd</sup> project is Hats and Scarves for the Seafarer's...we send them to North Haven and they are handed out to the sailors there. All projects are a part of Caring Ministries.

The Craft Fair (2022) was held on the first Saturday in November. Prince of Peace women divided up the leadership for each of the booths. We received a grant from Thrivent to help cover the cost of food for the lunchroom because there wasn't enough donated. The fair made over \$2,000 again this year.

In conjunction with the "Easter Egg Hunt" for the community, we had a bake sale and monies raised were given to that project. In December, along with the "Breakfast with Santa" and the following Sunday, we held a small boutique of craft items and a cookie sale....Over \$300 was raised and donated to the Daily Bread Food Pantry. Monies were also sent for the Ukraine Fund through synod and we are currently remodeling the bathroom in the green room.

We thank everyone for their participation in all our events and if you have any questions, don't hesitate to contact me.

Marci Sharp  
President  
Women of the ELCA

# PRINCE OF PEACE PRE-SCHOOL

Prince of Peace Pre-School serves the greater Brookfield area through offering pre-school services to families with 3 to 5 year olds. The Pre-School currently hosts 71 students and employs 15 Staff members (13 teaching staff members, 1 Assistant Director and 1 Director). We offer two, three, and five day part day (9am-12pm) and full day (9am-2pm) class options.

This year, all preschool activities are in-person and families can bring their children directly to their classroom. Enrichment events, such as gym classes, and gingerbread house decorating events have taken place in Fellowship Hall, and we have hosted 6 holiday concerts. The families have been so happy to have access to the building again and are grateful for the enrichment opportunities we are providing.

On December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2022, an accreditor from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) visited the preschool to assess our program for reaccreditation. While we were nervous about the visit, our work over the last 2 ½ years has prepared us and gives us confidence that we will be reaccredited. We expect to have a decision on our accreditation status within 90 days and if reaccredited, the status will be valid for a 5-year period.

Currently, our largest goal is to increase program marketing efforts. To this end, a Prince of Peace (PoP) Preschool sign has been created and hung on the fence below Kids Kingdom in Brookfield, we have begun a PoP preschool Instagram account and notified both current and past families about the account, have updated the school entry to make it visually more appealing, and are working on a new road sign, which will be updated and hopefully relocated to improve visibility. Beginning next year, we plan to update the preschool website. This will require outside support and will need to be budgeted for accordingly.

We are truly appreciative of the support we have received and continue to receive from Steve Murphy, Priscilla Mancinone, Rich Mercado, Rene Tuccillo, Trish Leary and Paul Adam. They are instrumental in helping the pre-school run smoothly.

Respectfully submitted,

Heidi Riddle

Director  
Prince of Peace Pre-School

# **YOUTH GROUP**

We are a nondenominational group that consists of youth from POP and our community. Presently we have 10-12 active youth with Monica Walsh & Lorraine Lavery leading the group. The focus of this group is to provide opportunities for youth to gather in fellowship and serve those in need in our church, community and world.

This past year the group has:

- collected food twice for local food pantry
- held a chocolate fundraiser to benefit people of Ukraine
- volunteered at Easter Egg Hunt, Fall Craft Fair, & Santa Breakfast
- painted youth room

We have also held monthly meetings.

Moving into 2023 we hope to be in our revitalized youth room. Planning to continue monthly meetings along with special events with other local ELCA youth. Plan to explore how to open our group to community and service projects for the year.

Do you want to join us? This group is open to all from 6-12th grade. Also youth group is not only for youth- that's right we are always welcoming any adults who would like to help our youth. So if you have any skills, ideas, time - please consider sharing with our youth! Did I mention we have FUN too!

Any Questions- please contact Monica Walsh, [mwalsh21@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mwalsh21@sbcglobal.net) or (203)512-1166.

Respectfully submitted,  
Monica Walsh  
Lorraine Lavery

# PRINCE OF PEACE FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE

## 2022-2023

The current Fellowship Committee is led by Laura Duffy and Liz Davies. The focus of this committee is on social events and receptions for our congregation. These are opportunities to gather as friends and fellow worshipers and to build relationships within the church and with those in our community.

Over the past year, Fellowship has been involved in three main areas, Coffee Hour, Friday Night Live and Funeral Receptions.

Coffee Hour is offered after the Sunday service, and it is an enjoyable time for the congregation to visit and chat with one another. We have a sign-up sheet for volunteers who are responsible for the set-up, clean-up, and coffee/baked goods offered for each Sunday.

Friday Night Live takes place on the second or third Friday of each month. A family or individual from the congregation is the host and they may have the gathering at their house or at church in the Green Room. This is a potluck dinner event open to all members of the congregation.

Funeral Receptions are offered to the families of active POP members. These gatherings are usually done immediately after a POP funeral service in the Fellowship Hall or in the Green Room. Volunteers are needed for the various duties involved with this type of event.

The Fellowship Committee hopes to continue to organize these events in 2023 and additionally add other social gatherings for all ages throughout the year. It would be wonderful to have a list of Fellowship Committee members that we could call on to volunteer as needed with Coffee Hour and receptions.

If you would like to join the Fellowship Committee or if you have questions about it, please contact Laura Duffy at [l.duffy@charter.net](mailto:l.duffy@charter.net) or Liz Davies at [elizdavies15@gmail.com](mailto:elizdavies15@gmail.com).

Laura Duffy & Liz Davies

