

partners

Peace Lutheran Church

Lent 2025



Growing a community that nurtures a deeper relationship with
Jesus Christ.

from the senior pastor

Life is a Strange Mix

Life is a strange mix. There is both joy *and* grief; big wins *and* big failures. We hold on to the good moments but then the phone rings, a diagnosis comes down, and we're reminded once again that everything is much more fragile than we thought. Lent is the season of the church year when we stop pretending and face the truth: life is fragile, and so are we.

Lent begins with Ash Wednesday (March 5, 2025) when a pastor says words that I am uncomfortable in saying and no one really wants to hear out loud: *"Remember you are dust, and to dust you shall return."* It's not the kind of Bible verse you'd frame and put on a wall in your home, but it's a truth we need.

So Lent invites us to stop pretending we can hold it all together and instead sit with the weight of what we carry—the regrets, the messes we can't change no matter how hard we try. Here's the hardest part: to be human and Christian is to carry the weight of our own fragile lives.

However—and here is what we can never forget—we do so with Jesus Christ our Lord. Jesus, who we look to for hope and healing, suffers and dies. His pain is real—just like ours. So we sit in the wilderness with him, acknowledging how hard life can be, facing the heartbreak, the messes—all of it. What will we find? It's in those places where Christ meets us with the promise, *"In my dying is your rising."*

Come, join us, for Lent and for Holy Week, as we travel once again from death to life and life beyond death.

—Pastor Mark Nelson



Ash Wednesday, March 5, 2025



On Ash Wednesday we begin our forty-day journey toward Easter with a day of fasting and repentance.

Ash Wednesday is a solemn day of prayer. On this day we confess our sin in a litany of repentance. We also receive the sign of ashes. This ancient symbol of repentance reminds us of our mortality. Returning to God's mercy and grace, marked with the cross of Christ, we make our way through Lent, longing for the baptismal waters of Easter, our spiritual rebirth.

Join us for worship with Confession of Sin, Imposition of Ashes, and Holy Communion on **Wednesday, March 5 at 6:30pm.**

(Please note, Wednesday Lenten suppers will begin on Wednesday, March 12.)

Lenten Daily Devotionals

Our Lenten walk begins on Ash Wednesday, March 5th. The good news? We don't walk Lent alone. Your fellow walkers in faith here at Peace have, with Bible in one hand and their own lives in another, described our walk with Jesus in our congregation's annual Lenten Daily Devotional Booklet. These daily devotions are available to you in a daily email or in print.

The printed devotional booklet will be available in the narthex on Sunday, March 2. Everyone who receives the Friday e-Note will receive Lenten Devotionals by email. If you would like to be added (or removed from) to the daily devotional list, please send an email to Daina Sivanich at daina.sivanich@peacebloomington.org.

The real Good News for all of us? Jesus will walk with you through whatever kind of Lenten day you are having. The wonderful one. The garbage one. The one that barely seems like it counted at all. As we walk through every kind of emotion this season—boredom, devastation, happiness, irritation—we pray: “Bless this Lent.”

—Pastor Mark Nelson

Lenten Midweek Sermon Series: “Pain Seeking Understanding”

Wednesdays, March 12 - April 9

Ellen Charry teaches theology at Princeton Seminary. In her commentary on the Book of Psalms, she suggests that the subtitle for the book of Psalms could be, “Pain Seeking Understanding.”

This subtitle came from her own experience. Her husband Dana, a psychiatrist, died of lung cancer in 2003. Never a smoker, his diagnosis was sudden and his decline quick. After his death, Charry published an essay on lament. In the essay, as what she called “a case-study in trust and lament,” Charry included some of the letters her husband wrote to family and friends as he navigated “the vale of death's shadow.”

What's helpful about his letters is how even as he documents his ongoing frustration and grief that his prayers have not been answered in the manner he hoped. Even so, Dana Charry nonetheless experienced a new awareness of the faithfulness and life with Jesus Christ.

Our primary text in this series will be the well-known and well-loved Psalm 23 but we will also

venture into other Biblical texts and stories, all in an effort to deepen our prayer life, our faith in Jesus Christ, and—as Charry named it—deepen understanding in our pain.

—Pastor Mark Nelson

A supper will precede midweek Lenten Wednesday evening worship which will be served from 5:30-6:15pm. \$5/person or \$15/family.

- **March 12:** Parmesan Chicken prepared and served by the Peace Staff and Church Council.
- **March 19:** Greek/Chicken prepared and served by the Altar Guild.
- **March 26:** Pasta Bar prepared and served by the CYF Committee
- **April 2:** Walking Tacos prepared and served by the Service Committee
- **April 9:** Breakfast for Dinner prepared and served by the Peace Choir.



Seasonal Worship Guide

March

2	5	9	16	23	30
Transfiguration of Our Lord, 9:30am	Ash Wednesday, 6:30pm	First Sunday in Lent, 9:30am	Second Sunday in Lent, 9:30am	Third Sunday in Lent, 9:30am	Fourth Sunday in Lent, 9:30am
Luke 9:28-36	Matthew 6:1-16, 16-21	Luke 4:1-13	Luke 13:31-35	Luke 13:1-9	Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32
Holy Communion, Sunday School Singers, Peace Choir	Imposition of Ashes, Holy Communion	Holy Communion, Peace Choir	Holy Communion, Peace Choir	Holy Communion, Peace Choir	Holy Communion, Peace Choir
Adult Education, Sunday School	Adult Education, Sunday School	Adult Education, Sunday School	Adult Education, Sunday School	Adult Education, Sunday School	Adult Education, Sunday School

April

6	13	17	18	20	27
Fifth Second in Lent, 9:30am	Passion/Palm Sunday, 9:30am	Maundy Thursday, 7:00pm	Good Friday, 7:00pm	Easter Sunday, Resurrection of Our Lord, 9:30am, 11:15am	Second Sunday of Easter, 9:30am
John 12:1-8	Luke 22:14-23:56			Luke 24:1-12	John 20:19-31
Holy Communion, Peace Choir	Peace Choir, Sunday School Singers, Children's Palm Processional	Holy Communion, Peace Choir	Readings, prayers, meditations, Peace Choir	Holy Communion at both services, Peace Choir	Rite of Confirmation, Holy Communion, Peace Choir
Adult Fellowship	To be announced	—	—	—	Adult Education, Sunday School

Subject to change

Sunday Adult Education

Sunday, March 2 **“Mental Illness Rights”**

Eve Byrd from the Carter Center will join us to talk about continuing the legacy of the late former First Lady, Rosalynn Carter, a longtime champion for the rights of people with mental illnesses. The Carter Center's Mental Health Program works to promote awareness about mental health issues, inform public policy, achieve equity for mental health care comparable to other health care, and reduce stigma and discrimination against those with mental illnesses.

Sunday, March 9 **“Toward a Meaningful Lent”**

The church season of Lent has been with us for centuries. Yet, what is Lent for us, exactly? Is it “giving up something?” Is it a happy time; a sad time? How is it a preparation and commemoration of Jesus's death and resurrection? During this hour we'll take a look at the meaning, the origins, the misuses, and the benefits and opportunities that these 40



days of Lent offer us.—
Pastor Mark Nelson

Sunday, March 16 **“Hymns and Music”**

Gracia Grindel, Professor Emeritus, Rhetoric from Luther Seminary joins us to talk about 500 years of Lutheran hymns and hymnals. Gracia has published many articles on hymnody and the writing of hymns and hymnwriters, especially the history of Scandinavian-American Lutheran hymnody. In 2011 her collection of Scandinavian hymns in English, *Hymns and Songs of the North: Nordic Christians Sing their Faith*, came out, which included some 150 Nordic hymns many of which were translated by her. In addition, her hymns and hymn translations are published in hymnals of several mainline churches, including Episcopal, Lutheran, Mennonite, Methodist and Presbyterian.

Sunday, March 23 **“What is a Funeral?”**

Funeral practices are changing—drastically. What

were once very prescribed rituals and events are now varied. Rare it is that funerals happen within 3-7 days following a death, and caskets that can cost as much as a used car are rare. We'll take a look at the changing landscape of funerals and the very nature and purpose of Christian funerals themselves.—*Pastor Mark Nelson*

Sunday, March 30 **“Martin and Katie Luther”**

Guest speaker, Johann Kinderley joins us to talk about Martin and Katie Luther.

Sunday, April 6
Enjoy time in extended fellowship.

Sunday, April 13
To be announced.

Sunday, April 20
Easter Sunday. No Sunday Adult Education.

Sunday Adult Education is subject to change.

Coat Drive Recap



On Sunday, February 9, 2025 Peace held a one-day winter coat drive for Reach & Restore in Hopkins. They, in turn, distribute winter coats free to any and all who need them. We collected 81 coats—67 adult coats and 14 children's coats. Many thanks to everyone who donated to this organization and helped keep people warm this winter!

ELCA Good Gifts Recap

Thank you so much to the Congregation for your generous participation in ELCA Good Gifts for the 2024 Christmas season.

Here are the numbers you gave! 37 goats, 22 honeybees, 20 chicks, 15 water filters, 13 piglets, 12 microloans for a woman, 9 roosters, 8 school supplies for a child, 7 latrines, 6 Bibles, 3 goats and chicks combination, 3 backpacks with food, 2 cows, 2 vaccines for a child, 2 feed a family for a week and 1 each of school uniforms for a girl, feed fifty at a feeding ministry,



family mosquito net, seeds and tools for a farm, portion of an irrigation project, safe water project, stock a health clinic for a week, vegetable garden, fish farm, fruit tree farm and a water well!

Goats, honeybees and chicks are the perennial favorites! This year a few other items moved up on the list; like water filters and microloans. It is fun to see entire vegetable gardens and farms too!

Whether sent directly to the ELCA, sent through Peace, given by the children, or with our

benevolence the Peace community gave a total of over \$8,000 this year. These gifts will make a difference. They already have. Our kids and families experienced the joy of giving, and those who receive our gifts will know that someone, somewhere cares enough to invest in their future. These gifts are life giving!!!

Our thanks to all who participated in this ministry. It is a wonderful way to celebrate God's gift to us in the birth of His son Jesus. What a blessing this is for all of us.

—Lori Thomson

Thank You from VEAP



Nancy Berg from VEAP called Peace on December 4, 2024 to effusively thank us for our book donation! We donated 560 books equaling 285 lbs. She was amazed at the quality of books donated (new or nearly new and all in excellent condition) and the range of ages that the books were for (babies to teens). Nancy said that she also works with other volunteer organizations and regularly values books and that our book donation could be valued at \$2,500-\$3,000. They immediately started giving books to shoppers with children. Thank you to everyone who participated!

2025 Congregational Lenten Service Project: Diapers and Dollars

Sunday, March 9 - Palm Sunday, April 13, 2025

For this year's contribution to MN FoodShare, the Service Committee is naming this project, "Diapers and Dollars." We are asking for :



adult diapers are needed as well.

Our collections will be given to support VEAP.

Let's fill the narthex with diapers and let's stuff the display diaper box with dollars and coupons!

Cash is welcome! If you choose to write a check, please write it to either Peace Lutheran Church with "Diaper Drive" in the memo line, or, you can make the check out to VEAP.

Diapers, money, or both, this is an opportunity for us to make a difference in our own community.

As always, our committee is so thankful for the generosity of this congregation!

—Kris Holm and Joanne Vance,
Service & Mission Committee
co-chairs

- Monetary donations which will be used to purchase diapers.
- Coupons to use for those purchases.
-and diapers!

Do not limit your donations to just children's diapers either—

Fellowship Opportunities



Service Saturday at Feed My Starving Children. The CYF Committee will host an **intergenerational** service activity on **Saturday, March 15, 2:30-4:15pm** at Feed My Starving Children in Chanhassen.



Age 80+ Spring's Luncheon is planned for **Thursday, April 24, 11:30am.** Come celebrate spring!

Look for more information about each of these events or others, on Peace's website, in the Sunday bulletin, in the Friday e-Note and/or in the CYF Blast.

Ongoing Fellowship

Knitting & Crochet Small Group: 2nd and 4th Mondays, 4:00-5:30pm starting March 31. Questions? Please see Gayle Haugen.

Yoga: Monday nights, 5:30pm. The group meets in Peace's front meeting room. \$5. All skill levels welcome!

Peace Quilters: On the **1st and 3rd Tuesday of the month, the quilters meet 10:00am-12:00 noon** to stitch and sew.

Book Group: The book group meets **monthly on the 2nd Thursday at 6:45pm.** Contact Lori Thomson for more information.



In Memoriam

Pam Sjoquist, 1948-2024



Pamela Kay (Ernst) Sjoquist passed away peacefully on November 17, 2024.

After high school she landed a job at IDS/American Express as a mail delivery person before accepting the Project Manager for Insurance Product Implementation position. She enjoyed her job and received awards and acknowledgements for her work over her 35-year career. During her time at IDS, she met Brian and they were married on August 6, 1994.

Pam enjoyed helping and hosting people. Pam volunteered with the Peace Quilters, at Friendship Village, Park Nicollet Hospital, and by making treats for Fire Station 6. She shined bright when decorating for each season and holiday, especially Christmas, and hosting parties for friends and relatives.

Pam enjoyed time at the family farm in North Branch with Brian's parents. Pam's mother-in-law, Alice, would teach her how to make Swedish dishes and take care of the garden.

Her father-in-law, Maurice, would joke with her, show her how things worked on the farm, and take her for drives on gravel roads in the countryside. Pam's brothers and sister held a special place in her heart as well. She never let a birthday or special event go by without a card, a phone call, or an invitation to dinner.

Pam experienced medical setbacks, yet met challenges with a positive outlook and bright spirit. Pam never gave up and worked hard with therapists to improve her strength and capabilities. Throughout this time, Pam deepened her relationship with God to gain strength and guidance. She prayed for support for herself and for others—she knew she was blessed to have a family that loved her and always wanted the best for her.

Blessed be her memory.

—Excerpt from Pam Sjoquist's funeral bulletin written by Brian Sjoquist.

Bob Buuck, 1940-2025



Bob Buuck died on January 4, 2025 after a long battle with Alzheimer's disease. Bob

was a quiet man who lived a remarkable life. He was born in Hong Kong in 1940 to missionary parents, followed by time in a WWII Japanese internment camp. Bob was raised in Arcadia, IN and Garfield, MN. After a stint in the U.S. Army, he moved to Minneapolis where he co-founded the medical device company American Medical Systems in 1972. After success in business, Bob and his wife Gail founded the Buuck Family Foundation in 1994, part of their lifelong commitment to giving back and helping others.

An entrepreneur, philanthropist, globetrotter, and beloved husband, father, and grandfather, his was a baptism-shaped life.

Thanks be to God for Bob!

--Pastor Mark Nelson

Bill Neher, 1942-2025



When I think of Bill Neher, I also think of Nicodemus.

According to John's Gospel, Nicodemus

was a smart

man. He was a leader and a teacher of people, a cultured, all-around honorable man. But for all his ability, there was still something missing. Something that drew him out into the night to meet with a popular rabbi from Galilee. We're not told what kicked Nicodemus into higher gear but whatever it was, he was convinced he did not know enough.

When I asked Ann to describe Bill. She said he was "smart, talented, very romantic. He wrote poetry. He was thoughtful. Bill was a perfectionist. He just had to be tops at everything, whether it was work, karate, or with the Masons." The last thing on her list? He was driven to know.

It showed in his work life. Bill served as Director of Education for Rasmussen Business Colleges. Worked with computer-based education at Control Data. Started his own business. Served as Regional Director of the American

Society for Training and Development. Consulted in organization and management development. Bill was successful at them all! He found the time to serve on the Church Council and sing in the Peace Choir.

Then in 2023, Bill fell in a Target parking lot. He recovered but for many months afterward he couldn't understand why he didn't feel better. Doctors finally diagnosed cancer. Bill battled these last few years. Yet, to be with Bill was to be with someone who was fiercely compassionate. At one point he was ready to give up cancer treatment. But he continued it. "Why?" I asked. Bill's answer? "Because I want to be with my wife and be with my daughter as long as possible."

Throughout it all—like Nicodemus—Bill never stopped wanting to know. Nicodemus wanted to talk to Jesus to know. Bill too, wanted to talk about Jesus. He said to me once, "I get God. The Creator. But Jesus is hard, really hard. I mean, Jesus on the cross. Jesus at Gethsemane. That's hard." There was a little part of Bill, who, at the end of his life said. "Oh, I believe. I trust in Jesus.

But; but there is this little part of me that isn't so sure."

But here's the thing. Jesus is sure about Bill! Hear it in the Gospel? It's a word for Bill, for us, for all. It's Jesus promise to Nicodemus: "For God so loved the world that God gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him." For God so loved—loved the world, loved Bill—that gave God's very self—to Bill! Not to condemn but to save!

When Paul Tillich, a great theologian, heard the news of the death of his friend, Reinhold Niebuhr, he responded with just 3 words. "Now he knows."

Today, the same can be said of Bill Neher. "Now he knows." Bill knows. His search is complete. His life is complete. Because now he knows fully, face-to-face, what has always been true: the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Thanks be to God and thanks be to God for Bill!

--Pastor Mark Nelson



Life Passages

Births

- **Harrison Hansen Dorn** born on January 23, 2025. Harrison is the son of Bobby and Erin Dorn. He is also welcomed by brother, Connor, grandparents, Jon and Betty Hansen, and the Toppin family.

Grieving

- **Brian Sjoquist** upon the death of his wife, Pam, on November 17, 2025.
- **Vi Engquist** upon the death of her son, Mark Engquist on December 9, 2024; and upon the death of Milt Lefebvre on February 10, 2025.
- **Gail Buuck** upon the death of her husband, Bob, on January 4, 2025.
- **Todd and Susan Bordson and family** on the death of Susan's mother, Beverly Hutchinson on January 4, 2025.
- **Holly Long and Joanne Vance** on the death of their mother, Margaret Rees Schorsch on January 8, 2025.
- **Ann Neher** upon the death of her husband, Bill on January 15, 2025.
- **Paul and Deborah Guiher** on the death of Deborah's sister, Cindy Heins on January 16, 2025.

Annual Peace Congregational Meeting Recap

At our annual congregational meeting on Sunday, February 2, 2025 the following budget was approved and people elected. Copies of the annual report can be found at the information kiosk.

2025 Annual Budget

A proposed 2025 church budget of \$776,546 was approved.

Church Council

The following people were elected to serve a three-year term on the Church Council: Robin Kennedy, Michelle Stockinger, Tom Tisthammer.

We thank outgoing council members Adam Tschida, Jason Rich, and Kara Stender for their service to Peace.

Nominating Committee

John Kennedy and Jim Thomson were elected to the Nominating Committee.

We thank outgoing Nominating Committee members: Tyler Cadman and Rhonda Grunwald.

Auditing Committee

Dave Dynneson was elected to the Auditing Committee. We thank Bev Schlink for her work on behalf of Peace.

Installation of the new council for 2025/2026 will be on Sunday, May 4 during worship.

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Lent 2025

Published by Peace Lutheran Church
8600 East Bush Lake Road
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Front Cover, African Resurrection artwork
Artist unknown

Submissions:

Do you have an idea for a story or would love to write? Contact our Managing Editor with your submission, but please keep in mind the following guidelines: (a) Your article will be reviewed by the editorial staff for suitability and may be edited for length and content. (b) Articles must fit the overall theme of the issue and reflect the mission of Peace Lutheran Church.

Devotion: Joy to the World

In our congregation in Cairo, Egypt, there was a member by the name of Dr. Martha Roy. She was a missionary sent by the Presbyterians to teach school in upper Egypt (in the 1920's!), a scholar of Coptic Christianity, and—in her 90's—still the organist for weekly worship. She was quirky, too. How quirky? She would play “Joy to the World” every Sunday of the year!

It always seemed odd to me until, one Easter Sunday, something struck me about the verse, that goes, “No more let sin nor sorrow grow, nor thorns invest the ground; he comes to make his blessings flow, far as the curse is found.....”

“Nor thorns infest the ground.” What the carol was trying to tell us (and Martha reminding us) was that without the cross and everything that led up to it, Easter is simply the resuscitation of a body without any of the true problems Jesus came to reckon with.

In Mark's gospel Jesus himself has to fight against people just wanting glorious wonders out of him. As a matter of fact, whenever Jesus heals someone, he tells them to say nothing to anyone. Again and again, it's “don't tell.” People think he's come to fill their hopes and dreams, heal what is broken, whether it's their bodies, the weather, or the political situation. He's going to take away the bad stuff so they'll never feel out-of-control. In other words, Jesus will make everything nice and comfortable. No more struggle. No more aches and pains. No more sin and sorrow growing.

But in Mark's gospel, it's not yet. First things first. The cross and thorns first, then the glory. If you go back to the first verse of the gospel, you'll get a clue about what Mark is up to. He starts with this statement: “The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ the Son of God (1:1).” He sets us up to think the story will be Jesus shows up, grows up, and then goes all Terminator on his enemies. Wham-bam, world restored.

But Mark's story is a story of God showing up among the thorns, among the hard stuff you've known in your life or might be carrying right now. Your thorny patches of grief, job loss, addiction, illness, aging, bad grades, broken relationships, financial problems, and parenting of toddlers—all those times and places where we have no ability to fix anything, where God is the only power and the only hope. Our thorns are the field where Jesus plants himself. When Jesus meets you right there, he also takes you through to his empty tomb.

God is unafraid of our sin and brokenness. That he's raised with his wounds is a reminder he's been through it already and says to you, “Today you will be with me in paradise.” The final divide of your own death is defeated. Nothing is holding back Jesus and his power to love you and to keep you forever. Indeed, “Joy to the World.” Thanks be to God.....and thanks be to Martha Roy!

—Pastor Mark Nelson

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PEACE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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Sunday Worship: 9:30am



Growing a community that nurtures
a deeper relationship with Jesus
Christ.

2025 Lenten and Easter Worship at Peace

Ash Wednesday, March 5

Ash Wednesday Worship at 6:30pm

Holy Week

Palm Sunday, April 13, Worship at
9:30am

Maundy Thursday, April 17, Worship at
7:00pm

Good Friday, April 18, Worship at 7:00pm

Easter Sunday, April 20, Worship at
9:30am and at 11:15am

Lenten Wednesdays,

March 12, 19, 26, April 2, 9

Lenten Supper, 5:30-6:15pm

Worship, 6:30pm

Confirmation, 7:15-8:00pm

Peace Choir Rehearsal, 7:15-
8:30pm

**Make plans to worship
with your family at Peace.
All are welcome!**