

partners

Peace Lutheran Church

Winter, 2025



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

Advent Midweek

Wednesdays
December 3, 10, 17

Dinner served 5:30-6:15pm

Worship 6:30-7:00pm

“Holy Healing, Holy Light”



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Devotion



Advent Fun for All!

Saturday,
December 6,
9:00am

Sign up to make
lefse, krumkake, and
decorate gingerbread
houses!

Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany

We're about to embark on the high holy seasons that celebrate Christ's appearance among God's people over two thousand years ago. The three seasons that mark this sacred time are Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany.

ADVENT

The word "Advent" literally means "to arrive," and during this season we spend our time preparing for the arrival of Jesus in our midst. The color of the season is blue, reminding us of the early morning sky as it approaches dawn. We read Old Testament prophecies regarding the birth of our Lord, such as, "But from you, O Bethlehem, shall come forth one who is to rule," from Micah 5:2 and, "For a child has been born for us, a son given to us," from Isaiah 9:6. The lighting of the Advent Wreath each week helps us count down the four weeks until the celebration of the birth of our Lord on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

CHRISTMAS

The entire Christmas season actually lasts twelve days, from December 24 until January 6.

The color for this season is white, a reminder that the light of Christ has broken into our dark world. According to scripture, the birth of Jesus happened in a quiet, unassuming way. But his life, death, and resurrection changed the world forever. If there is one reading that sums up this season, it would be these words from John 1: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... And the Word became flesh and lived among us."

And so we celebrate this season of hope, joy, and peace with decorations and trees, candles and songs, gifts given and gifts received. We sing, we pray, and with the shepherds and the angels we all sing together, "Glory to God in the highest, and peace to God's people on earth!"

EPIPHANY

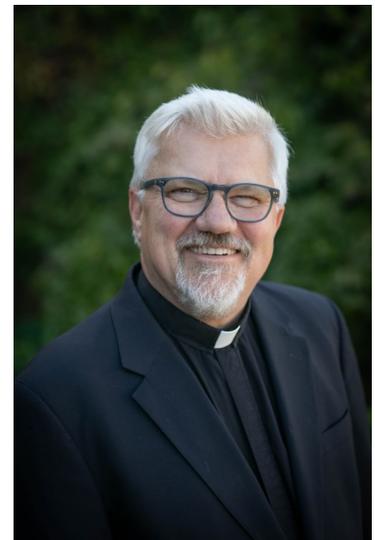
The word "Epiphany" means "manifestation" or "appearance." Literally, the word "phanos" means "lantern" or "light." During the season of Epiphany we celebrate the fact that God has lit a lantern in our dark world

and is shining the light of Christ for all to see. If one Bible verse sums up this season, it would be John 1:9: "The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world."

The color for Epiphany Day is white, a reminder again of the light that has broken into our darkness. But the color for the season of Epiphany is green, the color of growth and fulfillment.

May the Lord truly be with you during these Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany seasons.

—Pastor Jeff Engholm



Seasonal Worship Guide

December

Nov. 30	Dec. 7	14	21	28
First Sunday of Advent, 9:30am	Second Sunday of Advent, 9:30am	Third Sunday of Advent, 9:30am	Fourth Sunday of Advent, 9:30am	First Sunday of Christmas, 9:30am
Matthew 24:36-44	Matthew 3:1-12	Matthew 11:2-11	Matthew 1:18-25	Matthew 2:13-23
Holy Communion, Peace Choir	Holy Communion, Peace Choir	Holy Communion, Peace Choir	Holy Communion, Peace Choir	Holy Communion
Adult Education, Sunday School	Adult Education, Sunday School	Fellowship Time, Children's Christmas Program (11:00am)	Adult Education, Sunday School	Extended Fellowship Time

Christmas Worship Schedule

Dec. 24	Dec. 25
Nativity of Our Lord, Christmas Eve, 4:00pm and 5:30pm	Nativity of Our Lord, Christmas Day, 9:30am
Luke 2:1-14 [15-20]	Luke 2:[1-7] 8-20
Both Services: Special Harp Prelude Music, Children's Message	Holy Communion

January

4	11	18	25
Second Sunday of Christmas, 9:30am	Baptism of Our Lord, 9:30am	Second Sunday after Epiphany, 9:30am	Third Sunday after Epiphany, 9:30am
John 1:[1-9] 10-18	Matthew 3:13-17	John 1:29-42	Matthew 4:12-23
Holy Communion	Holy Communion, Peace Choir, Blessing of the Robin's Nest Mission Trip Participants	Holy Communion, Peace Choir	Holy Communion, Peace Choir, Sunday School Singers
Adult Education (Sermon Discussion), Sunday School	Camp Sunday, Adult Education (Sermon Discussion), Sunday School	Adult Education (Sermon Discussion), Sunday School	Preview to the Annual Congregational Meeting, Sunday School

February

1	8	15	18	22
Fourth Sunday after Epiphany, 9:30am	Fifth Sunday after Epiphany, 9:30am	Transfiguration of Our Lord, 9:30am	Ash Wednesday, 6:30pm	First Sunday in Lent, 9:30am
Matthew 5:1-12	Matthew 5:13-20	Matthew 17:1-9	Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21	Matthew 4:1-11
Holy Communion; Peace Choir	Holy Communion, Peace Choir	Holy Communion, Peace Choir	Holy Communion, Peace Choir	Holy Communion, Sunday School Singers, Peace Choir
Annual Congregational Meeting, Sunday School	Adult Education (Book Discussion), Sunday School	Extended Adult Fellowship Time, Sunday School	—	Adult Education (Book Discussion), Sunday School

Sunday Adult Education

Sunday, November 30

To be announced

Sunday, December 7 Hymns, Carols, and Advent

Rolf Jacobson, Steve Thompson, and Pastor Jeff Engholm, members of The Fleshpots of Egypt, will bring song and celebration to Advent. Join us as we sing and celebrate.

Sunday, December 14 Children's Christmas Program

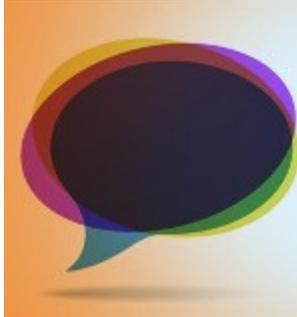
This year the children of Peace will present the Christmas Program *after* church! After the service, come out to the Parish Hall for coffee and a donut while the scene is set in the Sanctuary. We will then go back and enjoy the program.

Sunday, December 21

To be announced.

Sunday, December 28

Enjoy extended fellowship time and holiday cheer!



Sunday, January 4 Small Group Discussion on The Sermon

Join Pastor Jeff as we explore the message from today's sermon.

Sunday, January 11 Small Group Discussion on The Sermon

Join Pastor Jeff as we explore the message from today's sermon.

Sunday, January 18 Small Group Discussion on The Sermon

Join Pastor Jeff as we explore the message from today's sermon.

Sunday, January 25 Preview to the Annual Congregational Meeting

Council and Staff will present a preview to the Annual Meeting and answer any questions you may have about 2025.

Sunday, February 1 Annual Congregational Meeting

The annual meeting will take place in the Sanctuary.

Sunday, February 8

Book or Video Discussion. Together we will either read a book or watch a video/video series and have a large and/or small group discussion.

Sunday, February 15

Enjoy extended fellowship time.

Sunday, February 22

Book or Video Discussion. Continuation of February 8.

Sunday Adult Education is subject to change.

Advent Sundays, 9:30am

November 30, December 7, 14, 21

“Advent calls us to hold this moment in history, the yearning for a tangible and specific arrival of God’s future, and the mysterious magnitude of the cosmos together in each sermon.” (*Sundays and Seasons, Year A, 2026*)

Each Sunday we will light another candle on our Advent wreath in the sanctuary as we observe the progression of Advent.

Join us for Sundays during Advent as we await the birth of Christ.

Advent Gospel Readings

- **Sunday, November 30**
Matthew 24:36-44, “The Necessity for Watchfulness”
- **Sunday, December 7**
Matthew 3:1-12, “The Proclamation of John the Baptist”
- **Sunday, December 14**
Matthew 11:2-11, “Messengers from John the Baptist” and “Jesus Praises John the Baptist”
- **Sunday, December 21**
Matthew 1:18-25, “The Birth of Jesus, the Messiah”

Advent Midweek Worship: Holy Healing, Holy Light, Wednesdays, 6:30pm

December 3, 10, 17

During the season of Advent we will be gathering on Wednesday evenings to share a quiet time of reflection, songs, and stories about healing. We’ll also listen to the prophets from the Old Testament as they prepare us for the coming of our Lord. Micah will remind us that Jesus will be born in Bethlehem, Jeremiah will bring a word of warning to the

shepherds who scatter their people, and Isaiah will bring a word of hope about the One to be born who will be a “Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Prince of Peace.”

In the midst of all the frenetic activity that accompanies this season, please join us for these quiet services of healing and hope.

A light supper will be prepared with serving starting at 5:30pm (\$5/person) and the brief 30 minute service will begin promptly at 6:30pm.

—Pastor Jeff Engholm

Sunday School News

Advent is Approaching

We become very busy with family and friends and sometimes we forget that the glitter and fun exists because “CHRIST IS BORN.”

Our Advent events for the children of Peace begin on Sunday, November 30. The First Sunday of Advent the children will receive a small coin box designed to be decorated. Please use this as a reminder to add prayer to your family’s daily routine—a small coin to be saved before a mealtime or a bedtime prayer. If your child would like, these boxes are a perfect way to “buy” a chick or honeybees through the ELCA Good Gifts Program. More information on “Good Gifts” is available in the narthex during Advent. “Families Celebrate Advent & Christmas” card packs

will also be distributed before Advent to all families. They are flexible to use throughout Advent and contain prayers and family activities. The cardpack is not year-specific and can be saved to used in future years!

To observe the Second Sunday of Advent, please join us on Saturday, December 6 anytime between 9:00-10:00am as we decorate gingerbread houses with the children while we watch the grownups make Scandinavian cookies in the Parish Hall and Kitchen. Sampling is invited!!!

The Third Sunday of Advent is our CHILDREN’S CHRISTMAS PROGRAM. This year we are trying something a bit different. The program will be presented as a part of Fellowship Hour. Coffee and treats will be served

after the service. “A Night in Bethlehem” will be presented at 11:00am. Please plan on attending!

As a side note: the program will not be posted on YouTube; this follows the best practice guidelines from the Minneapolis Synod in regard to children’s safety. Peace will record the entire program and get a link to the recording to parents if they wish to re-watch or forward to family and friends.

The Fourth Sunday of Advent will be a Sunday School Celebration of Christ’s birth with stories, activities and treats. Please plan to join us if time allows in your schedule.

—*Marcia Craig, Sunday School Programming Coordinator*

Communion Education Class

Communion Education for Second Graders and older is scheduled for **Sunday, February 1, 2026**. Each child should bring a favorite adult to this session.

We will gather from 12:00pm to 1:00pm to share lunch and learn about the Last Supper.

The Last Supper was the special meal that Jesus shared with his Disciples.

At baptism, we as believers, make a promise to raise our children in faith—“to live among God’s faithful people, hear the Word of God and share in the Lord’s Supper...”

This time of exploring and learning about God’s gift of the Lord’s Supper is a continuation of this promise. Please RSVP directly to Marcia Craig (marcia.craig@peacebloomington.org) and add this to your family’s schedule.

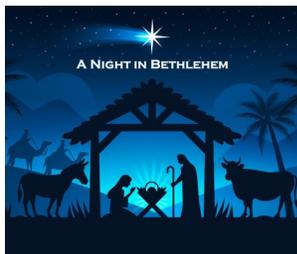
—*Marcia Craig*

Children's Christmas Program

Sunday, December 14, 11:00am

The Children's Christmas Program will be presented on Sunday, December 14. The program will be presented during Fellowship time—at 11:00am. Be sure to invite family and friends to join in this special morning!

Rehearsals, for the most part,



will be during Celebration Time, before Sunday school class time.

The younger children will be singing dressed as angels, shepherds and assorted animals. The older children will have the majority of speaking parts.

—Marcia Craig

Rehearsal Schedule

- Sundays during the Sunday School Hour
- Saturday, December 13, 10:00-11:30am mandatory dress rehearsal
- Sunday, December 14, 9:00am final rehearsal
10:00am snack, bathroom break, costumes
11:00am play presented

Unbridled Presence



Augsburg Fortress Publishing, part of the ELCA, has introduced a new prayer app for parents. They are short, one or two paragraph, prayers. "The prayers offer support, understanding and a touch of humor."

Its daily prayers are designed for parents of early childhood, elementary and preteen children.

Go to unbridledprayers.app and follow the instructions to download this app to your mobile device.

—Marcia Craig

Sunday School Singer Dates

The Sunday school singers will be singing January 25, February 22, Palm Sunday, March 29, and May 17, the last day of Sunday School.

We will continue to rehearse during Sunday school Celebration Time.

—Marcia Craig

Camp Sunday is January 11

Look for Camp Sunday on Sunday, January 11!

Camp Wapogasset will be visiting Peace. The staff will be present during worship to give the Children's Message and will lead the kids in fun camp songs during Celebration Time. Last year, 12 children from Peace attended this camp and they loved it!! It will be exciting to learn more about this camp which is affiliated with the ELCA.

Grandparents, please note, a gift of camp is a wonderful way to share your faith with your grandkids.

Confirmation Update

Our 6th, 7th, and 8th Graders are growing in their faith this year through the Peace Lutheran Confirmation Program.

Each Wednesday night we gather for videos, stories, and exercises that bring Faith Formation to light.

In addition to the weekly mid-week classes, these students also spend time off-site to

experience the church in our community. For instance, at the beginning of November, they spent a day on an “Urban Plunge” retreat at Augsburg University in Minneapolis where they spent time walking around the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood, one of the most diverse neighborhoods in the country. And on top of all that, our Confirmation students are

serving as ushers and greeters each Sunday morning at worship.

Will you please continue to support these young people by welcoming them into our midst whenever you see them, as well as keeping them in your regular prayers? Thank you!

—Pastor Jeff Engholm

Service & Mission

Spotlight On...VEAP's Volunteers



VEAP (Volunteers Enlisted to Assist People) was founded by Peace Lutheran

Church along with 12 other churches in Bloomington and Richfield in 1974. Today, VEAP provides access to food, basic needs and social services to over 10,000 people each month. Peace has provided food donations, cash donations along with a supply of dedicated volunteers.

Committee member and VEAP volunteer, Ric Soderstrom suggested that we interview three of our current volunteers David Henderson, Janet Pladson, and Dave Thoen for their views of VEAP and Peace's role in this ministry.

Janet Pladson has volunteered since 2022; her job is prepping donations of produce, dairy, deli and frozen food. The team checks all donations for expiration dates and quality before products go on the shelf. Their key question is “Would I buy this product for

my family?” Janet noted that diapers and toilet paper are repackaged into smaller amounts so there are more packages of these items for clients. The toothpaste, toothbrushes, and personal soap are immediately put on the shelves due to the great demand for personal care items. Janet commented that, “a lot of food comes in after the August National Night Out collections held in neighborhoods. And, sometimes, there is little food

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to distribute, so what does come in goes out the door quickly.”

David Henderson has volunteered at VEAP three times a week since 2021. He carries groceries to the cars of clients who come to VEAP for food assistance. A volunteer shopper fills an order and hands it off to David for delivery. David is only one part of the volunteering Henderson family; Kris is active on the Finance committee at VEAP. David enjoys his VEAP experience - the atmosphere working with others brightens his day.



Dave Thoen began his volunteer life when he retired in 2023. His Tuesday afternoons are dedicated to VEAP and their Mobile Pantry Group; loading and delivering a van full of food to local communities for immediate distribution. He loads 500 to 1,500 pounds of food into a VEAP van—potatoes, carrots, boxes of apples, rice and cereal, etc.—before he heads out to a delivery site.

There he helps set up a site (school, church, apartment complex) for food distribution to the area’s residents. One Tuesday a month, Dave and a partner set up and manage a distribution site at a large, low-income apartment complex. Dave admits that working in the snow, rain or heat is not always fun, but the work helps him realize how fortunate he and his family are with a pantry full of any food they can wish for.



Janet, David and Dave all expressed the sense of fulfillment they receive from the time spent at VEAP. They enjoy the camaraderie with other volunteers, the expressions of thankfulness for their work, the joy on people’s faces when they receive food for their families. All three stated that they want Peace to continue their support of VEAP. Dave Thoen wrote “I would challenge our congregation to send a group of volunteers over on a specific afternoon and help VEAP out that day in any way we can.”

Ric Soderstrom has been delivering food from VEAP to

families for the past 6-7 years. Ric echoed the comments from the other Peace volunteers by saying, “It is always the highlight of my week!”

They have seen the needs of our community up close, and they have seen the disappointment when VEAP does not have enough food, diapers, toilet paper to share. But they have also seen the joy when special items like meat is available, and when there is a book to be brought home for a child. Please remember the dedicated Peace volunteers at VEAP and all other volunteers in your prayers. They are showing the grace of God through work in our community.

—*Marcia Craig and Mary Kautto, Service & Mission Committee Members*



Service & Mission Fall 2025 Recap

It was a good and busy fall for Service & Mission activities at Peace!

On Sunday, October 5, 2025 during the Adult Education Hour a group packed 104 of **personal care kits for Lutheran World Relief** to be distributed worldwide.

Loaves & Fishes meals continued to be prepared and distributed on the third Tuesday each month this fall as they are every month of the year.

On Sunday, November 2, Service & Mission co-chair Joanne Vance announced a focused collection initiative with **VEAP** to focus on **Baking Essentials** during November. Joanne also introduced **VEAP's Express Packs program** (\$10=1 pack). A separate cash offering was conducted in November and Peace members immediately responded. We have collected over \$1,500 as of this printing!

Harvest Pack was held on Sunday, November 9. We had 100+ people participate in this event and in just over one hour we packed 15,000 meals.

On Thursday, November 13, Peace partnered with the Bloomington Police on a new program called **Sandwich Squad**. 50 sandwiches were packed in 30 minutes by four Peace members along with members of the Bloomington Police force for distribution at Dollar Tree on Penn Ave.

Thank You from VEAP

In October, Peace received a letter of thanks from Jennifer Harrison, VEAP's VP of Advancement for our donation of \$2,430.68.

They wrote, "We are profoundly grateful for the role you play in this work. Your congregation is a vital partner in ensuring that children have enough

to eat, seniors can stay safely in their homes, and families facing crisis know they are not alone."

Thank you all for your generosity and compassion.

Service & Mission Committee Welcomes New Members

The Service & Mission Committee is seeking new members to augment our committee. We meet once a month, usually the last Tuesday, for about an hour to discuss ways our committee and congregation can serve not only our local community but globally, too.

We are a hands-on group looking for new ideas while staying committed to our core organizations. If you are interested in joining our committee or have any questions, please contact Kris Holm at (507) 828-0578 or Joanne Vance at (760) 458-5850.

Come join us!

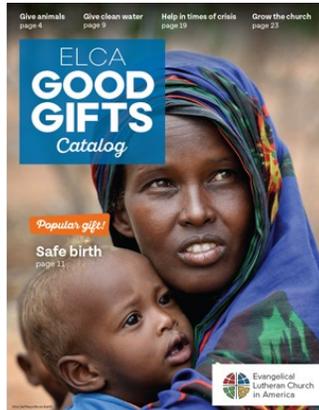
ELCA Good Gifts

November 30-December 28, 2025

Make a Difference

Every project in every community starts with listening. ELCA believes that their congregations, companion churches and partners know their communities best. That's why they identify the needs and priorities in their communities, as well as the solutions they believe will make the biggest impact. The items in the ELCA Good Gifts catalog are real examples from projects currently supported through different churchwide ministries. The projects have been planned by ELCA partners meaning that each community receives exactly the kind of support it needs and none of what it doesn't.

Your donation will be used where needed most within the wider category of each gift you've selected. (For example, a gift of vaccinations may be used to support other health care initiatives.) This allows our greater Church to stay



adaptive, flexible and effective in the work that it does. Because the ELCA seeks to honor your generosity and keep administrative costs low, they do not track individual financial gifts to specific families or locations in the United States or abroad.

ELCA Good Gifts provides over 50 gift-giving options that grow the church, fight hunger and transform lives. These gifts, starting at just \$10, provide direct support for the churchwide ministries of the ELCA.

How To Give

Copies of the 2025 catalog will be available at Peace starting Sunday, November 30 allowing you and your family to say "goodbye" to traditional gift-giving and "hello" to meaningful gifts that save lives and really make a difference in the world.

Once you have selected a gift, there are several ways to make

a purchase:

- Make a check out to Peace Lutheran Church for the Good Gift amount and write "Good Gifts" on the memo line.
- Make a check directly to "ELCA Good Gifts" and Peace will mail it in for you.
- Make a check out directly to "ELCA Good Gifts" and using the envelope provided with the catalog, mail it directly to ELCA Good Gifts, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, P.O. Box 1809, Merrifield, VA 22116-8009.
- Purchase your gift online at goodgifts.elca.org/all-gifts

Whatever means you use to make your purchase, please find a corresponding ornament in the narthex to hang on the Good Gifts Christmas tree.

The program will end on Sunday, December 28.

Together, we can celebrate Christmas and watch our Peace "Good Gifts" grow.

Transition Team Update

Prior to initiating a call for Peace Lutheran Church's next pastor, the Transition Team has been gathering critical input from the congregation that will set a clear future direction and help inform the call process.

Our initial steps were to gather information through two primary initiatives: the Congregational Survey and Listening Sessions.

The purpose of the survey was to gather input on what our church is doing well, what could be improved, and where we believe God is leading us next. More than 120 responses were received from the survey, including responses to a survey specially geared toward youth under 18 years old. Thank you to everyone who participated! The survey closed on October 24, 2025.

We are currently working on tabulating the results, but we can share a few statistics at this time:

- 59% of surveys were completed by people who have been a part of Peace for more than 15 years.
- 26% have been a part of Peace between 6 and 15 years.
- 15% have been a part of

Peace for fewer than 6 years.

We received replies from every age demographic, but the majority of responses received were from those 50 years and older. Responders took the time to provide many thoughtful comments, and we have been working on collating and summarizing the results.

The Listening Sessions were small group gatherings that provided the opportunity to dive a little deeper and reflect on who we are, how we got here, and where we are being called to grow. Through more than eight, one-hour sessions held in person and virtually, 60 people shared their stories and experiences, and communicated their hopes and concerns for the future.

The listening sessions represented a wide variety of congregants: new members, members greater than 30+ years, parents with young kids, and all age ranges from 20/30 somethings through the 85+ crowd. We also met with youth from confirmation age and above as well as the Sunday School students. Additionally, the members of the Transition Team and staff members participated in a focused

Listening Session to ensure their input and feedback was captured as well. The last Listening Session took place November 16.

Again, a heartfelt thank you to everyone who invested their time and shared their thoughts via the Survey or a Listening Session! The process has taken some time, but we believe it has been an essential investment to make sure we have a clear future direction in place for Peace Lutheran Church before initiating the call process.

The next steps for the Transition Team involve carefully reviewing and analyzing the data and comments gathered from the congregational survey and listening sessions. This information will help the committee discern common themes, priorities, and hopes expressed by the congregation.

By identifying these key insights, the committee can create a clear and thoughtful profile of the qualities, skills, and leadership style most needed in a new pastor. This process will guide the development of the church's Ministry Site Profile for the

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Minneapolis Synod and ensure that the search for a new pastor reflects the congregation's collective vision, values, and future direction.

Respectfully Submitted,

—The Transition Team
Communications Team: Pastor Jeff Engholm, Amy Strasheim, Connor Myhre, Dave Thoen

Peace Photo Diary



Sunday Adult Education Guest Speaker, Kristofer Phan Coffman from Luther Seminary



Sunday School Celebration Time



Confirmation Retreat at Augsburg University's Urban Plunge



LWR Personal Care Kit Packing



Older Adult Harvest Lunch



Harvest Fest, an intergenerational event for all!



Harvest Pack, 100+ volunteers ages 3-100 packed 15,000 meals in about 60 minutes!



Fellowship at Peace

Exciting news! This past September, we kicked off a new fellowship committee! The members are, Denise Thoen (Chair), Lori Thomson (Secretary), Marcia Craig, Mary Kautto, Joy Kjeldahl, Rachel Kyllo and Kim Myhre. There is always room for more; all are welcome to join.

We had a strong fall with events such as the Synod Senior Band Concert, Harvest Fest, Adult Fellowship Dinner, Westminster Town Hall Forums, to name a few. We would love to have your ideas and your participation. If you have any questions, please speak to any of the committee members.

Our **next planning meeting** will be **January 5, 2026** at 6:30pm and we hope to plan great activities for all of 2026 at this meeting!

Here's a preview to Upcoming events:

Saturday, December 6, 2025, we will be gathering to make lefse and krumkake! We'll meet in the Parish Hall for old-fashioned lefse-making. We start at 9:00am and roll until the dough is gone! This year we are also adding krumkake to the mix!

If you have rolling pins, pastry cloths, lefse grill, lefse turner, or another lefse or krumkake making equipment, please bring those items.

We'll divide up what is made so that each participant will go home with some fresh lefse and krumkake for their enjoyment.

Norwegian heritage is not required!

Sign up at the information kiosk or on the website.

Kids, arrive on December 6 between 9:00-10:00am to build and decorate gingerbread houses!

Thursday, February 19, 2026, at 6:30pm, we will be "Takin' it to the Limit" at the Chanhassen Dinner Theatre. Two bands, Collective Unconscious and the Fabulous Armadillos, join forces once again to present their unforgettable tribute to The Eagles—the quintessential band of the '70s and '80s.

Chanhassen Dinner Theatre audiences have loved every minute of this incredible concert, often singing and dancing along to hits like "Take It Easy," "Life in the Fast Lane," "Desperado" and many more. Look for more information at the information kiosk.

—Denise Thoen and Lori Thomson

Winter Fellowship



Lefse and Krumkake Making will be on **Saturday, December 6 at 9:00am**. Sign up at the information kiosk so that we have enough dough and stations!



Gingerbread House Decorating for Kids will be on **Saturday, December 6, starting at 9:00am**; drop in anytime before 10:00am. Sign up at the information kiosk!



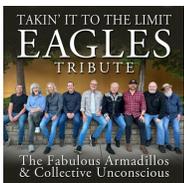
Age 80+ Christmas Luncheon is planned for **Thursday, December 11, 11:30am**. At **12:45pm, everyone is invited** to come to the sanctuary to join in a Carol Sing with Bruce Hudson playing favorite Christmas hymns. Want to volunteer to help with this event? Please contact Daina Sivanich in the church office.



Learn to Play Mahjong: Bams, cracks, dots...what?! Come learn how to play Mahjong! How to set it up, how to read the Standard Hands and Rules card, and give it a go!

We'll play on three **Tuesday nights: January 27, February 3, and February 10 at 6:30pm**. Sarah Oman has offered to lead these sessions. If you have a Mahjong set, please bring it along!

Sign up at the information kiosk or on Peace's website.



Eagles Tribute Concert: Chanhassen Dinner Theatre offers a tribute band concert series. Peace has purchased 12 tickets to the **Thursday, February 19, 7:30pm** "Taking it to the Limit" show featuring two Eagles tribute bands. We'll be singing and dancing along to hits like "Take It Easy," "Life in the Fast Lane," "Desperado" and many more. Look for more information and ticket prices at the information kiosk.

Ongoing Fellowship

Tuesday Mornings at Peace

On the **1st, 3rd, and occasional 5th Tuesday of the month, the quilters** will meet to stitch and sew. The Quilters will take January off and resume meeting on Tuesday, February 3, 2026 at 10:00am.

Book Group

The book group meets **monthly on the 2nd Thursday at 6:45pm**. New members are welcome! Contact Lori Thomson for more information.

Yoga

Monday nights, 5:30pm. Join us for prayer, breath, movement and community in the Front Meeting Room. All levels of practice are welcome. Bring a yoga mat and a \$5 donation. Questions? Please contact Sandy McGurran at smcgurran03@gmail.com.

Single Adults 65+ Group

This casual group for older singles enjoys getting out and going places! Contact Gary Vig at gvig33@gmail.com or (952) 941-3877 for upcoming activities or more information.

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

Sign up at the information kiosk or online this winter.

Church Council News

Greetings from the Peace Lutheran Church Council to all our members!

In this article, there will once again be a listing of who is on the Church Council, and any role that person plays and their years of service; an update on our financials through October; and an update on our current projects/activities. Elsewhere in this edition of *Partners*, an update from the Call Committee/Transition Team is provided so it will not be covered in this article.

2025-2026 Church Council Members

The 2025-2026 Church Council, along with their years of service and current roles, are as follows:

- Third Year: Holly Long (Secretary), Emily Sidhom, Dave Thoen (President)
- Second Year: Josh Braband, Andy Loeffler (Vice President), Cindy Olson
- First Year: Robin Kennedy, Michelle Stockinger, Tom Tisthammer (Treasurer)

Please reach out to any of us with any comments, thoughts, concerns, etc.

Financial Update

At our last Annual Meeting in

January, 2025, the Peace Council proposed and the Congregation accepted, an annual budget of approximately \$776,000, for the calendar year 2025. Since we now have financial information through October, 2025, an update on giving and expenses is being provided.

On the giving side, with a budgeted giving amount through October 2025 of \$647K, we have had giving of \$567K, or approximately \$80K below budget. We've noted that giving has been down substantially the past four months.

On the expense side, expenses through October 2025 have been \$572K, or approximately \$75K below budget. Therefore, through October 2025, our expenses are approximately \$5K over our giving, which is the first month in 2025 that we've encountered this.

Thank you for everyone's generosity and we hope and pray that financial giving to Peace will be a part of your end-of-year plans.

Peace Council Current Updates/Activities

Our Council has undertaken a few projects and they are as

follows:

- Identification Badges: Every Peace Council member now has access to an identification badge to wear while attending service.
- Greeting Guests: A Peace Council member is available at every Sunday service to meet and talk with guests who are attending that day. If you see a Council member lingering in the entryway, and you don't know that person, please feel welcome to introduce yourself.
- Security: At our Council meetings, we discussed, and had discussions with our Peace staff, about potentially enhancing security of our front entrance.
- Constitution: Since the Peace Church Constitution hasn't been updated in over seven years, we are planning to update our Constitution to better fit the recommendations of the Minneapolis Area Synod. Any changes made, which we expect to be minor, will be presented at the Annual Meeting in February, 2026, for congregational approval.

—Continued on next page—

- We are also currently working on our standard year-end activities which include preparing a budget for 2026 and seeking Peace members to join the Council.

That's all from your Peace Lutheran Church Council. It is a goal of mine to make the Peace Council more visible, so hopefully some of the small changes we are undertaking are making that possible.

Again, please reach out to anyone if you have any feedback you'd like to share.

Respectfully,

—*Dave Thoen, Peace Lutheran Church Council President*



Annual Peace Congregational Meeting

Sunday, February 1, 2026

The annual congregational meeting of Peace Lutheran Church will take place on **Sunday, February 1, 2026 at 10:45am**. We will review our year of ministry; staff, committee, and financial reports will be presented. A 2026 budget will be recommended for approval, new Council members elected, and any other new business will be presented to the congregation for consideration.

We will have a preview and discussion of the annual meeting during the Adult Education Hour on **Sunday, January 25, 2026 at 10:45am**. Written annual reports will be available, the 2025 finances will be reviewed, and the 2026 budget will be first presented.

If you have, at any time, comments, questions, and/or concerns about ministry at Peace, don't hesitate to contact pastors and/or staff. We like to hear from you!

—*Pastor Jeff Engholm, Interim Pastor*

—*Dave Thoen, Church Council President*

Stewardship

We have seen many changes in our congregation over the past year and it's a new day at Peace! We find ourselves in an "in-between" season—a time of transition and new possibilities.

Even during a time of change, one thing hasn't changed; the ministry of Peace does not rest on the pastors alone. Our whole church family continues to make incredible things happen! Our amazing staff is keeping programs running strong, our church council is offering steady leadership, and our entire congregation is sharing time, talents, and treasures to keep our mission thriving.

To keep our ministries strong, we need to continue providing the financial support that makes all of this possible. Your gifts help Peace:

- Fill our Sunday mornings with inspiring music
- Equip children, youth, and adults with meaningful learning and faith experiences
- Create a warm sense of welcome and belonging for everyone
- Support and care for our members each day
- Help people in need, both nearby and around the world
- Share the Good News of New Life in Jesus Christ with our community

By now you have received a Commitment Card. If you have not yet, please take a moment to fill it out and return it to Peace as soon as possible.

As you prayerfully think about your giving for the coming year, would you consider increasing your commitment by 1%, 5%, 10%, or more? Every gift—big or small—helps our ministries not just survive, but thrive, as we live our God's mission together.

In Christ's Service,

—*Jeffrey Engholm, Interim Pastor*

—*David Thoen, Council President*

O God, you have called your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go, but only that your hand is leading us and your love supporting us, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

New Members

Welcome new members! Throughout the fall, we have been regularly welcoming new members to Peace! Join us in welcoming these 14 new members. Please welcome the Henderson family (David, Kris, and adult daughters, Erin and Meghan), Ben and Sofia Hylan, the Lalim family (Matt, Sherry, and children, Leo and Riley), and the Teer family (Kelby and JaNae and sons, Breece and Benz).

We look forward to life and ministry together!



Front Row L to R: Kris and David
Henderson
Back Row L to R: Megan and Erin
Henderson



Ben and Sofia Hylan



Sherry Lalim with Leo and
Riley
(Matt Lalim not pictured)



Kelby and JaNae Teer with Breece
and Benz

Life Passages

Weddings

- Wedding congratulations to **Taylor Oistad and Harrison Tenpas** who were married Saturday, October 18, 2025 in Edina. Taylor's parents are Donna Dahlen and Robert Endly.

Grieving

- **Joni Murphy** upon the death of her nephew, Zackery Umland on August 28, 2025.
- The family and friends of **Marian Fronk** who died on September 4, 2025.
- **Theresa Hillsdale** on the death of her stepmother, Patricia Frederickson on September 11, 2025.

- **Monte and Evie Anderson** upon the death of their grandson, Mason Anderson on September 26, 2025 and their granddaughter-in-law, Rebecca Huber on October 28, 2025.
- **Bruce and Julia Wiessner** on the death of Julia's mother, Shirley Margenau on October 3, 2025.
- The family and friends of **Donna Chatfield** who died on October 17, 2025.
- The family and friends of **Joyce Nelson** who died on October 26, 2025.

Grief Support

January 8-February 26, 2026

Churches in Bloomington and Richfield provide education and support for adults who are grieving the death of a loved one.

The winter series will meet on **Thursdays, January 8-February 26, 2026, 4:30-6:00pm** at St. Patrick's Catholic Church (7540 Penn Ave. S., Door 5, Richfield).

The meeting starts with a 30-minute educational topic presented by guest speakers who share their own

experience and professional knowledge on grief and loss.

Then the next hour is spent in small group conversation with the opportunity to share feelings and concerns with others who are also working through the grief process.

The information kiosk has brochures with the winter topics or visit Peace's website for more information. There is no cost to participate and no pre-registration needed.

partners

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Submissions

Do you have an idea for a story or would love to write? Contact Daina Sivanich with your submission, but please keep in mind the following guidelines: (a) Your article will be reviewed by Peace 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: “Deep Roots”

Happy are those who delight in the Lord, and on his law they meditate day and night. They are like trees planted by streams of water which yield their fruit in its season, and their leaves do not wither.
Psalm 1:1-3

Have you had a chance to read the update from the Peace Transition Team yet? They have been reading the surveys that were submitted and listening to stories from the entire congregation for the past several months, hoping to discern a clear direction for the future of the congregation. Obviously this information will help the congregation in its search for its next pastor. But there is more to this process than simply finding a pastor – listening to the stories, reading the surveys, and engaging in thoughtful dialogue is simply good for the congregation’s soul!

Where has this congregation been in the past 47 years, since its founding in 1978? What was it like worshiping in the Holiday Inn, moving the roulette table in the conference room to hold worship? What was it like to build the first building in 1980, gathering for worship, fellowship, confirmation, Sunday School, and EVERYTHING in what is now the Parish Hall? What was it like to add the formal sanctuary and lower level education space in 1990? What did it feel like to do the latest remodel in 2017 which added gathering space, office space, and a beautiful window behind the altar? Each

space brought a new way of serving out Peace’s mission.

Do you remember all the pastors who have served at Peace over the years? Galen Knutson, Kent Grosser, Richard Rittmaster, Maribeth McGovern, Robert Wertz, Mark Nelson, Joe Orner... Each pastor brought unique gifts and talents that helped shape the mission of this congregation.

But what exactly IS the mission of Peace Lutheran Church? It’s many things, of course, but we print our overarching Mission Statement in the worship bulletin every single week:

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

That’s what Peace Lutheran Church is all about. We’re about Jesus Christ. We’re about being a community of faith. And we’re about growing. The verse above from Psalm 1 reminds us that our roots are planted deep in the soil of God’s light and love. And with roots planted deep, we simply grow in faith, hope, and love in the grace of God.

May God bless us as we grow deeper in our relationship with Jesus Christ during this season of transition!

—Pastor Jeff Engholm

Staff and Contact Information

(952) 944-6510 | www.peacebloomington.org

- Pastor Jeffrey Engholm—Interim Pastor, pastor.engholm@peacebloomington.org
- Marcia Craig—Children’s Programming Coordinator, marcia.craig@peacebloomington.org
- Lori Thomson—Administrator, lori.thomson@peacebloomington.org
- Daina Sivanich—Communications Specialist, daina.sivanich@peacebloomington.org
- Bruce Hudson—Director of Music; music@peacebloomington.org
- Tom Walter—Maintenance Staff

PEACE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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Bloomington, MN 55438

Phone: 952-944-6510
Email: info@peacebloomington.org
Website: www.peacebloomington.org
Sunday Worship: 9:30am



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

CHRISTMAS WORSHIP AT PEACE



Wednesday, December 24, Christmas Eve

4:00pm, Worship

5:30pm, Worship

- At both services, Harp Prelude, Children's Message

Thursday, December 25, Christmas Day

9:30am, Worship

- Holy Communion

Sunday, December 28, First Sunday of Christmas

9:30am, Worship

- Children's Message, Holy Communion

- Fellowship following worship

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