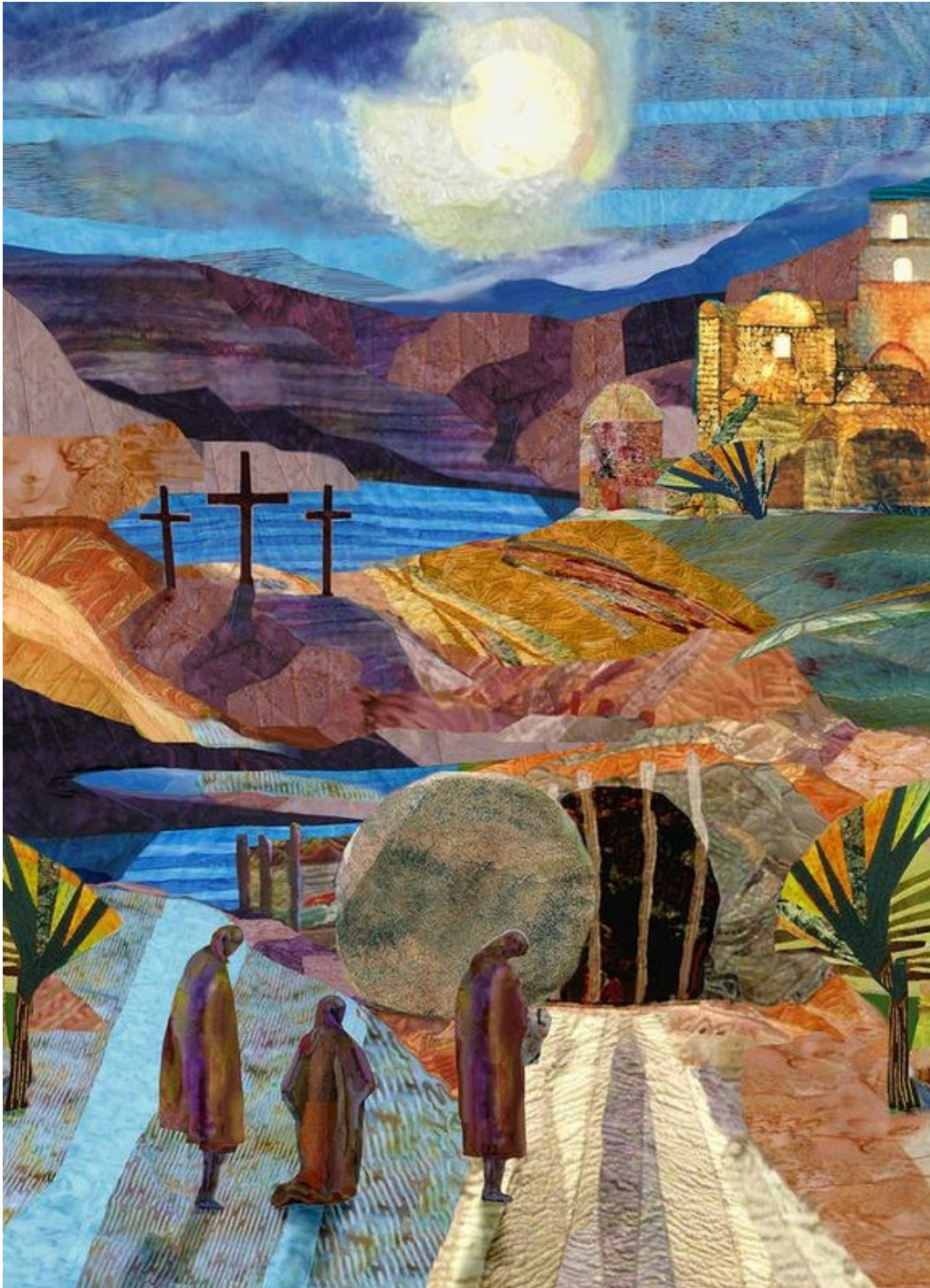


partners

Peace Lutheran Church

Spring, 2023



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

from the senior pastor

What is Lent?

The church season of Lent begins soon. It marks the 40 days leading up to Easter, echoing the 40 days Jesus spent in the wilderness. It is a practice that began during the 4th century as a way to prepare Christians for the holiest days of the year.

During Lent, our Scripture readings show us the world as it is. We begin with the reality of our mortality crossed on our foreheads on Ash Wednesday—from dust we were made, to dust we will return. With that, we continue through Lent in a kind of dress rehearsal. A downward slope that has been described as the *Great Descent*, where the whole Church walks toward the Cross.

Lent is one of my favorite parts of the church calendar because

it is a time when we all get some moments to tell the truth: Life is so beautiful and life is so hard. For everyone.

Of course, the Cross isn't the end of the story, but this season is given to us to acknowledge all of what Jesus Christ has done for us, and, also, to recognize our own pain and grief and despair. Easter is coming, yes. But for now, we move through Lent in the ashes of broken dreams and broken hearts, knowing that God is with us all along the way.

Many people observe Lent by giving something up—alcohol, meat, chocolate, social media. Some take on something new—a practice of prayer or Scripture reading.

But Lent is also a time to be together in special ways.

Together, we're going to bless the days we have, while looking to the future God promises, when there will be no more tears, no pain.....(and no junk email or robocalls!)

My hope and prayer is that we can understand Lent and all the days of our lives—wonderful, painful, ordinary, days of our lives—as being blessed by the God who is just dying to love us.

—Pastor Mark Nelson



Lenten Wednesdays — March 1, 8, 15, 22, 29

Lenten Supper served 5:30-6:15pm; \$5/person; \$15/family

**Lenten Midweek Worship at 6:30pm
Holden Evening Prayer; Lessons from the Desert**

Lenten Midweek: Lessons from the Desert

One of the purposes of Lent is to focus our lives on following Christ all the way to the new life that his resurrection offers us. One of the important questions of this season is, “What do you need to leave behind to find this new life?” Is it anger and cynicism? Is it despair that nothing is really going to change? Is it a need to control because you can’t control your way into new life? Or might it even be boredom that you must leave behind to find new life?

One tried and true way to help us answer these questions for

ourselves is a trip through the desert. Shortly after he was baptized, Jesus spent 40 days in the desert. There he learned some about his identity; who he was and who he wasn’t. Israel, too, spent time in the wilderness and also learned some important lessons along the way.

On these Lenten Wednesday evenings, we will follow Israel’s pilgrimage from slavery in Egypt to the Promised Land. The only way they, and we, can get to this Promised Land is by going through the desert. The desert is the place that teaches

us the faith we need to live in freedom. Join us for Holden Evening Prayer and a trip through the desert.—*Pastor Mark Nelson*

- **March 1:** The Call of the Desert—Exodus 14:10-14, 21-25
- **March 8:** On Control—Exodus 16:1-8
- **March 15:** On Anxiety—Exodus 32:1-5
- **March 22:** On Certainty—Numbers 9:15-18
- **March 29:** On Blessings and Curses—Numbers 22:1-6

Lenten Daily Devotionals

Before Jesus called his disciples to believe, love, or to trust him, Jesus invited them just to walk with him. That makes sense. Paul praised those who run with perseverance. But many of us have found the Christian life to be more a slow, step-by-step walk than a hundred-yard sprint. Sometimes we speak of working for and serving with Jesus, believing in, or just speaking up for Jesus. It’s good to know that just *walking*, putting one foot in front of another, trusting that God is leading us to God knows where, is also “faith.”

Our Lenten walk begins on Ash

Wednesday, February 22nd. 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 print or in a daily e-mail.

The printed devotional booklet will be available in the narthex on Sunday, February 19. Everyone who receives the Friday e-Note will receive Lenten Devotionals by email. If you would like to be added to the daily devotional list, please

send an email to Daina Sivanich at daina.sivanich@peacebloomington.org to be added to the list.

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*



Seasonal Worship Guide

February

22	26
Ash Wednesday 6:30pm	First Sunday in Lent 9:30am
Preacher: Pastor Mark Nelson	Preacher: Pastor Mark Nelson
Gospel: Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21	Gospel: Matthew 4:1-11
Imposition of Ashes, Holy Communion, Peace Choir	Holy Communion, Peace Choir
	Adult Education, Sunday School

March

5	12	19	26
Second Sunday of Lent, 9:30am	Third Sunday of Lent, 9:30am	Fourth Sunday of Lent, 9:30am	Fifth Sunday of Lent, 9:30am
Preacher: Pastor Mark Nelson	Preacher: Pastor Mark Nelson	Preacher: Pastor Mark Nelson	Preacher: Pastor Joe Orner
Gospel: John 3:1-17	Gospel: John 4:5-42	Gospel: John 9:1-41	Gospel: John 11:1-45
Alleluia Singers; Holy Communion	Holy Communion	Holy Communion	Holy Communion
Adult Education, Sunday School	Adult Education, Sunday School	Adult Education, Sunday School	Pancake Breakfast; Sunday School

April

2	6	7	9	16	23
Palm Sunday, 9:30am	Maundy Thursday, 7:00pm	Good Friday, 7:00pm	Easter Sunday, 9:30am and 11:15am	Second Sunday of Easter, 9:30am	Third Sunday of Easter, 9:30am
Preacher: Pastor Mark Nelson	Preacher: Pastor Mark Nelson	Preachers: Pastors Mark Nelson and Joe Orner	Preacher: Pastor Mark Nelson	Preacher: Pastor Mark Nelson	Preacher: Pastor Joe Orner
Gospel: Matthew 27:11-54	Gospel: John 13:1-17, 31b-35	Gospel: John 18:1-19:42	Gospel: Matthew 28:1-10; John 20:1-18	Gospel: John 20:19-31	Gospel: Luke 24:13-35
Sunday School Singers	Holy Communion	Readings, prayers, and meditations	Holy Communion	Holy Communion Alleluia Singers	Rite of Confirmation; Holy Communion
Adult Education, Sunday School			Easter Fellowship	Kit Packing Service Project, Sunday School	Adult Education, Sunday School

April

May

30	7	14	21	28
Fourth Sunday of Easter, 9:30am	Fifth Sunday of Easter, 9:30am	Sixth Sunday of Easter, 9:30am	Seventh Sunday of Easter, 9:30am	Day of Pentecost, 9:30am
Preacher: Pastor Mark Nelson	Preacher: Pastor Mark Nelson	Preacher: Pastor Mark Nelson	Preacher: Pastor Joe Orner	Preacher: Pastor Joe Orner
Gospel: John 10:1-10	Gospel: John 14:1-14	Gospel: John 14:15-21	Gospel: John 17:1-11	Gospel: John 20:19-23; John 7:37-39
Holy Communion; Installation of Church Council	Holy Communion	Sunday School Singers; Alleluia Singers; Holy Communion	Holy Communion	Holy Communion
Adult Education, Sunday School	Sunday Adult Education, Sunday School	Sunday Adult Education, Sunday School (Last Day)	Fellowship	Fellowship



Sunday Adult Education

Sunday, February 26

Through videos and stories, *A Peace of My Mind* founder, John Noltner, helps us rediscover what connects us, bridge divides, and build community. Come join us for the conclusion of the three-part series.

Sunday, March 5

“Challenges of Caregiving”

Many of us are looking out for the older adults in our lives. It is a blessing as well as, at times, a difficult task. Becky Zinn-Caulfield from the Normandale Center for Healing and Wholeness will join us to discuss care for the caregiver.

Sunday, March 12

“What is Christian Nationalism?” Part 2

Maybe you’ve heard the term; maybe you have not. Either way, this movement influences the public perception of Christians and the Church. Join us for this important discussion!

Sunday, March 19

“On Depression”

The Biblical writers knew

something about depression. In Psalm 131, we hear: *“O Lord, my heart is not lifted up,”* is the way it begins, *“my eyes are not raised too high; I do not occupy myself with things too great and too marvelous for me.”* To be in a state of depression like that, is to be unable to think about or do much of anything else.

We know something about depression, too. We’ve experienced it and we know others have also. In this hour, we’ll together try to shed some light on this disease. We will watch and listen to a recorded sermon from the Washington Cathedral by the late Michael Gerson, a columnist for the *Washington Post* and the chief speechwriter for President George W. Bush, in which he describes his own depression. We’ll together read a column of *New York Times* columnist, David Brooks, in which he describes the depression of his best friend. Join us for this important conversation.—
Pastor Mark Nelson

Sunday, March 26

Peace Youth Fundraising Pancake Breakfast

Sunday, April 2, Palm Sunday **“Holy Week in the Gospels”**

We’ll take an in-depth look at the events of Holy Week; the triumphal entry into Jerusalem, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Sunday.

Sunday, April 9, Easter Sunday

Join us for Easter Sunday fellowship!

Sunday, April 16

Lutheran World Relief kit assembly in the Parish Hall. All ages are welcome to come pack Baby Care Kits and Personal Care Kits!

Sunday, April 23

To be announced.

Sunday, April 30

To be announced.

Sunday, May 7

To be announced.

Sunday, May 14

Last day of the academic year. Adult education topic to be announced.

Wednesday Evening Bible Study

Resumes Wednesday, April 12

We will take a break from Wednesday Evening Bible Study during Lent and Holy Week. We’ll resume meeting on Wednesday, April 12th and, as we have been doing, review and study the Sunday Scripture.

2023 Congregational Lenten Service Project

February 26 - April 9



LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF

This year Peace’s Lenten congregational service initiative will be to prepare

Baby Care and Personal Care Kits for Lutheran World Relief (LWR).

A new baby is a blessing, but bringing a baby into the world can also be difficult for a mother living in poverty. This is even harder in war-torn Ukraine or in Turkey, where 35,000+ perished as a result of the recent earthquake. Keeping a new baby healthy, clean and comfortable can take a lot of resources. **LWR Baby Care Kits** provide the basics that a family needs to care for their newest member.

Soap, towels, toothbrushes and combs. These simple gifts among others in the **LWR Personal Care Kits** improve the standard of living for people around the world. We can’t control wars or where disasters strike, but we can help given them hope, and restore dignity.

From Sunday, February 26 through Easter Sunday, April 9, we will be seeking item and/or financial donations to create these kits.

We encourage you to visit the display in the narthex to see the items that will be included in each kit.

Please contribute what you are able towards these kits.

If you would like to make an item donation, pick up a “shopping list” of items needed at the narthex display. Please note, LWR has very specific recommendations and sizes to follow for each item in each kit. Please read the shopping list carefully and take the recommendations into account when making purchases so that we are able to use your donation.

If you are making a financial contribution, please make your check out to Peace and write “LWR Kits” in the memo line. Financial contributions can also be made online or using Text to Give.

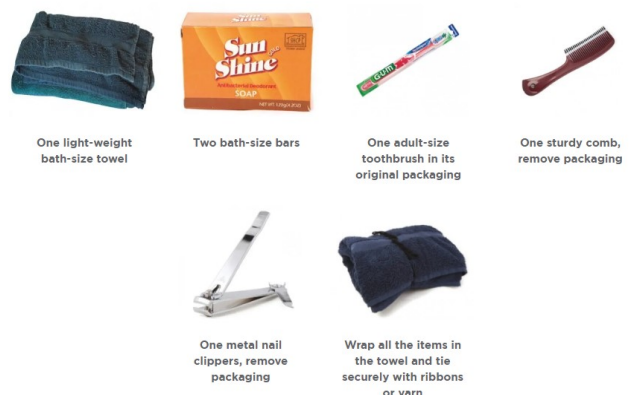
The Sunday children’s offerings during Lent will go towards funding Baby Care Kits.

Be sure to save the date for **Sunday, April 16** when we have a congregational kit packing event during the Education Hour!

Baby Care Kit



Personal Care Kit



Gotta Go Through It

One of the books my son, Lucas, enjoys the most is *We're Going On A Bear Hunt*. It's been a toddler favorite for over three decades now, and I can still repeat the tagline from when I was a boy: "Can't go over it. Can't go under it. Gotta go through it."

This is often the mentality I take when faced with tough challenges and difficult situations—there's no avoiding them, you just have to dig deep and persevere through them. Uncoincidentally, it's also how I get through Minnesota winters.

And, I imagine Moses might have thought something similar as he traversed through the

desert with the Israelites, or that Jesus might have when he wandered through the wilderness facing temptation.

But Moses and Jesus were also both sustained by something more than just an encouraging phrase. They had the promise of God—a promise that they would never walk alone, a promise that they would always be loved—a promise that we also cling to.

So while I may have great distaste for January and February, I know that pressing ahead also brings the delights of Shamrock Shakes, March Madness, and spring renewal. More importantly, we proceed

with persistence through winter and Lent knowing that Easter is coming, and that the joys of the Resurrection are ours to embrace, thanks to the wonderful, unending love of Jesus.

Grace and Peace,
Pastor Joe Orner



Children's Ministry

In January, we had the joy of celebrating 11 students and their families who recently completed their communion education class here at Peace.

These students learned about the Last Supper, the special meal of bread and wine shared with his disciples, and how the sacrament of communion is God's body and blood given for us. Additionally, students came away knowing that communion is all about the gift and promise of God's unconditional love and forgiveness—freely given for each and every one of us.

Join us in recognizing: Emma Byers, Savannah Fields, James Hanson, Myra Hanson, Stella Loeffler, Kael Marinero, Miralinda Marinero, Max Sidhom, Luke Toppin, Wyatt Tschida, and Nora Waller.

—*Pastor Joe Orner*



Summer Camps and Trips Preview

It's going to be a busy, Spirit-filled summer for all of the students and families at Peace, yet again! Here is a preview of what we're looking forward to this year:

- June 10-16 Service Trip: Chicago (Grades 6-12)
- June 16-18 Camp Wapogasset Seeds (Grades 1-3)

- June 26-29 VBS at Peace, presented in conjunction with Community of the Cross Lutheran Church (Ages 3.5 through 5th Grade)
- July 14-16 Family Camp at Luther Crest Bible Camp
- July 30-August 4 Camp Wapogasset Youth Camp (Grades 4-9)

The open registration period has now closed, but some spots still remain. If you are still interested in one of these opportunities, please reach out to pastor.joe@peacebloomington.org as soon as possible!

—*Pastor Joe Orner*

VBS is Coming!

June 26-29, 9:00am-12:00 Noon at Peace!

God's love is out of this world! At VBS this year, we will shine Jesus' light through engaging Bible stories, exciting games, meaningful services projects, and memorable worship music. It's going to be Stellar!



Through fun games, engaging Bible stories, captivating music, and more, kids will come away with new friends and have a Stellar experience in Jesus' light.

Registration for campers and volunteers will begin on Palm Sunday, April 2!

VBS is perfect for children ages 3.5 and toilet trained through those entering 5th Grade.

And with VBS comes a big ask! We will need many volunteers to

make the week possible, and to provide wonderful hospitality and ministry to all of the kids joining us this year. Volunteer roles include crew leaders, station leaders (Bible Story, Imagination Station, Games, Service, and Cinema), nursery leaders, registration and welcome squad, snack squad, setup squad, and tech squad. Please send an email to pastor.joe@peacebloomington.org if you are interested!

—*Pastor Joe Orner*

This summer VBS returns to Peace! We will be the host site and Community of the Cross Lutheran Church will be joining us for VBS, where kids will go on a cosmic quest and have a blast shining Jesus' light to the world.

Confirmation: Gustavus Retreat Review

On February 4th, our Confirmation students enjoyed a day-long retreat at Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter. After a fall retreat on World Religions, this day was spent learning about Christian denominations, and Lutheranism in particular. In addition to the learning, the students enjoyed an escape room, a campus tour, games, the Gustavus cafeteria, and more!

—*Pastor Joe Orner*



Middle & High School Youth

The Broomball Battle is back! 6th-12th Graders, on Sunday, March 5, 5:30-7:30pm, our team of Peace students will be taking on churches from Bloomington and the southwest metro to see who can rule the rink. The “battle” will be held at Bloomington Ice Garden (3600 W 98th St, Bloomington). Please RSVP to Pastor Joe at pastor.joe@peacebloomington.org.

Sticks will be provided, boots or durable shoes recommended. Peace’s team color is **BLACK**—please wear black clothing!

—*Pastor Joe Orner*

Spring Fundraising Breakfast

On Sunday, March 26, Peace’s 6th-12th Grade youth who will be participating in this summer’s service trip to Chicago will host a pancake breakfast fundraiser.

From 8:30-9:15am and from 10:30-11:30am, come and eat breakfast with the church and

support a valuable Peace ministry and its wonderful students!

Tickets will be sold starting Sunday, March 12 and can also be bought the morning of the breakfast. Tickets will be \$5 per person or \$20 for families.



Spring Fellowship

For Everyone

Date/Time	Event	Description
Fridays, 6:30-8:00pm	Indoor Pickleball	Join us Friday nights 6:30-8:00pm at Bloomington Jefferson High School in the Activity Center on Court #3. Every Friday night through March 31, 2023. (No pickleball on March 17.) Starting on April 13, assuming good spring weather, we'll resume playing outdoors at Westwood Park (3416 W 108th Street, Bloomington). All skill levels welcome!
Sunday, March 26, 8:30am-11:30am	Youth Service Trip Pancake Breakfast Fundraiser	Come one, come all for a pre- and post-worship pancake breakfast prepared and served by Peace youth who will be traveling to Chicago this summer! \$5/person; \$20/family

For Families and Young Children

Date/Time	Event	Description
Sunday, February 26, 2:00-3:00pm, at Brookside Park	Winter Outdoor Fun	Let's get outside for some fresh air and fun at Brookside Park (10000 Xerxes Ave. S., Bloomington). Bring your skates and sleds! Sign up sheet at the information kiosk.
Sunday, March 26, 8:30am-11:30am	Youth Service Trip Pancake Breakfast Fundraiser	Come one, come all for a pre- and post-worship pancake breakfast prepared and served by Peace youth who will be traveling to Chicago this summer! \$5/person; \$20/family
Friday, April 21, 6:45-8:45pm	Family Service Night at Feed My Starving Children	Join us at FMSC as we pack meals (18732 Lake Drive East, Chanhassen). Look for sign up information in March.

For Adults 40+

Adults 40+ meet for coffee and conversation the third Saturday of each month at 10:00am at Peace. Our spring meeting dates will be March 18, April 15, and May 20. Questions? Please contact Cynthia Fossan at cindikf@gmail.com.



For 20 & 30 Somethings

Date/Time	Event	Description
Tuesday, March 7, 6:45-8:45pm	Service Night at Feed My Starving Children	Join us at FMSC as we pack meals (18732 Lake Dr E, Chanhassen). Look for a sign up sheet at the information kiosk or RSVP to Pastor Joe at pastor.joe@peacebloomington.org .
Wednesday, May 3, 6:30-8:30pm	Wooden Hill Trivia Night	Come test your knowledge! We'll meet at Wooden Hill Brewing for Trivia Night! Please RSVP to Pastor Joe at pastor.joe@peacebloomington.org .

For Older Adults (80+)

Date/Time	Event	Description
Thursday, May 4, 11:30am	Spring Fling Luncheon at Peace	Join us for a spring luncheon at Peace! It will a great way to see one another, welcome back our "snow birds," and get to know some newer Peace members. Volunteers are welcome. If you would like to assist with transportation, serving, or cleaning up, please contact Daina Sivanich in the church office.



Annual Peace Congregational Meeting Elections

At our annual congregational meeting on Sunday, January 29, 2023 the following people were elected.

2023 Annual Budget

A proposed 2023 church budget of \$726,624 was approved.

Church Council

The following people were elected to serve a three-year term on the Church Council:

Holly Long, Emily Sidhom, and Dave Thoen.

We thank outgoing council members Scott Moe and Mark Pladson for their service to Peace.

Nominating Committee

Justin Myhre and Janet Pladson were elected to the Nominating Committee.

We thank the outgoing Nominating Committee

members: Connor Myhre, Scott Moe, Mark Pladson, Dave Dynneson, and Jeremy Macejkovic.

Auditing Committee

Gary Vig was elected to the Auditing Committee. We thank Larry Albert and Joni Murphy for their work on behalf of Peace.

Installation of the new council for 2023/2024 will be on Sunday, April 30 during worship.

In Memoriam: Evan Hansen

October 26, 1963—
December 28, 2022



Our brother in Christ, Evan Hansen died on December 28, 2022 at the age of 59. His funeral service was held at Peace on January 26, 2023.

Evan was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania on October 26th, 1963 to Howard and Ann Marie Hansen.

Evan’s father, Howard was a Presbyterian pastor. In 1974, Howard accepted a call in New Jersey and the family moved to Ridgewood. Evan graduated from high school there and then from Rutgers University with a combined degree in Psychology, English, and English Literature.

Following graduation in 1987, Evan moved to Brooklyn, taking a job with Rebus Company, researching and writing for accounts that varied from Johns Hopkins University to *Reader’s Digest*. Shortly thereafter, Evan moved to Bloomington, taking a job as Executive Director with *Crossways International*, a ministry producing Bible study materials for Christians and churches around the world,

working there until 2012.

In 2007, Evan joined Peace and quickly became a vital member of the church. He taught Bible study, led Adult Education and he often preached. Evan had a gift, a way with words and he gave away that gift to others, to Peace, and to the whole Church of Jesus Christ.

Like all of us, Evan was both saint and sinner. The Good News for him and for us? Jesus just *loves* sinners. So we entrust Evan to the God who loved him from the very beginning and we do so with two essential prayers. One: an ancient prayer of the Church—“*Lord, have mercy.*” And the second prayer: “*Thanks be to God who gives us the victory through Jesus Christ, our Lord.*”

—Pastor Mark Nelson

In Memoriam: Will Mesna

April 25, 1933 —
January 24, 2023



Will Mesna passed away peacefully at the age of 89 on January 24. He was born on April 25, 1933,

in Pelican Rapids, MN, where he grew up hunting, fishing, and playing sports. He attended St. Olaf College where he met his wife, Elaine, played football, and

joined the Air Force ROTC. He went on to graduate school at the University of Minnesota and developed a career in sales and marketing.

After raising their family in Edina, Will and Elaine moved to San Francisco in 1985. There they founded Sage Marketing, where they worked together until they retired.

Retirement was enjoyed in Desert Mountain, AZ, where Will golfed year-round and travelled with Elaine. They moved to Friendship Village in 2019 to be closer to family, and joined Peace in March 2020.

Will was a tremendous conversationalist, and was interested in everyone and everything. His hobbies included: golf, sports, travel, music, nature, art, and literature. He attributed his success to his Christian faith, a close and loving family, and his many coaches and teachers along the way. He will be greatly missed by everyone who knew him.

Will is preceded in death by his parents, Arthur and Selma Mesna. He is survived by his loving and devoted wife, Elaine; his sister, Marilyn; his children David (Linda), Gregory (Peggy), and Kristin (Bruce); and beloved grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

—Pastor Joe Orner



Life Passages

Births

- **Parker Jean Kenny** born to Jared and Anna Kenny. Parker is welcomed by brother, Levi, and grandparents, Rich and Rachel Kylo.

Baptisms

- **Scarlett Jean Sasse** baptized on December 4, 2022. Scarlett is the daughter of Chris and Maggie Sasse. Scarlett's sponsors are Andy and Alisha McInnis.

Grieving

- **Cynthia Fossan** upon the death of her brother, Gregory Mackedanz.
- **Carol Omlie and family** upon the death of her daughter, Christina Kjeksrud.

- **Jack and Andi Bidwell** upon the death of Jack's brother, Dennis Bidwell.
- **Derek, Lisa, Owen, and Eli Betlock** upon the death of Derek's father, Eric Betlock.
- **Kris Holm** upon the death of her sister, Vicki Fugleberg.
- **Bruce and Julia Wiessner** upon the death of their sister-in-law, Ann Wiessner.
- The family and friends of **Evan Hansen**.
- **Pastor Joe and Reilly Orner** upon the death of Pastor Joe's grandmother, Lorraine Trulen.
- **Elaine Mesna** upon the death of her husband, Will Mesna.

Text to Give

You asked for it...a simpler way to give for those who don't carry checks or credit cards. We have enrolled in Text-To-Give through Vanco. Please contact Lori Thomson if you have any questions.

The church name is Peace Lutheran Church and the 10-digit GivePlus Text Number is: 844-422-1219. Here are the steps:

- Enter the 10-digit GivePlus Text number in a text message and the amount you wish to give then press send.
- You will receive a registration link. Click the link and enter your contact and payment information and tap "Process."
- After registration is complete, you will receive a verification text, as well as a receipt via email.
- For future giving, simply send a text with the amount you wish to give, and it will process automatically.

partners

Spring 2023

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On The Cover

"Who Will Roll Away the Stone for Us?"

Painting by Mike Torevell

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: *On Gardening*

I'm not a gardener but I have known some orchid growers in my time. Each and every one has been careful, thoughtful, and, above all, patient. It takes time to grow beautiful orchids. One orchid grower happily described to me one plant that had finally bloomed....after 5 years! *"Most of the time, it's been a fight to keep it alive! It's fabulous!"*

Gardening requires a particular kind of hope, imagining buried seeds and new blooms and new life in the midst of the dirt. Orchid growers pluck and prune, all for a single flower. Gardening is an act of hope.

And it's the same kind of hope that a woman was hunting for on Easter morning. John's Gospel tells us that Mary Magdalene is awake. It's still dark. Grief does that to you. Three days before, her friend, Jesus, had died on a cross. Now Mary was headed back to his tomb to finish the burial preparations. She looks in. The body is missing.

The next time she looks in the tomb, it's not empty. Instead, there are two people dressed in white. *"Why are you crying?"* they ask. When you think about it, that's a pretty callous question to ask in a cemetery. Mary answers: *"They've taken him."*



Mary turns to leave and she bumps into a man with dirt on his hands. He, too, asks her, *"Why are you crying?"* She mistakes him for a gardener and begs him to tell her where Jesus' body lies.

What a strange detail! Jesus is mistaken for a gardener. There could be a lot of reasons, I suppose. But maybe—just maybe—this gardener

looks like he knows something about hope; hope that Mary needs. Spring and blooming may be predictable for gardeners, but resurrection is not. This gardener knows something about that though. Mary doesn't recognize that the gardener is Jesus until he calls her by name: *"Mary!"* Finally, Mary knows. *"Rabbouni!"*

Maybe this is what it means to be a Christian. To see Jesus Christ and think, *gardener*. Seeds in the ground. The body in the tomb. This is a picture of hope! All of the tending and work and love and time for one single bloom. God giving everything—*everything*—for us and for our salvation.

Thanks be to God!

—Pastor Mark Nelson

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Email: info@peacebloomington.org
Website: www.peacebloomington.org
Sunday Worship: 9:30am



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

2023 Lenten and Easter Worship at Peace

Ash Wednesday, February 22

Lenten Supper, 5:30-6:15pm
Ash Wednesday Worship at 6:30pm

Holy Week

Palm Sunday, April 2, Worship at 9:30am
Maundy Thursday, April 6, Worship at
7:00pm
Good Friday, April 7, Worship at 7:00pm
Easter Sunday, April 9, Worship at 9:30am
and at 11:15am

Lenten Wednesdays, March 1, 8, 15, 22, 29

Lenten Supper, 5:30-
6:15pm
Worship, 6:30pm
Confirmation, 7:15pm
Peace Choir Rehearsal,
7:15pm