



Peace Notes

PEACE LUTHERAN CHURCH OF PLYMOUTH, MINNESOTA

Volume 25, Issue 9 | September 2020

LETTER FROM PASTOR KJELL



This fall we will start again reading from the beginning of the Bible--the second creation story in Genesis Chapter 2. Recently I was listening to the podcast *On Being* with Krista Tippett as she spoke with Jane Goodall. Goodall became famous in the 1960's for her groundbreaking research with the chimpanzees in Tanzania. She discovered that humans weren't the only ones to use tools, as she saw the chimp David Graybeard fishing for termites with a stick. Goodall told a story from when she was 4 or 5 years old. She wanted to know where the eggs came from so she sat for 4 hours in the hen house watching. Goodall recalled the joy of watching and wondering.

The creation stories in the book of Genesis tell us how God created order in the universe and how we are part of nature. The story says that God sees creation as "very good" when all its parts are working together in harmony. A powerful form of prayer is watching. Watching nature. Watching plants and animals and bugs.

According to the stories in the Bible, Jesus spent a good portion of his time praying, off in the quiet places of nature. Nature has a power to heal, to refresh and renew us. In this late summer or early fall time, as we live in the midst of pandemic and election and racial turmoil, I invite you to look out the window or adventure into the yard or a park to watch and wonder... to pray and experience the joy of God's creation.

Christ's Peace,

Pastor Kjell

FALL WORSHIP

Here at Peace, we have been using scripture readings from the Narrative Lectionary, and we will continue in 2020-2021. The chosen readings start in Genesis and go chronologically through the Old and New Testaments, focusing on one of the books of the Gospels. This year's gospel is the book of Luke.

On Welcome Sunday, September 13, we begin the Narrative Lectionary again, reading the grand story of God's love for God's people as told in the Bible. Each week we will pair one of the Faith Practices with the weekly reading from the Old Testament. With these ancient faith practices, we will be learning and experiencing new things as we see them being lived through stories in the Bible.

September 13: Community

An Unexpected Family - The Creation & The Fall
Genesis 2:4-7, 2:15-17; 3:1-8

September 20: Worship

Seeking God's Presence - God's Promise to Abraham and Sarah
Genesis 15:1-6

September 27: Service

The Needs Right Around You - God Works Through Joseph
Genesis 37:3-34; 50:15-21

October 4: Food

Eating with Jesus - The Promise of Passover
Exodus 32:1-14, Oct. 4

October 11: Money

The Joy of Sharing - The Golden Calf
1 Samuel 1:9-20; 2:1-10

October 18: Prayer

Oriented toward God - God Answers Hannah
2 Samuel 7:1-17

October 25: Sacraments

A Tapestry of Traditions - God's Promise to David & Reformation Sunday
1 Kings 17:1-24

**We are in this together and look forward to seeing you online.
Please watch for emails and updates about future events and activities.**

Christianity and Black Lives Matter

by Michael Sorenson

At a base level, we can all agree that if we as people are created in God's image, this includes Black people. Because Black people are created in the image of God and are a part of God's creation, we need to affirm and respect them the same as we do for all people. I believe that we can all agree on that. I believe that we all strive to do that as well. The question remains, why the focus on Black lives? This question is especially prevalent when people think that they, themselves, are not racist. The focus on Black lives is because of the way society was, and is, set up. Our society was not created equally for all people.

During the founding of our country, Africans were enslaved; they were not seen as fully human. A system was put in place to view Africans, and looking forward, African-Americans or Black Americans, as less than. They were placed as second-class citizens when they were no longer thought of as property. After slavery was abolished, a set of laws were put in place, the Jim Crow laws. These laws were designed to place or keep African-Americans as second-class citizens. They kept African-Americans and White Americans separate. There was separate seating, separate water fountains, separate neighborhoods, etc. Again, a system was put in place to keep African-Americans as disadvantaged in society as they could.

Abolishing the Jim Crow laws and the fight for equal rights helped bring in new opportunities for African-Americans. It brought inequality through law. Unfortunately, things were still not equal for African-Americans. The oppression was no longer codified in law, but it still existed. Beauty standards, medical standards, and even just what it meant to look "American" were all defined by white people as white. Black was not beautiful. When comparing a Black person's health to a "normal" person, that "normal" person was white. There was very little Black representation in the media. To be Black put you at the bottom and outskirts of society.

Looking back at a very generalized and abstract understanding of Black history in America is meant to show the oppression they have faced. I highlight this history because understanding history helps us to understand why Christianity and black lives matter is connected.

It ties into our understanding of God and Jesus and the role they play in our lives. For many of us, we look at God and Jesus for our salvation, salvation of our souls. For many people, God and Jesus are seen as our salvation, our salvation from oppression. God and Jesus fight for social good.

Oppression can take many forms. Those forms can be an addiction, a hard time, or help for a problem. The oppression can also take the forms of the above. The oppression can be from slavery. Similar to the Exodus story of God freeing the slaves from Egypt, African slaves were freed from slavery. God took an active role in fighting for the oppressed. Currently, the oppression that is being fought is not as obvious as slavery. It is insidious and deeper than that. The fight is against systems of oppression or ways that people are kept down in our society. Activists see the oppression that is happening and work to fight against it.

The parable of the lost sheep is often used as the reasoning for helping our Black friends and neighbors. To lift up Black lives is not to ignore the rest. In the parable, there are 100 sheep, but one is not there. Jesus being the shepherd, realizes that one is missing. That one could be hurt or lost, but no matter what, it needs help. Jesus leaves the other 99 sheep that are safe and helps the one that is lost. Normally this is used to talk about sinners and a sinner needing help. This interpretation instead says that one sheep needs help. The other sheep are safe. They are secure. They do not need help. But one sheep does, and Jesus helps that sheep. Jesus understands the other sheep are not in danger and do not need help. They do not need to be rescued from oppression, but one sheep does.

Jesus is radical. He sees who needs help and helps them. It did not matter the social status. It did not matter if they were a criminal. It did not matter if they were an outcast. Jesus helped everyone. It is through this lens that we look at Jesus as a warrior for social justice and change. As Jesus said in John 13:34, "A new command, I give you; love one another. Just as I have loved you, so you must love one another." Jesus tells us that we must love one another. Not a certain group of people, but all people. That love can take the form of personal actions, very simply, not being racist. That love can take the form of larger actions, such as fighting for equality between people, calling for an end to police brutality of all forms, listening and hearing other's experiences, or being anti-racist. If we believe that God and Jesus act in our world for the betterment of all people, then we should stand with the people who think that Black lives matter too.

WHY WE SAY “Black Lives Matter”

Recently Rabbi Michael Latz, Lead Rabbi at Shir Tikvah Congregation, reached out in response to the Black Lives Matter statement on Peace’s digital sign saying...

Either we believe the Bible when it says in Genesis 1:26 that human beings were created in God’s image—ALL HUMANS—or we don’t. If we believe that our Black and Brown and Native and Immigrant and Muslim neighbors are created in God’s image, then we better darn well act like it—or put our sacred text away and close up shop. Good for you, Peace Lutheran, for rising up for decency and human dignity. Feels like the very least we people of faith ought to be doing these days.

In solidarity,

*Rabbi Michael Latz
He/Him/His*



Rabbi Michael Latz

FOCUS ON FAITH PRACTICE: Money

In May, Peace Lutheran began exercising a different “faith muscle” every four months. September through December we are working our generosity muscle. Jesus said, “where your money is, there your heart will be also,” knowing that our actions form our values and our beliefs.

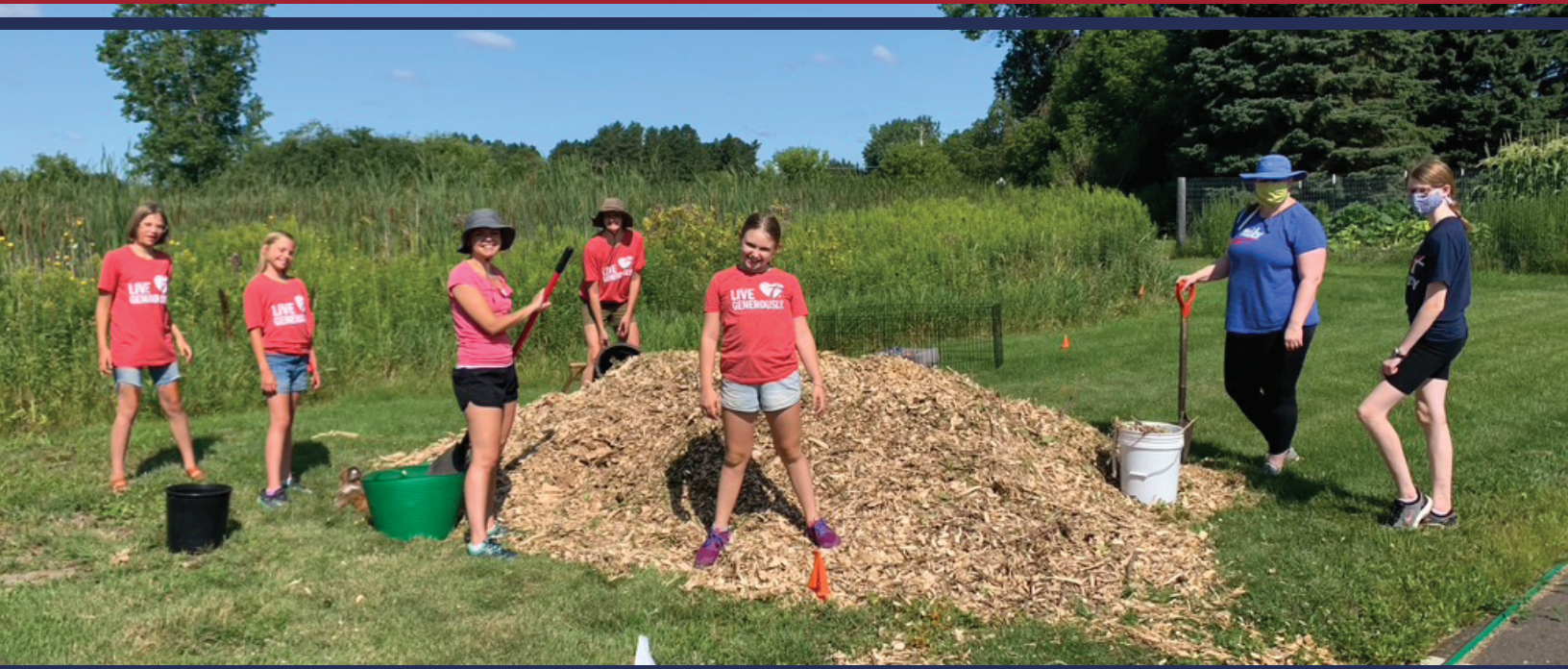
Ask yourself, “What is one change you can make to be more generous at... home?” Over the next months we will look at different roles in our lives and how we can live more generously in them.

WHITE FRAGILITY BOOK STUDY - ONE PARTICIPANT’S THOUGHTS

by Jan Yarger

Ever since George Floyd’s death, I have been asking myself, “What can I do about racism? Am I racist?” I asked my 24 year-old granddaughter, who is far better informed about these things, and she suggested I read *White Fragility* by Robin DiAngelo. The next day, Peace Lutheran announced there would be a book study on this very book. I signed up and my group met by ZOOM on August 4th: Inger, Melissa, Jeanette and me. Our fifth member, Dick, will join us next time. We agreed that we wanted to look at racism from the Christian perspective, which is not necessarily the author’s perspective. I realized that I was not taught to see myself in racial terms. All of us had grown up in the white world and had very little contact with people of color. One of the study questions asked “How do so many white people feel so confident in their opinions on racism even as they live their lives in segregation?” As a person of faith, I want to find the answer to that question. I am challenging the way that I have thought and lived. These questions are bubbling up inside of me. I want to find the answer to how we can be less racist.

Confirmation Garden



Fall Programming

As we look into fall, programming will continue in ways that we did not plan. While things are different, we are working to insert creativity and substance into our programming. While there are still a lot of unknowns, there are a few things that we do know.

- There will not be dinner on Wednesday nights for now.
- Online programming will continue for all ages.
- There will be some small group, in-person programming.

While we know that ambiguity is sometimes hard and even frustrating, moving and flexing with the ever-changing world we are living in is what we are doing. If you have any questions, please contact Pastor Kjell or Melissa Weinhandl at mlweinhandl@gmail.com.



The VISION Team

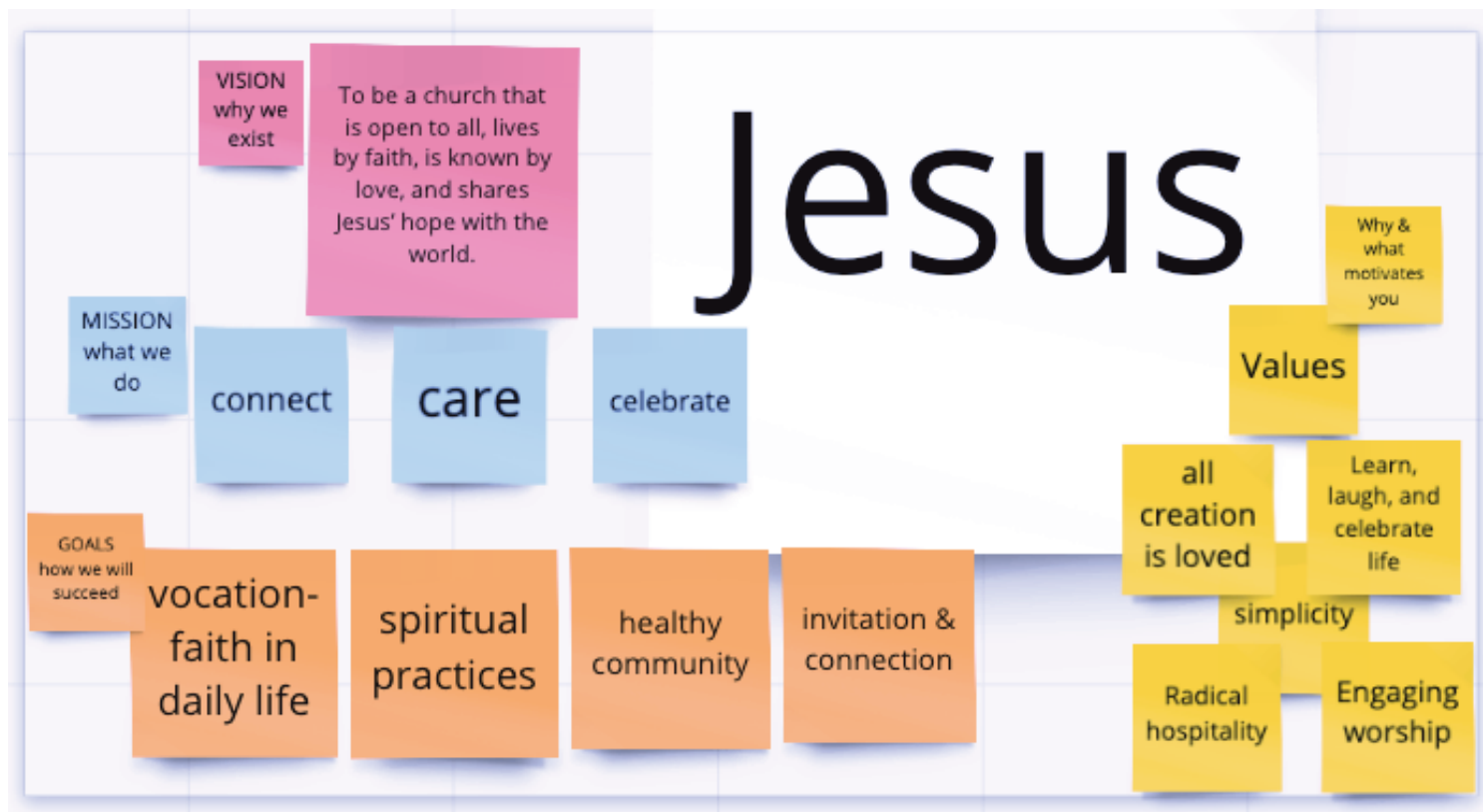
VISION, MISSION & VALUES

Over the last nine months the VISION Team has gathered information from the congregation about who we are and to what God is calling us. A Vision, Mission, and Values document is now ready for conversation. View it at peaceofplymouth.org, plus it will be sent in the weekly email (you can sign up for emails on the website).

Plan to join the Listening Session, Sunday, September 20, 10:00am.

You may join in person in the parking lot, or via zoom. Watch your weekly email for the information.

Here is a visual representation of the document:



FAITH IN DAILY LIFE

By Joni Sutton

Dreaming Big and Moving Forward

Lance Novak has been a member of Peace for 39 years. During that time, he has lived his vocation – both for the church and in the greater community – in many ways. The first time that he was elected to Peace's church council, he was asked to represent the youth committee, as he himself was a young college graduate. Over the years, he found that his vocation drew him to a financial role at Peace. It is no wonder that Lance was drawn to the position of Treasurer multiple times at church, as he is the Chief Financial Officer for a business segment of UnitedHealthcare. In his professional vocation, he can provide financial and business expertise to ensure that organizations meet their mission and have the resources to continue to meet their mission. He has used that expertise to help Peace do the same.

Lance and his wife, Lisa, have both served in support of several missions that Peace has championed. These include evenings of helping out with the Interfaith Hospitality Network when their children were younger, working (with Ilene Forde, Grace Tauring and Jane Tellekson) to begin the project of supporting an entire class of 45 girls for their six years of secondary education at the Masaae Girls School in Tanzania, and working on a committee to begin the training of health care chaplains in Latvia – a country that was not able to openly worship for over a half century.

Whether at work, at church, or with one of the other volunteer organizations that Lance has worked with over the years, Lance feels that the greatest joy of his vocation is when a problem is solved. "Whether that be the ability to ensure that the Maasae girls received an education, or that chaplains are trained to serve in a country where the practice of Christianity was just beginning to be reborn, that is the greatest reward," says Lance. He admits that it is humbling when you don't succeed in your vocation. In the 1990s he worked for a defense contractor, and they pursued an opportunity to recycle excess munitions in the former Soviet Union into scrap metals and mining explosives. It was an exciting time, employing people in the former Soviet Union at a time when their economies were struggling, plus, they were "turning swords into plowshares." Unfortunately, they were not able to sustain the business. "Sometimes dreaming big doesn't always result in the success you dream about," he says. But that doesn't mean a person needs to stop dreaming!

Lance feels that using his skills and abilities to serve the broader community is, for him, what thriving looks like. He says that his vocation includes the ability to dream big and find ways to solve problems, so that dreams may be realized. He says that his faith moves him to serve God in multiple ways. "God gave me skills and abilities to do many things. I have been blessed by these gifts. I believe that because my skills and vocations are a gift from God, I strive to use those gifts not only for myself, but for my church, the Plymouth community and around the globe."

Those who have worked alongside Lance on Peace's church council can attest to the fact that he is a man who steps forward in faith, knowing that the Lord will provide. He leads with the belief that it is the job of all of us to continue to take those steps forward for the good of Christ's mission at Peace, in Plymouth and in the world. Thank you for all you do, Lance!

Lance recently stepped down as Treasurer of the congregation. A huge thank you for his years of service, care and passion.

Do you know someone at Peace who is living out their vocation?

Please drop a note to peace@peaceofplymouth.org for this recurring feature in the PeaceNotes.



**Lance Novak
with Grandson Ryder**

Vocation
Faith in Daily Life



Outdoor Worship

Updates & Notices

Worship Outside!

Please join us for outdoor worship services on September 13, 20, and 27, weather permitting. **(We will still livestream the service as usual on peaceofplymouth.org.)** Bring your own chair and bring your own coffee, and we will gather, sing and pray together in person!

Dates to Remember:

Sunday, September 13 - Welcome Sunday
Blessing of the Backpacks
Blessing of those who work in education

Sunday, September 20
Blessing of Sunday School teachers
Blessing of the Bibles (milestone)
Listening Session about Vision, Mission, and Values Document, 10:00am



Paycheck Protection Program Loan

Peace has received a loan from the Small Business Administration to help cover employee and other eligible expenses. Peace plans to meet all criteria so the SBA will forgive the amount.

The Peace Retreat scheduled for September 25-27 has been postponed.

Thank You for Your Giving

Thank you for your financial gifts to Peace Lutheran Church! The dollars you donate make transformational worship, healthy community and faith active in daily life possible. Thank you! The mission and ministry of Jesus Christ are lived out at Peace as we seek to be a church that lives by faith, is known by love, and brings hope to the world. We thrive because of the financial support of members and all are invited to contribute by mailing a check to Peace, 3695 County Road 101 N., Plymouth, MN 55446 or by visiting **www.peaceofplymouth.org**. If you would like to donate stock or name Peace Lutheran in your will please contact Pastor Kjell or our Treasurer Jason Tofteland at finance@peaceofplymouth.org
Stewardship Team: Jason Tofteland, Nick Bonow, Lee Yarger and Valerie Sorenson.

The church office is closed.

To contact please email peace@peaceofplymouth.org or call Chris at 612-386-8013



Pastor Kjell can be reached
Sunday-Thursday
at kjell@peaceofplymouth.org
or 763-571-2919
(in case of emergency 24/7)

Prayer Requests

If you have prayer requests you can send them to prayer@peaceofplymouth.org and they will be added to the prayer chain email. If you would like to receive the prayer chain emails sign-up under "News & Events" at peaceofplymouth.org

**Peace Notes is a monthly newsletter.
Deadline for submissions
is the 5th of the month**

Peace Lutheran Church Staff

Lead Pastor Rev. Kjell Ferris
Minister of Music..... Stefanie Fiser Kleven
Organist..... Anne Phillips
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COMMUNICATIONS

Want an announcement into the weekly email? Email chris@peaceofplymouth.org by Thursday 5pm.

Want an announcement into the monthly newsletter? Email chris@peaceofplymouth.org by the 5th of the previous month.



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about race, culture and
empathy available to borrow
from the Peace Library of Love.**

All Are Welcome Here

Invite Your Family & Friends



the **7** Faith Practices

Prayer - oriented toward God

Food - eating with Jesus

Worship - seeking God's presence

Sacraments - a tapestry of traditions

Money - the joy of sharing

Service - the needs right around you

Community - an unexpected family

SUNDAY MORNING

9:00 am —Worship Live Streamed

9:45 am —Fellowship & Education
for all ages via Zoom Ministries.

Find these on peaceofplymouth.org



YouTube

Peace is social!

Find us on Facebook

@PeaceofPlymouth or search

Peace Lutheran Church Of Plymouth to stay connected.

Youtube Channel: Peace Lutheran Church of MN

Welcome. Worship. Service.

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