



Peace Notes

PEACE LUTHERAN CHURCH OF PLYMOUTH, MINNESOTA

Volume 25, Issue 11 | November 2020



Advent and Christmas are going to be different this year, that's for sure. But, we know that God is steadfast, and even if we aren't worshipping together in person, Christ will come indeed.

Virtual worship will be a little different, too. We'll focus on how we bring Advent into our homes and await the Messiah.

You are invited to participate in various ways, both during worship and otherwise. We will be putting together activities and devotions that connect us to our traditions and each other and giving them to all Peace members to enjoy. We're calling it Advent-in-a-Box!

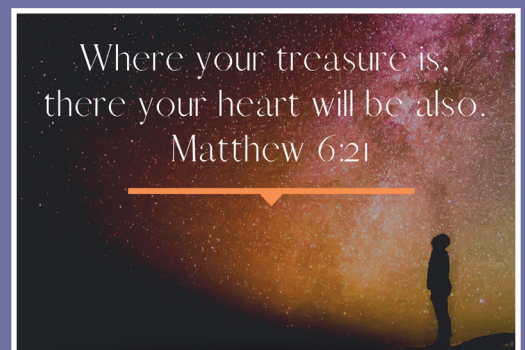
You can expect activities that are appropriate for all ages, in addition to some education about Advent traditions from other countries and ideas for serving our neighbors during this season. For each of the four weeks of Advent, we will Learn to Create, Serve, and Explore together.

This box is FREE to all Peace members, and we encourage everyone to get one. They will be available for pick-up from the church on Nov. 21, 10 am - 11 am, and Nov. 22, after worship at 10:30 am, or they can be delivered right to your home. If you wish to GIVE Advent-in-a-Box to a friend or neighbor, we invite you to do so as well. Watch for a link to the registration page in the Peace e-news that arrives each Saturday.

Faith Practice: Money

Prayer, Food, Worship, Sacraments, Money, Service & Community, are faith practices—ways we strengthen our faith in response to God's abundant love. September through December Peace Lutheran is focusing on the faith practice of money. We challenge ourselves to seek change in the four areas of our lives that Martin Luther says we live out our vocation: home, congregation, work/volunteer/school, and community engagement.

You are invited to write your goals on the bookmark that was mailed out. Remember, the change doesn't need to be huge; it needs to be meaningful to you.



Your Story, Our Story, God's Story

Vocation
Faith in Daily Life



peaceofplymouth.org

Your Story, Our Story, God's Story

Vocation small groups and sermon series October 25 - November 22

"In the beginning...", "Long, long ago, in a kingdom far, far away...", "It was the best of times. It was the worst of times." A good story always draws us in. And we are changed by hearing it. The **Your Story, Our Story, God's Story** booklet we will be using contains short readings from a variety of books and articles that empower us to better understand our stories and our place within God's story. There is about 30 minutes of reading per week and we will meet in small groups via Zoom for 60 minutes per week over 5 weeks.

How can I get involved? To join a virtual small group and receive the **Your Story, Our Story, God's Story** booklet, email peace@peaceofplymouth.org or visit www.peaceofplymouth.org

A Thanksgiving Note



Small, special, personal is how we are hosting Thanksgiving this year. We are thankful for just harvested flavors, armfuls of fall colors, and candlelit smiles. As we move into the season of holidays, we can slow-down and take-in what matters most: saying thank you to friends and family, cooking a favorite dish, or playing that song that means so much. Jesus' love frees us from having to do it all. Jesus' love meets us amid our real lives, giving meaning to our every-day. My thoughts and prayers are with you as you plan to be in these holy-days in new and different but still deeply meaningful ways.

Christ's Peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink.

Pastor Kjell



A Vision for Peace and YOU!

The Peace VISION Team has spent the last year defining who we are as a congregation and how we support each other and our community. The work resulted in a carefully crafted vision, mission, goals, and values for Peace Lutheran.

To reach this point, we conducted the Congregational Vitality Survey, met with influential members of the broader Plymouth community, and reviewed our draft with a representative group at the church. From there, we produced a living document that will serve as a guide to make decisions going forward.

Next, we will identify key champions to lead the process of developing priorities, actions, and timelines. The strategic direction that was created in our VISION document will be the blueprint to support that tactical execution.

As we prepare for this transition to a new set of champions, we ask each member of Peace to review this defining document and consider:

1. **Is this accurate?**
2. **Is it clear?**
3. **Is there anything key to our identity that is missing?**
4. **How would you like to help to move forward?**

Please join us on Wednesday, November 11, at 7 pm to discuss these questions and your thoughts.

Your input is valuable, and we appreciate you taking the time to share. The zoom link will come in the weekly email. Email peace@peaceofplymouth.org to get signed up for the email.

You can access the current VISION document from the peaceofplymouth.org homepage at any time before the conversation.

The VISION Team consists of Inger Trooien, Val Sorenson, Janelle Leppa, Kate Tofteland, and Jennifer Stoffel. We were assisted by Pastor Kjell and Jim Ladoux from Vibrant Faith Ministries.

Black Lives Matter

Just after the killing of George Floyd, Peace Lutheran Church put the words, Black Lives Matter, on our digital sign. Some in our community have been uncomfortable with those words, calling to say that real Christians should say, "All Lives Matter." Of course, all lives, even more, all creation, matter to God, but not all lives have been bought and sold, discriminated against, and not valued equally. As Annika Isbell says so well in her article this month, white people need to be uncomfortable.

As Peace Lutheran continues to seek justice and peace, we are adding new messages to our sign that will powerfully communicate our commitment to the lives of our neighbors of color.



Interfaith Outreach Sleepout

2020 has been different for all of us. One thing that has not changed is the existence of poverty and homelessness. Interfaith Outreach has been organizing the Sleep Out for homelessness for 25 years. Last year, the Sleep Out raised \$2,698,912 and helped to support nearly 2,000 families in gaining the resources needed to help them strengthen and stabilize.

The Sleep Out remains a vital ministry, even though it will look different this year. To keep everyone safe during the Covid-19 pandemic, the Sleep Out will not happen at Peace.

The community-wide Sleep Out will happen on Saturday, November 13th. The campaign will run from November 1st through December 31st. Here are some ways you can participate:



1. **Share your intention to raise Interfaith Outreach funds** by talking about the campaign with friends and family or sharing on social media.
2. **Sleep outside in your yard!**
3. **Have a “bedless night”** (Ideas might be to turn your heat down, have everyone in the house sleep on a hard floor, or both)
4. **Go to the IOCP.org and donate.**

If you are interested in participating in the Sleep Out and would like some resources, or if you are interested in a community event related to the Sleep Out, please contact Melissa Weinhandl or email peace@peaceofplymouth.org.



Ways of Giving by Mike Onan

Ways to Give to Peace



Mike Onan

How we do things, all seems to be changing, including how we give financially to the church. With COVID, there is no longer an offering plate passed down the pews that we drop our giving envelope into. The fact is, the offering plate hasn't been how many members have been giving to Peace for a long time. Maybe it's an excellent time to remind you of some of the options for giving to Peace that may fit better with your situation and these changing times.

One way is donating a lump sum into a Donor-Advised Fund. When you do, you will receive a tax deduction for the full amount you donate. Then direct that money to Peace Lutheran and other non-profits you support over a period of years. It provides a way for some of us to retain a tax benefit for our charitable contributions that we otherwise wouldn't receive because we no longer qualify to itemize deductions on our tax return.

DAFs can offer parents an opportunity to teach their children or grandchildren about generosity. With a DAF, not unlike God's love and grace, the gift has already been made. What remains is how that gift is to be used. Giving your child a small part of the donated money and having them choose the non-profit organization provides you with a chance for conversations about giving and instilling in them your values.

Ways of Giving video

Mike Onan has recorded a video talking about different ways people can give to Peace and to other non-profits they care for. This video can be found by going to YouTube and typing "Peace Lutheran Church of Plymouth Minnesota" into the search bar.

A PRAYER FOR DISCOMFORT

by Annika Isbel

In the spring of 2017, college campuses across the country erupted in protests and sit-ins in response to racist incidents that had threatened the well-being of students of color. St. Olaf College, my alma mater, made national headlines when students occupied our commons' building after a classmate had found a note on his car.

“GO HOME, N-WORD”

A word so vicious I cannot type it, written so flagrantly on a Post-It Note. At around 6:30 pm, just before the dinner rush, students blocked the cafeteria. In all honesty, most students who came up with the stairs for their evening meal joined the group without hesitation. But it was the visiting parents, the grandparents, and the faculty who looked uncomfortable. Not angry, not disgusted, not confused, not annoyed, not even unsupportive. Uncomfortable.

Discomfort is a powerful agent. It is the sensation that prompts us to change. Hunger pangs encourage us to eat, a restless leg reminds us to stand up and move, and we toss and turn in bed until we reach maximum comfort for a good night's sleep.

Now, I have a confession to make. Standing in front of that cafeteria, I, too, felt uncomfortable. Not confused, not unsupportive, but uncomfortable. Hungry, arms linked with two students I didn't know and flooded with questions. How long would we be here? Would we be allowed to eat eventually? Would I get in trouble? Would I have time to finish the essay I had been writing? What if my Mom finds out? What is the plan here? The biggest question plaguing my mind:

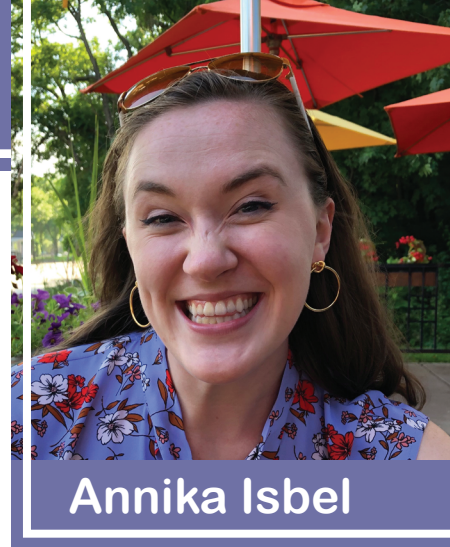
What is my job as a white person?

After reading books upon books, having tense and wonderful conversations, and trying my best to be a good ally, I have concluded that as a white person, my job is to make peace with my discomfort. My discomfort when I am unsure of what to do and what to say. My discomfort when I have done or said the wrong thing. My discomfort when I face something I do not understand. If I cannot make room for my discomfort, I will never be able to make room for change.

At that moment, standing in front of the cafeteria, the most important thing I could do was to let go of my discomfort and my uncertainties so that I could stand with the people of color who simply needed us to be there. Most people, including myself, fear discomfort. Both the discomfort itself and the aftermath of our choices before we make it go away. Shame, anxiety, defensiveness (the distant cousins of discomfort) set in until we lose the opportunity for change. But if we make peace with the members of this unpleasant family tree, what possibilities lie ahead?

What can be changed if we make peace with our discomfort?

Peace be with you all.



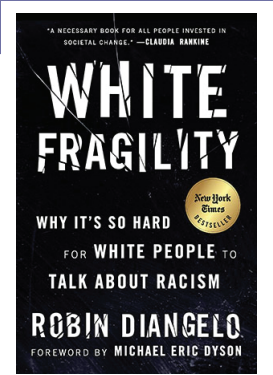
Annika Isbel

Learning About Ourselves Through Book Study

By Joni Sutton

Twenty-two members of our Peace congregation are wrapping up weekly small group meetings to discuss the book **“White Fragility”** by **Robin DiAngelo**. Members have been divided into four groups and have typically discussed one chapter per week via Zoom.

Reading and processing the information in this book can be a challenge, as it pushes us to examine our own prejudices and behaviors. At the same time, group members have found it to be a valuable learning experience and a way to become more in touch with our faith as we strive to “walk the walk” as Christians. Says one study group participant, “Studying this book has opened my eyes to be able to recognize how I am participating in systematic racism. My hope is that this can be the first step on a lifelong journey of attempting to interrupt the racism that is all around me.” Some may ask why the topic of racism is relevant to a Christian congregation. One of our members describes the value in this way: “As a Christian, I see parallels to the confession of sin which we speak every Sunday: I confess that I have sinned against my brothers and sisters by not recognizing their status as diminished and oppressed in God's kingdom, and not witnessing to the justice desired by God. The book study has caused me to pray for forgiveness and strength to keep my resolve to follow God's will for His people. And, because I am forgiven, the Spirit sends redemption, hope, and resolve to continue. I thank God for the members of my group, who share their faith and wisdom. Sharing thoughts and experiences encourage me to continue to seek justice.”



FAITH IN DAILY LIFE

By Joni Sutton

Building Community through the Environment

At Peace Lutheran, we have had many conversations about how our faith leads us to be good and faithful stewards of the earth. One Peace member who knows how to “walk the walk” when it comes to taking care of our planet is Luke Forsberg.

Luke has been a member of Peace for all of his 22 years. A recent graduate of Luther College holds a degree in Environmental Policy with a minor in Spanish. As a person who enjoys writing, one of Luke’s career hopes is to work in environmental journalism. He thinks it would be great if he could make a difference in people’s lives and our planet’s health by doing this.

During his time at Luther, Luke was able to go on a J-term trip to Holden Village, a Lutheran Ecumenical Environmental Retreat Center in the Northern Cascade Mountains of Washington State. Holden Village is an old copper mining village that has become a retreat center that values community and nature, with very little to no electronics use. “Without everyone on their cell phones, we got to know each other so much better through playing games and just having a lot of time for conversation, as well as amazing hikes and cross-country ski trips through the mountains.”

When asked about his vocation’s joys and challenges, Luke says that one of his greatest joys is witnessing community building through environmental work and being in nature. “Cleaning up a local park, picking up trash on the side of Highway 55 with other church members, or teaching young kids about nature as I did last summer as a Green Iowa AmeriCorps member was all done with other people who care about their community, each other, and the generations of the future.” Luke acknowledges that although we always hear that as Christians, we are supposed to be stewards of God’s creation, this can feel like one of those sayings that has been used so much it has lost some of its meaning. He says, “I believe sometimes we all get caught up in overthinking about the material world that we forget about what is truly important. Thinking about something larger than ourselves – nature or the environment – can realign us. My faith in God and the awe of this huge and beautiful place has always been able to re-center me when I feel overwhelmed.”

Luke has enjoyed activities beyond his studies both at home and at college. He has been a part of the chimes/bells choirs at our church since middle school and continues to play in Peace’s adult handbell choir as time allows. At Luther, he was able to perform musically with the Luther Ringers for three years. During his time at Luther, he was also a member of a group known as Song Paths, led by Luther alumnus Richard Bruxvoort Colligan (nephew to Peace member Ross Colligan). Song Paths was a group that talked about faith, life challenges, and how one’s faith has helped the group’s members get through those challenges.

Luke shares that it has been wonderful growing up at Peace. He has loved the sense of community as well as the opportunities to be involved in music. “Singing the Holden Evening Prayer at Holden brought back so many fond memories of Lenten worship services back home,” he says.

Your church family looks forward to seeing what life has in store for you next, Luke, and we appreciate all of the good work you are already doing for our planet!



Luke Forsberg



Generosity Devotion Videos

Lee Yarger, a retired pastor and member at Peace, recorded three video devotions. In each video, he shares a story and wonders about how the stories are true in his life.

Check them out by going to peaceofplymouth.org/archives/3630 or typing “**Peace Lutheran Church of Plymouth Minnesota**” into the YouTube search bar.



Updates & Notices

Your Story, Our Story, God's Story

Vocation small groups and sermon series
October 25 - November 22

All Saints Day, Nov 1

9:00 am virtual worship, live-streamed on
peaceofplymouth.org
10:30 am in-person worship in the Sanctuary

Pledge Card Drive-in Drop-off

Sunday, Nov 8 after worship

Peace Vision Discussion

Wednesday, Nov. 11, 7 pm via Zoom
Sign-up at peaceofplymouth.org

Pick-up ADVENT-IN-A-BOX

Saturday, Nov 21, 10-11 am
Sunday, Nov. 22,
after worship, 10:30 am



Thanksgiving Eve Worship

Wednesday, November 25, 6:30 pm
View at peaceofplymouth.org

ADVENT-IN-A-BOX Virtual kickoff

Saturday, Nov 28, 3:00 pm via Zoom



Thank You for Your Giving

Sunday, Nov. 8 is Pledge Sunday and we are encouraging everyone to drive over to Peace to drop off your pledge card and have some donuts and coffee on us! If you are unable to do so, please mail your card to: Peace Lutheran Church, P.O. Box 416, Hanover, MN 55341.

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
Office Manager Chris Bacon



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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.



Temporary Mailing Address:

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Thanksgiving Worship
Nov. 25, 6:30 pm
peaceofplymouth.org

All Are Welcome Here

Invite Your Family & Friends



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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