



Peace Notes

PEACE LUTHERAN CHURCH OF PLYMOUTH, MINNESOTA

Volume 25, Issue 12 December 2020



ADVENT 2020

"Lost in the night do the people yet languish,
longing for morning the darkness to vanquish
plaintively sighing with hearts full of anguish,
Will not day come soon? Will not day come soon?"

The words to this Nordic Hymn from the late 1800s seem especially appropriate this year. We are struggling. We yearn for the Christmases we know from the past. We are awaiting a new day, free of COVID-19. But yet... Christ is coming soon.

Join us as we look with longing to the birth of Jesus and await his arrival. How will you create an Advent worship space in your own home this year? Who would you like to invite to virtual worship and coffee hour? All are welcome around our collective Christmas tree.

Many of us will be sharing the joys from Advent-in-a-Box throughout the month. Everyone can look forward to seeing our crafts and activities featured in our social media and virtual coffee hours.

Worship & Fellowship Opportunities

November 29 – First Sunday of Advent

Candle of HOPE - BLUE

Daniel 6:6-27, Daniel's Hope in God

9:00a live-streamed worship, followed by virtual coffee hour

December 6 – Second Sunday of Advent

Candle of PEACE - BLUE

Joel 2:12-13, 28-29, Joel: God's Promised Spirit

9:00a live-streamed worship with Holy Communion, followed by virtual coffee hour

December 13 – Third Sunday of Advent

Candle of JOY - BLUE

Isaiah 61:1-11, The Spirit of the Lord is Upon Me

9:00a live-streamed worship, featuring a virtual mini Christmas pageant, followed by virtual coffee hour

December 18 – Fourth Sunday of Advent

Candle of LOVE - PINK

Luke 1:26-49, Jesus' Birth Announced

9:00a live-streamed worship with Holy Communion, followed by virtual coffee hour

Thursday, December 24 – Christmas Eve

CHRIST candle - WHITE

Luke 2:1-20 and Psalm 96, The Birth of Jesus

3:30p live-streamed worship with Holy Communion, followed by virtual fellowship on Zoom

December 27 – First Sunday of Christmas

Luke 2: 21-38, Simeon and Anna

9:00a live-streamed worship with Holy Communion, followed by virtual coffee hour

January 3 – Second Sunday of Christmas

Luke 2: 41-52

The Boy in the Temple

9:00a live-streamed worship, followed by virtual coffee hour

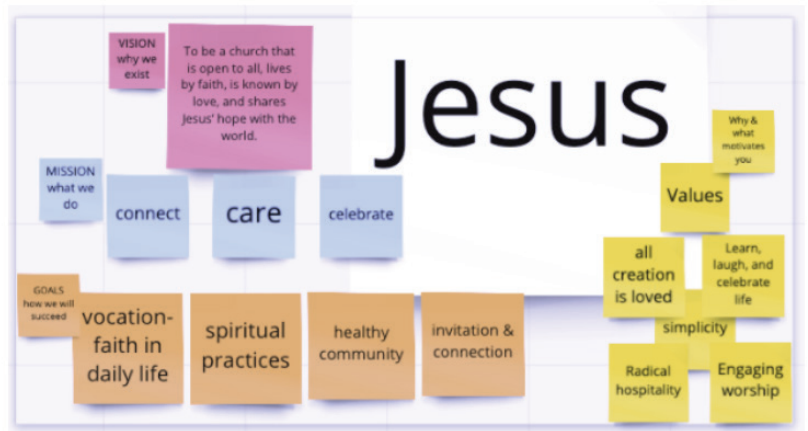
THE MOST SIGNIFICANT ISSUE



As I talk with people from Peace Lutheran and pastor friends from around the country, it seems the most significant practical issue right now is: white comfort at the expense of justice for people of color. As light is shown on the insidious nature of white supremacy in our institutions and culture, many seek and work for change, and they see this rooted in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This movement causes discomfort and conflict at Peace and many of the congregations where I have spoken with the pastors. Some people are frustrated we are not moving fast and far enough, while some can't believe we are still even having the conversation. At the same time, another group is just getting by with all the daily stressors of 2020.

How do we find a deep unity that is not centered in "let's just get along," but an understanding of faith rooted in Christ's insistence on justice for the marginalized and

oppressed? What are the risks of seeking this unity? What will be lost in this shift away from the lowest common denominator unity of "comfort" toward one of deeper discipleship commitments? How do we insist on justice while not looking down upon those who participate in systemic oppression (this includes all of us!). This is challenging work, but it is good work, and it's the work before us today.



Connect, Care, and Celebrate is the "what we do" words for Peace Lutheran the VISION Team discerned while listening to the congregation. In November and December, the VISION Team and some other volunteers will call every household to do just that: Connect, Care, and Celebrate (maybe you've already been called). The calls will offer a chance to connect via one-on-one conversations. During the calls, we seek to care deeply about your feelings related to race and your daily lives. And we will celebrate our joys and messiness in prayer. All of this is part of our movement toward being a church that is open to all, lives by faith, is known by love, and shares Jesus' hope with our world.

Christ's Peace,

Kjell
Pastor Kjell



3,000 MITTENS!!

Bunny Rova has once again knit mittens this year for donation. In fact, Bunny knit 173 pairs of mittens so far this year. She started knitting mittens for the Peace giving tree in 1996 and hit the 3,000 mark this year!

**The dark purple mittens
on the seat of the chair is number 3,000.**

Bunny put money and a note inside for the lucky one who chooses that pair!

Thank you from all of us, Bunny!

OPERATION BOOTSTRAP AFRICA

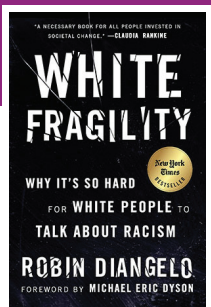


There is a good chance you know about Operation Bootstrap Africa's work to educate girls in Africa. That is about two-thirds of their budget, but that isn't all they do. For example, since the 1980's, they have helped pay teachers at a handful of schools in southern Madagascar.

Just last month, the church employee distributing the teachers' salaries reached out to Jason Bergmann, OBA's Executive Director, telling him about a famine in the area of these schools. Jason put together a plan for feeding the students at the schools, which was no small feat given there is no food available in all of southern Madagascar due to the drought.

Within three weeks, the 800 students were being fed; literally, lives are being saved. And, as the word gets out, more kids are showing up to school. Amazingly it costs about \$1 per week to feed one student. \$800 can provide food for all the students for one week! What a great gift for Christmas!

To learn more and donate, contact www.bootstrapafrica.org or info@BootstrapAfrica.org



Racial Justice Meeting

In late October almost 30 people from Peace met via zoom to discuss their experiences of reading the book *White Fragility* and to ask questions about what is next in Peace Lutheran's work around

racial justice and as individuals in our families, workplaces and communities. The group used a document from the Minnesota Council of Churches that suggests a three pronged approach: truth-telling, education and reparations. A starting point seems to be: continued truth-telling in our liturgy and sermons, a video discussion group starting in January and more conversation as a congregation about what it means to white in America. Part of that congregational conversation is happening in the every-member-calls of late November and early December. Stay tuned for more information from this group and remember everyone's feedback is important.



Members of Peace talking about racial equity and justice on October 21

Ways to Give to Peace



Mike Onan

How we do things all seems to be changing, including how we give financially to the church. In these “COVID times,” some people are taking advantage of the option to have automatic withdrawals from their bank account. Another option for giving to Peace that may fit your situation and these changing times is an IRA distribution.

If you are at least 70½ years old, a direct IRA distribution might be the perfect way for you to give and retain

the maximum tax benefit. I’m getting very close, so I have checked into it--simply ask the custodian of your IRA to send an amount directly to Peace instead of withdrawing it yourself. Then you don’t have to include that in your taxable income. After you reach 72, you are required to take a certain amount out of your IRA every year and pay the tax on that amount. If you donate some or all of that amount to a non-profit through direct distribution, it will count toward meeting that required minimum distribution, but you won’t have to pay tax on it.

Ways of Giving -- On YouTube

Mike Onan has recorded a video talking about different ways people can give to Peace and other non-profits they care about and make donations. Find this video by going to YouTube and typing “Peace Lutheran Church of Plymouth Minnesota” into the search bar.

Thank You for Your Giving

2021 Pledge Cards

You can mail in your pledge card or simply email finance@peaceofplymouth.org with your expected giving for 2021. Mail to: Peace Lutheran Church, P.O. Box 416, Hanover, MN 55341



PEACE
LUTHERAN CHURCH

PLEDGE
2021

WAYS TO MANAGE HOLIDAY STRESS AND EXPECTATIONS

by Melissa Weinhandl, MA. MA. LAMFT

The season of Advent is about anticipation. We are waiting for our promised messiah. In many ways, this is a happy and exciting time! However, it is not uncommon to experience increased stress or an uptick in depression or anxiety symptoms. Many components contribute to extra difficulties during this time of year. Financial strain, extended family stress, listening to “shoulds,” traveling, extras in our calendars, and decreasing sunlight are all things that bring on burdens for us. This year, we have the added stress of COVID-19. This year, we might be wondering how to spend time with the people we love and care about, especially with the significant ambiguity surrounding this virus and community safety. Many people have lost jobs or had their pay cut, increasing the financial load. Some may be experiencing loneliness. It is often hard to admit when we struggle through the Christmas season because the expectation is that Christmas is a happy time.

Here are some ways we can help to support our mental health during this time.

Be aware of increasing stress or increasing anxiety or depression symptoms.

Know what happens as your body starts to experience these things. Catch it as soon as you can. The earlier we intervene, the better. Pay attention to both brain and body responses.

Acknowledge when things are hard.

It is OK to experience stress, sadness, or anger this time of year. For some, Christmas brings up grief. Having feelings other than joy and happiness is normal. Acknowledging and expressing these feelings can be powerful.

Watch alcohol and food consumption.

Food and sometimes alcohol plays a significant role in how we celebrate the season. Both of which can be used to decrease uncomfortable feelings artificially. While there might be temporary relief of symptoms, we often feel worse after overindulging.

Use coping skills.

Healthy coping skills will vary from person to person. They can range from taking time for silence to vigorous exercise. Two simple things to try would be to stop and take five deep and slow breaths or take a brisk walk.

Let go of some expectations.

Christmas does not have to be perfect. There is pressure to make the right meal or get the right gifts. This year especially, Christmas will not live up to the expectations that many of us have. We can let go of the ideas of perfection that comes with this time of year. As we let go, we can celebrate and find gratitude in smaller victories.

Seek out help.

Sometimes, we need a professional to help us when our stress becomes overwhelming, persistent, or increasingly difficult to manage. Seek out a therapist when needed.



Melissa Weinhandl

WEST SUBURBAN GRIEF COALITION

The mission of the Grief Coalition is to provide caring grief support and education for all adults who are grieving the death of a loved one. Since COVID, they have moved to smaller in-person or Zoom meetings. The in-person meetings are being held by multiple spouse loss groups, a child loss group, and a family loss group. Once a month, they have a speaker on Zoom that speaks on relevant grief subject to our entire membership.

Questions?

You can reach the Coalition Director, Alva Benson, at 763-545-1108 or the Coalition Coordinator, at 612-840-1774.

You can also keep up with the latest information about the Coalition at westsuburbangriefmn.org

FAITH IN DAILY LIFE

By Joni Sutton

A Life Journey of Faith

There are those among us who are most comfortable curling up with a good book. Others keep busy with a job and a hobby or two. And then there is Deb Weir, our featured Peace member this month. At work and in her free time, she is a woman who can't seem to get enough of living her vocation!

Deb has been a member of Peace for 24 years. During this time, she has taught nearly every age of Sunday School. Has been a Confirmation mentor, has worked in the nursery, was a member of the Youth and Family, Finance and Social Action Committees, has led the Stewardship Drive and the Rummage Sale, has sung in the choir, has ushered, has been a communion helper, a lector, has cooked TreeHouse dinners, has volunteered for Families Moving Forward and has been a member of many small groups. Deb has a full-time career as a consultant, and she is also pursuing a Doctorate in Leadership (she holds a Master's Degree in Organizational Leadership). Amidst these many vocations, this lifelong learner sees her greatest vocation as a mother to her son, Blake. "This has been the best gift I have received, and he has made me a better person."

For Deb, life is all about making connections and building relationships. As a consultant, she is continually learning about different industries, people, and innovations. In her volunteerism, she feels that she has always had a calling to work with young people as a mentor and in a spiritual sense. "I have learned far more from them than they have from me," she says, adding that working with students allows her to talk about her faith path and journey. When asked about her vocation's joys and challenges, Deb admits that she tends to take on a lot and doesn't always have sufficient time to recharge and take care of herself. On the other hand, she says that during the COVID pandemic, Deb has had times when she has not felt that she has been thriving as much as usual. She misses the personal contact with people that have been vital to her well-being.

Deb sees her faith as a part of who she is, not something separate from her vocations. "Even when I question my faith, it will continue to be a part of my life. Faith is not something that I only feel or express in church, but it is how I live my life." When she was about ten years old, a woman named Mrs. Westlake instilled in her a deep love of and faith in Jesus, which has been a continual part of her life. It is Deb's faith that has helped her through some very tough times in life. She says that she has questioned her faith throughout her life but that her first pastor told her that this is how faith is strengthened. "Don't be afraid to look hard at your faith; I am a person who likes tangible proof, and faith requires that I simply trust. Sometimes I do have proof, but the basis of faith is trust in God." Thank you for your service and faithfulness, Deb. Your Peace family hopes that you are taking some time to put your feet up during this time!



DEB WEIR



PRAYER

In his 1984 book, *Guerrillas of Grace*,
Ted Loder offers a prayer worth revisiting today.

*Sometimes it Just Seems to Be Too Much.
Sometimes, Lord,
Sometimes the very air seems scorched
by threats and rejection and decay until there is nothing
but to inhale pain and exhale confusion.*

*Too much of darkness, Lord,
too much of cruelty and selfishness and indifference...*

*Too much, Lord,
too much,
too bloody, bruising, brain-washing much.*

*Or is it too little,
too little of compassion, too little of courage,
of daring, of persistence, of sacrifice;
too little of music and laughter and celebration?*

*O God,
make of me some nourishment
for these starved times,
some food for my brothers and sisters
who are hungry for gladness and hope,
that, being bread for them,
I may also be fed and be full.*

Amen

Advent 2020



November 29, 2020
First Sunday of Advent
Daniel 6:6-27



December 18, 2020
Fourth Sunday of Advent
Luke 1:26-49



December 6, 2020
Second Sunday of Advent
Joel 2:12-13, 28-29



December 24, 2020
Christmas Eve
Luke 2:1-20



December 13, 2020
Third Sunday of Advent
Isaiah 61:1-11

Congratulations Miles!



Miles Akhigbe, member of Peace and Wayzata High's junior soccer defender, made first-team All-State for leading the Trojans to a Lake Conference title and first place in Section 6AA with a 12-1-1 record.

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 ManagerChris Bacon



3695 County Road 101 N.
Plymouth, MN 55446

763.478.9406

peace@peaceofplymouth.org
www.peaceofplymouth.org

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:

Peace Lutheran Church

P.O. Box 416

10961 4th St NE

Hanover, MN 55341

Peaceofplymouth.org

Street address:

3695 County Road 101 N

Plymouth, MN 55446-2907

NON-PROFIT
ORG.
U.S POSTAGE
PAID
COPI

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Christmas Eve Worship

Dec. 24, 3:30 pm

peaceofplymouth.org

All Are Welcome Here

Invite Your Family & Friends



**Hope Peace
Joy Love**

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.

3695 County Road 101 N., Plymouth, MN 55446-2907

www.peaceofplymouth.org | 763.478.9406 | peace@peaceofplymouth.org