



# Peace Notes

PEACE LUTHERAN CHURCH OF PLYMOUTH, MINNESOTA

Volume 26, Issue 1 January 2021



## The Season of Epiphany

LIVING FAITHFULLY IN GOD'S WORLD:  
SEEING WHITE,  
CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER,  
AND BIBLE STUDY.

### THE GOSPEL OF LUKE - LIVING FAITHFULLY IN GOD'S WORLD

Jesus proclaims God's love by healing the sick, raising the dead, casting out oppressive spirits, and teaching through vivid parables. In the Gospel of Luke, salvation is not just far off and eternal but here and now. Luke makes it clear that salvation looks like people being restored to full participation in society. Increased charity isn't the goal of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection; God seeks a changing world where there truly is justice for all.

From now until Easter, we are reading from the Gospel of Luke. Luke's Gospel offers a glimpse into the different facets of salvation, a salvation that has spiritual, physical, and social dimensions. Luke invites us to deeply reflect on the nature of God and what it means for us to live faithfully in the world.

During the season of Epiphany, Peace is offering three ways to live out your FAITH and to empower our reflection on living faithfully in God's world: Seeing White podcast and small groups, Contemplative Prayer, and Bible Study.

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# EPIPHANY 2021:

## THREE WAYS TO LIVE OUT YOUR FAITH

# Living Faithfully in God's World

### 1) *Seeing White* Podcast & Small Group Conversations

Participants will use the Gospel of Luke to take a critical look at whiteness and how it functions in our society, and what it means to live faithfully in God's world based on the fact that whiteness has been privileged since before the creation of our nation. Epiphany is the church year's season that literally means a manifestation of the divine or a moment of sudden insight. Epiphany is about SEEING, and now is the time for *Seeing White*.

Starting the first week of January and continuing for seven weeks, individuals will read from the Gospel of Luke, listen to two of the *Seeing White* podcasts per week, and discuss with their small group. Some families might choose to do this together, other people might organize a group of friends or neighbors. Still, others will participate in a group from the church as we seek the truth and learn, all of us journeying toward the world God desires.

#### How to get started:

- **Join a group** by emailing [peace@peaceofplymouth.org](mailto:peace@peaceofplymouth.org) or form your own group.
- **Download the study guide** at [peaceofplymouth.org](http://peaceofplymouth.org).
- **Get the podcast** - Scene on Radio, Season 2, Turning the Lens (*Seeing White*, Part 1) [www.sceneonradio.org/episode-31-turning-the-lens-seeing-white-part-1/](http://www.sceneonradio.org/episode-31-turning-the-lens-seeing-white-part-1/) from Feb 15, 2017).  
or where ever you get your podcasts.

### 2) Contemplative Prayer

*Fridays at 7-8 pm via Zoom, starting January 8th, 2021*

Mental health is an essential part of overall health. While there are many aspects to increasing emotional wellness, we often consider the skill of self-reflection to be foundational. Self-reflection allows us to care for ourselves so that we can show the world our best selves. When we do not care for ourselves, troubling thoughts and feelings often come out in ways that we do not intend (such as anger outbursts, depressive episodes, panic attacks, unrealistic expectations of the world or others, and irritability). There are many ways to access and build the skill of self-reflection. Finding ways to slow ourselves down, so we have the time to spend with ourselves, recognizing our thoughts and feelings, and recharging our brains and bodies, so we have the emotional resources to move through the rest of our day or week.

Spiritual health operates in similar ways. Contemplation is the act of slowing down and spending time with something. Through contemplation, we can learn to be fully present in our tasks and connect with ourselves, God, and others. This is not something that necessarily comes easily when we are bombarded with daily stress. It is a skill that needs to be practiced.

A time to practice contemplation: Melissa Weinhandl will offer a dedicated time to learn and practice this contemplation skill. We will focus on spiritual, emotional, and communal health. There are many benefits to practicing this in a group format as the community offers us support, vulnerability, and accountability. Melissa will create space every week, and you can choose if you would like to attend or not. There is no commitment and will be on an "as-needed" basis. The Zoom link will be provided in the regular Saturday email. If you would like to be included in a separate email list with the link and some additional resources between sessions, please email [peace@peaceofplymouth.org](mailto:peace@peaceofplymouth.org). Also, if you are interested in this group but the day/time does not work, please let us know that as well.

### 3) Book of Ephesians Bible Study

# The Season of Epiphany

Thursdays, 9-10 am on Zoom, Jan 7-Apr 1

Join in for an hour of Bible study, prayer, and fellowship. Starting in January, this small group will use the book of Ephesians to guide their learning and reflection in a way that sends them out better equipped to “lean-in” to life’s joys and challenges. Look for the Zoom link in the weekly Saturday e-news. (Please email [peace@peaceofplymouth.org](mailto:peace@peaceofplymouth.org) to receive the e-news).

## THE GOSPEL OF LUKE - LIVING FAITHFULLY IN GOD’S WORLD

**Sunday, January 3** - Escape from Herod, Matthew 2:11-15

**Sunday, January 10** - Jesus’ Baptism, Luke 3:1-22

**Sunday, January 17** - Sermon at Nazareth, Luke 4:14-30

**Sunday, January 24** - Fish for People Luke, 5:1-11

**Sunday, January 31** - Healing on the Sabbath Luke, 6:1-16

**Sunday, February 7** - Raising the Widow’s Son Luke, 7:1-17

**Sunday, February 14** - Transfiguration Luke, 9:28-45

## STRENGTHENING FAITH, ONE FAITH PRACTICE AT A TIME

In the Congregational Vitality Survey, the people of Peace said they would like to strengthen their faith. So, way back in May, Peace Lutheran began exercising a different “faith muscle” every four months.

- **May through August**, we focused on prayer--*being oriented toward God*.
- **September through December**, we were working our generosity muscle--*experiencing the joy of sharing*.
- **January through April 2021**, we will turn our attention toward the faith practice of community.

### Faith Practice, Community--an unexpected family

Amid COVID, we feel a deep desire for community. Our usual ways of connecting with friends, family, and community have been radically changed. Throughout time, one ritual that has symbolized community is lighting a candle. To light, a candle is to enact what the Gospel of John says, “A light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.” The light of a candle represents the Holy Spirit in our midst and reminds us that we are brought together through the power of the Holy Spirit. When we feel separated from one another, when our faith needs strength, we can light a candle acknowledging Jesus’ mighty love that is active in our lives and the world, that love that is bringing us together even when we are not physically together.

# LIGHT SHINES IN THE DARKNESS

Merry Christmas Peace Lutheran Church,

In the midst of pandemic darkness, the words from the Gospel of John are still true... the light shines. A wonderful Christmas program, tons of people involved in the leadership of worship, and continued financial support of Jesus' mission and ministry that is being carried out through Peace Lutheran Church! We are committed to making Peace a place that is steeped in Jesus' love. The past 10 months have been hard for everyone. Not being able to gather in person makes communication very difficult.

Through the every-member-calls, we have gathered some valuable information about how people are feeling. It is clear that not everyone needs the same things. For example, some are happy with worship "just the way it is" while others are looking for more "tradition." Some are very happy with the focus on race and justice, while others are feeling overwhelmed by the information. As we approach a new year let's set ourselves up for success.

First, let's take a deep breath. In the midst of this very different New Year let's allow ourselves space to celebrate, in new and different ways, the love of God becomes flesh, Jesus. Let's center our lives in Jesus' grace and generosity.

Second, let's make an effort to communicate. The Council wants to listen more deeply and gain insight into the initial feedback from the every-member-calls. To do this we are creating a listening session on Tuesday, January 12, 7 pm. Using the breakout rooms in Zoom we'll form small groups, pray together and listen as you share where you believe God is calling Peace Lutheran Church.

Happy New Year!

*Pastor Kjell and the Council: Angela Birnbaum, Anne Stern, Jason Tofteland, Michael Sorenson, Janelle Leppa, Erin Jopke, and Dan Anderson*



## Hope Peace Joy Love

## ADVENT-IN-A-BOX DAY PHOTOS

**Photo 1:** Cheryl Taylor and Videll Pfeifer happy to pick up their Advent Bags.

**Photo 2:** Connie Onan sharing the joy of Advent.

**Photo 3:** The Boettner family joined the stream of cars at Peace, picking up their bags.

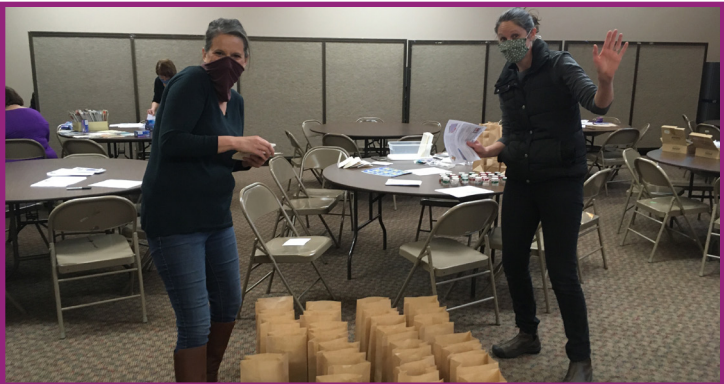
**Photo 4:** The Yargers picked up 1 of the 41 "Advent-in-a-Box" Bags that were put together.

**Photo 5:** Grace and Bob Tauring happy to participate in this Advent activity.

**Photo 6:** Pastor Kjell and family are excited to deliver "Advent-in-a-Box" to friends and family!



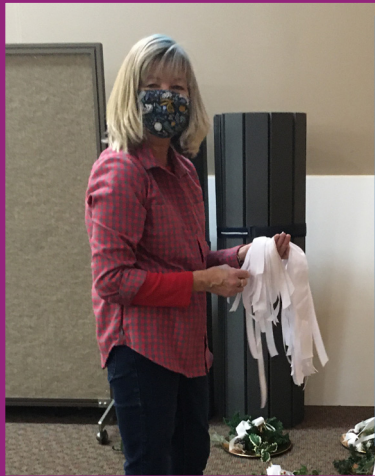
# CELEBRATING ADVENT-IN-A-BOX



**Melissa Weinhandl and Annie Bonow**  
assemble Week 1 Advent bags.



**Carol Forsberg, Jan Cera, and Chris Bacon**  
assemble Week 3 Advent bags.



**Holly Anderson**  
adds ribbon to the  
Advent wreath decorations.

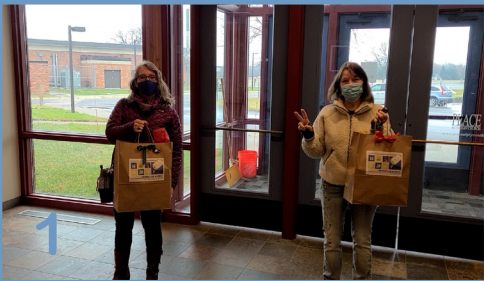


Happy Peace people talking and assembling their  
Advent wreaths on Zoom, November 28.



**Kinzie Weinhandl**  
adds ribbon to the  
Advent wreath decorations.

## ADVENT-IN-A-BOX PICK-UP





# FAITH IN DAILY LIFE

By Joni Sutton

## Giving Back

He holds an MBA in accounting. He is an avid gardener. He commits to Operation Bootstrap (a non-profit that supports projects that improve access to education and healthcare and supports sustainable agriculture in Tanzania, Kenya, and Madagascar) and the Maasai Girls Lutheran Secondary School in Tanzania. He has joined Peace Lutheran Church three different times. Have you narrowed it down? This month's Peace member who is living his vocation is Mike Onan.

In his career as an accountant, Mike has worked for both the private sector and non-profit organizations. During his 18 years working for Cargill, he found the company to have high standards "that started at the top." He appreciated knowing that the company would walk away from business deals that treated workers poorly or involved corrupt governments. Mike's time spent with Cargill shaped his view of the world and showed him how a for-profit company could be successful and ethical at the same time.

Mike moved to the world of non-profits when he became the Finance Director for United Way of Portage County in Stevens Point, Wisconsin. For Mike, this was a return to his roots near the Wisconsin area where he grew up, and where much of his family still lives. He appreciated their model for addressing health and human service needs and worked there for 12 years until he "retired." Retirement didn't last long: he went to work for Operation Bootstrap Africa in Minneapolis. He knew the organization well, as he had already been involved as a volunteer and board member over the years. He worked there for 18 months and then moved to become the Director of Finance for Academy of Whole Learning, a private non-profit K-12 school for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder, which he finds very rewarding.

Gardening is a passion for Mike, and it has been since his days as a 4-H member in his youth. He has been gardening organically since 1996. In his words, "Although there are many great food traditions in our country, I feel in general that we have a terrible food culture. From the way we grow our food to what we eat, we aren't caring for our bodies and God's creation as we should." When Mike and his wife, Connie, returned to Minnesota and Peace in 2016, he decided to take over the Peace Garden that had been Vern Miller's project in the past. He built a fence, created raised beds, and began composting. Food is once again being donated to IOCP. The Sunday School students helped to plant strawberry plants in 2019.

When asked what thriving looks like to him, Mike says that thriving is having what we need and being satisfied with what we have. "Thriving requires controlling our stress and being able to enjoy the big things and little things in our lives. I think we need to find ways to give back, to be God's hands and feet in the world to feel we are thriving. We need to keep the right relationship with our family and everyone else we deal with. You can disagree with people, you can have different beliefs, agendas, lifestyles, etc., but you should never do anything that severs the relationship." Thank you, Mike, for all you do for our congregation and our community!



Mike Onan

## VOCATION SMALL GROUPS

In November and December, people of Peace gathered via zoom to talk about stories--God's story and their story. What was a takeaway? "Listening to someone's story can be like standing on holy ground." That comes from our confession of faith in the God who has claimed us in Jesus Christ. At the heart of vocation is the belief that Your Life Matters... and your life matters to God! Vocation means we are claimed by God's love and called into the world for the thriving of our neighbors.



# Updates and Notices

## ANNUAL MEETING DURING THE COVID ERA

The Minneapolis Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) informed its member congregations, of which Peace Lutheran is one, that if councils pass a resolution, Annual Meetings can be held electronically.

Peace's continuing resolution approved by Council:

Peace Lutheran Church may hold meetings by remote communication, including electronically and by telephone conference, as long as there is an opportunity for simultaneous oral communication. Notice of all meetings may be provided electronically.

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS AND WATCH YOUR EMAIL FOR ZOOM LINKS!!

Budget Meeting - Sunday, January 24, after worship

Annual Meeting - Sunday, January 31, after worship

## Dates to Remember

- January 3 - February 14, Small Groups, *Seeing White* podcasts
- January 7 - April 1, Bible Study, Thursdays, 9-10 am on Zoom
- January 12 - Listening session with Council, 7 pm via Zoom
- January 24 - Budget Meeting via Zoom after worship
- January 31 - Annual Meeting via Zoom after worship

The Season of Epiphany

## Racial Justice Resources -- from the Synod

The Minneapolis Area Synod of the ELCA is committed to the work of healing racial injustice. One step in the process has been to add four web pages highlighting the many and varied ways we engage racial injustice and our work toward healthy truth-telling and equity.

Please, take a moment to check out how the synod addresses the systems and structures that oppress our siblings of color. Consider finding a way that you and Peace can engage in this work with the synod and our partners in this calling. [mpls-synod.org/outreach/racial-justice/](https://mpls-synod.org/outreach/racial-justice/)

## The church office is closed.

To contact please email [peace@peaceofplymouth.org](mailto:peace@peaceofplymouth.org) or call Chris at 612-386-8013



**Pastor Kjell** can be reached  
Sunday-Thursday  
at [kjell@peaceofplymouth.org](mailto: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](mailto: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](https://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](mailto:chris@peaceofplymouth.org) by Thursday 5pm.

Want an announcement into the monthly newsletter? Email [chris@peaceofplymouth.org](mailto:chris@peaceofplymouth.org) by the 5th of the previous month.



**Temporary Mailing Address:**

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Peaceofplymouth.org

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## The Season of Epiphany

**January 31,  
Annual Meeting  
via Zoom after worship**

**All Are Welcome**  
*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](http://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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