



Peace Notes

PEACE LUTHERAN CHURCH OF PLYMOUTH, MINNESOTA

Volume 25, Issue 7 | July 2020



LETTER FROM PASTOR KJELL

On Monday, May 25 George Floyd, an unarmed black man, was murdered by a white Minneapolis police officer. In the following weeks people have flooded the streets around the nation to say, “never again, we must end systemic racism!” The pain of Floyd’s killing and hundreds of years of oppression have fueled a moment for change.

Peace Lutheran people have dropped off needed items and Peace is walking with Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, who has had their doors open for their community at Lake and Hiawatha since this all began, giving first-aid, food and trauma counseling. In the next weeks and months there will be ways that we will help with the clean-up and rebuilding, there will be politicians to contact and marches to attend.

There is a lot that needs to change in our communities and in ourselves. This is hard work. Jesus is always calling us to engage in deep joy and messiness of our world. It is hard, but we are in this together and God is with us. For this change we need God. We need to lean on God, be held by God’s love, as God’s love flows through us seeking the healing and thriving of our neighbors of color.

This is the world God longs for, united with our black and brown sisters and brothers in a desire for justice. Jesus said, “I have come that you might have life and have it abundantly.” Abundant life is found in this uncomfortable and joyous space of community together. Don’t get me wrong, I know we have a long way to go, there is a lot of reconciliation that needs to happen, but this is “beloved community” work. This is the joy of being alive together in Christ. Amen.

Christ’s Peace
Kjell
Pastor Kjell

Movies About Race

Films give us the ability to experience a world outside our own and to walk in someone else’s shoes for a couple of hours. In this time many of us are looking for ways to combat racism. Expanding our entertainment choices is a small and meaningful step. A quick internet search will give a longer list but these are a few to start.

- *Do The Right Thing*
- *I Am Not Your Negro*
- *Selma*
- *13th*
- *Got Out*
- *The Hate U Give*
- *12 Years a Slave*
- *Dear White People*
- *LA 92*
- *Just Mercy*

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



After the murder of George Floyd, Peace Lutheran placed Black Lives Matter on our digital sign along Cty. Rd. 101. Given the fact that we believe all lives matter, why do we need to say, Black Lives Matter? Brene Brown in her book *Braving the Wilderness* tells why. “In order for slavery to work, in order for us to buy, sell, beat, and trade people like animals, Americans had to completely dehumanize slaves. And whether we directly participated in that or were simply a member of a culture that at one time normalized that behavior, it shaped us. We can’t undo that level of dehumanizing in one or two generations. I believe Black Lives Matter is a movement to rehumanize black citizens. All lives matter, but not all lives need to be pulled back into moral inclusion. Not all people were subjected to the psychological process of demonizing and being made less than human so we could justify the inhumane practice of slavery.”

Having Black Lives Matter on the digital sign in front of Peace Lutheran moved one woman to call and tell Pastor Kjell -- “I am a member of the Plymouth community and black woman and mother. Seeing your sign with the words Black Lives Matter made me feel welcome. It gave me a sense, after years of living here, that I am valued here. Thank you so much for putting that on your sign.”

CHILDREN’S BOOKS ABOUT RACE, CULTURE AND EMPATHY

Peace has a new book collection. 30 books about race, culture and empathy for people to check out. To borrow books email kjell@peaceofplymouth.org and stop by the church after worship.

OUR FAITH IN A WORLD FILLED WITH RACISM - PODCAST

Listening to Black voices has been identified as one of the important steps white people can take toward ending systemic racism. In this podcast with Leroy King, Jr., Melissa Weinhandl and Pastor Kjell listen as Leroy shares about faith, vocation and life as a black man in Minneapolis.

HELPING OUR NEIGHBORS THRIVE

Sometimes it's hard to know how to help when we know people are in need. After the killing of George Floyd, protests and riots erupted in Minneapolis and St. Paul, destroying businesses and making it hard for people to get simple, every-day necessities.

Peace members wanted to help, so we brought non-perishable food items, diapers, and laundry detergent to two sites: Sandford Middle School/Longfellow Park and Holy Trinity Lutheran Church.

Upon arriving in the Longfellow neighborhood on Sunday, May 31, we saw flocks and flocks of people walking up and driving up with donations. It was a beautiful sunny day and spirits were high. Random people were stepping up to direct car traffic, help unload vehicles, and organize items. We saw generous people going out of their way to help make sure that families in the affected areas would have enough food to eat.

Thank you, Peace Lutheran, for your contributions that are helping South Minneapolis during these traumatic times.

GRANT RECEIVED FROM THE MINNEAPOLIS AREA SYNOD!

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought change to nearly every aspect of life and churches have been finding ways to continue ministries in safe and accessible ways. To help churches with that task, the Minneapolis Area Synod of the ELCA made funds available from their Resurrection Fund in the form of a grant. Peace Lutheran Church applied for funds to enhance our ability to provide virtual worship each week, and we received \$1,505.00 toward that ongoing project!

We are thankful to the Synod for their assistance, and they have also offered a free technology consultation. We strongly believe that we can have meaningful worship together even when we're not in the same room, and many people have made it possible for us to livestream our services.

We want to give a special shout-out to our current technology lay people in the congregation: Scott Rusten, who got us set up to record and stream services LONG before COVID-19 came on the scene, and continues to help on Sunday mornings. Brian Lukis, who helps us with our email accounts and website. Jason Tofteland, who has quickly learned how to livestream our services and is running the camera on Sunday mornings. Bob Samuelson, who runs the sanctuary sound system and helped with significant upgrades recently. Thank you!

A hearty THANK YOU to all of these people, living out their vocations through these contributions to Peace. Would you like to be part of this team? Please reach out to Stefanie Fiser Kleven or Pastor Kjell if you have ideas or expertise to share!

Pastor Kjell, Melissa Weinhandl and LeRoy King, Jr. during the *Our Faith in a World Filled with Racism* - podcast



Resources to See a Different Experience

by Michael Sorenson

Black Lives Matter. It is an impactful phrase. It was created to show the importance of black lives. It is not to say, “only” black lives matter. It is to say, when thinking about laws and policies, education, social programs, economics, and everything else, to think about and include black lives. It is difficult to think and understand another’s perspective, especially when it comes to an experience so large as the black experience.

It is difficult to go through life and think about how your experience is not like someone else’s experience. Have you ever gone to a hair salon and wondered if they would know how to do a certain hairstyle or have the correct products? Have you ever been stared at while walking around a store? Have you ever had to think about where your hands are at any given moment, and what might be in or around them that could look like a weapon?

It is hard to comprehend what that experience is like, especially when we are surrounded by white stories.

When thinking of the authors you read, or the directors you watch, or music you listen to, or the plays you see, how many people of color are in the narratives or stories? How many people of color are the authors, directors, or musicians you consume?

This is where white privilege comes in. It is not saying that you have a higher socio-economic level. It is not saying you are wealthy, or you never have struggles. But you can see yourself in any profession. You can turn on the TV and see people who look like you, who share similarities with you. When you go shopping, your food is not in the “ethnic” aisle because you are not “ethnic” you are “normal.”

When discussing all of these privileges, it is hard to wrap your head around it. The classic article to look at is called **“White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack”** by Peggy McIntosh. This article was written in 1989. Peggy MacIntosh discusses what white privilege is and the different things carried around that are a part of that privilege.

The article touches on systemic racism. This racism is not as overt as a person yelling racial slurs or refusing to serve someone on the basis of their skin. This is the racism that makes this behavior acceptable. A person does not need to refuse service openly if there are laws in place that prohibit it. A person of color, especially a black individual, is more likely to be convicted of the same crime as a white person. A police officer is more likely to be patrolling a black neighborhood than a white one. These feelings and ideas are built into the systems, systems like government, policy, police, education, and economics.

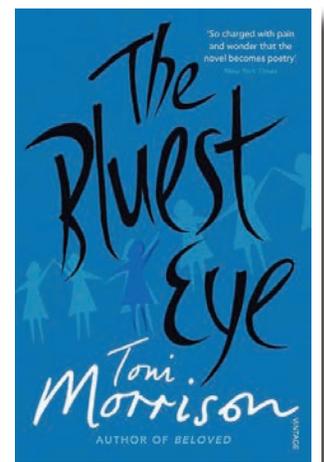
To see these experiences helps show the importance of Black Lives Matter. It helps people to see the differences. It is not about understanding. How can you understand a person’s lived experience without living it? But watching movies and reading books helps open ourselves up to what can be seen and learned about the black experience.



Black Lives Matter. It is not to say, “only” black lives matter. It is to say, when thinking about laws and policies, education, social programs, economics, and everything else, to think about and include black lives.

Watching a movie like ***Do The Right Thing*** by Spike Lee helps to show what gentrification looks like. Watching movies like ***I am Not Your Negro***, ***Selma***, ***Just Mercy***, and ***13th*** help give a history lesson of how we got here. ***The Hate U Give*** gives a very modern lens of what is happening now. It is eye opening to read the book and watch the movie, and compare it to what is happening now.

Reading books can help us understand where we were, and where we want to go. ***White Fragility*** by Robin DiAngelo is the big book now to talk about the blindspots in people’s privilege. It helps go further into white privilege and what it means. ***How to be an Antiracist; Stamped: Racism***,



Anti Racism, and You: A Remix (and Jason Reynolds); and *Stamped from the Beginning* all by Ibram X. Kendi give an overview of how our society got to now, and where we can go. *Me and White Supremacy* by Layla F. Saad helps you to understand your place in our society. *Talking to Strangers* by Malcom Gladwell shows the importance in communication when discussing these topics. *So You Want to Talk About Race* by Ijeoma Oluo is important when it comes to communication and what our current context is. Finally, *The New Jim Crow* by Michelle Alexander helps to show one part of the new systemic racism that was put in place.

These books give a deeper understanding. They are all important books, but very heavy books. These are not light topics to delve into. They take time, thought, patience, and an understanding that these were written as a response to lived experience. These are not fantasies or fictional. These are important books that move us to the future.

For lighter books to delve more into the lived experience, Young Adult books have really paved the way. These are all fictional books written from the black experience. *The Hate U Give* is probably the most popular. As discussed earlier, it gives a current example of the feelings of a young girl in a black neighborhood going to a white private school. It helps show her perspective living in two very different worlds. *Dear Martin* by Nic Stone is about the struggles of a young man as he goes into white spaces where he does not belong. *Ghost* by Jason Reynolds is about the story of a young man who tries to navigate a path out of poverty through sport. Finally, *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison is a powerful book on what it was like to grow up a black girl in a white society.

For those not as inclined to read, there are audio books for the above but also some good podcasts. The two biggest ones are the *1619 Project* from the New York Times and *Scene on Radio: Seeing White*. Both of these podcasts delve into the historical context around racism and how it developed over time.

No matter how you choose your time, watching movies, reading books, listening to podcasts, it is important to educate yourself on those around you. Without an openness to hearing the lived experiences of people who do not look like you, it is hard to understand these big topics of why Black Lives Matter; and what is white privilege and systemic racism. Listening to others' stories are important. For those who might not have friends who are willing to talk and be the voice of their race, or people who might be uncomfortable hearing these stories, these resources help. They are not a definitive list of what to read, watch, or listen to, but this is a list of courageous people willing to share their stories. Also, these resources are not here to say, "Oh, now I understand," and "Oh, you must be feeling this because that is how Starr felt in *The Hate U Give*." Instead this is just a way to get a peek into the lived experiences of people around you.



The Ferris family and Melissa & Ivy Weinhandl dropping off donations at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church.

And all the bones we've held
 And all the flags we've hung,
 The millions who have nothing for our pay—
 Except the dream that's almost dead today.

O, let America be America again—
 The land that never has been yet—

And yet must be—the land where every man is free,
 The land that's mine—the poor man's, Indian's,
 Who made America,

SCENE
 • ON
 RADIO

SEASON 4

FAITH IN DAILY LIFE

By Joni Sutton

Connecting with Faith

This month we spoke with Peace member Janelle Leppa about how she lives her vocation. Janelle, along with her husband, Peter, and their daughters, Sylvi and Sonja, joined Peace three years ago. She is currently on our Church Council as well as on our VISION Team.

Since Janelle was a child, she has known that she wanted to help people. Her first job after college was at Simpson Housing Services, a nonprofit organization that provides assistance to people experiencing homelessness. At her new job she often felt overwhelmed and inadequate. At the same time, she felt confident that God had led her to the right place. Nineteen years later, she is now the Family Housing Programs Director at Simpson. Janelle continues to believe that she is living out her vocation at work. She says, "I look back and see those early feelings of inadequacy as a gift. They taught me to seek teachers everywhere in my work, and to see that my most powerful teachers would be the families that I sought to help." There are many joys as well as challenges at her job, but she says that the joys consistently outshine the challenges. She loves seeing the way that relationships transform people. "We truly do better when we put our hearts and minds together. Authentic compassion and empathy have the power to heal," Janelle says. She adds that most of the challenges related to homelessness are around resources such as the lack of affordable housing, income and education disparities, and stressed support systems.

When asked what thriving looks like to her, she says that a person's body, mind and spirit need to be positioned to seek out and take advantage of opportunities that come one's way. She tries to help clients to balance daily stress with an overall sense of connectedness, as well having basic needs met and having a sense of purpose. Faith connects with her vocation, although her employer is not a faith-based organization. Faith is what provides her "personal fuel" each day, she says. "In both my highest and my lowest moments, I feel God's presence. My faith inspires me to be more persistent and more compassionate in my work."

Janelle mentions that the community at Peace has been a blessing to her and to her family, and says that weekly worship and fellowship recharge her for the week. "During this time where we are unable to physically worship together due to COVID-19, I'm so thankful that we have found ways to stay connected!" Thank you, Janelle, for all you do at our church and in your work with homeless families.



Janelle Leppa



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.

The VISION Team

The VISION team has been working with the Congregational Vitality Survey and notes from their conversations with the people of Peace Lutheran to create some guiding statements for Peace Lutheran as we move into God's future.

What Peace seeks to be...our vision - to be a church that lives by faith, is known by love, and brings hope to the world.

What we seek to do... our mission - connect, care, and celebrate.

We will live out our mission by living out our vocation in our daily lives, connecting with community, and through invitation and connection, and spiritual practices.

On July 12 after worship (about 9:45am) the VISION Team will host an online forum talking about these concepts. Join the livestream after worship to participate.

Updates & Notices

Reopening Peace Taskforce

A small group of people has been identified to develop protocols for in-person gatherings at church.

Vision & Mission Forum

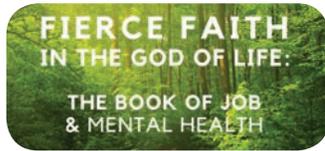
Sunday, July 12, 9:45am

Stay connected to the live-stream following worship to learn more about the Vision Team's progress toward articulating Peace's Vision and Mission.

Worship Preaching Series

NOW - July 12

The book of Job & Mental Health: human suffering and a loving God is exploring how to move beyond blame, to accept ambiguity and uncertainty, and trust God for what we cannot see or control. Now, with an additional focus on grief caused by systemic racism and white privilege.



Sunday, July 5
Job 41:1-8, 42:1-6

"Softening into the Joy of Life"

Sunday, July 12
Job 42:1-17

"A Fierce Faith in the God of Life"



7 Faith Practices

July 19 - Aug 30

Songs, sermons and liturgy will dive deeper into these seven cornerstones of faith practices seeking to raise questions, flip established answers and assumptions on their heads and to stick in people's minds for months, even years to come.

- 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

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
- Childcare Specialist..... Serena Galatz
- Office Manager Chris Bacon



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PEACE
LUTHERAN CHURCH

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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New children's books
 about race, culture and
 empathy available to borrow
 from the Peace library.

Learn more on page 2.

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.