

THE GOOD NEWS OF PEACE

**Our Vision Statement: Sharing Peace Faithfully*

**Our Mission: To bring people into contact with the gospel, and help them grow in their relationship in God in Christ
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On a Long Road Trip

Merry Christmas or Bah Humbug?

Are you as confused as I am about what do about Christmas this year? So many of the traditional markers are missing, starting with a Thanksgiving that was “less than before.” For church, caroling at Sunny Hill and decorating our inside tree in less than 10 minutes, Sunday School Christmas programs, Breakfast with Santa, the giving tree with presents stacked around it, rehearsals from all the choirs and instrumentalists are just some of the things that are not happening. In your own setting, what are you doing about shopping and cards and decorating and gatherings? It is enough to make Scrooge sound like an optimist.

Fortunately, God is not limited by what is not possible for us! Two thousand years ago, the Roman government was ruling Palestine without a nod to God. A young couple were nobodies as far as everyone else was concerned. Shepherds were just doing their job keeping track of mindless sheep. Bethlehem was booked. Even so, God was not about to say, “bah humbug.”

God is not about to say, “bah humbug,” to us and our world (or the whole world for that matter) either. Instead, God is looking for ways to be born into the messes and drawbacks and pains and heartaches. God is looking for ways to “proclaim liberty to the captives” whether our captivity is personal or as a society. In humble people and humble methods, God still enters human lives and history to make a difference. When we pay attention to all the stories of individuals and churches and organizations trying to make a difference, know that God is at work, even if we cannot have a Breakfast with Santa. It does not have to be a “Merry” Christmas to be Christmas. All we need is a God of self-giving love who keeps coming to people who are waiting and looking....and then inspiring and redeeming us – even when we are confused!

Pastor Dave Hedlin

Please check our website, Facebook and YouTube for the latest information, videos, and more!

Prayers Requested

Lori Kooi, Kelly, Sue, Emmett Carroll, Danny, Teresa & Meredith Rosales, the family of Sharlene Smith, Roxanne Kozar, Ryan Jones, Claudia Green, Terry Jesk, Zach Huelhorst, Dave & Dawn Urewicz, the Miheve family, Mary Brouette, Char Bonomo, Sabina Stohlquist, Mike Svancarek, Harriette Vanco, Kelly & Amanda Muehlnickel, Sue Horn, Daniel Kiebles, Dick & Marylynn Tyler, the family of John Bentley, Larry Hedlin, Meggan Walker, Don Lafferty, Gloria & Ken, Bryan, Paul & Carel Sons

Sympathy

The congregation of Peace wishes to extend its sympathy to:

the family of Emil Sestak Jr., father of Roxanne Kozar;

the family of Tom & Maxine Bell, father and mother of Jeff Bell;

the family of Garry Lohmar, husband of Beth Lohmar, father of Matthew, Haylie & Martina.

Congratulations

Tim & Katelyn Tomczak, parents (Hunter) and Kim & Sharon Braget, grandparents, on the birth of Dakota Louise Tomczak on Oct. 27

Michael Putrich and Hillary Johansson on their marriage on Oct. 31

Welcome to the Lord's Family

Madisyn Ann Brill was baptized on Nov. 7

Details for How We Worship

FOR EVERYONE COMING TO PEACE

*Whether you drive-in or worship at home, we have a modified communion option. You can take a piece of bread or cracker with you to the service. We will give the Words of Institution on behalf of all of us and invite us to take our bread/cracker at the same time and partake of this modified version of the Lord's Supper. When the back-order is filled, we will also be adding a pre-packaged wafer & grape juice option.

* In order to keep people's safety in mind following the advice of the CDC and Illinois Department of Public Health, there will be a drop box if you wish to bring an offering with you. Otherwise, we will depend on people continuing to contribute online or by mail.

* Bathrooms will be available, but people would be encouraged to use them only if necessary, and social distancing would be required. The doors to the bathrooms will be left open to eliminate having to touch them, and for the sake of knowing what kind of distancing/waiting is needed. Masks are required.

DRIVE-IN WORSHIP ON SATURDAYS AT 5:00PM & SUNDAYS AT 9:30AM

* Households are required to socially distance from each other, which can be accomplished by **parking on the yellow lines. Our worship location is centered under the main canopy.**

* Masks would be required if you get out of your car. (We have spare masks.)

* We will have sound projection/speakers for all to hear, plus the FM channel (89.3.)

* The worship will last about 30 to 40 minutes. Worshipping outdoors allows us to sing!

ONLINE OPTION CONTINUES INCLUDING AN 8:30 VERSION

* We will continue to live-stream our worship. We plan each week to record both Saturday and Sunday. Assuming everything works, all will be available through our Facebook site. **We are now going to live-stream an inside the sanctuary version at 8:30am for those for whom that option would be meaningful.**

INDOOR WORSHIP ON HOLD

For now, we are back to outdoor/drive-in on Saturdays at 5:00 and Sundays at 9:30am. Stay tuned!

Please pray for our world's healing, and for our congregation's ongoing attempts to stay faithful to God and God's leading!

Thank You Very Much!

The list that follows is for those who have done something for the first time. (If we miss someone, please let us know!) We are thankful for all the people who give of themselves to make ministry happen, even though their names don't keep getting mentioned here.

To:

Donna Conway, Nathaniel Knutson, Marylynn Tyler, Jodie Brugler and Pamela Putrich – for special music

Jan Bentley – for delivering Prayer Shawls to Sunny Hill Nursing Home

Kathy Sons – for delivering food to Santa Cruz

Everyone involved in making this year's Thanksgiving dinner a blessing to the tune of 207 dinners-out-the-door, not to mention the volunteers who gave of their time and energy, and the whole congregation for wanting this vital ministry to happen this year!

From:

ELCA World Hunger – for the donation

Rose Corley – for being a bright, guiding light in the world

Catholic Charities – for the donation

Operation Care Package – for the donation of candy

The Torres Family, Peggy, Dolores Mott & Flora Rose – For the wonderful Thanksgiving dinners

Need A Mask?

Thanks to our wonderful group of masks makers, we have a supply of masks available. If you are need of a face mask, please take what you need from the Ziploc bag in the grey tote by the front door of church.

Devotional Booklet Available

We put a second bin outside the front door labeled "devotional booklets" and you can come by the church and pick one up at your convenience. If you want it mailed to you, just let us know via peacechurch@peacenewlenox.org.

Your Offerings Matter & Are Appreciated!

You can either donate online or mail in your offering (PO Box 205, New Lenox, IL 60451). If you know your envelope #, write that on the check. If you don't, we'll gratefully look it up so that you get credit!

No matter how: thanks for your offerings – they are making a difference at Peace, in our community, in our country and around the world!

Quick Reminders

NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE IS **Dec. 27**. If you get your newsletter late, please pick one up here, or if you want it mailed first class or via e-mail, let us know.

* **The Will-Grundy Medical Clinic** is now accepting patients for free healthcare for the uninsured and those who qualify. Appointments are available onsite or over the phone, Monday – Friday from 8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. To schedule a free screening appointment, please call 815-726-3377, ext. 228.

***Crutches and walkers available** – The church has received crutches and walkers from members. Please feel free to contact the church office if you need to borrow one of these items.

* **Yellow Ribbon Suicide Prevention Cards** – Suicide is not about wanting to die, but about a powerful need for pain to end. You can help someone today by reaching out, listening, and letting them know you care. Be sure that the person can reach you and several responsible others if the desire to commit suicide becomes strong or if he/she just feels the need to talk to someone. Give the individual the names and telephone numbers of people who could be contacted and if possible, have the person meet these people. Give them the suicide prevention hotline. **Yellow Ribbon Suicide Prevention Cards** are always located in the entrance area. Let's remember to keep in mind to spread the word that no one is alone in a time of need. Suicide destroys everyone who cares! Help someone today who is reaching out for help by picking up the cards and being attentive to what people are saying about their lives. Crisis Line – 815-469-6166, text line – 741741, and online – www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org.

* **Bereavement Support Groups**

- *GriefShare* – Not currently meeting – please watch the newsletter.

- *Evening Adult Support Group* – Meets the third Thursday of the month, (with the exception of the month of March), December - June 6:00 – 7:30 p.m. at Joliet Area Community Hospice, *donation appreciated*.

- *Afternoon Adult Support Group* – Meets the second Friday of the month, 1:30 – 3:00 p.m. at Joliet Area Community Hospice, *donation appreciated*.

For other services offered, including individual counseling, parent support and general grief support, please visit the Joliet Area Community Hospice website: www.joliethospice.org or call 815-740-4104.

***Thrivent members** – For those of you who have Thrivent dollars to donate, don't forget Peace is one of those choices.

* **LSSI's Joshua Arms Website** - Joshua Arms has a website that makes it easy for visitors to see all that the affordable senior housing development in Joliet has to offer. Visit the site at www.LSSI.org/JoshuaArms. Located at 1315 Rowell in a tree-lined residential area, Joshua Arms offers 186 independent, apartment-style units and 56 supportive living units, where residents can receive three meals a day, housekeeping and other daily living services. The new website is an easy to use tool for potential residents *and* family members to learn about Joshua Arms, including eligibility and floor plans.

***Cleaning for a Reason** – Provides free housecleaning once a month for 4 months for women currently undergoing chemotherapy. For more information or to sign up please go to: www.cleaningforareason.org/cancer_patients_acct.html. You will need a doctor's note confirming treatment to sign up and have a participating maid service in your zip code area arrange for service. This organization serves the entire US and currently has 547 partners.

***Guardian Angel Community Services** – Sexual assault & rape crisis services, prevention education & outreach. Programs include medical advocacy, legal advocacy, individual counseling, group counseling, prevention education & professional training. 24-hour sexual assault hotline: 815-730-8984.

Check Out Our Social Media Pages

You can follow us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram with the handle @PeaceNewLenox. You can help to promote our pages and our church by following our pages and engaging our content by commenting, liking, and sharing our posts.

Addresses for Service Personnel

Midshipman Trevor Horn PO Box # 12989 Annapolis, MD 21412	Sargent Devin Pafford 1208 Battery Creek Dr. Beaufort SC 29902
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MA2 Baker, Connor 5600 Shorewood Lane Norfolk, VA 23502	2 Lieutenant Jakob Swenson 16113 Ryan Place, Apt. C Fort Polk, LA 71459
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Military Pray for List

We are starting from scratch and updating our Military Pray for list in the bulletin. If you know of someone who should be on the list, please email the church office.

Looking Ahead

Dec. 5 – Blood Drive 9:00 am - 1:00 pm

Dec. 6 & 20 – Peace 360

***Dec. 12 – Special Congregational Meeting Following
5:00 pm Worship***

Dec. 13 – All Grades Sunday School Zoom

Dec. 19 – Shortest Day/Longest Night Service 5:00 pm

***Dec. 24 – Outdoor Services at 4:00, 7:00, 9:00 & 11:00
Recorded services will also be available***

Dec. 25 – Possible Outdoor Service at 10:00 am

Jan. 9 – Special Prayers for Healing 5:00 pm

Jan. 16 – First Communion Class 10:00 am

Jan. 17 & 24 – New Member Orientation & Reception

Groups

Ruth Circle Quilting – Dec. 14 & 28

Ruth Circle quilting will meet every other Monday at 9:00 a.m. It's very casual and if you can't make it each time, just come when you can. At this time, we will not be having snacks. Questions? Contact the church office.

Prayer Shawl

We are not meeting in person, but feel free to keep making shawls at home and bring them by when it is convenient! Please email the church office if you have questions or would like more information.

Trailblazers – Next Year

We keep ourselves on the radar but will hold off meeting once again. Stay tuned for another update, but currently are thinking to wait until next year. Our group is for senior citizens and welcomes you to join us. Email the church office (or call Pastor Dave at home for now) for more information.

Strong Seniors Exercise – TBD

We usually meet Mondays 12:00 - 1:00 and Wednesdays 11:30 - 12:30 in Fellowship Hall. We are cancelling exercise class until further notice.

Ping Pong Club – We have resumed

If you are interested, contact the church office (815-485-5327 or peacechurch@peacenewlenox.org.)

Peace Page Turners – Sun., Jan. 10

Our next meeting will be Jan. 10 at 9:30 a.m. to discuss, *Year of Wonders: A Novel of the Plague* by Geraldine Brooks. It is a timely novel, written about the plague in the 1660's in England. Dealing with half the town succumbing to the disease, and all the emotions and stories that go with it will make this a terrific read. You can pick up a copy of the book at church (sign-out which copy) if you wish. Please be sure to let us know you're interested so we can give you the Zoom codes you'll need.

Alzheimer's Association Support Group

Do you care for someone diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease or a related dementia? Are you looking for information and support? The Alzheimer's Association Support Group is hoping to resume at some time, but not yet. For more information on when the group will resume meeting, contact the church office (815-485-5327 or peacechurch@peacenewlenox.org).

Addiction and Family Support Group

The Addiction & Family Support Group meets at Peace on Tuesday nights from 7:00 - 8:30 p.m. This support group meeting is for those struggling, those who love someone struggling, or those who just want to learn about the epidemic of heroin and prescription pain medications in our community. For more information, contact the church office.

GriefShare Ministry

Please watch the newsletter & bulletin for when we will be able to resume meeting. GriefShare is a special weekly seminar and support group designed to help you heal after losing a loved one. The group is led by caring people who have experienced grief and want to help you through the difficult days. If you would like more information please contact Janet at griefshare.plc.60451@gmail.com.

Peace Circle of Prayer Ministry

If you would like special prayers said for someone, just let the office know of a particular need. Our Circle of Prayer ministry is ready to help. We will send out an email to the praying volunteers with that need. (If you would like to be a part of this Peace Circle of Prayer, let us know, including what email address we should use.)

From Deacon Shari Trotter

Dear Members and Friends of Peace,

Our Advent Hymn “Wait for The Lord” is beautiful and stirring. The words are, wait for the Lord whose day is near, wait for the Lord be strong take heart. This hymn speaks to the Advent theme of waiting. With waiting comes anticipation, which can be both a positive and a negative. The positive side of anticipation is the feeling you get when you know something good is going to happen soon and you can’t wait for it to come, like the arrival of a baby or Santa Claus. However, there is a negative side to anticipation too. The negative side is fear or worry. This piece is more like the anticipation felt when you are waiting for a punishment, “wait till your father comes home”.

In this season of Advent, we wait for Christmas, but we also wait for the coming of the Lord. The second piece of the Advent theme is the one that can cause some fear or worry, especially for our youth. I remember being in Kindergarten and my teacher was talking about the end of the earth and the deep fear that I felt until she said, “don’t worry that won’t happen for a long time”. However, the coming of the Lord does not have to be a scary thing.

During this time of pandemic, we have spent a lot of time waiting. We have also spent a lot of time in fear and worry. The coming of the Lord that we wait for is an end to this fear and worry. God promises no more struggle, no more pain. How can we create a sense of peace for our youth and for one another around the concept of waiting for something we don’t fully understand or have conceptualized? For adults it is easier because we have experienced some real struggle and have seen the world groan in pain but for our children, this unknown is something we need to put some “skin” on.

I think it is important to start by pointing out the places in which the coming of the Lord is already happening. In what ways is God showing up in our world every single day? When we can look at these examples with our youth than we can say that the ways in which God shows up are not scary. We can put the parameters of love and hope on this unknown event. When we do that, the fear and worry of anticipation turn to hope and perhaps even a little excitement!

May you and your family experience the hope and excitement of this Advent season. May our congregation come together in hope gathered around the one whose love knows no bounds.

God’s Peace,

Deacon Shari Trotter

Faith Development/Education

Everybody Read

Our desire to have people read a common Bible passage is part of our Book of Faith effort. Each month we’ll pick a passage, invite everyone to read it sometime that month, and then those who are willing, write a sentence or two (or more if you’d like) about what you got out of the passage. December’s passage is Luke 2:8-11.

Wednesday Bible Study - Now both in person and on-line

Each Wednesday for many weeks now, people have been joining our Bible Study through the wonders of Zoom! We offer both an in-person version for those who hate Zoom. We meet on Wednesday mornings at 10:00 a.m. Any version of the Bible you have will work. You don’t need to know anything about the Bible to join this class!

Sun. Morning Adult Class – Dec. 13

We invite anyone who wants to participate in an adult class on join us on Sunday, Dec. 13, at 10:30 am, via Zoom (unless you just hate that; then you can be in person.) Be sure to let us know if you’re coming so we can you the right codes. The topic for this class will be “Why Revenge Feels Good, but Fails.” The topic for Jan. 10 will be the beginning discussion of Luther’s “The Freedom of a Christian.” That work is 500 years old, and as timeless as when it was written.

Daily Devotionals Also Available Online

The coronavirus calls for new ways of helping people of faith. The ELCA’s publishing house, Augsburg-Fortress, has made *Christ in Our Home* available free online:

<https://www.augsburgfortress.org/store/category/286137/Christ-in-Our-Home>.

Faith & Life Experience

We are going to feature stories about people from Peace from time to time.

Enjoy this one from Deb Standard Goebig!

My faith is my foundation, and I have been blessed with many people in my life that have helped build and maintain my faith.

My grandmother was a strong woman who loved God and her family. She was involved in her church and would often bring us with her to help her take care of the church building and prepare the church for all types of services. Sundays were always: Church, Sunday School and dinner at her house with all the aunts, uncles and cousins. On Christmas Eve, we would have to stand up in front of the Christmas tree and recite our piece from the Christmas program before we could open our presents.

My godparents brought me to church and Sunday School when my mom couldn't. My godmother would make all of us girls (11 of us) matching dresses for Christmas and Easter Church services. She even made my dress for my confirmation.

My mother was not raised in a Christian home, so my sisters and I were part of her journey in faith. We attended a Lutheran grade school, and she learned the catechism and the Bible along with us throughout our homework years. As she got older, she stayed involved in the church by being part of the altar guild.

All these people helped build my foundation, but today it seems like the world keeps trying to break down my foundation, so I conscientiously work to keep it strong. Many years ago, I came across this saying, "7 days without God makes 1 weak." I find this to be very true for me. I need to have God in my life every week. I need to keep my faith alive, and my foundation strong. How do I do that? Peace church not only gives me many opportunities to do God's work but to grow personally. For example, I would have never thought I could stand up in front of the congregation and speak, but I found I love being a lay liturgist. I would have never thought I could be a leader, but I am able to work with a group and organize the Meal in the Upper Room. I think my life is so busy, until I sing Christmas carols at Sunny Hill and see the smiles on the patients' faces or help serve food at MorningStar. These are just some things I can do to keep my foundation strong. I encourage you to try new things to keep your faith growing and keep God in your daily life.

So, as we say in closing as our worship service ends:
Go in Peace and Serve the Lord!

Debbie Standard (Goebig)

Fellowship Opportunities/Tickets & Events

Chicago Shakespeare Theater Offers Free Peter Pan Stream

Bring the magic of theater home for the holidays with a newly remastered, 80 minute, *Peter Pan – A Musical Adventure*, available December 19 through New Year's Day. Filmed by multiple cameras in front of a live audience in the Courtyard Theater, you can soon join the high-flying adventure from the best seat in the house—your couch!

General Announcements

Special Congregational Meeting - Sat., Dec. 12, Following 5:00 Worship

Our annual meeting in Feb. will have to be different. In order to accommodate the COVID reality, we need to make some temporary changes to our constitution to get around the current requirement for in-person only with a written ballot. The Congregation Council has figured out a way to do that by making some temporary amendments to our constitution, which will have a sunshine clause that makes them effective Feb. 1 through Aug. 31, 2021 only. To make that possible, we will have a special congregational meeting right after the 5:00 drive-in worship on Dec. 12. An email will be sent to the congregation or can be sent to you individually if you'd like. Please mark your calendar. The meeting will likely take about 5 to 10 minutes at most.

Shortest Day/Longest Night Worship Service – Sat., Dec. 19

As a part of the 5:00 worship service on Dec. 19 we will have a special liturgy and emphasis. It will acknowledge that Christmas is not merry for everyone. This Shortest Day/Longest Night observance allows anyone who has felt any kind of loss (death, divorce, job, etc.) to come and recognize that each is not alone; each is also held in God's compassionate care. We encourage you to invite anyone who has experienced a loss or is struggling.

Special Prayers for Healing – Sat., Jan. 9

As part of the 5:00 p.m. Saturday night service on Jan. 9, we will have an opportunity for people to come forward for special prayers for healing. They can be for you or for somebody you know.

First Communion Class – Sat., Jan. 16

Each year we seek to prepare children in the fifth grade (and beyond) for receiving their first communion. We do it in a one-hour concentrated class. A parent/other adult (or two) should attend along with the child. The class will be offered on Saturday, Jan. 16, at 10:00 a.m.

New Member Orientation & Reception - Sun., Jan. 17 & 24

We are privileged once again to invite more people to become formal partners with us in our mission of spreading the Gospel and growing in faith. Because of the strange times we are going through, it will be a different version of our new member orientation and reception! Part 1: Sun., Jan. 17, tentatively at 9:45 at church – either on Zoom or in person; (2) on Jan. 24, during worship (tentatively 11:00 am). If you are interested in joining or finding out more information, email (peacechurch@peacenewlenox.org) or call the church office at 815-485-5327 or see Pastor Dave. (We will need to omit the sponsors and new member luncheon for now but hope to make it up to the new members later.)

Advent Devotionals

We have a limited number of Advent devotional booklets (adult's & children's) available. You can pick them up anytime from the black bin by the front door. Please also see the article below if you would like a free online option.

Free Online Advent Devotionals

There are free Advent devotionals available online. You can have them delivered right to your inbox, podcast the audio devotional, access them on your mobile device through the FREE app, or listen with Spotify, iHeart Radio, Alexa, or Google Home. The link below will take you the site. There is also an option to print out the devotionals if you would rather have a hard copy.

[Advent Devotions:: Lutheran Hour Ministries](#)

New Holiday Outreach Opportunity with Lutheran Immigration & Refugee Services (LIRS) - from Kelly Renaud

Hello Peace Church family. I'm excited to share a new Holiday outreach opportunity that Peace Lutheran is helping to facilitate this year. If you haven't heard of Lutheran Immigration & Refugee Services (LIRS), for over 80 years the organization has helped more than half a million refugees who faced conflict and persecution in their homeland. I encourage you to visit their website at <https://www.lirs.org/> to learn more. Currently, immigrants who are primarily from Latin America are being held in detention centers across the U.S. To demonstrate God's love and care for those in detention, 2020 marks the sixth year of the LIRS program called *Hope for the Holidays*. Written Christmas or other holiday greeting cards and gifts purchased through donations are delivered to detainee families in three facilities – two in Texas and one in Pennsylvania. Last year, with the help of 266 groups and individuals, LIRS delivered 14,137 cards and 1,512 gifts.

You can participate in this program in several ways: 1) making homemade or personalizing ready-made greeting cards; 2) donating money to the organization for the purchase of toys. Of special note, homemade greeting cards should be free of removable pieces, jewels, glitter, etc. as some of the recipients are or have young children. When signing, use your first name only and your city and state. The primary languages spoken by the detainees are English and Spanish. If you would like to personalize the cards using Spanish and aren't fluent, or for more information about the program, visit <https://www.lirs.org/take-action/hope-for-the-holidays/> and click on Tool Kit. Also important, please do not include or place the cards in envelopes! **Please drop your cards off at Peace by Sunday, December 6. If you come by when the office is closed, just leave them in the grey container outside the front door.** (If you wish to make a monetary donation or missed the drop-off deadline, go to the website. The deadline for monetary donations is December 21 and can be done using the same link and clicking on Give a Gift.) Thank you for your interest and participation in this meaningful Hope for the Holidays program. (If you want more information or have any questions, please feel free to contact the church and we'll connect you with Kelly.)

Christmas Gift “Tree” Giving – Please Be Generous

The donation Christmas tree that we set up in the entrance area would go largely unnoticed and unused this year. Yet, we know how generous the people of this congregation are and how you have a heart for others. So, we are going to set up a Christmas gift-giving fund to which you can contribute. We know it doesn't feel as good as actually buying a present, but let's concentrate on the people who are in need and plan for a normal 2021 Christmas season!

Our causes will be the same, so you can designate which one(s) you wish to support and the amount(s). So that we don't blend these gifts with regular offerings, would you please send a check that gives which cause(s) and amount(s)? If you don't have checks anymore, you can drop off an envelope at church with cash, or you can use the online giving and send/email us a note for the special contribution so we look for it.

We will buy gift cards/send in the donations for the organizations/causes from the moneys we receive.

The causes

Santa Cruz in Joliet (our mission partner) - children and teens (\$10 to \$50)

Santa Cruz in Joliet - homeless adults (\$10 to \$50)

Augustana Open Arms - orphaned teens (\$25 to \$50)

ELCA Good Gifts ministry - assisting people all over the world with animals & more (chicks - \$10; honey bees - \$20; piglet - \$30; school uniform for girls - \$40; goats - \$50; feed 50 people at a soup kitchen - \$100; cow - \$500)

Thanksgiving & Christmas Offerings

Each year the money we receive in our Thanksgiving & Christmas special envelopes is given away to others, divided between the ELCA's Hunger Appeal, Lutheran Social Services of Illinois (the agency of our church that serves so many people in need), mission churches (Santa Cruz in Joliet and Resurrection in Channahon – Pastor Ben's church), and local ministries that help others (Groundwork, Daybreak, Trinity Services, and MorningStar Mission). Under normal circumstances, these gifts total over \$10,000. Again, your generosity will make a huge difference! Please let us know when you've made the donation if online, otherwise just include a note with your offering if by mail or in person.

Decorating Peace's Outdoor Tree

We have put up a fresh Christmas tree just north of the front entrance on which to hang an ornament. We invite you to bring one you already have or to create one to hang. Because it will be outside, please bring unbreakable ones. (Because we won't know whose ornaments are whose, also don't bring a "priceless" one because at the end of the season the ornaments will be gone.) You can come anytime and put on the ornament.

Light Advent Candles at Home, Too, & Devotionals

This year we invite you to create your own Advent candle lighting space. Don't have four candles? No problem! You can create a paper version to color one flame a week, or use birthday candles or some kind of electronic version!

You also are invited to pick up an Advent devotional in the black box outside the front door at church or go online. (Here is one source: [Advent Devotions :: Lutheran Hour Ministries](#); there are more!)

Thinking about Christmas Gifts?

Give your loved one a goat. What!? Through the ELCA's Good Gifts, you can find all kinds of alternative Christmas giving ideas. In short, someone who needs something, such as livestock, receives the actual animal, and your loved one knows that his or her gift is helping someone in need. Check out these and many other good gifts at <https://community.elca.org/elcagoodgifts>.

ELCA World Hunger Resources

This year due to the pandemic we will not have copies of the ELCA Good Gifts catalogs and resources available. Please go to [ELCA.org/hunger/resources](https://www.elca.org/hunger/resources) to find unique seasonal giving ideas that help fight hunger and poverty around the world.

Coat Drive to Help Others

One Warm Coat is a ministry of our church to assist in the collection of clean, reusable coats and jackets for donation to local individuals free of charge. We are grateful for our ability in all circumstances to continue in our mission to meet basic human needs. Items can be dropped off at church including left outside the front door in a bag or box. Scarfs, hats, gloves/mittens and boots are also accepted. Thank you for your support.

Christmas Worship Plans

What to do about Christmas worship? Churches everywhere are debating that question. We want to keep some of the traditions, but still keep everyone safe.

After multiple conversations, here is what we are planning:

On Dec. 24, release two recorded worship services for Christmas Eve. One would have more of the flavor of the children's 4:00 worship and the other the flavor of the later worship services.

On Dec. 24, at 4:00, 7:00, 9:00, and 11:00 we will have outdoor worship spreading out in the parking lot (no indoor worship.) All the services will include the reading of the traditional scripture, a brief sermon, two hymns, singing Silent Night with some form of candles/lights you bring from home. The 4:00 worship will give kids a chance to ring their bells to the other hymn. (Again, bring your own bells.) Reservations are not required. We'll spread out in the parking lot as far and wide as needed. Masks will be needed. The service will be about 20 minutes long; we hope you'll be able to dress warm enough to celebrate Christ's birth in this very different year.

Then a question: On Dec. 25, how many people would come for a drive-in worship at 10:00am? If we get a sufficient response, we'll schedule a brief service then, too. Email or call the church if you would come.

Church Office – More Care in Place for the Staff

Because of more rampant (COVID) spread, we are asking you once again to being more restricted about coming into the church office (as it was when we first re-opened the office.) Call ahead M-F from 9:00 to noon and maybe you can arrange what needs to be done by dropping off or picking up something outside the front door. (You can always leave things for our various giving opportunities out there anytime and we'll take care of getting it inside. Also, you can email the church and we'll get back to you.) We continue to seek ways to serve and be safe at the same time.

2021 Calendars Available

Hickey Memorial Chapel delivered 2021 calendars to us again this year. If you'd like a copy, they will be in the black bin outside the front door – help yourself!

Helping Santa Cruz's Food Pantry

We have an ongoing partnership with Santa Cruz Lutheran Church in Joliet. They have a food and resource pantry for people of their neighborhood who are hungry or in need. You can bring donations anytime and put them in the baskets on the floor heading into Fellowship Hall. The pantry is in need of the following specific items: **especially cereal (all kinds), canned fruit, peanut butter, soups**, coffee (ground), creamers (powdered), hand soap (bar & liquid), disposable diapers, dish soap, toothpaste, juices.

Because of You and Your Gifts

Last year, Lutheran Social Services of Illinois served 12% of children and youth under the guardianship of the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), more than any other organization in the state. To provide this level of care for thousands of children and families who depend on our support, it's critical that we maintain adequate staff members and foster parents to meet this demand. One of those hardworking people is Lindsay, who wrote, "The children and families I serve have shown great strength, resiliency, and hope, which in turns gives me more drive to continue this meaningful work. It has been such a joy to watch our newborn clients grow into amazing toddlers, witness mothers viewing the world through a new, sober lens, and to be a positive agent for change." LSSI currently has a number of openings in child welfare. These openings are across Illinois, each position critical to supporting children and families in the communities where we work.

Wish List

From time to time, people want to make "above and beyond" financial gifts to the church. These gifts are not in place of regular, faithful stewardship – giving from the heart, off the top. Instead they are signs of extra gratitude/joy for the blessings of God. If you would like to make one of those gifts, email Pastor Dave for a list of items that are on his wish list (beyond the budget.)

Would You Like Your Own Copy of the Worship Book?

One of our members asked about doing this, and we can make that happen. If you'd like your own copy, let us know and we will pass one along at our cost, which should be about \$28 after shipping. Contact the office (peacechurch@peacenewlenox.org or 815-485-5327).

Questions Kids Ask About God – Great Christmas Gift!

You may have a spot in your shopping lists that could be filled by our *Questions Kids Ask About God* book or coloring book. The hardcover version is \$14 and the coloring books only \$1. If we can arrange for you to pick them up, no shipping costs! And don't forget we also have Spanish versions, too! Look at our website: www.gkapublishing.org. Call the office if you want to order that way.

Amazon Smile Donation Thanks

We received word that another \$87.39 has been sent to Peace through the Amazon Smile Foundation's donation program; thanks to all who have used it! If you would like to designate Peace (or some other worthy cause) as a beneficiary of the program, just use <https://smile.amazon.com> as the go-to site. Everything else is the same and it costs you nothing.

Golden Opportunities Books are Back

We are once again offering Golden Opportunity books. They're filled with savings coupons for many different types of places, from food to entertainment to carwashes. This year's edition has arrived and are \$25 each. (A portion of that goes to youth-related ministries.) We hope this helps you get some good bargains!

Caregiver Tip of the Month

From the American Heart Association. THINK POSITIVE. Take time every day to refresh your mind. Acknowledge your limitations, and make peace with them. Let go of guilt. Pat yourself on the back for the job you're doing. If you're feeling guilty or angry, take a break. KEEP HUMOR IN YOUR LIFE. It's true — laughter is good medicine. Try to find humor in your situation. Watch a silly TV program or seek out a movie that tickles your funny bone. Find things to laugh about with the loved one in your care — that person needs joy too. (For more information about being a caregiver and other related topics - see our display in the narthex and don't forget to check out any books in the bins)

Youth Events

Confirmation – Online for now

7th Grade Dec. 2 & Jan. 6

8th Grade Dec. 9 & Jan. 13

Peace 360 – Meetings 4-6p.m.

Dec. 6 - On line movie night watching, "Case for Christ"

Dec. 22 – To be determined

Sunday School

We are hard at work with our Sunday School packets! Remember when your youth(s) do a lesson you can go online to

<http://www.peacenewlenox.org/ministries/youth-ministry/sunday-school/> and fill out the form. Then they can earn points for a prize! We will tally up points during Christmas break and I will let you know what you can win! We also added a "Questions Kids Ask" section, so if any of the youth have questions, or if you have questions; let us know! Parents, thank you so much for helping your youth to see God's light through out this murky time. Next meeting online is on Dec. 13 at 10:30 a.m. All the grades are welcome to join us! Codes will be sent out Friday, Dec. 11.

