

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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December 2022

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From Pastor Gary Erickson

Matthew 1:21-23

She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: "Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us."

A humble family's story is told each Christmas. In the story we hear of parents who must travel, a child born away from home, and strangers marking the child's birth. A blessing of stars, angels and shepherds accompany the child's first breaths. We, upon seeing the abundant serendipity of events surrounding this humble birth, might be left breathless with wonder.

I pray that during this holy season you will find peace, comfort, and joy.

With gratitude,

Pastor Gary Erickson

Interim Update:

The coffee break is a wonderful convention. There are times during a busy day when a break is called for – coffee, tea, or a soft drink often revive the body and soul in preparation for whatever is next.

In some ways the interim period is like a coffee break between pastors. During the interim the mission and ministries of the congregation are reviewed, perhaps revived, or perhaps retired. All in preparation for the formation of a transition team and call committee.

We are engaged in a process that will move along more quickly after the holidays. Please plan to be present with us on January 29. On that day Assistant to the Bishop Rev. Jennifer Beamsley will join us a preacher. After worship she will help us understand the transition and call process.

Prayers Requested

Joe, Dana Pitlik, the family of Ryan Plowman, Kathleen Tomlinson, the family of Jaiden Ross, Vivian Farbak, Carole Burge, the family of Jaiden Ross, the family of Ryan Plowman, Helen Bohr, Doreen Stefansko, Loren Drews, Janel Trent, Erah, Phillip, Claudia Green, Cookie, Diane Lillie, Norman and Sandra Braun, Joyce, Diane Lillie

Sympathy

The congregation of Peace wishes to extend its sympathy to:

the family of Dave Davenport, father of Al Davenport

Welcome to the Lord's Family

Leonore Claire Lamore was baptized on Nov. 20

Special Prayers for Healing – Sat., Jan. 14

As part of the 5:00 p.m. Saturday night service on Jan. 14, 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.

Christmas Worship Schedule

Dec. 24 - 4:00pm worship includes an invitation for children to bring bells to ring, plus multiple children's sermons (no candlelight at 4:00)

Dec. 24 - 7:00pm, 9:00pm & 11:00pm worship - candlelight and communion

Dec. 25 - 10:00am Christmas worship

Dec. 31 & Jan. 1 - 5:00pm and 8:30 & 11:00am schedule as usual. Get your New Year off to a good start!

Thank You Very Much!

We are thankful for all the people who give of themselves to make ministry happen!

To: Everyone who helped make Trunk or Treat a huge success

To all the Thanksgiving Dinner leaders and volunteers who helped serve almost 200 meals!

From:

ELCA World Hunger – for the donation

Jack & Linda Goesel – for support & prayers

ELCA Disaster Relief – for the donation

Easter Seals of Will County – for the donation of quilts & prayer shawls

Tina Blackburn – for Thanksgiving dinner

Worship Details

Saturday worship 5:00pm, Sunday at 8:30 & 11:00am.
8:30am service is live streamed.

* Masks are now optional but are once again encouraged for all who are at all concerned.

* In order to keep people's safety in mind, 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.

* If you feel sick or have come in contact with someone who has COVID-19, please stay home and watch via the live-stream.

To sign up for anything, to ask a question, or to share a thought, we suggest using the church's email:

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

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

Electronic Giving

If you would like to sign up for automatic withdrawals, please contact the office. You can also give on-line at any time through our website www.peacenewlenox.org, click on the donate tab and then use the donate through PayPal tab. You can use most major credit cards.

Because of You

Transformative steps to breaking the cycle of poverty for women

In Guatemala, more than half of the population lives in poverty. It has the sixth highest level of chronic malnutrition in the world, and the highest in Latin America and the Caribbean. It is one of the ten countries most vulnerable to natural disasters. The effects of climate change result in longer and longer dry seasons, the result of which is a devastated agricultural sector and increasingly impoverished farmers that depend on the land for their livelihoods.

And for females in Guatemala, the challenges are multiplied. Lack of job opportunities and decision-making roles plus the rampant levels of gender-based violence create an extremely hostile environment for which women to thrive.

But how do you break the cycle of poverty for women in places like Guatemala? While the root causes run deep and require long-term complex solutions, here are three things that make a transformative difference — and that Lutheran World Relief is doing in Guatemala right now.

2023 Flower Chart

2023 dates are available to donate flowers for the altar. Any week we have people who wish to donate them we will order them. You may call or email the church office. The cost per arrangement is \$20.

Community Resources

*** The Will-Grundy Medical Clinic**

free healthcare for the uninsured and those who qualify
815-726-3377, ext. 228.

*** 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline**

call/text 988 or online chat at www.988lifeline.org

*** Joliet Area Hospice Support Groups**

www.joliethospice.org or 815-740-4104

***Crutches, walkers & wheelchairs available**

please contact the church office

***Guardian Angel Community Services**

Sexual assault & rape crisis services

24-hour sexual assault hotline: 815-730-8984

*** LSSI's Joshua Arms**

independent & supportive living units for seniors

www.LSSI.org/JoshuaArms or 815-727-6401

*** NAMI - National Alliance for Mental Illness**

815-409-7917

info@namiwillgrundy.org or www.namiwillgrundy.org

***Cleaning for a Reason**

free housecleaning for women undergoing chemotherapy

www.cleaningforareason.org/cancer_patients_acct.html

Looking Ahead

- Dec. 3 – Blood Drive 9:00am.-1:00 pm***
Altar Guild Meeting 1:30pm
Ladies Ensemble Rehearsal 3:00pm
Trivia Night 6:15pm
Dec. 4 – Sunday School Christmas Program 11:00am
Gingerbread with the Grinch 12:00pm
Dec. 6 – Committee Chair Meeting 7:30pm
Dec. 9 – A Motown Christmas Event 8:00pm
Preshow Dinner at Juliet’s 6:00pm
Dec. 11 – Women’s Group Ugly Sweater & Cookie Exchange 12:00pm
Dec. 17 – Shortest Day/Longest Night Service 5:00pm
Dec. 24 – 4:00 p.m. – Celebration service – including our invitation for children to bring bells to ring
Dec. 24 – 7:00, 9:00 & 11:00 p.m. – Candlelight Communion services
Dec. 25 – 10:00 a.m. – Festival Communion service
Dec. 27 – Church Council Meeting 7:00pm
Jan. 8 – Peace Page Turners 9:45am
Jan. 14 – The Sound of Music Event 3:00pm
Special Prayers for Healing 5:00pm
Jan. 15 – New Member Orientation 9:45am
Jan. 21 – First Communion Class 3:30pm

Groups

Quilting – Mon., Dec. 5 & 19

Ruth Circle Quilting meets every other Monday from 9:00am - 12:00pm. Come whenever you would like.

Trailblazers – Tues., Dec. 20

We invite anyone who’d like to get together with some others who are anything but “over the hill” to come together on Tues., Dec. 20, at 11:30am at church. Bring \$5; the food will be provided. Email or call the church office for more information.

Strong Seniors Exercise – Mon. & Wed.

Join us for a low impact, do what you can exercise program for seniors. We meet twice a week: Mondays 12 noon -1:00pm and Wednesdays 11:15am-12:15pm.

Peace Circle of Prayer Ministry

If you would like special prayers said for someone, just let the office know of a particular need. We will send out an email to the 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.

Prayer Shawls – Dec. 14 & 28

Do you crochet or knit? The Prayer Shawl Ministry is meeting again! A prayer shawl is a shawl prepared for and prayed over for someone that is hurting so they can wrap themselves in God’s love. We could provide you with simple patterns or you could create your own. We meet every other week on Wednesday at 6:00pm. You may also create shawls at home and drop them at church if you are not able to attend in person.

Peace Page Turners - Sun., Jan. 8

Our next meeting will be Jan. 8 at 9:45am and we will discuss *Horse* by Geraldine Brooks. Copies of the book are available to sign out at church.

Addiction and Family Support Group

The Addiction & Family Support Group meets at Peace on Tuesday nights from 7:00-8:30pm. 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.

Faith Development & Education

Wednesday Bible Study

We meet on Wednesday mornings at 10:00am. Why not join us online or in person to learn more about this amazing resource? You do not need to know anything about the Bible to join us!

Adult Education Classes

Please join us for Sunday adult classes

Dec. 4: Keeping Christ in the center of our holidays.

Dec. 11: Matthew 10:34 and other perplexing Scriptures

Dec. 18: Christmas: when and why was December 25 chosen as the day for celebrating Christ’s birth?

Dec. 25: Merry Christmas! - No adult class

Everybody Read

Our desire to have people read a common Bible passage is part of our Book of Faith effort. Each month we will 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 Galatians 4:4-7.

Advent Devotionals

The season of Advent is a time of preparation for Christmas. There are many ways to observe it on your own, as well as together in worship. One of the ways is with Advent devotionals. We have a variety from which to choose that you can pick up on the table in the narthex.

General Announcements

GriefShare – Surviving the Holidays Series

The holiday season will soon begin, but for some this is not a happy time. Some people may want to skip this period from Thanksgiving to Christmas all together. If you have recently lost a loved one or are grieving the loss of a family member or friend, Surviving the Holidays is here to help you. This is a holiday component to the GriefShare program. This is a safe place where you can talk about your emotions or you can choose to sit quietly and just listen. Some of the information we will cover includes:

- How to handle overwhelming emotions
- What to expect in the days to come
- How to grieve in a way that is healthy for you
- What the Bible says about death and grieving

We will continue on Dec. 5 & Dec. 12 from 6:30-8:00pm. It is not necessary to attend all of the sessions. Former GriefShare participants are also welcome. To sign up, please call the church office.

Blood Drive – Sat., Dec. 3

Our next blood drive is Sat., Dec. 3, from 9:00am - 1:00pm. Please use the Versiti website https://donate.illinois.versiti.org/donor/schedules/drive_schedule/5597808 to make an appointment.

Altar Guild meeting – Sat., Dec. 3

The next altar guild meeting will be Dec. 3 at 1:30pm. If you are interested in helping with this group, please join us.

Ladies Ensemble Rehearsal – Sat., Dec. 3

Rehearsals are only one Saturday a month. The next rehearsal will be on Sat., Dec. 3 at 3:00pm. Please contact the church office for more information."

Trivia Night – Sat., Dec. 3

Come and join the fun, as we have brought back Peace Church's in person general trivia contest. It will be on Sat., Dec. 3 at 6:15 p.m. We intend to have multiple teams of no more than six players each. Each of you is an expert at something, right?! We encourage you to assemble a team of your own. Signing up individually? No problem! We will place everyone who wants to play on a team. Come join us!

Children's Christmas Program – Dec. 4

Mark your calendars for our Sunday School Christmas Program! This year we will have one program for P3-12th grade on Sun., Dec. 4 at the 11:00am service!

Thanksgiving & Christmas Offerings

Each year the money we receive in our Thanksgiving and Christmas special envelopes is given away to others. This year it will be divided between the ELCA's Hunger Appeal - which includes direct help for the victims of the floods, earthquakes, and other disasters, Lutheran Social Services of Illinois, mission churches Santa Cruz in Joliet and Resurrection in Channahon – Pastor Ben's church, and local ministries that help others like Groundwork, Daybreak, Trinity Services, and Morningstar Mission.

Christmas Giving Tree

Each year we put up a tree with Christmas gift giving tags for people who could use our help to have a better Christmas. This year we again are going to support Santa Cruz's efforts to make that happen for people in their neighborhood and congregation and ELCA World Hunger Project. New this year is LSSI Project Room in the Inn. Lutheran Social Services of Illinois has a goal to raise \$30,000 to provide Christmas gifts for children served by their programs statewide. LSSI program staff works closely with families to ensure Christmas gifts and to identify sudden and urgent needs such as a warm winter coat or car seat. **If you would like to participate in Project Room in the Inn or ELCA World Hunger there are premade tags and envelopes on our giving tree. Please return your donation by Dec. 30** in the envelope to the church office so it goes to the right organization. **For Santa Cruz, please choose a tag and return it with your gifts by Dec. 11.**

Ugly Sweater and Cookie Exchange – Sun., Dec 11 - Women's Group Reboot

Ladies, join us for the 4th annual (after a 2 year hiatus) event! Wear your favorite holiday sweater and bring eight dozen cookies (and perhaps a few to taste) to exchange. It will be great to get together again! Please sign up by Dec 7. If you have any questions, please contact the church office. See you then!

Shortest Day/Longest Night Service – Sat., Dec. 17 - 5:00pm Worship

As a part of the 5:00 worship service on Saturday, December 17, there will be a special liturgy and emphasis that acknowledges that Christmas is not merry for everyone. Also known in some congregations as a Blue Christmas Service, 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.

Blue Christmas Wed., Dec. 21

This is an online event hosted by Women of ELCA. Our Blue Christmas Service offers a safe place to bring your grief, fear, and loss. Brief readings. Quiet and reflective music. Prayers. All are welcome. Spanish translation provided. [Click here to register now](#) to attend. The service takes place at 7 p.m. Wed., Dec. 21, 2022.

First Communion Class – Sat., Jan. 21

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 should attend along with the child. The class will be offered on Saturday, Jan. 21, at 3:30pm.

New Member Orientation & Reception - Sun., Jan. 15 & 22

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. Orientation will be Sun., Jan. 15 at 9:45 and the reception will be Sun., Jan. 23, during 11:00am worship. If you are interested in joining or finding out more information, please call the church office at 815-485-5327

From Deacon Shari Simon

Dear Members and Friends of Peace,
It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas. I am writing this newsletter article on November 15th during the first measurable snow fall of the year and although Thanksgiving is a week away it feels like the Christmas season is approaching. When you walk in stores, the red and green decorations are up, and the ugly sweaters are out. The Christmas dinner recipes are flooding my Facebook newsfeed and children are starting to tell us what they want from Santa Claus.

So, what do you do if your heart is not quite in it yet? How do we get jolly when the world around us and life in general is making us feel like a scrooge or a grinch? We remind ourselves that its ok to feel like this! God came for the griches and the scrooges too. It's normal and ok to feel a little down on the holidays. We put up Christmas Trees and Tinsel and that is supposed to somehow change our reality, but it doesn't always. Do what you can. Your best is enough and there is no shame in saying no I can't go to the neighborhood Christmas party this year.

What if you are the opposite? What if you were singing Christmas carols the day after Halloween? What if you find yourself in Cindy Lou Who, and Tiny Tim? We remind ourselves that its ok to feel like this! Hang the lights and deck the halls. Let your delight for the season rub off on all those you meet. Plan the meals and time together with family and friends and host the neighborhood Christmas party. Your joy is valid and makes the world a little brighter. Your infectious spirit creates a more cheerful reality.

What if your somewhere in the middle? This is where I find myself. I will start the Christmas carols the day after Thanksgiving and I will decorate my home moderately. I will plan a simple Christmas dinner and I will enjoy it with my family. I will have moments during the Christmas season where I am overcome with joy and moments when I am overcome with grief. We remind ourselves that its ok to feel like this! God's love given to us in the form of the Christ child is a message that is for the joy filled and the grief stricken. God has come into our reality and spoken compassion, understanding and Peace into our world. May you find Peace wherever this holiday season has you. May you know that its ok to feel however you are feeling, and that God is in the joy and the sorrow. God is in the highs and the lows and everywhere in between. You are loved by God and that is enough!

God's Peace,

Deacon Shari Simon

Youth Fellowship & Faith Story

Hi my name is Chance Smothers and I am 9 years old. I believe that God helps people and a lot of good things happen because of God. I learned in Sunday School that Peter had a vision and it was important because God told Peter that none of the animal were dirty anymore and we can eat them now. I come to Sunday School because we do a lot and I like to learn about Jesus. I think everyone should believe in Jesus because he keeps us safe.

~ *Chance Smothers*

Helping Others

December Collection – Socks

During the month of December, we will be collecting socks for MorningStar Mission. Please look for the donation box in the narthex. Thank you!

Coat Collection Through January

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 in the bin located in the narthex. Scarves, hats, gloves/mittens and boots are also accepted. Thank you for your continued support.

Help Others Fund

Alongside our regular giving that helps all kinds of people in need, we also have a special “help others” fund within our general fund. It is targeted to help people who need food or gas. We will continue to be diligent in making sure the money given away actually goes to people in need.

Helping Santa Cruz’s Food Pantry

Santa Cruz has a food & resource pantry for people of their neighborhood who are hungry or in need. We have a list now of specific items they can use in their pantry. You can bring these anytime and put them in the baskets on the floor heading into Fellowship Hall.

| | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| cereal (all kinds) | canned fruit |
| coffee (ground) all kinds | creamers (powdered) |
| ice cream cones (summer only) | juices |
| hand soap (bar & liquid) | toothpaste |
| dish soap | disposable diapers |

Confirmation Schedule -

7th Gr. – Dec. 7 at 7:00 p.m.

8th Gr. - Dec. 14 at 7:00 p.m.

Youth Events

7th -12th gr. Events coming up-

Sign up here

Sun., Dec. 11 – Escape Room & Brunch 12:30-2:30pm
Sat., Dec. 18 – Sky Zone ([liability waiver](#)) meet here at 12:30 & pick up \$25 for ticket \$5 for sky socks
Sun., Jan. 22 - Serving at MorningStar Mission 3-6pm (meet here at 3pm)

7-12 Grade Escape Room and Brunch - Sun., Dec. 11

Please join us on Sun., Dec. 11 at 12:30 - 2:30 for a Nativity Escape Room and brunch for lunch! We have lots of puzzles to figure out as our team finds the prize at the end of the game! Plus, great brunchy food! Sign up in the bulletin or [online](#).

7-12 Grade Sky Zone Event – Sat., Dec. 18

Please meet at church at 12:30 so we can jump at 1pm. Cost of this event is \$25 for admission and \$5 for Sky Socks. You must have sky socks to jump at Sky Zone. There is also a [liability waiver](#) that needs to be filled out by an adult. Sign up in the bulletin or [online](#). Please let us know if you are able to drive to this event. We may need 2 more drivers depending on size of group.

Parents - On Sun., Dec. 4, if your youth is participating in the Sunday School Christmas Program, please *do not pick them up from Sunday School*. We will have the program during the 11am worship service and you can *pick them up in their classroom after the program has ended*.