

# Peace Lutheran Church Olive Branch

## Thoughts from the Pastor

God bless and keep each of you during this continued time of isolation. I want you all to know that I hold each of you in prayer and that I am proud of how you have all reached out to one another, to friends and family in order to make this quarantine less onerous. It uplifts my spirit to see so many of you caring for others when it would be so easy to think only of ourselves. God bless you for your loving hearts.

We are beginning to hear about the possibility of an end to some of the more rigid regulations around the quarantine, which is heartening. We have done well to isolate from one another, which means that we will be able to reconnect without as

much fear of a relapse. Unfortunately, we are not there yet as the a note from our Bishop in this newsletter tells us. While some restrictions will likely begin to be lifted, it will still be some time before we can get together as a whole church.

The Council and I are beginning to make plans for when we can join with one another in worship again, but it will largely depend on the state of the virus in our area. It is looking like it will be a staggered reintroduction. This means that gatherings will be in limited numbers to begin with and that they will gradually grow as long as the virus doesn't come back. For those of you

that are more vulnerable to the virus, you will likely need to remain isolated for longer to ensure your health.

At this point we are dealing with more speculation than real facts, but we want a clear plan for reintegration going forward. As we get details, we will let you all know what those plans are and how we hope to implement them. We continue to take this situation seriously for everyone's safety.

I am starting to hear from some of you that you are really missing connection and Communion. I am beginning to think about ways we can share communion together that are safe. I miss seeing all of you but don't want

to rush things because of my impatience. God will continue to be with us in this time and knows our hearts, so there is no need to rush to the altar. Please continue to call or send notes in if you are feeling isolated and lonely. We are hear for one another as God is with us always.

In Christ,

Pastor Travis Larsen



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# Council Minutes April 12, 2020 12:02pm

Via Zoom meeting (everyone on their own computer or phone)

**Present:** Pastor Travis, Carol Doherty, Linda Gustin, Janet Wood, Gayla Eckis, Dena Summerfield, Mark Stansbury, Kevin Hale, Doug DeBok, and Linda Mattes.

**Absent:** Don Reese.

Meeting called to order by President Carol Doherty and Pr. Travis conducted the meeting.

**Treasurer's Report:** by Janet Wood. March offering was \$15,541; budgeted monthly amount is \$18,128.00. Income was \$2,587 less than budgeted amount. The monthly expenses were \$4,874.24 less than income. Month end bank balance of checking account is \$9,738.52. We discussed that so far, the offering is good, and we have not had to touch our savings. Benevolences of \$1,319.77 were not paid for the month. Portico (employee insurance and retirement) was not paid in March but will be paid on April 13<sup>th</sup>. It was moved by Pr. Travis, seconded by Kevin Hale to accept the

Treasurer's Report and motion carried.

**Old Business:** Short term (Community Awareness, Nametags, Spotlight Members, Sharing, Evangelism, Vitality, Funding) and Long term (Fund Raising and Increased Visibility) goals were tabled.

The new doors are on the cabinet in the narthex.

**New Business:**

**Live streaming the services:**

This has been going well with a few bumps but overall good feedback. Next week will again be live streaming and then the services will be pre-recorded to watch at the regular church time until we can again be together. Do not forget that you can go to the Facebook website Peace in Pendleton and watch the video again.

**The Lenten devotions**

will be ongoing during this time of social distancing.

**Continue to reach out**

it was suggested that the council members continue to call the people on their lists.

**Newsletter mailings**

we acknowledge that people are not cut off from receiving the newsletter by mail. We can send 90 mailings per month and keep under the bulk mail increase. Please contact the office if you want it mailed to you. Communication is im-

portant currently. Gayla will update in the next newsletter.

**Pr. Travis or Anna:**

either Pastor or Anna will be in the church office for the next few weeks during this difficult time. If you need assistance call or text and one of them will get back to you.

**Communication is critical**

at this time; Pastor would rather have too much information than NO information.

Adjourned with the Lord's Prayer at 12:23pm

Linda Mattes, Council secretary

**Note:** this was Pr. Travis's 1<sup>st</sup> Easter council meeting.





## Message from your Council President

As council president I would like to thank everyone who has continued to send in their offering. In these difficult times of not being able to gather it is encouraging to see that God is continuing to be our faithful father as he oversees his church and his people. Here is a brief financial update that I received from our treasurer, Janet Wood,

"Financial information through April 24, 2020.

The offering for April so far is \$17,705.00, which is only \$423.00 under our monthly budgeted amount. All of the bills including benevolences for February and March are paid."

Pastor is continuing to send out daily devotions through email and our weekly service is also online. Hopefully you can stay

connected to the church through these means and praying that we will be able to gather again soon.

If you are in need of something, you have a prayer request, or just need conversation even if it is to vent or express a concern, please call the church office or one of your council members as we would be glad to help you to the best of our ability.

Blessings to all! Carol Doherty



## Newsletter update

The bulletin is being sent by email unless you have requested a hard copy be mailed. It is available in the office for those who live locally. Members can easily obtain "*The Olive Branch*" when services resume, or you can pick it up during regular office hours. The newsletter is also available on the

church's website  
[peaceinpendleton.org](http://peaceinpendleton.org).

**If you would like to change how you receive The Olive Branch,** please contact the church secretary at 541-276-7592 or send a note to:

Peace Lutheran Church  
210 NW 9<sup>th</sup> St.  
Pendleton, OR 97801





Yes! We do have one more new church council member to introduce this year – Doug DeBok. This column featured a story about Doug and his wife, Terry Dallas, last October. I'm sure you have that on file! Terry volunteers in many areas of the church and therefore, is here frequently - or WAS here frequently – before we started staying home to stay safe. The term for the “property and management” committee councilperson was expiring and Doug knew that he had just the right skill set for that position – and he was at the church a lot with Terry - so he threw his hat in the ring!! And he and his hat were selected! He's already been mowing the lawn for quite a while. So, that's who's on the lawnmower. As for the pew....

.....This might be a good time to switch stories for a while... like to our stained glass windows! It appears that we have about eight windows that are connected to current members of the church. There are other local experts in the “field” with whom I can and will visit. Also in the story about Terry and Doug, are references to windows that are in honor of Terry's great-grandparents and Charter Members of the church. August and Adele **Moeller** came to the United States from Germany in the late 1800's. They had had 2 children, Herman and Chris-

tian, before August died in a diphtheria epidemic. Adele then married August **Kupers** and they had six children, three of whom survived to adulthood – Bertha (Ila Lorenzen's mother-in-law!), Ger-tie and Retta.

Terry called the window dedicated to the Kupers “Knock and the Door Shall Be Opened” and I knew exactly which one she was talking about! That is how I know where “my pew” is – opposite that window! I've been connected with a 3-ring binder that was a collaborative effort about the church put together by Rockne Larvick. In the section dedicated to the stained glass windows of the church, the description identifies that particular window as “The Light of the World” - Jesus is knocking at a large brown door and He is also holding a lantern. That surprised Terry. All this time she's considered it the “Knock and the Door Shall Be Opened” window. Ah, the wiles of history!!



Each section of the binder is preceded by a picture of one of the windows and a scriptural reference. For the “Knock/Light” window (a temporary name), Revelation 3:20 was chosen. It reads, “Look! Here I stand at the door and knock. If you hear me calling and open the door, I will come in, and we will share a meal as friends.” The binder indicates that the window was dedicated August 4, 1963 but, according to Terry, that is actually a re-dedication date of the windows after coming from the Myrick church. Terry explained that the windows on the east side of the sanctuary reflect Jesus's life and on the west side, His ministry. Those windows facing into the sanctuary came from the Myrick church.

The subscript at the bottom of the “Knock/Light” window says “In the Memory of / August & Adele Kupers / By The Children”. Terry noted that a more appropriate explanation is that the window was donated “By the Children of Adele”, all five of them – Kupers and Moellers.

A Very Important Council Person has indicated that right now, there are many doors shut to us and so maybe this could be called ...God Opens a Window. I like it!



### Beloved of God,

Last Sunday's gospel reading had us walking with the two on the road to Emmaus. As we continue in our current shut-down, it looks like our sojourn walking with them has been extended.

Though this was not what they'd planned, they don't give up.

Though they don't understand where this will lead them, they remain open.

Though they could be paralyzed by grief or fear, they seek the wellness of the other.

Though they were grieving and confused, they listened for hope, for wisdom, for faith and slowly, eventually, they did see the Savior, in the breaking of the bread.

In the wake of the crucifixion - an anxious, confused, faithful, grieving, time - they walk, breathe, listen, include. And so do we.

Part of my new normal during the shutdown has been attending regular virtual meetings with a small group of other faith leaders in Oregon, Gov. Kate Brown, and the expert advisors she is relying on to navigate us through this pandemic. They want us to know, we who lead churches, synagogues, mosques, and temples, that our faith life together is an important piece of the ongoing planning for Oregon's public health and wellness. As talk of reopening dominates news headlines, and states go their different ways, the message from local scien-

tists and government leaders could not be clearer, here in Oregon we are taking the medical data and CDC recommendations seriously, and the reopening will happen in phases that are more restrictive than those laid out by the federal government.

### What does this mean for churches?

What these proposed phases, and meetings with the governor make clear, is that the likelihood we will meet in sanctuaries across the state anytime soon is low. Schools, sporting events and church gatherings, where hundreds or even dozens meet together, will remain closed for the foreseeable future. For those over 60, the request to stay home and stay safe will likely last much, much longer.

I write this with a heavy heart. This is NOT the news I'd been hoping for. I too, ache for churches to reopen with grand celebratory sermons, plaintive prayer, warm hugs, and festive worship. But, I want us to be realistic so we can plan well, as we begin to think in months rather than weeks. Like your governor and her team, the health of Oregonians remains my central concern. Until there is either herd immunity or a vaccine, we're looking at a summer of advance and retreat as we dance with the realities of the coronavirus in our midst.

As Dr. Fauci has said:

**"You don't make the timeline. The virus makes the timeline."**

Dr. Anthony Fauci

So, we take a breath. Offer a prayer. Call a friend. Go on a walk. Eat well. Go back to the essentials. As we journey together along the road of this pandemic, we are reminded, yet again, that we are not in control. And yet, we know we are not alone.

I look forward to a day when we WILL gather again in the flesh. When we can look back together on this corona-time, and discuss how we have been changed, opened up, and made wiser and surer of God's resurrection power. How Christ fed us even when we were unable to see the Holy right in front of us. How Spirit used our weakness for good. How church, community, and even communion have changed us and cracked open our capacity to connect with a wider world.

**Until then, let's remember that we are God's beloved, we are together, and we are called to courage and compassion in and with Christ.**

Blessings,

Bishop Laurie

*All of our services are being streamed live on our Facebook page and then posted to our website [peaceinpendleton.org](http://peaceinpendleton.org)*

## Upcoming Dates to Remember

ALL DATES ARE TENTATIVE

Please call the office to verify

May 17 ~ Last Day of Sunday School

May 10 ~ Mothers Day

May 25 ~ Memorial Day/Office Closed

June 20 ~ First Day of Summer

June 21 ~ Father's Day

June 22 ~ First day of VBS

June 22-25 ~ VBS Rocky Railway

## Food Pantry

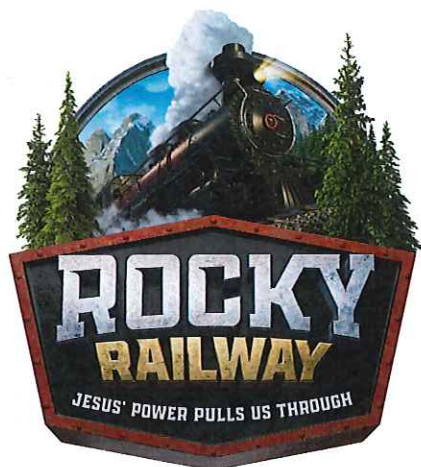
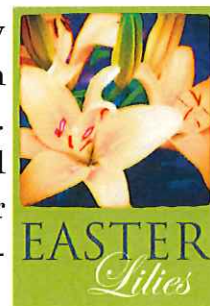
Due to the corona virus the food pantry has been open but not through the regular channels. If you or anyone you know is in need of our help, please come by or give us a call. We are more than happy to be of service. We did help three families last month, we are here for you.

## Springtime Flowers

Thanks to all who donated Easter flowers in spite of all the health and safety rules we are complying with. The lilies and tulips bloomed just in time for the Easter morning service, and hopefully

were enjoyed virtually by our online congregation (without risking allergic reactions as well as potential virus exposure). The plants that were not claimed afterwards have been planted along the sidewalk in front of the church in

hopes that they will bloom again next Spring. Stay well and enjoy your springtime garden!



## MARK YOUR CALENDARS VBS:

**June 22<sup>nd</sup> - June 25<sup>th</sup>**  
**with program on**  
**June 24<sup>th</sup> @ 6:30PM.**



It was a Thursday morning in January that I remembered to join up with the quilters at church to see how I could help out. Impressed by their donation last year of 131 quilts for needy folks in our region or beyond, and knowing how to use a sewing machine, I wanted to check in with them.

All handmade by a weekly group of about a dozen women and men who gathered to team up and fill in wherever needed to get another quilt laid out, pinned and tied, fabric ironed, and edges stitched and finished, these quilts are about extending warmth to those who lack it, rather than following an intricate design pattern. Still, there were efforts to combine pattern and color into a visually pleasing combination, communicating love and care to the stranger who would receive this gift.

As other obligations took me away from a regular commitment, I intended to return later to be involved. Unfortunately, that collaborative team approach is currently not possible during this time of physical distancing. And so, many of them are making masks, some to be sent out to hospitals or given to anyone who might need them.

Many folks find that their leisure interests and faith commitments meld in charitable action through the religious congregations they attend. In the past, those I know of have met during the week to serve meals at the homeless shelter, offer support to children and families under stress, provide personal care and school kits to those in need,

offer music for services, or replenish and share donations from food pantries.

When flooding displaced our neighbors, those religiously committed stepped up along with others to support those most in need around us. We followed that activity in social media and in the news and were inspired to follow their example. That relief work continues, and in partnership with secular counterparts, congregation members continue to be available as the contact on the ground, with leaders available to those who might fall through the cracks in gaining aid through large agencies. It's a challenge to reconsider our charitable activity or find a new approach to the needs surrounding us. This kind of action remains an important lifeline, a mutual give and take of care and concern, supplying concrete assistance where there is need, the warm support of human connection, even when we remain physically distanced. And at this time there are so many within those pathways of support who may find their local faith community to be a conduit to that assistance, whether on the giving or receiving end.

The pastor of the quilting group reported that the church continues to offer pre-filled bags of food to pantry clients, and that those in need are expanding to include people who have never needed it before. Congregation members, including a CPA, are available to bring their expertise informally to those needing it in strange and

challenging times. Whether just noticing and filling a new gap where it exists, connecting with county and state agencies, advocating for housing and food needs, or just letting people know what facts and sources of information are reliable, faith leaders along with their congregants are responding to a heightened sense of service to others.

It has not been that long since we gathered to follow our interests with those who share them, whether it's to sing, knit or sew, garden, landscape, cook or bake. In do-it-yourself projects at home and beyond our walls, we make ourselves available to others and communicate our care for them. We do so also in our support of local businesses in whatever ways we still can. As we feel gratitude to those performing essential services in their occupations, we can also ask ourselves if there is possibility to pay forward our thankfulness in meaningful ways.

We may find that a faith community is a place to connect with the efforts of secular entities who are working hard to fill the gaps.



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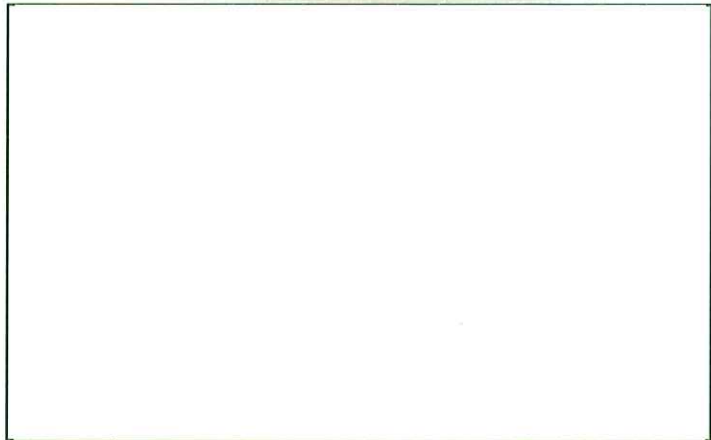
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