

Peace Lutheran Church Olive Branch

Thoughts from the Pastor

I pray that this newsletter finds you all well. This seems doubly appropriate as we seem to be entering a time of a resurgence of COVID-19 and a decline in our capacity to respond to it. Many people are just tired. Tired of having to think and deal with the realities of living during a pandemic and all that this means for us and our lifestyles.

I for one am feeling pulled thin. The many changes and the lack of interaction with others takes a toll. I long to see you all in church and hear your stories. To know that you are doing well and to be able to share with you my love and support. Many of you let me know if various ways that you are doing fine out there in the world and I am grateful for that. Simply know that I pray for you all often.

That is not to say that there aren't bright spots in the midst of it all. We continue to reach more people online every Sunday than we did

prior to our livestreamed services. It is also heartening to know that the congregation continues to be faithful stewards of the missions of the church and that you all continue to support the work that the church does. Because of that support we are still able to do things like offer assistance to the needy, aid in the flood recovery, support mentors and mentees, and even help people figure out how to navigate this new landscape of life.

This will be a strange summer no doubt. We weren't able to host VBS, our kids won't be able to go to camp, we will miss many of the gatherings that are regular for the sunny weather of summer, but we will still be able to connect with our faith. I would like to challenge you all to engage in Bible study this summer and beyond. Take 10 minutes or so of your day to open your bibles and read God's Word. I recom-

mend you start with the psalms. They are easy to digest and give a variety of experiences of faith. I also encourage you to do this because we all seem to need to build up a new routine. Let scripture be a touchstone for that routine so that you can have a strong foundation to cling to in these times.

Another thing I want you to think about adding to your routine is Communion at Peace. While we aren't meeting in the building in person, we will be doing more drive-up communion. I have decided that we will just have a standing appointment for it the last Sunday of every month. We have a way of sharing God's body and blood safely during this time and it helps us to feel connected during these days of isolation. Please join us the last Sunday of every month between 11:15 am and noon!

God speaks to us in the silene and in the noise,

and there seems to be a lot of both in our society today. A lot of noise about who to listen to and who to believe, and a lot of silence about how to function in these strange times. God, of course, is the answer I offer. Trust in God when you don't feel like you can trust in anything else, and your path forward will be made clear.

In Christ,

Pastor Travis Larsen



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Council Minutes May 11, 2020 6:15pm

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

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

Meeting called to order by President Carol Doherty and Pr. Travis opened with prayer.

March & April Council Minutes:

It was moved by Linda Gustin, seconded by Gayla Eckis to accept the minutes of March 7 & April 12, 2020 Council meetings and the motion carried.

Memorials Report

It was moved by Pr. Travis and seconded by Linda Gustin to accept the Memorials report, the motion carried.

Treasurer's Report: by Janet Wood. April offering was \$17,763; budgeted monthly amount is \$18,128.00. Income was just \$365 less than budgeted amount. The monthly bills were \$1,091 less than income. April 30, 2020 ending bank balance is \$11,396.96. We talked about the fact that offering so far has been good and we have not touched the savings account. Benevolences for February and March have been paid. The insurance and retirement are not paid until May. It was moved by Linda Gustin, seconded by Don Reese to accept the Treasurer's Report and the motion carried.

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

Hood above range in Kitchen. We are still trying to get things set up to be done. Once the hood is

installed it will have to be inspected yearly. It was moved by Pr. Travis and seconded by Linda Gustin to move ahead with the hood installation when possible; the motion carried.

New Business:

Live streaming: feedback has been positive about staying connected with live streaming the services. When we can begin meeting at church again, we will continue to live stream the services. The First United Methodist Church has agreed to give a camera so that we can stream from a distance instead of in the aisle, that way we can move the camera out of the way.

Re open possibilities we are a month to six weeks away from Phase 1 with 25 people allowed to assembly with good sanitation and social distancing. There was a lot of discussion about how to handle this: possibly asking people to sign up, call in, do so many in the alphabet and/or to do 2 services during the week. People are missing Communion and the possibility of a drive through pick up in the parking lot on Pentecost Sunday was suggested.

A letter or statement from the council explaining our position on re opening to the congregation and the restrictions.

Newsletter email list: there have been several people that have called the office to be added to the email list. Reminder: if you would like to receive the newsletter in the mail or know of someone that wants to receive it by mail let the office know.

Pandemic pen pals: Pr. Travis suggested opening it to the other churches and the question was asked about privacy. Pastor said it would all be voluntary and people would be asked if they wanted to participate so if they said they did, of course that would mean they would be making their address available.

The council was encouraged to call the people on their list again this month. Pr. Travis will assemble a topic list to help conversations.

A HUGE thank you to our congregation for staying in touch with each other and for your faithfulness with your offerings to keep things running smoothly.

Masonry repair: the tower outside of the secretary's office needs to be repaired. We are still waiting for a quote about cost.

Update the Sanctuary: Good news – The Pendleton Foundation has allocated \$8900 for updating the sound system. Kevin Hale will send a letter out or an article in the next newsletter about the sanctuary updates.

Bottles and cans: there are \$502 in the bottle fund.

Announcements, reminders, and updates:

Congregational members updating contact information. Marge Hudemann turns 102 the 25th of May.

Adjourned with the Lord's Prayer at 7:10pm
Linda Mattes, Council secretary

Council Minutes June 8 2020 6:02pm

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

Absent excused: Doug DeBok.

Meeting called to order by President Carol Doherty and Pr. Travis opened with prayer.

It was moved by Pr. Travis, seconded by Don Reese to accept the minutes of May 11 & June 1, 2020 Council meetings, the motion carried.

Pastor's Report: no report.

Treasurer's Report: by Janet Wood. May offering was \$14,537; budgeted monthly amount is \$18,128.00. Income was \$3,591 less than budgeted amount. The monthly expenses exceed income by \$4,334.90. May 31, 2020 ending bank balance \$15,538.13. Portico and benevolences are paid. It was moved by Linda Gustin, seconded by Gayla Eckis to accept the Treasurer's Report, motion carried.

Old Business: we skipped over this and went right to new business.

New Business: Umatilla county was declared to be in Phase 2 for reopening; gatherings of up to 50 indoors and 100 people outside allowed with physical distancing and enhanced hygiene protocols. We will begin services this coming Sunday, June 14th, with the following restrictions: First and foremost, if you are feeling ill, or think you may have been in contact with someone who has been infected with the coronavirus, please stay home.

Masks are required the whole time you are in church.

6-foot social distancing (except families may sit together) and use

every other pew.

No singing: singing or other loud vocalizations spread the coronavirus up to 25 ft.

Entering from one entrance and leaving from another.

For purposes of contact tracing, we will have greeters who will be taking everyone's name down as you enter the church. We can only allow so many people in the church. If we reach a number that is beyond our ability to socially distance, we may have to turn some people away.

We will continue to livestream the service, so until the new sound system is installed, there will be some equipment upfront,

Communion will not be served regularly, but we will share drive thru communion occasionally.

Please try and refrain from using the church's restroom, but if you need to, be prepared to sanitize the restroom after you (or your child) use it

All the books and papers will be taken out of the pews. Also the pew cushions for sanitation purposes.

Pr. Travis will prepare a list of things to expect if you come to church to send to members.

Updating the sanctuary –the sound system will hopefully be ready to install in approximately 3 weeks thanks to Pendleton Foundation and a generous donor. Paint colors in the sanctuary will be the same as the Fellowship Hall. We will be going forward with carpet selection, color, and price. Pr. Patty Nance's son will be our person for samples and advice. The carpet ad hoc committee will meet Thursday. Hoping to have a cost put together to present to the congregation for approval.

Painting: John Summerfield has volunteered along with Pr. Travis to paint the hallways downstairs. They will continue the color scheme of upstairs.

Newsletter email list: we are continuing to update the list to make sure that everyone is on it that would like to be. And to make sure those who would like to have their newsletter mailed to them. It was decided to get a scale so we can figure out how much it cost to put the newsletter in an envelope and mail it.

Masonry repair: Pr. Travis moved that we have Houk Masonry, Inc. from Walla Walla do what is needed for the \$2800 estimate with a \$500 leeway in case he runs into a problem with half the money coming from capital expenditures and the other half from savings, it was seconded by Don Reese. Motion carried.

Upstairs kitchen refrigerator went out and everything in it had to be thrown out. It was moved by Mark Stansbury that we buy Anna's extra fridge for \$400 to replace the old one, seconded by Linda Gustin. Motion carried.

It was suggested that we ask Memorials Committee to buy a 60-65inch TV and cart to put outside on the porch or the Fellowship Hall for overflow to watch the live streaming Sunday service. Pr. Travis will pursue this.

East Oregonian ad: Kevin Hale would like to sponsor an ad for Peace. If you are looking for peace come to Peace Lutheran Church.

Bottle fund: There is approximately \$480.72 in this fund with half going to Youth and half to the Sanctuary Fund.

Announcements, reminders, and updates: Congregational members updating contact information.

Adjourned with the Lord's Prayer at 6:59pm on the Peace greens. Linda Mattes, Council secretary

Lutheran World Relief Kits

PLEASE HELP!

VBS is cancelled, In-person Worship is Cancelled, but Lutheran World Relief is NOT Cancelled!

There are 3 aspects of Lutheran World Relief in which we participate as a congregation: Quilts, Personal Care Kits, and School Kits. Each year in October, we ship our donations to a central receiving station where they are packaged to ship overseas or to use when they're needed in the US. Here's how you can help with each:



Quilts: Although the Peace Quilters are not meeting, there are quilt kits ready to sew in a box near the South windows in the Fellowship Hall. Pick up a kit, follow the instructions to sew it together using straight ¼ inch seams, and return it to be quilted later when the Quilters are able to meet. Or, donate new fabric yardage or scraps. We are unable to use fabric with religious symbols or messages.

We also can't use fabric with a US flag, or with any patriotic or military symbols, including camouflage.



Personal Care Kits: These kits contain the usual items that everyone needs for personal hygiene: a quick-drying **bath towel**, 2 or 3 bars of **soap** (8 or 9 oz. total), **nail clippers**, a sturdy **comb**, and a **toothbrush**. Inexpensive bath towels which are easy to hand wash and will dry quickly are available at Wal-Mart or Bi-Mart. The other items are available at the Dollar Store or wherever you normally shop. There's a sample kit on a table in the Fellowship Hall. You may roll everything up yourself or just drop off the items and we'll finalize them for shipping.



School Kits: It will soon be time for school supplies to go on sale so please keep an eye out for the items needed. Each kit requires **4 notebooks with 70 sheets of paper**, wide or col-

lege ruled (no religious, patriotic, or military designs and no US flags), a **12" ruler** with both centimeters and inches, one **pencil sharpener**, one blunt pair of **scissors**, **5 unsharpened #2 pencils with erasers**, **5 black or blue ballpoint pens** (no gel pens), **one box of 16 or 24 crayons**, and one **2 ½" eraser**. Each school kit is packed in a 14"x17" drawstring backpack which you may purchase or Rosanne Goade sews them according to LWR requirements. Call her at 541-429-3238 if you'd like to help with making backpacks.

Any items that you donate can be left on the tables in the Fellowship Hall. There are supply lists available there also. Ring the doorbell alongside the parking lot door to have the door unlocked. For more information about the ways that Lutheran World Relief helps to extend God's loving care and hope to people around the world, go to <https://lwr.org> Thank you for your generosity!

Focal verse

“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends” (John 15:12-13).

Reflection

Beneath the blue sky, a friend and I met for a walk on a nature trail with our collective five kids, two strollers, one bike, water and snacks. “Walk” is a loose term for what unfolded. We moved in fits and starts, crying, corralling, picking up a toddler with a scuffed knee and conversing with a defiant preschooler.

“I push, Mama!” Charlotte, my 5-year-old pleaded. “Please, Mama!” Taking a deep breath, I stepped away from the stroller to give her small hands room to push her younger brother. She craned her head over the handlebars just enough to see the path ahead of her and took off in a sprint as I kept my distance, trying to eke out a moment of conversation with my friend. After one sentence, I saw the stroller rush down a grassy embankment, tilting to one side.

“Alright,” I called. “It’s my turn to push now. Go and run with Liam and look for leaves.”

In total, we walked an hour. I can’t recall what we actually talked about in between bargaining with our children and doling out snacks. Yet between the screams, demands and crashing of strollers, magic happened. My friend and I bore witness to one another in our calling as mothers.

In the parking lot the kids piled into their car seats and we folded the strollers. With the slam of my trunk I turned to my friend. “See you next week?” I asked with a wave and a smile.

“Sounds good,” she responded. Sitting in the driver’s seat, I gave thanks for that day and our walk—the sun, the gentle breeze, the hugs, the tears, all of it—together.

Throughout the various stages of parenting, the best thing we can offer to others is our presence and witness. We remind each other we’re not alone.

While we stayed home due to COVID-19, my connections with fellow parents were different yet just as needed. Calls, Zoom chats and snail mail took the place of in-person get-togethers. With every connection point, I felt less alone and more seen. And my children saw that they have a group of people cheering for their mother.

When we invest in friendships, whether virtually or in person, we acknowledge the gift of community and remind our children that God’s presence can be found precisely amid showing up.

Practices

How might you show up for your friends and model faith-centered friendship to your children? Maybe you could send a text and invite family friends to the park for a physically distanced picnic. Try a virtual game night and use a video chat with family friends. When you gather, be present and bear witness to others. Afterward, discuss with your children how you saw God showing up in your fellowship with friends.

Prayers

We pray for the diversity of families—single parents, grandparents raising grandchildren, and blended families—that they may know and share God’s love.

We pray for opportunities to listen deeply and learn from others.

We pray for parents of newborns and of newly adopted children.

We give thanks for playdates at the park, hikes in the woods and picnics with friends.

We give thanks for church communities that become family.

We give thanks for laughter among friends.

Service opportunity

Call your local animal shelter to learn about volunteer opportunities. Get together with friends and see if you can walk the dogs for exercise. As you walk, say a prayer for the animals and their future owners as well as a prayer of thanks for friendship.

Council Minutes June 18, 2020 4:32pm

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

Present: Pastor Travis, Gayla Eckis, Carol Doherty, Janet Wood, Linda Gustin, Don Reese, and Linda Mattes.

Absent excused: Kevin Hale, Mark Stansbury, Dena Summerfield, and Doug DeBok.

Meeting called to order by President Carol Doherty and Pr. Travis chaired the discussion about in person services at the church.

It was agreed by the council members to not encourage open ser-

vices to the public or members due to recent outbreak of COVID in our area, Methodist participation, and low demand. It was agreed that Carol and Anna would draft an email to send to members with Pr. Travis's approval. Also put on the peaceinpendleton.org and Facebook accounts. Livestreaming of the church service will continue as usual.

Meeting adjourned at 4:51pm, Linda Mattes, Council Secretary

Message sent out: The Council met recently to discuss our open services. Due to the increased cases in our area, related to religious services, we have decided not to continue having services open to the public. Our member's continued health and well-being are our top priority. We will continue to live stream our services on the internet. We will be offering drive-thru communion June 28th from 11:15 am until noon and will be hosting such communion services the last Sunday of every month until we are completely open.

Sanctuary update

More good news?

Let's keep the project moving forward. We have painting to do, new carpet, new pew cushions, and repositioning of the pews to accomplish next. Please join us in raising these funds for the next phase. We are going to be closed down a bit longer...maybe it would be wise to have this project completed and ready for when we can join together and really celebrate the good new of God's love in our Church, or Community and our Souls.

The sanctuary committee is working on a plan to push the sanctuary fundraising forward. You will be receiving a letter outlining the details and how you can help with the fundraising process.

Please join us by making a special contribution today. Can I hear a loud Hallelujah??

SCHOLARSHIPS



The Peace Lutheran Scholarship committee meet June 18, 2020 to review this years well qualified applicants. The scholarship committee member's are Don Partis, Marjean

Corey, Dusty Dressler, Virginia Miller-treasurer, and Evelyn Jenson-chairman. The committee was notified that we had \$2,300 fir distribution thanks to our strong

congregational support. This years three recipient's are Annaliese Oertwich, Doria Summerfield and Gabe Umbarger.

A tale of two pandemics Reflections: Racial Justice and COVID-19

By Shari Seifert, Jessica Harren

Editor's note: COVID-19 has uniquely impacted communities of color and their lives and ministries. In this series, we will feature ELCA Racial Justice reflections from each of the ELCA Ethnic Specific and Multicultural Ministries associations, focusing on racism and racial disparities amid the coronavirus.

Authors' note: Shari Seifert and Jessica Harren are members of the European Descent Lutheran Association for Racial Justice (EDLARJ). EDLARJ works in solidarity with ELCA communities through witness, partnership and trainings to confront racism. Its tagline is "Awaken Hearts, Inspire Transformation and Confront Injustice."

We are writing this because we see how the effects of this pandemic are compounded by the effects of systemic and everyday racism. The disparities seem even more stark now. Since much of our nation is highly segregated, it can be hard to see beyond what one is personally experiencing. We both have work and personal relationships with people of other races, so we are acutely aware that, for generations, our societal structure has accorded resources to some groups more than to others. We hope this post will awaken hearts and lead to transformation and more folks confronting the injustices this pandemic is making clear.

We have white privilege. During this pandemic, we are living lives very different from those of people of color (POC)—it's a tale of two pandemics. If we are outside, we are unlikely to be stopped by police. If we go to the store in a mask, we are assumed to be people caring for our neighbors, not criminals. When we go grocery shopping, no one spits on us because we appear Asian. Even white folks and POC belonging to the same social class will experience this pandemic differently.

For the first time, we are feeling restrictions to our movement and our access to medical care. Many POC

have known these restrictions for their entire lives. Many white folks are not used to having restricted movement and are now protesting *en masse* in public. Many POC live in food deserts. We are used to constant access to anything we want.

This doesn't mean our lives are not extra-complicated right now. Jess is having to do online school with a child who had had accommodations for various medical and neurological conditions. Jess lives with disabilities and is more likely to get very sick if she gets COVID-19. She and her family are grieving the loss of vacations and school. And yet, for a family of color, even with similar resources, life is harder.

We don't have to do anything to keep this unjust system in place.

For example, the illustrations in Jess's child's books for online learning are mostly of white kids. The assignments are culturally relevant. When Jess goes to the store to pick up medicine, no one assumes she's a criminal or spits on her. The police don't stop her for being out, because her neighborhood isn't policed.

Shari is working from home, sharing a workspace with her oldest son, who is in college and has autism and anxiety. He has access to a therapist through telemedicine. Her younger son is doing high school from home. Both boys have their own computers and can easily get help with schoolwork. Days when grocery orders are finally ready are celebrated! When Shari gets tired of being inside, she can play fetch in the backyard with the family dog. Running Shari's small business of selling real estate comes with no guarantees, except that bills and Shari's assistant still need to be paid. Sometimes it's hard not to worry and to fall into scarcity mode.

The reality is that many of Shari's clients are less affected by the pandemic and that business is continuing—and if her

business falls on hard times, there are family members who can help. For many POC, staying home from work is not an option, there is not good access to health care, access to healthy food is harder, not every child has their own device for doing schoolwork, there may not be family members who can help financially, housing is more dense and there is not a private backyard to play with the dog in.

We are all struggling now. People are dying alone, their families are being denied the solace of funerals, grandparents can't hug their grandchildren, people have lost jobs, businesses are shuttered and we all face uncertainty. These things are all true, yet entrenched systemic racism still gives white people of all classes advantages in this pandemic.

This crisis lands on people in very different and important ways. Not all white people are rich and not all people of color are poor, but the majority of white Americans are middle-class homeowners who live in stable communities.

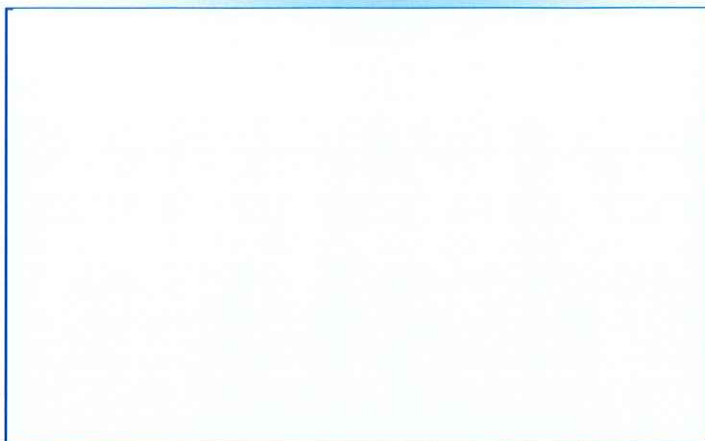
The disproportionate number of POC dying is heartbreaking. We don't have to do anything to keep this unjust system in place. Change is stubborn and requires faithful and persistent effort such as speaking up at racist jokes or memes online, listening to and following POC (we recommend this by Jeremiah Bey Ellison), shifting money to POC-led organizations for racial justice and praying for the whole body of Christ, including our POC friends. If you still have an income or access to money, consider supporting a POC-led organization in your community.

We pray that the Holy Spirit will enter our hearts and move us to action.

Peace Lutheran Church

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We're on the web
peaceinpendleton.org

Address Service Requested



**This Independence Day, we're reaching out to say
the best things in life are FREE...
Just like God's love for you.**