

Love Your Neighbor

Jesus said, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." –Matthew 22:37-40

What a shame that February – the one month of the year with keen focus on love – is also the shortest. We sure could use a lot more love in our world, especially for our neighbor.

The last 12 months have been particularly hard, as race riots, a divisive election and civil unrest have all unfolded against the traumatic backdrop of the Covid-19 pandemic. Currently in very short supply, more love for neighbor would go a long way in helping us to solve our problems.

Love for neighbor is integral to not only good discipleship, but also good stewardship. The greater the "love for neighbor" factor in our lives, the better stewards we will be of every blessing God provides – creation, time, relationships, money, possessions, health, to name just a few. By cultivating love for neighbor we will also enjoy a happier life and promote a healthier and more civil society.

The opposite is also true. Cultivating enmity for neighbor leaves us sour, selfish and cynical, while also making our nation angry and selfish.

This year make February "Love Your Neighbor" month in your personal devotions and your congregational life. Give the concept breathing room in your life. Keep it in your thoughts, sow it in our heart, talk about it to your family and friends.

Pray for God to teach you what it means to love our neighbor. Pray for God to give you the strength and will to live it. And watch as love heals and invigorates your life ... and our world.

–Rob Blezard

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A Message from the Pastor

Naming the Pain

A few years ago I was running and had a pain in my foot. I decided it wasn't too bad, so I just kept running on it. Guess what happened? It got worse. Pretty soon I could hardly walk at all. Ignoring the pain, doesn't make it go away; in fact, it makes things worse. Had I given my foot some rest early, it wouldn't have inflamed, and I would have been back on my feet much sooner.

Part of what we do in the church is name the realities of our pain in a world that tries to numb pain. We do this with our bodies, but also with our spirits and our relationships as the body of Christ.



I have found that the difficult conversations in life are the ones I tend to avoid the most. After all, who wants to go into tell someone bad news. Or who wants to go and face the music having screwed up. The easier thing to do is simply not deal with it at all and keep it out of sight and out of mind; simply try and move on to something else and stay busy, so I don't have to worry about it. Maybe it will magically disappear.

It's the same problem as ignoring the pain in my foot.

As Christians we are gifted with the ability to give voice to what ails us. As we move into the season of Lent, we enter a reflective and penitential time naming the things that afflict us, and the ways in which we have been poisoned by sin.

The healing balm God gives us in confession allows us to receive divine mercy and reconciliation both with God and with one another. We are moved with Jesus as he marches to the cross to face the demons of this world. We face our own demons and name them before God that we might be restored and made whole again in the image of God; that we might remember who we belong to and what life is all about; and that we might be renewed in our spirits to carry on as God's beloved community in a harsh world.

For our midweek Lenten worship, we are looking at praying the Psalms of Lament – this raw language of naming the struggles we have and laying it all on the table before God.

Many of us have been taught to be nice to people as the ultimate good, and certainly to be nice and subservient in our prayers with God.

Dr. Walter Brueggemann teaches the Psalms as a way of giving voice to the human experience, including our struggles. Prayer and the Psalms, therefore, allow us to engage God with difficult conversation as we wrestle with this world groaning in beleaguered pain from a devastating global pandemic.



Each Wednesday night in Lent during worship we name the pains we face in our world; learn how to pray and lament in a holy fashion; and draw closer to the God who knows our pain not by avoiding it, but by facing it in the cross.

God's Peace,
Pastor Jake



Voices in the Wilderness

The season of Lent begins with Jesus entering the wilderness for forty days beginning this spiritual vision quest clarifying his path forward to the cross. As we live in this pandemic time, we are in the wilderness, listening to the voice of God clarifying the way of the cross. Join us Wednesdays at 7pm to hear the voices in the wilderness speak. Worship is livestream only.

Abundant Blessings

February Birthdays

03 Dave Keeler
 03 Antonio Rosales
 05 Johnana Clark
 06 Dayna Schmidt
 06 Debra Ullrich
 06 Anthony Rosales
 07 Alex Keatts
 08 Lavonne Ohnheiser
 09 Pam Kurczewski
 11 M.L. Friedrich
 12 Marvin Monson
 12 Brandi Raschke
 14 John Kassel
 15 JoAnna Wold
 16 Tammy Dougherty
 21 Shawn Braune
 23 Joe Wold
 28 Vicki Ralph
 28 Michele Kriley

February Anniversaries

Bobby and Karen Laughlin
 February 2, 1980
 Salim and Emily Khalil
 February 17, 1996

In Sympathy

Our thoughts and prayers go out to the following:

- ✝ Larry Crowell and his family at the death of his wife, Joan
- ✝ Terry Westerman and her family at the death of her husband, Lewis
- ✝ Greg Mosher and his family at the death of his sister, Cheryl



Prayers

Jim Boenig
 Cathy Boenig
 Dora White
 Wil Voges
 Lindsay Friedrich
 Martin Franz
 Michelle Rappmund
 Ron Podojil
 Rhonda Schmidt
 Cody Smith
 Helen Probst
 Bob Schlabach

Thank You

I am sending a note of thanks to all of you: Pastor Jake, Deacon Andrew and all of our Peace family and friends. Lindsay is walking a difficult path towards her goal of “Stroke Recovery”. We, as her family, can not walk that same path with her but we are traveling the journey close by her side. It is often times a bumpy and winding road but, with God’s help, we will continue forward. God has kept his caring and loving arms around us each step of the way and we have faith that He will continue to take care of us. We thank you all for your continued prayers, support and good thoughts. Our family believes that prayers work!

God’s Blessings to all of you, Lindsay and Roy Friedrich and Claire.

Peace and Hope,
 Vicki Hillmer

Thank you for helping us play Santa! We appreciate your support for all our kids in care.
Kindest Regards,
The Upbring Staff

From the Castle

Color me liturgical!

Have you ever wondered why periodically the banners hanging on the walls and the cloths on the altar change colors? If any of you still own calendars you hang on your wall, you will note that when you turn to a new month, there is a new picture...often capturing the season of the year. Sometimes you will see the colorful leaves of autumn in New England, or a snow scene with birds foraging for seeds or for suet left behind by a bird lover. It would be very unusual to turn to the month of July and see a pumpkin patch. Likewise, it would be very unusual to see a black cloth and no banners or paraments on Easter Sunday!



The church too has seasons, liturgical seasons. In fact, last month, we celebrated the season of Advent, the first liturgical season of the church year. All during the season of Advent the large cross in the sanctuary was draped in royal blue cloth, the banners hanging on the wall were all blue, depicting the upcoming birth. Pastor Jake's stole was blue, matching the cloth draped over the altar. On Christmas, everything turned white...the drape, the banners, the stole and the altar cloths, called paraments. During the Epiphany season in the church, the colors all became green until Transfiguration Sunday when they will all turn white...just prior to Lent when all the colors become purple. Each season in the church year

has a specific color assigned and our altar guild, ably chaired by Lupe Travis, along with the worship/music ministry team oversees those duties.

Changing the colors in our worship service reminds us of the changes in the church year, the story of God's people in scripture, and the formation of our faith throughout our lives. God is always on the move in our lives.

In Peace,
Marianne Gould
Deacon Intern

Important Information

Flowers 2021

Signing up for flowers will look a little different in the new year. There will not be a chart in the Narthex; we will utilize a Sign Up Genius online.

Visit the Peace website at www.peacenb.org. Scroll to the bottom and click on the Flower Button. This will take you directly to the Flower Sign Up Genius.

Please review the available slots, click on the date to sign up, then scroll to the bottom and click the Submit and Sign Up Button. Enter your dedication, name(s), and email. Click the Sign Up Button Now.

Cost of flowers is \$40.00. Make checks payable to Peace and mark "flowers" in the memo. Contact the church office if you need any assistance.

Thank you!
Worship Ministry Team



Stephen Ministry

Alone

Well everything continues to be upside down. No matter how hard we try, we just continue to have difficult making headway. The isolation related to Covid is unbearable at times, and more of our friends are becoming ill. We want to be safe and yet we want to see our friends, other than Skype, Hangouts or Zoom. Jesus declared His dependence on God in everything He did "By myself I can do nothing." (John 5:30) *(Our Daily Bread January 6, 2021)*



God is seated on His throne, surrounded by a sea of glass. (Revelation 4:2,6) Despite the troubles that plague us here on earth, God isn't pacing the floor and biting his nails. He's actively at work for our good, so we can experience His peace. *(Our Daily Bread, January 17, 2021)*

As we continue with 2021, if you are having difficulty, feeling isolated, confused or just feeling upside down, contact the Stephen Ministers. Those who are experiencing difficulties with the Coronavirus, or with the isolation and challenges that we are experiencing, contact the church, Pastor Jake or one of our Referral Coordinators, Bill Purcell or Cathy O'Shea, at 210-846-3315. For more about

Stephen Ministry at Peace Lutheran Church, see the web pages at www.peacenb.org/Stephen-Ministry

Ron Podojil
Stephen Minister

Deacon Andrew's Bible Study Toolbox

How Lutherans Interpret the Bible Series



"Therefore dismiss your own opinions and feelings, and think of the Scriptures as the loftiest and noblest of holy things, as the richest of mines which can never be sufficiently explored, in order that you may find that divine wisdom which God here lays before you in such simple guise as to quench all pride. Here you will find the swaddling clothes and the manger in which Christ lies, and to which the angel points the shepherds. Simple and lowly are these swaddling cloths, but dear is the treasure, Christ, who lies in them."

Martin Luther (Luther's Works, 35:236)

The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible

Lutherans regard the Bible as the **inspired** word of God.

The word inspired literally means "breathed into". Interestingly, in both Hebrew and Greek the word for "spirit" also means "wind" or "breath". We believe that the Bible is created by God, and so we refer to the Bible as inspired, God-breathed. When we say that the Bible is the inspired word of God, we are saying that God has worked by the power of the Holy Spirit through human authors across the centuries to give us this story of God's love for all of creation.

Lutherans say that the Bible is the **authoritative** source and norm for our Christian proclamation, faith, and life.

What makes a writing authoritative? For Lutheran Christians, the Bible is authoritative because

- * the Bible comes from God.
- * God is the primary actor in Scripture.
- * through the Bible, God actively engages us-
 - ⇒ it communicates the saving grace of God in the person and history of Jesus Christ.
 - ⇒ it creates and nurtures faith in those who hear it.
 - ⇒ it gives us our identity -the Bible is where God speaks, so we have no identity without it
 - ⇒ it helps us to see and understand the world and our lives in a real way
 - ⇒ it shapes our life together in Christian community

The authority of scripture rests on that of the gospel and its content. The Bible does not just convey information – it actively engages us to DO SOMETHING. The Scriptures are more than the historical record of God's revelation in Christ. The Bible's primary function is to convey Christ. Everything else is subordinate to the Word of God found in the Bible (our Creeds, Confessions, Catechisms, and confessional documents).

In saying that the Bible is authoritative, we confess faith in the God who engages us there. We worship a living, active, relevant God who continues in relationship with creation, with humanity, with the church, with each of us. We know that The Bible is intended for the good of all, directly through God's engagement and indirectly through service of those who have been engaged by God.

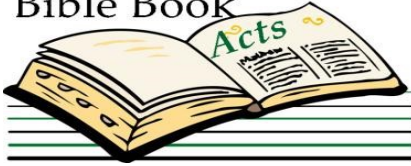
The Bible is given to the whole of Christ's church. It is an inherited and shared gift – meant to be passed on. We received it from others, we hear it now, we are to share it with those who come after us. Our role is to be attentive and faithful listeners and proclaimers of the Good News of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

In Peace,
Deacon Andrew More

From the Desk of Deacon Andrew

February's

Bible Book



The Gospel of Mark

Some interesting aspects of Mark:

- Length: Sixteen chapters
- Author: Historically, this gospel is attributed to John Mark, a coworker of Peter and a travelling companion of Paul (see Acts 12:12, 15:37).
- Date: Most scholars agree that this gospel was written sometime around the Jewish War with Rome, perhaps between the years of 66-70 CE. All scholars agree that this is the earliest of all four of our gospel accounts.
- “Mark” is the shortest of our four canonical gospels. In fact, it is in this writing that the word “gospel” (Greek=Euangellion) is first used (Mark 1:1). Mark assembled various stories about the life and ministry of Jesus that had been passed down by his followers. The authors of both Matthew’s and Luke’s gospels appear familiar with the Gospel of Mark and indeed incorporate much of his writing into their own.
- Unlike Matthew and Luke, Mark’s gospel does not contain any record of Jesus’ parents, lineage nor his birth. Instead Mark begins with Jesus as a grown man, with his baptism by John at the Jordan River, followed by a brief account of his temptation in the wilderness, then and moves right away into his ministry in Galilee.
- Mark structures his writing around three scenes: Jesus’ baptism, transfiguration, and crucifixion. Some scholars refer to Mark as an extended Passion story (account of Jesus’ arrest, trial, crucifixion), with a brief prologue and epilogue.
- Mark tells the story of Jesus’ life with unusual urgency and a fast pace. He uses the Greek word for “immediately” (at once, then) forty times in sixteen chapters. While the first three years of Jesus ministry are covered in 10 chapters, the final six chapters slow the pace and cover the final week of Jesus’ life.
- Mark’s writing style is vivid and concrete, with a concern for detail. He writes about the stunned reaction of the crowds (1:27, 2:12) and the fear and amazement of the disciples (9:6, 10:24, 32). Mark also seems to offer the most human portrait of Jesus. Here we read about Jesus being tired, hungry, and expressing the full range of human emotions, including pity (1:41), anger (3:5), wonder (6:6), compassion (6:34), indignation (10:14), and love (10:21).
- Mark’s gospel emphasizes Jesus deeds over his words. The impression of Jesus as a miracle worker is felt more strongly here than anywhere else in the Bible. Mark’s gospel is imbued with a motif of secrecy. Jesus describes his teaching as the “secret kingdom of God” (4:11). Whenever Jesus heals someone, he commands them to “say nothing to anyone”. When demons identify him as the “Holy One of God”, Jesus orders them to “not make him known”. When Peter identifies Jesus as the Messiah, he orders his disciples to not tell anyone about him (8:30). But in the end, Jesus does commission his disciples to proclaim him to all the nations.
- Mark’s gospel highlights the flaws and failures of Jesus’ disciples more than any other gospel. Perhaps Mark’s point was that, even with all their failings (including not completely understanding who Jesus really is), Jesus calls these disciples, teaches them, forgives them, empowers them, and sends them out for mission into the world. So it is with all of us! The power of the gospel is based upon Jesus, and in particular his very real suffering, death and resurrection. Mark makes it clear that we are to proclaim Jesus as the *crucified and risen* Messiah!

New Members

Lewis and Terry Westerman: Lewis and Terry have two daughter, Amy and Jenny and two granddaughters, Emma and Allie. Lewis is planning on retiring after 40 years of working in commercial real estate investment. He serves on the Board of Regents at TLU and the Board of St. Luke's Lutheran Health Ministries. Terry was a Deacon at Christ Lutheran for 20 years. Most of those years were spent as Director of Christian Education. She also served in Pastoral Care. She enjoys reading, gardening and playing golf. Sadly, Lewis passed away on January 16, 2021.

Kurt Andersen-Vie: Kurt and his wife, Tricia, retired and moved to New Braunfels two years ago. He is a career Army Officer and later a Program Director with Lockheed Martin. He is active in the Chamber of Commerce, Lion's Club, HOA and German-American Club. Kurt is learning Spanish with the hope of backpacking in Spain next year. He is a life-long Lutheran.



Alex Keatts: Alex is retired from his real estate business in Houston. He has a son, Mark, grandson, Ryan and great-granddaughter, Arya.

Nate and Brandi Raschke: Nate and Brandi are from Houston and have been in the central Texas area for over 10 years. They met at TLU. Nate majored in Finance and Marketing. He works for Sather Financial Group. He enjoys volunteering his time at church, the Rotary Club, the Chamber of Commerce and the New Braunfels Food Bank. Brandi pursued a Theology Degree and a Master's in Higher Education. She served MacArthur Park Lutheran Church for three years as a youth director. She currently works at CASA of Central Texas as their Training Coordinator. Brandi currently volunteers on a weekly basis with both Meals on Wheels and the Food Bank. They both enjoy hiking and exploring state and national parks.



Tommy and Becky Perkins: Tommy and Becky transferred to Peace Lutheran Church from Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church in Lockhart, Texas.



Linda Ottmers: Linda joined Peace Lutheran Church via transfer from Grace Evangelical Lutheran church in Lockhart.

Natanael Lizarazo and Barbara Wangsness: Natanael is from Columbia, South America and was ordained in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Columbia, where he worked with development projects of the Lutheran World Federation. He and his wife, Pastor Barbara Wangsness are retired ELCA pastor who have served different ministry settings for over 30 years, predominantly in cross-cultural and global contexts. Natanael's interests include traveling, reading, photography and gardening. Barbara is a Midwesterner. She and her husband served in Minnesota, Columbia and South Central Texas. In her retirement years, she wants to increase her health wellness through many and various holistic aspects. They have a grown daughter who lives in Austin.



Helen Lieck: Helen lives in San Antonio. She is Pastor Jake's grandmother. She loves people, family and the Lord.

Congratulations to Our New Church Council 2021!

Don Hodde - President
Lisa Harrison - Vice President
Matthew Simmont - Secretary
Megan Wenzel - Treasurer

Carol Franz - Member At-Large
Hayden Kaufman - Member At-Large
David Thomas - Member At-Large
Amy Tiemann - Member At-Large
Forrest Willis - Member At-Large

Noisy Offering

The Noisy Offering is back! Peace will be collecting donations for the following Noisy Offering Sundays:

February 28 Habitat for Humanity

The Noisy Offering will be collected a little differently though. **We will not actually collect coins, rather, we will collect cash and/or check donations.*****

Early Parking Lot Service attendees can drop off their donation at that time. Live Stream Worship Service attendees can drop off donations in the church mailbox or mail their donation directly to the church. Please make your check out to Peace Lutheran Church and put Noisy Offering in the memo.



*****Giving online is always a great option as well. Go to the church website, peacenb.org, and click on the Ways To Give Tab. Choose Online Giving and follow the instructions. Please remember to designate Noisy Offering in the memo.**

Finances December 2020

FUND	BEGINNING BALANCE	INCOME	EXPENSE	TRANSFERS	ENDING BALANCE
General Fund	\$ 82,776.93	\$ 32,320.02	\$ 34,191.46		\$ 80,905.49
Building Fund	\$ 32,857.77	\$ 1,154.13	\$ 0.00		\$ 34,011.90
Endowment Fund	\$ 7,842.29	\$ 344.59	\$ 0.00		\$ 8,186.88
Endowment Investment Fund	\$ 133,875.47	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00		\$ 133,875.47
Deferred Maintenance Fund	\$ 5,774.64	\$ 0.73	\$ 0.00		\$ 5,775.37
Designated Funds	\$ 29,786.23	\$ 1,678.00	\$ 1,446.41		\$ 30,017.82
Total Funds	\$ 292,913.33	\$ 35,497.47	\$ 35,637.87		\$ 292,772.93



There are several giving options at Peace: Offering Envelopes; Online Giving (Website); AmazonSmile Program; Bank Drafts. If you would like more information on any of the options listed above, please give our Financial Administrator, Valerie Wood, a call at 830-620-0618.



Peace Lutheran Church
1147 S. Walnut Ave.
New Braunfels, TX 78130
Web address: www.peacenb.org

830-609-8359 - Valerie Wood
830-312-8797 - Pastor Jake Fain

Office Hours
Monday - Friday
8:00 am - 12:00 pm 1:00 pm - 2:00 pm

Worship Services
Sundays
8:00 am Parking Lot Service
10:30 am In Person or with
peacenb.sermon.net or
[Facebook.com/PeaceLute](https://www.facebook.com/PeaceLute)



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