



To Our Brothers and Sisters of Peace Lutheran Church,

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. We give thanks for the abundant ministry we continue to share. By so many metrics, this congregation continues to be a vibrant beacon of light in our community. Even as the world shifted in 2020, Peace has stayed the course of listening to the voice of God and living faithfully, loving God, loving people, and serving the world.

Our collective work as a congregation discerning God's dream for the world and the role we play in that dream continues strong. We are particularly proud of the congregation for engaging in the process over the season of Lent and in our Visionboard event after Easter. Our Vision Team will take the input from those discernment times and begin to clarify our mission, vision, and values in this post-pandemic world. Our leadership will present to the congregation God's call to us, so that we are clearly living out the gospel in this new era.

In so many ways, our congregation is healthy. Worship is vibrant, our people are joyful, leadership is strong, and we are blessed to serve a growing and thriving community. However, some challenges have begun to surface. Over the past couple of years we have ebbed and flowed financially through the uncertain times. We had to dip into some savings reserves to cover some unexpected repairs. Congregational giving slowed the 2nd half of 2022, but thankfully was bolstered by strong giving during the holidays. Pledges to our stewardship drive for 2023 were strong and by historical measures indicated an ability to support a budget over and above the one passed by the congregation for this year. Church leaders were optimistic heading into the new year!

However, it is important for the congregation to know that while first quarter giving in 2023 has been steady, it has not been sufficient to cover our expenses each month, which have been aligned with our budget. As a result, we have reached a critically low level in our general operating account. If the current trend of a net loss of \$6000 a month continues, we will very quickly not be able to meet our mission obligations.

What does that mean? It puts us in a difficult position of either raising more funds or cutting expenses. We believe we have the right staff who work hard to facilitate the life of ministry. One of the hardest things is to build a staff culture that is moving in the same direction. Downsizing would hinder the growth and what we have been working toward for so many years. Further, we believe that the resources needed to live out our mission are there. We are continually amazed at the generosity of the church, particularly when there is a stated need. The church time and time again arises to the challenge and meets the moment.

Therefore, we trust that this congregation has both the heart and gifts to resource the mission God has called us to live out. Sometimes we as the collective body do not pay attention to the pulse of the church especially when our congregation is flourishing in general. We tend to trust that everything is moving in a good direction.



Love God, love people, and serve the world

This letter is an appeal to recognize that our financial health is struggling and our congregation needs additional financial support in order to continue to remain healthy. The intention is not meant to make anyone panic or anxious. It is to challenge the church once again to invest in the mission, not only with your time and energy to enable ministry, but also by joining whole-heartedly in generous giving to fund that mission.

We recognize as well that economic times have been challenging the last year. High inflation has driven prices up, and many are on fixed incomes. Perhaps you've been worshipping virtually, and do not get by the church regularly to make your gift. There are many reasons why giving is dropping off, and my prayer is that bringing awareness to the church's needs will rally all to do what they can to get our financial picture back on track.

Giving to the church is a faith practice. Many of you reading this have experienced the joy of giving. If you haven't taken that plunge, we want to encourage you not to give out of guilt, but rather to give generously and experience the joy of sharing in the transformational mission God has in store for all people!

We have been called to share abundant life in Christ. We do it not only by what we receive, but by how we share and pass on the gift! What do we do with the gifts we have been given by God? Maybe the onus is on the church to make that compelling case.

Here is what joyful giving means to some real folks in our community:

I feel that by supporting the church financially, I am supporting my church family and am a part of something bigger than myself. The church not only feeds my soul, but its outreach to the larger community helps those in need and shows me verified charities that I can donate to to help those in need. Karen Laughlin

Giving glorifies and honors his abundant generosity and reflects it back toward him as those made in his image and likeness. Giving also says we aren't afraid of lacking anything because God is our source and we trust him. John Kassel

We invest in the Church, because the Church invests in us. When Martin was ill the past three months, I worried how we were going to pay for all the medical expenses and still meet our Church commitment. We prayed about it and determined that God has been good to us in returning his health, so how could we not meet our commitment to him. We have tightened our belt and will do our best to meet our stewardship commitment. Martin and Carol Franz

Finally, brothers and sisters remember we serve a gracious God who never ceases to give and provide. *For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that whoever believes in him may not perish, but have everlasting life.* John 3:16

God's abundant peace be with you!

Rev. Jake Fain

Pastor



Don Hodde

Treasurer

