

# ANNUAL REPORT 2025



Evangelical  
Lutheran Church  
in America



## A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDING BISHOP YEHIEL CURRY

Dear friends in Christ,

As Lutherans, we are set free to love our neighbors and seek justice. In Colossians 2, we read: “As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving” (6-7).

I am abounding in thankfulness for you, church. You are an integral part of this mission as we envision a world experiencing the difference God’s grace and love in Christ make for all people and creation. The ministries of congregations including yours, our synods and the ELCA churchwide organization are all working together today and every day so more people may know the way of Jesus and discover community, justice and love. From providing food to people experiencing hunger, to helping train the next generation of leaders that will lead this church, your support is at work here at home and around the world.

Your generosity to each of the three expressions of the church — your congregation, your synod and the churchwide organization — has made it possible for us to do this work

together. Your financial resources, your time volunteering and accompanying others, and your voices are so valued.

As we look ahead to the coming year, I encourage you to continue to walk in Christ, remembering you are rooted and established in faith, and free to love and serve your neighbors. Thank you, church, for the ways you connect with and support our siblings across the ELCA and in our communities.

In Christ,



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Yehiel Curry'.

The Rev. Yehiel Curry  
Presiding Bishop  
Evangelical Lutheran  
Church in America

“As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.”

—Colossians 2:6-7



# ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING OPENING LITURGY

Recognizing that our faith is a living, busy, active and mighty thing, may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with each of you.

**And also with you.**

Teach us to love you with all our heart, soul, mind and strength.

**Receive our prayer, O God.**

Descend on our hearts, that we may love others in the ways Jesus loves us.

**Receive our prayer, O God.**

Empower us to be enthusiastic in pursuing your vision for our congregation.

**Receive our prayer, O God.**

Move us to engage issues in our community in Christlike ways, and to pursue deep and authentic relationships with those with whom we serve and partner.

**Receive our prayer, O God.**

Strengthen us to face the barriers we encounter in doing your work, learning to work with others amid disagreement.

**Receive our prayer, O God.**

Give us the ability to adapt to the cultural, economic and social changes that occur in the neighborhoods we serve.

**Receive our prayer, O God.**

Guide us to be a healthy congregation that learns from its failures as well as its successes and offers wisdom to others.

**Receive our prayer, O God.**

As we strive to become the church that we proclaim to be, raise up leaders who focus on the gospel of freedom, forgiveness and reconciliation as given to us through God's indescribable act of love in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Renew us daily in our baptism, that we may discover vitality in our relationships with you, each other and those we serve in the world.

**Amen.**

## Founded on Faith

1 Found - ed on faith, the church— a - live by grace—  
2 Your cross, O Christ, re - news our life each day.  
3 E - quipped by prayer, we live the Spir - it's call.  
4 Grow - ing in grace for God's cre - at - ed earth,  
5 Found - ed on faith, called forth, em - pow'ed to serve,  
pro - claims the gos - pel here and ev - 'ry place.  
Bap - tized in you, we learn and teach and pray.  
Em - pow'ed to serve with gifts, both great and small,  
we yearn for jus - tice, peace, and hu - man worth;  
we share God's end - less love with - out re - serve.  
The word of God re - sounds through time and space:  
Fed by your love, with thank - ful hearts, we say;  
we bring the liv - ing hope of God to all.  
a world re - stored; a faith - ful, car - ing church.  
Then let us shout a - loud the liv - ing Word!  
Al - le - lu - ia!

*All Creation Sings, 1048*

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# THROUGH YOUR GENEROSITY, GOD IS AT WORK ACROSS THE ELCA.

## MISSION SUPPORT

A portion of your offering, called Mission Support, advances the ministry of our church, helping the ELCA nurture Christian community, raise up leaders, serve our neighbors and strive for justice.

## ELCA WORLD HUNGER

Part of our church's long tradition of meeting human needs, ELCA World Hunger testifies to our hope for and commitment to God's promise of a time when we will hunger and thirst no more. ELCA World Hunger walks alongside communities in more than 60 countries — including the United States — to create unique solutions to hunger and poverty.

## LUTHERAN DISASTER RESPONSE

Lutheran Disaster Response shares God's hope, healing and renewal with people whose lives have been disrupted by disasters in the United States and around the world. When the dust settles and the headlines change, we stay to provide ongoing assistance to those in need.

## WHERE NEEDED MOST

Where Needed Most supports the powerful ways we work together around the world — supporting leaders, inspiring young people, fueling ministries and championing global mission. Gifts to Where Needed Most support and sustain the people, congregations, synods and ministries working around the world to realize the hope-filled future God promises.



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in America

Sign up to hear more stories of impact from the ELCA churchwide organization at [ELCA.org/subscribe](https://elca.org/subscribe).

Read about Mission Support and learn more at [LivingLutheran.org/SOFIA](https://LivingLutheran.org/SOFIA).



*Peace Lutheran Church is a Christ-centered community of believers called to love God, love people, and serve the world!*

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**Peace Lutheran Church**  
**1147 S Walnut Ave, New Braunfels, TX**  
**Pastor: The Rev. Jake Fain**

**January 25, 2026**

**LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE**

**Officers and Congregation Council**

President	Dan Hill
Vice President	Kathi Anderson
Secretary	Brandy Huston
Treasurer	Tom Braaten
Member at Large	Martin Fanz
Member at Large	Nathan Anderson
Member at Large	Cindy Thomas
Member at Large	Carola Davis

**Ministry Team Chairs**

Faith Formation Transition	Bruce Rockstroh
Fellowship	Becky Voges
Finance	James Huston
Outreach	N/A
Property	Forrest Willis
Service	Karen Laughlin
Worship/Music	Michael Simpson
Compassion	Terry Westerman
Mission Endowment	Nathan Anderson

**Staff Members**

Pastor	Jake Fain
Finance Administrator	Theresa Robinson
Office Administrator	Madison Clark
Musician	Steven Robbins
Custodian	Donna Braune



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## **2025 ANNUAL MEETING AGENDA**

**Call to Order**

Dan Hill

**Opening Liturgy**

Pastor Jake Fain

### **Reports to the Congregation**

- a. Pastor  
President
- b. Ministry Teams  
Spiritual Gifts  
Faith Formation  
Fellowship  
Property  
Service  
Worship  
Compassion
- c. Mission Endowment
- d. Council Nominees
- e. Summary

**Approval of 2024 Annual Meeting Minutes**

**Approval of 2025 Financial Reports**

### **Business Items**

- 2. Approval of the 2026 Peace Lutheran Church Budget
- 3. Election of Council Members
- 4. Other Business as Required

**President's Comments**

**Adjournment**

**Closing Prayer**

Pastor Jake



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## **2024 ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING MINUTES**

**Location:** Peace Lutheran Church

**Date:** January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2025

**Attendees:** 54 attendees in-person, plus 3 online participants (*sign-in sheet attached*)

1. Meeting called to order at 11:30 a.m.
2. Liturgy
3. Old Business
  - a. Presentation of Annual Report
    - i. The annual report was presented to the congregation.
    - ii. A motion to approve the annual report was made and seconded. The congregation approved the annual report.
  - b. Presentation of 2024 Financial Report
    - i. The 2024 financial report was presented to the congregation.
    - ii. A motion to approve the financial report was made and seconded. The congregation approved the report.
  - c. John Kassel informed the congregation of a foundation issue.
    - i. The east wing of the church is settling and foundation work is needed to avoid impacts to the new roof and address cracks in the hallway and brick work. Three bids for foundation work were solicited, and a contractor was selected. The contractor will start work in 3 weeks to put supports under the foundation. Approximately 3 days of work are anticipated.
    - ii. No questions were raised by the congregation.
  - d. Reports from the ministry leaders were made available to the congregation ahead of the meeting.
  - e. Mission Endowment Grants
    - i. Nathan Anderson presented the grants selected by the Mission Endowment Team for this year. Four grants were awarded:





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1. New Braunfels Housing Partners (\$2,000). This will help furnish a house acquired by NB Housing Partners to provide short-term transitional housing.
2. The King's Embrace Academy (\$2,000). This grant will fund a certified teacher for a full year to help start a modern school in the village of Machwele in Kenya.
3. Fundacion Camino de Emaus (\$1,300). This grant will ensure the elementary education for ten children from economically vulnerable families in Columbia.
4. Community Prayer Labyrinth (\$900). This will fund a Community Prayer Labyrinth in the grassy area behind Peace Lutheran Church.
4. New Business
  - a. Proposal of 2025 Budget
    - i. The proposed 2025 budget was presented to the congregation. The budget represents a small overall decrease, but does include budget for staffing in the second half of the year.
    - ii. Patti Kassel made a comment about working to make the offsets going into the fellowship budget more visible for next year's budget.
    - iii. A motion to approve the budget was made and seconded. The congregation voted to approve the proposed budget.
  - b. The congregation recognized the outgoing council members – Megan Wenzel, Carol Franz, and Vicki Hillmer.
  - c. Nominees for the council were presented – Nathan Anderson, Martin Franz, and Cindy Thomas.
    - i. A motion was made to cease accepting nominations. The motion was seconded and approved by the congregation.
    - ii. A motion was made to approve the council nominees by acclamation and seconded. The congregation approved the incoming council members.
5. President's Comments
  - a. Megan Wenzel made final comments expressing thanks to the pastor, council, staff, and ministry leads.
6. Adjournment



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- a. A motion to adjourn the meeting was made, seconded, and approved by the congregation.
- b. Meeting adjourned at 11:54 a.m.



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## 2025 ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORTS

### Treasurer's Report as of December 2025

Peace Lutheran Church  
Treasurer's Report for the Year Ended December 31, 2025

	Account #	Description	Year-to-Date	Annual Budget
<b>Giving:</b>				
	401.010	General Offering Income	376,652.20	376,779.00
	401.027	St. Andrew Collaborative	400.00	-
	401.028	Faith Formation	295.00	-
	401.031	Flowers	145.00	-
	401.036	Christmas Tea	550.00	500.00
	401.037	Fellowship Income	1,828.49	1,500.00
	401.039	Miscellaneous	9,835.37	9,000.00
	401.040	SOS Food Bank	1,850.99	1,000.00
	401.041	Family Promise	2,147.89	1,000.00
	401.043	Family Life Center	1,032.00	500.00
	401.044	Comal County Crisis Center	924.00	-
	401.045	NB First Footing Homeless Shelter	1,596.75	1,000.00
		<b>Total Giving</b>	<b>\$ 397,257.69</b>	<b>\$ 391,279.00</b>
<b>Disbursements:</b>				
<b>Benevolence:</b>				
	501.010	General	31,159.00	31,159.00
	501.050	SOS Food Bank	1,850.99	1,000.00
	501.075	Family Promise	2,147.89	1,000.00
	501.080	Luther Advantage Scholarship	775.00	775.00
	501.089	Family Life Center	1,032.00	500.00
	501.090	Comal County Crisis Center	924.00	-
	501.091	NB First Footing Homeless Shelter	1,596.75	1,000.00
		<b>Total Benevolence</b>	<b>\$ 39,485.63</b>	<b>\$ 35,434.00</b>
<b>Pastoral:</b>				
	502.010	Salary	51,500.24	51,344.00
	502.020	Housing	29,963.04	29,963.00
	502.030	Pension/Medical	48,441.66	47,817.00
	502.040	SS Offset	6,033.12	7,856.00
	502.050	Auto Allowance	1,278.90	1,500.00
	502.060	Supply	1,000.00	500.00
	502.070	Continuing Education	260.07	700.00
	502.089	Phone Allowance	1,200.00	1,200.00
	502.090	Professional Expense	-	100.00
		<b>Total Pastor</b>	<b>\$ 139,677.03</b>	<b>\$ 140,980.00</b>



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**Peace Lutheran Church**  
**Treasurer's Report for the Year Ended December 31, 2025**

<u>Account #</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Year-to-Date</u>	<u>Annual Budget</u>
<u>Music/Ministry:</u>			
503.011	Salary-Organist	-	10,400.00
503.012	Salary-Choir Director	17,600.00	9,600.00
503.015	Bell Choir Music/Equipment	-	200.00
503.020	Music Substitute	-	600.00
503.022	Special Service Music	1,700.00	1,800.00
503.400	Professional Exp. - Organist	-	500.00
503.060	Licensing	720.00	1,300.00
	<b>Total Music/Ministry</b>	<b>\$ 20,020.00</b>	<b>\$ 24,400.00</b>
<u>Support Staff</u>			
504.001	Support Staff	1,000.00	25,000.00
	<b>Total Support Staff</b>	<b>\$ 1,000.00</b>	<b>\$ 25,000.00</b>
<u>Faith Formation Ministry:</u>			
504.009	Pray Ground	-	100.00
504.012	Summer Camp	465.00	1,500.00
504.013	VBS Materials/Supplies	1,425.00	1,500.00
504.014	Cradle Roll-Splash	-	100.00
504.015	Confirmaion Material	166.01	250.00
504.016	Celebrations	108.23	300.00
504.017	Confirmation Retreat	4,136.51	5,000.00
504.018	Christmas Program	-	100.00
504.019	Middle School Youth Group	502.78	200.00
504.020	Senior High Youth Group	-	200.00
504.021	First Communion Instruction	-	50.00
504.023	Passing on the Faith	-	300.00
504.024	Young Family Ministry	-	700.00
504.026	Small Group Ministry	32.48	
504.028	Adult Class	77.34	200.00
	<b>Total Faith Formation Ministry</b>	<b>\$ 6,913.35</b>	<b>\$ 10,500.00</b>





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**Peace Lutheran Church**  
**Treasurer's Report for the Year Ended December 31, 2025**

<u>Account #</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Year-to-Date</u>	<u>Annual Budget</u>
<b><u>Worship Ministry:</u></b>			
504.029	Misc. Worship Supplies	1,217.49	300.00
504.030	Bulletins	427.79	500.00
504.031	Communion Supplies	598.93	300.00
504.032	Baptismal/Funeral Supplies	-	200.00
504.033	Organ/Piano Repair	-	300.00
504.037	Flowers	437.08	100.00
	<b>Total Worship Ministry</b>	<b>\$ 2,681.29</b>	<b>\$ 1,700.00</b>
<b><u>Outreach Ministry:</u></b>			
504.040	Neighborhood Outreach	-	250.00
504.042	Outreach General Events	-	500.00
504.043	Advertising	40.83	300.00
504.048	Memorial Plague	70.00	75.00
504.049	Christ In Our Home	620.00	500.00
	<b>Total Outreach Ministry</b>	<b>\$ 730.83</b>	<b>\$ 1,625.00</b>
<b><u>Support Ministry:</u></b>			
504.051	Offering Envelopes		200.00
504.052	Stewardship Resources		200.00
	<b>Total Support Ministry</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 400.00</b>
<b><u>Service Ministry:</u></b>			
504.061	Family Promise	-	1,000.00
504.065	Lutheran World Relief Projects	3,000.00	3,000.00
	<b>Total Service ministry</b>	<b>\$ 3,000.00</b>	<b>\$ 4,000.00</b>
<b><u>Fellowship Ministry:</u></b>			
504.070	Fellowship Supplies	3,498.35	3,000.00
504.071	Christmas Tea	567.04	
504.072	Church Picnic	250.00	250.00
504.074	Retreats	-	250.00
504.075	New Member Supplies	46.22	100.00
	<b>Total Fellowship Ministry</b>	<b>\$ 4,361.61</b>	<b>\$ 3,600.00</b>



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**Peace Lutheran Church  
Treasurer's Report for the Year Ended December 31, 2025**

<u>Account #</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Year-to-Date</u>	<u>Annual Budget</u>
<b>Property Ministry:</b>			
505.010	Utilities	18,389.97	18,000.00
505.020	Salary-Custodian	12,492.00	12,495.00
505.030	Custodial Supplies	2,190.84	2,000.00
505.040	Insurance	22,114.00	23,400.00
505.050	Maintenance	3,952.92	2,000.00
505.060	Telephone	1,453.95	1,400.00
505.080	Landscaping Expense	6,045.00	6,800.00
505.090	Security/Fire System	5,179.57	7,870.00
505.100	Termite-Pest Control	488.81	600.00
505.105	Property Plant Equip. Reserve	6,000.00	6,000.00
<b>Total Property Ministry</b>		<b>\$ 78,307.06</b>	<b>\$ 80,565.00</b>
<b>Administrative:</b>			
506.010	Salary-Business Administrator	26,364.00	26,362.00
506.011	Salary-Office Administrator	21,204.00	21,200.00
506.015	Leadership Development	80.22	300.00
507.020	Office Supplies	1,054.52	500.00
507.021	Office Equipment	-	500.00
507.030	Postage Expense	640.20	350.00
507.031	Technology	2,420.02	2,250.00
507.040	Reproduction Expense	3,452.17	3,000.00
507.050	Conventions	225.00	600.00
507.060	Miscellaneous Expense	6,138.49	-
507.070	Payroll Taxes	5,941.20	7,113.00
507.080	Background Checks	166.65	500.00
507.081	Workers' Compensation Insurance	1,081.00	-
507.082	Staff Appreciation	223.66	400.00
<b>Total Administrative</b>		<b>\$ 68,991.13</b>	<b>\$ 63,075.00</b>
<b>Total Disbursements</b>		<b>\$ 365,167.93</b>	<b>\$ 391,279.00</b>
<b>Total Increase(Decrease) General Fund</b>		<b>\$ 32,089.76</b>	<b>\$ -</b>



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## Consolidated Fund Activity Report as 12/31/2025



*Peace Lutheran Church is a Christ-centered community of believers called to love God, love people, and serve the world!*

## 2026 Proposed Budget Report

### Peace Lutheran Church 2026 Proposed Budget Report

Expense	Description	2025 Budget	2025 Year Actual	2026 Proposed Budget
501.010	General Benevolence	31,159.00	31,159.00	28,978.89
501.050	SOS Food Bank Benevolence	1,000.00	1,850.99	1,000.00
501.075	Family Promise Benevolence	1,000.00	2,147.89	1,000.00
501.080	Lutheran Advantage Scholarship (TLU)	775.00	775.00	775.00
501.089	Family Life Center Benevolence	500.00	1,032.00	500.00
501.090	Comal County Crisis Center		924.00	
501.091	NB First Footing Benevolence	1,000.00	1,596.75	1,000.00
	<b>Benevolence</b>	<b>\$35,434.00</b>	<b>\$39,485.63</b>	<b>\$33,253.89</b>

502.010	Salary - Pastor	51,344.00	51,500.24	52,370.88
502.020	Housing - Pastor	29,963.00	29,963.04	29,963.07
502.030	Pension/Medical - Pastor	47,817.00	48,441.66	49,998.86
502.040	SS Offset - Pastor	7,856.00	6,033.12	8,012.75
502.050	Auto Allowance - Pastor	1,500.00	1,278.90	1,500.00
502.060	Supply Pastors	500.00	1,000.00	500.00
502.070	Continuing Education - Pastor	700.00	260.07	700.00
502.089	Phone Allowance - Pastor	1,200.00	1,200.00	1,200.00
502.090	Professional Expense - Pastor	100.00	-	100.00
	<b>Pastoral</b>	<b>\$140,980.00</b>	<b>\$139,677.03</b>	<b>\$144,345.56</b>

503.011	Musician Compensation	10,400.00	-	10,400.00
503.012	Salary - Choir Director	9,600.00	17,600.00	-
503.015	Bell Choir Music/Equipment	200.00	-	200.00
503.020	Music Substitute	600.00	-	600.00
503.022	Special Service Musicians	1,800.00	1,700.00	1,800.00
503.024	Music Equipment Replacement	500.00	-	-
503.060	Licensing	1,300.00	720.00	1,300.00
	<b>Music Ministry</b>	<b>\$24,400.00</b>	<b>\$20,020.00</b>	<b>\$14,300.00</b>

504.001	Summer Support Staff	25,000.00	1,000.00	3,000.00
	<b>Support Staff</b>	<b>\$25,000.00</b>	<b>\$1,000.00</b>	<b>\$3,000.00</b>





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Peace Lutheran Church  
2026 Proposed Budget Report

Expense	Description	2025 Budget	2025 Year Actual	2026 Proposed Budget
504.009	Pray Ground (Children's Church)	100.00	-	100.00
504.012	Summer Camp	1,500.00	465.00	1,000.00
504.013	VBS Day Camp	1,500.00	1,425.00	1,500.00
504.014	Cradle Roll/Splash	100.00	-	-
504.015	Confirmation Material	250.00	166.01	200.00
504.016	Celebrations	300.00	108.23	200.00
504.017	Confirmation Retreats (Camp)	5,000.00	4,136.51	4,500.00
504.018	Christmas Program	100.00	-	100.00
504.019	Middle School Youth Group	200.00	502.78	100.00
504.020	Senior High Youth Group	200.00	-	100.00
504.021	First Communion Instruction	50.00	-	-
504.023	Children's Ministry	300.00	-	300.00
504.024	Young Family Ministry	700.00	-	300.00
504.025	Young Adult Ministry			300.00
504.026	Small Group Ministry	-	32.48	300.00
504.028	Adult Classes	200.00	77.34	300.00
	<b>Discipleship</b>	<b>\$10,500.00</b>	<b>\$6,913.35</b>	<b>\$9,300.00</b>
504.029	Worship Arts	300.00	1,217.49	2,000.00
504.030	Bulletins	500.00	427.79	500.00
504.031	Communion Supplies	300.00	598.93	600.00
504.032	Baptismal/Funeral Supplies	200.00	-	200.00
504.033	Organ/Piano Repair	300.00	-	300.00
504.037	Flowers	100.00	437.08	-
	<b>Worship Ministry</b>	<b>\$1,700.00</b>	<b>\$2,681.29</b>	<b>\$3,600.00</b>
504.040	Neighborhood Outreach	250.00	-	250.00
504.043	Advertising	500.00	40.83	500.00
504.044	Outreach Care Ministry	300.00	-	500.00
504.048	Memorial Plaque	75.00	70.00	75.00
504.049	Christ In Our Home	500.00	620.00	500.00
	<b>Outreach Ministry</b>	<b>\$1,625.00</b>	<b>\$730.83</b>	<b>\$1,825.00</b>
504.051	Offering Envelopes	200.00	-	100.00
504.052	Stewardship Resources	200.00	-	240.00
	<b>Support Ministry</b>	<b>\$400.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$340.00</b>



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Peace Lutheran Church  
2026 Proposed Budget Report

Expense	Description	2025 Budget	2025 Year Actual	2026 Proposed Budget
504.061	Family Promise Expense	1,000.00	-	1,000.00
504.065	Lutheran World Relief Projects	3,000.00	3,000.00	3,000.00
504.066	GWOH/Big Serve	-	-	-
	<b>Service Ministry</b>	<b>\$4,000.00</b>	<b>\$3,000.00</b>	<b>\$4,000.00</b>
504.070	Fellowship Supplies	3,000.00	3,498.35	3,000.00
504.071	Christmas Tea	-	567.04	-
504.072	Church Picnic	250.00	250.00	250.00
504.074	Retreats	250.00	-	250.00
504.075	New Member Supplies	100.00	46.22	100.00
	<b>Fellowship Ministry</b>	<b>\$3,600.00</b>	<b>\$4,361.61</b>	<b>\$3,600.00</b>
505.010	Utilities	18,000.00	18,389.97	18,000.00
505.020	Salary - Custodian	12,495.00	12,492.00	12,845.00
505.030	Custodial Supplies	2,000.00	2,190.84	2,000.00
505.040	Insurance	23,400.00	22,114.00	24,000.00
505.050	Maintenance	2,000.00	3,952.92	3,000.00
505.060	Telephone	1,400.00	1,453.95	1,500.00
505.080	Landscaping Expense	6,800.00	6,045.00	6,000.00
505.090	Security/Fire System	7,870.00	5,179.57	7,870.00
505.100	Termite-Pest Control	600.00	488.81	600.00
505.105	PPE (Property Plant Equip) Reserve	6,000.00	6,000.00	6,000.00
	<b>Property Ministry</b>	<b>\$80,565.00</b>	<b>\$78,307.06</b>	<b>\$81,815.00</b>



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Peace Lutheran Church  
2026 Proposed Budget Report

Expense	Description	2025 Budget	2025 Year Actual	2026 Proposed Budget
506.010	Salary - Business Administrator	26,362.00	26,364.00	27,100.14
506.011	Salary - Office Administrator	21,200.00	21,204.00	21,793.60
506.015	Leadership Development	300.00	80.22	300.00
507.020	Office Supplies	500.00	1,054.52	750.00
507.021	Office Equipment	500.00	-	500.00
507.030	Postage Expense	350.00	640.20	600.00
507.031	Technology	2,250.00	2,420.02	2,350.00
507.040	Copy Expense	3,000.00	3,452.17	3,000.00
507.050	Conventions	600.00	225.00	600.00
507.060	Miscellaneous Expense	-	6,138.49	3,000.00
507.070	Payroll Taxes	7,113.00	5,941.20	4,694.35
507.080	Background Checks	500.00	166.65	500.00
507.081	Worker's Comp	-	1,081.00	1,200.00
507.082	Staff Appreciation	400.00	223.66	400.00
	<b>Administrative</b>	<b>\$63,075.00</b>	<b>\$68,991.13</b>	<b>\$66,788.09</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$391,279.00</b>	<b>\$365,167.93</b>	<b>\$366,167.53</b>



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## REPORTS TO THE CONGREGATION

### Pastor's Message

The earliest Christians were identified as followers of *the Way*. This name carried deep meaning: Jesus' disciples were going somewhere. Their faith was not static but a journey, with a clear path set before them in Christ.

That identity continues to shape us today. Our mission is *to love like Jesus so that each person experiences God's Way*.

So I ask: Are you on the Way? Is your spiritual journey taking you somewhere—or have you found yourself drifting, blown about by shifting winds? My hope is that the church is the avenue through which people find their Way in Christ: a place of grounding, growth, and movement toward abundant life.

We live in a world that is increasingly hurried, and each year it feels as though the church is being asked to do more with less. This is not unique to Peace Lutheran Church; it reflects a broader cultural shift. In response, the church is called to adapt—to become as fluid as possible—without losing sight of the sacred task entrusted to us.

This year, we embraced an ongoing governance process to help streamline ministry and right-size our structures for our current context. Out of that work, we identified four pillars of faith that support a healthy congregation. Each pillar depends on the others. Think of a table with four legs: if one leg is shorter than the rest, the table wobbles—and if one is missing, it collapses entirely.

This process has helped us bring greater clarity to our mission and how we structure and support ministry. While Sunday morning worship remains vitally important, it cannot be the only message we offer. When faith is limited to one hour a week, we unintentionally form “Sunday-only” Christians. Over the coming years, you will hear more about how these four pillars are being implemented—both in our shared life as a congregation and in how each of you is supported in growing as a disciple of Jesus.

I am deeply grateful to everyone who served faithfully this past year:

- Leaders who helped us discern our mission
- Teachers who passed on the faith





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- Servants who poured out time and energy for others
- Worship leaders who centered our hearts to welcome God's holy presence
- Generous givers who shared resources to bless the wider world
- Community builders who extended friendship and belonging
- Caregivers who visited, called, and supported those in times of crisis

In addition to these faithful servants, I want to highlight several bright spots from the past year.

Learning has become an essential part of adapting to today's world and discerning where God is on the move. This year, we began learning from the Fresh Expressions movement, which seeks to connect with people beyond traditional church walls.

Kathi Anderson has continued to deepen our feeding ministry partnership with The First Footing Shelter, expanding Saturday meals to twice a month. Thanksgiving and Christmas meals were also shared—feeding bodies, building relationships, and embodying the love of Christ.

We launched a new ministry, *Pub Theology*, at Guadalupe Brewing Company, with the intention of meeting people in public spaces and sharing faith beyond our walls. Special thanks to Michelle and Jim Johnson for their leadership and for creating space for discipleship and witness in the wider community.

In worship, we completed our first year in the Narrative Lectionary, following the Gospel of Luke, and have now entered the second year—the Gospel of John. By following the biblical story more closely, including the Old Testament, our goal is to grow biblical fluency and deepen our understanding of God's unfolding story. My hope is that this has enriched our discipleship as people who are part of God's story of abundant love and good news for the world.

We also joyfully welcomed new people into our community:

Kenneth Oxenreider; Justin Fryar; Sean, Terri, and Ollie Walker; Gwen Parr; Karen Ryan; Don Ohlschwager; Bill and Amy Lawrence; Lisa Harrison; John and Patty Tucker; Stacy Snell; and Larry and Betty Carney.

Looking ahead, I want to share that the church council has approved a pastoral sabbatical for the summer of 2026. With the help of Bruce Rockstroh and Megan Wenzel, Peace Lutheran Church was awarded a substantial Lilly Endowment grant to support this time.



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The grant application asked a simple but profound question: *What would make your heart sing?* In prayerful discernment, I realized that after 20 years of professional ministry, my heart longs for three things:

1. To reengage deeply with God through spiritual practices that renew and strengthen my relationship with the Holy One (love God);
2. To spend meaningful, memory-making time with my family while our children are still at home (love people); and
3. To integrate that renewed love of God and others into service in the world (serve the world).

While this sabbatical will certainly be a time of personal renewal, it is also meant to bless the congregation. Plans are being developed to create growth opportunities for you—deepening your relationship with God, strengthening your beloved relationships, and expanding your connection to ministry in the world. This will not simply be a break, but an intentional journey—together—as followers of the Way, growing more deeply centered in Christ.

Thank you for walking this path with me. I am grateful for this community and for all of you who help carry forward our mission of loving like Jesus so that each person experiences

God's Way. God's peace,

**Pastor Jake Fain**



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## **2025/26 Membership**

### **2025 Statistics**

Baptized Membership - 311

Confirmed Membership - 267

Total New Members – 16

Total Members Removed – 26

Household – 167

In-Person Attendance – 89

Online Attendance – 102

Estimated Average Attendance – 207

### **2025 Statistics**

Baptized Membership - 321

Confirmed Membership - 269

Total New Members – 10

Total Members Removed – 11

Household – 172

In-Person Attendance – 83

Online Attendance – 82

Estimated Average Attendance – 185



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## **New Members**

<b><u>How Came to Membership</u></b>	<b><u>Name (Last, First)</u></b>	<b><u>Membership Date</u></b>
Transfer from other Luth	Carney, Larry	12/04/2025
Transfer from other Luth	Carney, Betty	12/04/2025
Other	Fryar, Justin	10/27/2025
Transfer from Non-Luth	Harrison, Lisa	10/02/2025
Transfer from other Luth	Lawrence, Bill	11/20/2025
Transfer from other Luth	Lawrence, Amy	11/20/2025
Transfer from other Luth	Ohlschwagen, Don	10/27/2025
Transfer from other Church	Oxenreider, Kenneth	10/02/2025
Transfer from other Luth	Parr, Gwen	10/27/2025
Transfer from other Luth	Ryan, Karen	10/27/2025
Other	Snell, Stacy	10/27/2025
Transfer from other Luth	Tucker, John	10/02/2025
Transfer from other Luth	Tucker, Patty	10/02/2025
Transfer from other Luth	Walker, Shawn	10/27/2025
Transfer from other Luth	Walker, Terri	10/27/2025
Transfer from other Luth	Walker, Ollie	10/27/2025



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### **Members Removed**

<b><u>Inactive Reason</u></b>	<b><u>Name (Last, First)</u></b>	<b><u>Inactive Date</u></b>
Transfer	Johnson, James	11/19/2025
Transfer	Johnson, Judith	11/19/2025
Transfer	Hodde, Don	11/13/2025
Transfer	Hodde, Barbara	11/13/2025
Transfer	Anderson, Sharkey	11/13/2025
Transfer	Anderson, Beverly	11/13/2025
Transfer	Anderson, Elias	11/13/2025
Transfer	Anderson, Jackson	11/13/2025
Transfer	Martinez, Ray	11/13/2025
Transfer	Martinez, Kristan	11/13/2025
Transfer	Martinez, Rory	11/13/2025
Transfer	Martinez, Kristopher	11/13/2025
Transfer	Martinez, Riley	11/13/2025
Inactive	Morris, Gayle	08/04/2025
Inactive	Hada, Gene	11/13/2025
Transfer	Mathis, Joanne	11/13/2025
Transfer	Pfluger, Jean	11/13/2025
Transfer	Rossi, Dee	11/13/2025





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Transfer	Skeen, Darrell	11/13/2025
Transfer	Skeen, Tara	11/13/2025
Transfer	Raschke, Nate	08/11/2025
Transfer	Raschke, Brandi	08/11/2025
Transfer	Raschke, Estelle	08/11/2025
Transfer	Tumlinson, Dennis	11/13/2025
Death	Probst, Helen	07/06/2025
Death	Clark, Judy	04/07/2025
Death	Travis, Lupe	04/05/2025
Death	Rust, Betty	03/20/2025



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## **Council President's Report**

God's peace be with you all! For those that do not know me, I am Dan Hill, married to the wonderful Anita. We have three beautiful daughters, Emily, Taylor and Kylie and a son, Grant. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for their support, allowing me to grow in my faith, while serving as your church council President during 2025.

2025 was my second year on council, as I started in 2024 as your Vice President. I have been honored to have your trust while in these leadership positions, doing my best to stand for the congregation. THANK YOU for the opportunity. In these roles, I have solidified my belief that working together as a team and congregation is the best and most fulfilling way to live out our MISSION, VISION, and VALUES. As we build on the spirit of working together, I am proud that we have set a goal to improve communication amongst the congregation. Along with communicating about the business of the church, we welcome your feedback on how we can improve. We've even implemented a new, monthly "Council Corner" via e-Blast, Newsletter, and a "Live Announcement" the first Sunday of every month. We hope you enjoy these updates.

During late 2024 and early 2025, we faced challenges, not the least of which were foundation, plumbing, and AC repair issues that certainly strained our resources. Through the congregation's continued benevolence, we persevered and came out stronger, both physically and in spirit. Your stewardship during this time truly exemplified what it means to manage what God has provided, as we invested in our home here at Peace. That includes using our time and treasure to care for one another to meet our shared needs. How ironic that the physical work of "repairing our foundation" really sets the "foundation" as we invest in growing God's kingdom.

The congregation pulled together a spirited Youth Program, despite the loss of Deacon Andrew last year. The program was highlighted by a Confirmation Family Retreat, Maundy Thursday Sedar Meal, Fairground Outdoor Worship and Picnic, Youth Pool Party, Graduate Recognition, Affirmation of Baptism, Grace Works Youth Camp, Peace Family Hangout, and Confirmation Retreats in September and November.

Our congregation has open eyes and ears and loving hearts as we stretch ourselves to wonder "what if" instead of longing for "what was." This certainly takes work and commitment to move from just "fixing things" to also "listening and discerning." And in sharing the Good News, meeting people where they are and live, not just at worship on Sundays. I believe our growth online and community service are notable examples of this. I am particularly proud of our growth in living out our core values of Shalom, Compassion, Service and Grace. Most notably as disciples, serving the community as part of the SOS Foodbank, Family Promise, First Footing, our Little Pantry, and Quilters to name just a few. Thank you to all for your gifts.

As we grow, we will continue to meet challenges in the year ahead, especially as we lean into our congregational talents. The excellent work of the Spiritual Gifts team is to lay the groundwork to match our gifts around Stewardship, Worship, Serving the Community, and Discipleship. The Ministry Fair held on September 7 was a wonderful way to begin matching how each of us can help us toward our values which guide our daily actions and decisions. Using our gifts to care for each



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other, helping people to worship and share the Good News beyond Sunday morning, connecting with the surrounding community to include the youth, and equipping ourselves and others to become disciples are great examples of the rewarding work that lies ahead.

Our strong congregation is well positioned to take on added involvement. Toward that pursuit, we have instituted a Clergy Renewal Sabbatical policy which will be implemented in 2026. This will allow the Pastor a dedicated period of rest, reflection, and renewal and equally important to enhance the leadership and energy of our congregation. It will be vital as we continue to grow as a church. A major contributor to our future sabbatical success is the significant Eli Lilly grant we received to fund our efforts. We were one of only 250 or so congregations to receive a grant from Eli Lilly out of the thousands of churches who applied. The significance of their contribution grant speaks to how they feel about us here at Peace and their belief in the Clergy Renewal Program.

I am joyful of the work that continues with the Endowment Fund and the blessings that it provides. This year's grants include the New Braunfels Housing Partner "First Footing," serving as a catalyst to create housing and shelter to those in need. Two additional grants were for the Peace Lutheran Compassion Team, to provide financial and material support to individuals and families experiencing hardship due to extenuating circumstances, and for Fundacion Camino De Emaus, providing twenty scholarships for impoverished elementary school students in Colombia whose families are economically vulnerable. Without these scholarships these students would not be in school.

A special thank you to Pastor Fain for shepherding our congregation, especially as we celebrated his 10-year anniversary here at Peace in May. Quite the milestone! I would also like to extend my sincere gratitude to all staff members, fellow council members, ministry team leaders, and their resolute teams. You are truly special and appreciated.

We continue to keep our MISSION "To love like Jesus so that each person experiences God's way," and our VISION of "A world made whole through love." These are why we exist and what kind of community God is calling us to be.

In closing, I am genuinely excited about the upcoming features this year. Possible updates are a new sign on Walnut, an attractive entry portico, and new sanctuary video monitors. Also to experience the culmination of work from our Governance Team, to align "How We Church" with four key perspectives of Stewardship, Loving God as we Worship, Community, and Discipleship. These pillars will help us greatly as we continue to grow in our faith together.

I want to thank you all for allowing me to help lead our congregation and I truly am excited to see what 2026 brings.

Dan Hill  
2025 Council President



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## **2025 Spiritual Gifts**

In 2025, our team established a Fall Kick Off to educate and encourage congregation members to be more involved in church. This event gave team leaders a chance to share information and to connect with church members. It also provided time for people to get to know each other during lunch and fellowship.

We also developed a system for gathering information from the Spiritual Gifts surveys and shared them with the team leaders.

We have a monthly Spiritual Gifts Spotlight that is included in the newsletter. We will continue this in the future.

We are still struggling with convincing church members to take the survey and deciding next steps. Because of this, we have requested that the QR code and survey link be added to the bulletin each week.

Our other initiatives for 2026 include:

- Build a Congregational Teams Guide Book that can be shared with new members.
- Include a Team of the Month Spotlight in the Newsletter.

We decided to meet on a quarterly basis, unless there is a need to meet more often



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## Fellowship Report

*“To love like Jesus so that each person experiences God’s way.”* I once worked at a camp and the Pastor who was our Leader always reminded us that everything we planned should bring someone to Jesus. Hospitality can bring people to Jesus. Hospitality has been my calling for as long as I can remember, in my home, at my church or in my community. Our Fellowship Team has spent this year feeding, welcoming and celebrating! None of this could happen with very dedicated servants. Thank you Martin & Carol Franz, Becky Perkins, Ann Keeler, Vicky Hillmer, Sandy Freeman, Kathi Anderson, Fritz Friesenhan, Jim & Judy Johnson, Trice Kastein and Wil Voges. I cannot leave out my “go to guys” who always come when they are needed—John Kassel, Dave Thomas and Ted Wollven.



Becky Voges – Fellowship Chair





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### **Peace Little Pantry**

Thank you for supporting our Little Pantry for another year. We are so thankful for the Pantry Angels who take their monthly turn to keep the Pantry Filled and to the countless individuals who donate to keep it stocked. There is no better way to show our community that we are a congregation who loves everyone.



### **Peace Prayer Labyrinth**

Our Prayer Labyrinth was completed in March with the help of many willing workers. We were able to accomplish this thanks to Endowment money, and a donation of bricks by Karl Stellges. A very special thank you goes to Wil Voges for building the cross and the Kiosk. Over 1500 bricks were laid to mark the walking path. We had a fantastic crew come out on a Saturday morning to help us accomplish my dream! We received a wonderful donation of \$5000 that helped us add lighting to the cross and kiosk, God is so good!



### **Live Nativity**

We had over 100 people walk through our 2025 Live Nativity this year. Special thanks to the 25 volunteers who helped us share a night in Bethlehem.







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## **Peace Prayer Ministry**

Our Peace Prayer Ministry has become an integral part of life of our congregation. Our **Prayer Chain**, made up of over 30 people is available at all times for prayer concerns. Our **Prayer Loom** is bought forward during the prayers in worship. Our Monday morning **Sweet Hour of Prayer Group** prays over the concerns from Sunday mornings and the concerns from our community and our world. An additional **Prayer Tree** has been placed in the Narthex for prayers that can be taken home and prayed for.

## **It Takes A Village To Build A Bigger Table**

Over the past year, our church has built a bigger table by providing hot breakfasts twice monthly to residents of First Footing Homeless Shelter, in addition to serving full Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners. In total, approximately 1,300 meals were served, and this achievement was made possible by the generous contributions in various forms, including cooking in the early morning, assisting with food service and fellowship, buying bread on Sundays, and donating food. Each contribution played a significant role in positively impacting the lives of those we served.

With the help of donations, a Blackstone Griddle was acquired, enabling us to offer freshly prepared pancakes, eggs, and other hot foods. Future initiatives include the purchase of an additional hot box to keep food warm and ready for service, as well as securing a storage shed for the griddle, thus streamlining our operations and increasing our opportunities to serve, including adding some evening meals.

Feedback from shelter residents has been very moving. One gentleman watching us place cloth tablecloths and floral centerpieces on the table said he thought dignitaries were visiting and when I told him we do this for them, he said, God sent you angels to us. Their excitement over little things like placing salt and pepper shakers on each table reminds us of what these little touches mean to them. Despite the challenges they face many residents come up to us, shake our hand and tell us a simple Thank You. Their recognition affirms the value and impact of these efforts within our community.

Among the many impactful stories from our outreach, one former resident of the shelter stands out. After successfully securing housing, he has become a dedicated member of our breakfast team. Drawing from his personal experience, he now offers fellowship and support to current residents, fully understanding the significance of our efforts because he once benefited from them himself.

For those interested in joining our mission in person, we invite you to serve breakfast with us every 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday of each month at First Footing Homeless Shelter, located at 4120 Loop 337, New Braunfels. It is located next to the Pilot Gas Station on Interstate 35 and Loop 337 in a renovated Fire Station.



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In the next month, First Footing will add 23 additional beds to the shelter. That will mean an increase in the people we serve, so help us build a bigger table with your continued support. If you are unable to join us physically, we encourage you to continue supporting our work in any way you can. Every contribution, whether time, resources, or encouragement, helps us make a meaningful difference in the lives of those we serve.

Kathy Anderson

## **Property Report**

In 2025, significant efforts were undertaken to maintain, improve, and enhance the safety, functionality, and overall condition of the property. All required annual inspections, including irrigation backflow and fire systems, were successfully completed earlier in the year, with all systems passing inspection. In compliance with safety regulations, several fire extinguishers were also replaced as part of the scheduled rotation.

Key facility improvements included the completion of building stabilization work. As a follow-up, repairs to sheetrock and repainting in the East Wing are scheduled to begin in mid-January. Additional mechanical adjustments were made to the attic stairs to resolve vibration issues that had caused cable misalignment. A permanent solution was implemented by replacing the gears, resulting in smoother operation; a final adjustment remains to ensure complete closure. To enhance property security, plans are underway to install additional cameras to monitor the mailbox area and activity within the East Wing hallway.

Ongoing maintenance and grounds improvements were supported by the Property Team throughout the year. Routine tasks included HVAC filter and light bulb replacements, landscaping support, and general upkeep. During the annual workday, the team added gravel around the foundation to address areas affected by leveling, constructed a stabilized pathway through the playground, and inspected and caulked the building's flashing to help prevent water intrusion.

Overall, the combined efforts of inspections, repairs, preventive maintenance, and planned improvements reflect a continued commitment to providing a safe, secure, and well-maintained facility.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Forrest Willis/John Kassel



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## **Service Report**

2025 has been a very productive year for Peace as we endeavor to serve our neighbors. Each month we have had a Mission Spotlight that has given us an opportunity to support worthwhile missions and charities that are global or in our backyard. Our Spotlights have given us the ability to support these causes prayerfully, financially or as participants.

Our members are active in weekly and monthly outreach as well, core groups have staffed the SOS food bank on a monthly basis, sewed hundreds of quilts from our homes and together on Tuesdays, and established an association with First Footing with twice monthly breakfasts and special holiday meals. Peace Lutheran serves with our hands, hearts and wallets.

In addition to being active givers of time, talents and finances for these established programs and missions, we have also had a School Supply Drive, made the Christmas Season brighter for children with our Christmas Giving Tree, and participated as Salvation Army Bell Ringers.

As we begin the New Year, we look forward to more opportunities to serve. There will be five rotations for Family Promise in 2026, as we nourish and nurture families experiencing housing insecurities by delivering a week of meals to the Day Center. We will continue to support our missions with First Footing, Peaceful Quilters, and Peace Pantry and the SOS Food Bank, as well as community outreach such as Family Life Center, Comal County Crisis Center and Salvation Army.

Look for information in our newsletters on Mission Spotlights, the fourth Sunday of each month, and our EBlasts as giving and volunteering opportunities are announced.

Peace  
Karen Laughlin  
Service Chair



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## **Worship Report**

### **Mission Statement**

“Create a sacred space and time to encounter the God of love, to unite as community grounded in the Spirit, and to empower the church to live as disciples of Jesus.”

Goals established at council meetings:

- Provide transformative and inspiring worship

What does “transformative and inspiring worship” mean? We have been wrestling with that every month when we have our meeting, but if we look at the answer in conjunction with our mission statement, it means to carve out some time and space everyday for communication and worship with God. Worship should not be something we only do on Sundays but everyday and our goal is to inspire you to take the message home with you and pray about it, read about it, and take time to talk to God about it. Matthew 18:20 “For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.” The power of prayer is in the community when grounded in the Spirit because Jesus is with us. To empower the church to live as disciples of Jesus means we want you feel the power and spread the good news. We are still working on these, so please pray for us.

- Improve and integrate technology

If you look around you will see panels on the walls. Those aren’t just decorative, but are there to help dampen the echo so you can hear the message clearer. Obviously, we will need more, but it’s a start. Also, we hear you when you say you have trouble hearing the message. How can we use technology to make that experience better? We are still working on that. The sound panels help, but we to do more and we are still working on those solutions. How do we spread the good news to the community? How do we better communicate with you? We are still answering these questions, so drop us a suggestion and please pray for us.

- Reach out to the community and the world to spread the good news

This goal is related to the previous goal in part but not always. Reach out to your neighbors and friends and family and have a robust discussion of scripture. How can we empower you to live as a disciple of Jesus and help spread the word. Have lunch. Talk over coffee. There is an excellent program just being started where we talk as a community over a beer. We are still working on these, so please pray for us.

- A look back and a look forward

The Worship Team’s checklist of recommendations and accomplishments may not be that long, but each one focuses on providing an all-inclusive worship experience for the live and digital worship community.

Narrative Lectionary: Continued in September in the Book of John, and will continue through May.

Updating and revision of Worship Team Methods and Procedures: We have worked hard across all teams to update our methods, goals, and procedures. These are a work in progress. If you are hearing a common theme of “we are still working on these”, please understand that the work constantly changes and needs updating and implementation of new ideas. The work is never done, this is just where we are at the moment.



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**The Welcome Center:** This is a big hit and a special thanks to all who make it possible. As you know, this is located in the Narthex and provides visitors and potential members with a packet of information about Peace and programs available.

**Name Tags:** We have used up both sides of our board. We are considering getting a second board but don't want to make the Narthex too cluttered. Suggestions are welcome.

**Music Leader:** A big thanks to Steven Robbins who has enthusiastically embraced the role of Music Leader. He is an important part of our culture here at Peace and I'm not sure where we would be without him.

**Children's Church – God's Story:** Designed for children K-5th grade, the children's service follows the theme of the regular service.

**Improve on-line worship experience:** This is a part of our second goal mentioned above and we continue to explore add-on enhancements to the digital media. We especially welcome feedback (criticism and compliments) from the online worshippers.

**Audio improvements:** We continue to work on these on a monthly basis, but a special thanks to Martin and his team for putting up the sound dampening panels mentioned earlier.

As the new Worship team leader this year, I was the proverbial 'duck-out-of-water' and needed a seasoned veteran's knowledge and insight to guide me. Fortunately, I had a whole team of leaders to guide me. The leadership for this year will be turned over to Pastor Judy.

A special thanks to Kathi Anderson who needed to leave the team this year in order to fully focus on her café idea. Thank you Kathi!

Thank you,

Michael Simpson



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## **Compassion Report**

In 2023 a group of members were asked to serve on a newly created Compassion Team whose purpose it is to fulfill one of the 4 core values (compassion) that the Vision Committee established. We met monthly to discuss which members were in need of someone to talk with about facing life changes, struggles and stress. We each visit members who are living in nursing facilities to take communion to them and listen to their concerns. We also visit members who have lost a loved one and are facing issues with grief, as well as sending them periodic grief booklets. In addition, this year we took holiday gift bags to our shut-ins. There most certainly has been a need for this ministry at Peace Lutheran as the number of elderly members is increasing. Also, with Deacon Andrew's departure to North Carolina, Pastor Jake cannot meet the needs of pastoral care alone.

I certainly appreciate the following members who stepped up to assist with these needs: Cathi Fain, Ceretta Daum, Jane Moeller, Merle Cavanaugh, Barbara Doleshal and Lupe Travis. Merle and Barbara both have had moves which prevents them from this participating any longer, and Lupe has had to move to a nursing facility as she requires more daily care from professionals.

No one in this journey of life gets through it without suffering and facing challenges that often leave us feeling overwhelmed. The Lord promises us that he is with us always. All of us as Christians I believe, aspire to be compassionate people. If you feel called to this very crucial ministry, to be the "hands and feet" of our Lord, please contact me about joining our team. And if you are struggling with challenges and need support, please reach out to me or Pastor Jake and we would be happy to assist.

Thanks,  
Terry





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## **Mission Endowment Report**

The Mission Endowment Fund Committee is happy to announce that 3 grant requests were received and approved in the fall of 2025. Grants received before November 1st of each year are evaluated by the committee on their relevance to fulfilling the mission and vision of Peace Lutheran. The Church Council voted to approve the grants in November based on the committee's recommendation. These are the 3 grants that will be formally announced at the annual meeting on January 25th:

- New Braunfels Housing Partners \$5000 (Project sponsor: Kellie Stallings)
- Grant will be used to assist with purchasing furniture and equipment related to expanding the First Footing program from 42 to 66 shelter beds.
- Fundación Camino de Emaus \$1300 (Project sponsor: Pastor Natanael Lizarazo)
- Grant will be used to provide scholarships for 20 economically vulnerable elementary school students
- Peace Lutheran Church Compassion Team \$5000 (Project sponsor: Terry Westerman)
- The grant will be used to provide immediate financial and material support to individuals and families experiencing hardship due to extenuating circumstances.

Thanks to another strong year of investment returns on the fund balance (the endowment fund is required to maintain a minimum balance of \$100,000), the fund has been able to grow even with the disbursement of funds for grants. Besides investment growth, contributions to the fund also enable us to continue to provide grants which help the church serve the world. The Mission Endowment Fund page of the church website has information on the fund as well as a link for contributions.

Many thanks to the other current members of the committee: Cheryl Braaten, Trice Kastein, Vicki Roda and Carola Davis. Pastor Jake Fain also serves as a non-voting advisory member of the committee. In 2026, we will be looking for a new member to join. Please contact me if you are interested in serving on the committee. The position requires minimal time commitment.

The committee is excited to be a part of the process to help further the mission, vision, and values of Peace Lutheran Church. Please feel free to contact any member of the Mission Endowment Fund Committee if you would like more information on the fund or legacy giving.

Yours in Christ,

Nathan Anderson



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## **2025 CHURCH COUNCIL NOMINEES**

Carola Davis – 2 <sup>nd</sup> Term	Brandy Huston - 2 <sup>nd</sup> Term
Dan Hill – 2 <sup>nd</sup> Term	Carla Carter – 1 <sup>st</sup> Term
Michelle Johnson – 1 <sup>st</sup> Term	



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## **Church Council Nominee Profiles**

Nominee: Carla Carter

My name is Carla Carter, and I am honored to be considered for service on our Church Council. I have been part of this church community because it is a place where faith is lived out through service, relationships, and a shared commitment to growing together in Christ.

In my professional life, I serve as an elementary school principal, where collaboration, stewardship, and caring for people are at the heart of everything I do. These same values guide my involvement in the church. I believe strong communities are built when people listen with empathy, lead with humility, and make decisions rooted in prayer and purpose.

I am passionate about supporting ministries that strengthen families and community, nurture spiritual growth, and ensure our church remains a welcoming place for all. If elected to the Church Council, I will bring a thoughtful, servant-leader mindset, a willingness to listen to diverse perspectives, and a commitment to working alongside others to support the mission and vision of our church.

It would be a privilege to serve in this role and to give back to a community that has given so much to me and our community.



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## **PEACE LUTHERAN CHURCH COUNCIL NOMINEE PROFILE**

Nominee: Micelle Johnson

My name is Michelle Johnson. My husband Jim and I moved to New Braunfels in 2019. We currently live in River Chase and really love life in the Hill Country.

I am originally from Spring Valley, Wisconsin. I met Jim while I was teaching in Houston and convinced him to move back to Wisconsin. After 18 years of shovelling snow, we moved back to Texas. There's nothing like moving across the country several times!!

After teaching for twenty-six years, I took a leap of faith and went to work with Jim. He is a business coach. Our company is called ContractorCoachPRO. While I miss teaching, this decision has given me the flexibility to set my own schedule, travel, and serve in the community.

I am a lifelong Lutheran. At St. John's Lutheran Church in Spring Valley, I was active in our youth group, New Horizons, and later was part of the church council, serving on the social concerns committee. I was also part of the education team where I taught Sunday school and chaperoned the youth at the ELCA National Gathering in New Orleans.

While living in Montgomery, Texas, we attended Tree of Life Lutheran Church in Conroe, where we stayed busy with the high school youth group and fellowship. We organized several mission trips. I also chaperoned the youth at the ELCA National Gathering; this time in Detroit. We also hosted several interns as they fulfilled their experiences in various roles in the church.

After moving to New Braunfels, we joined St. Andrew Lutheran Church. However, we had a desire to be more active in the New Braunfels community, so we made the transfer here. We are so happy to be here! I am part of the Spiritual Gifts team. I also like to help cook for some of our meals. We also like to help serve breakfast at First Footing whenever we can. I recently joined the Compassion Team and look forward to helping that mission. I also started a fun group called Pub Theology. We meet on Tuesdays at Guadalupe Brewing. It has been a lot of fun gathering with others outside of our time together on Sundays.

In 2025, I completed a course and got a certification in Lay Ministry from Luther Seminary. I look forward to using the knowledge and skills as I step into the community to serve others.

My interests include cooking, traveling, camping, hiking, crafts, church, yoga, reading, and serving others. I am happiest when I am spending time with my family. Our daughter Annika lives in Wisconsin. Our daughter Heather and her husband Jared live in Colorado. They have two children Owen and Sloane. Our son Braden and his wife Emily live in Schertz. They are expecting a baby girl in May. When we are not traveling, we are probably at home hanging out with our dogs, Trixie and Princess Buttercup.



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