

Peace Lutheran Church

July 2025



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Pastor Megan's Peaceful Ponderings

Freedom means a lot to me as an American, and each year around July 4th I find myself thinking about what it means to be a free person, and more importantly, what it means to be a free Christian.

Freedom is defined in the Oxford dictionary as “the power or right to act, speak, or think as one wants without hindrance or restraint.” This sounds pretty good, until we start looking at it a little more closely. What is restraining or hindering us? What is empowering us? What does it truly be to be free of hindrance or restraint? And perhaps most importantly of all, what should be done with this absolute freedom? Put another way, we need to consider what we are freed from, and what we are freed for! These are BIG questions, and led us to ponder some frightening ideas.

As is so often the case, we can turn to our faith for answers. After all, we aren't the first people to ask these questions. Paul was wondering about them when he wrote to the Galatians saying “For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters, only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence, but through love become enslaved to one another.” Galatians 5:13. He was also thinking about it as he wrote to the Corinthians saying “For though I am free with respect to all, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I might gain all the more.” 1 Cor 9:19. Martin Luther had read Paul's writings and referred to them when he wrote *Freedom of a Christian* in 1520. One of the things Luther realized Christians are free from is rational limitations... and thus he wrote that “A Christian is a perfectly free lord of all, subject to none. A Christian is a perfectly dutiful servant of all, subject to all” A statement that sounds like it contradicts each other, but actually perfectly sums up what freedom is for Christians.

Looking at these authors we gain insight into these questions. Both Paul and Luther thought that we were freed from the law. The practice of trying to live a life according to God's rules so that we would earn salvation. It was freedom from trying to earn God's love... and in being set free from this, we were also set free from many other things.

Free from fear because we lived in the promise of God's love

Free from doing good works to earn God's love, because God has already claimed us in love
Free from judgement because God had claimed us in love
Free from sin because we could repent and be forgiven by our loving God
Free from death because God in his love for us was always making us new

This freedom opens up all kinds of doors for us... and we can be tempted to go too far with it. We can think that because we are free from sin we are free from consequence, and that our actions good or bad have no meaning. Or we can think that because we are free from doing good work that we no longer have responsibilities, and that we don't need to care about our brothers and sisters.

This kind of freedom is not a gift, and I don't believe that God is offering us this kind of freedom. Honestly, I don't believe God intended us to ever be free from consequence or responsibility at all. We can look at what Jesus did throughout the Gospels for proof of this. When Jesus healed someone and set them free from the injury, demon, or wound binding them, he sent them out to tell others about how they had been set free. When facing crucifixion, Jesus gave up his freedom and allowed himself to be bound by the rules and laws of our world, and showed us that God was truly free from all these laws, and earthly certainties, even death. Finally in the resurrection Jesus free from death, does not free the disciples from the responsibilities that came from following him. Jesus sent them out, empowered, equipped, and set free by the Holy Spirit to share the Good News with the world. You see, freedom for a Christian is all about understanding that God does not just set us free FROM something, God also sets us free FOR something!

That means; We are freed from fear so that we can be bold in sharing God's love
We are freed from earning God's love so that we can use that time and energy to love our neighbors... because as Martin Luther believed, God does not need your good works, but your neighbor does! We are free from judgement so that we can be more accepting and curious about others, moving beyond our shame and opening our hearts and minds to learn about others. We are freed from sin and forgiven so that we can be forgiving of others when they repent, allowing each other to make mistakes, deal with the consequences of those mistakes, and then move forward beyond them.

Finally we are freed from death so that we can live lives of mercy, hope, grace, and love in the here and now, and trust that ALL things will be put right in God's time.

This is what freedom means to me as a Christian. It means that I have been set free from the cycle of shame, doubt, hatred, fear, sin and death, so that I can live, proudly sharing God's love, finding healing for past mistakes, and boldly moving forward with hope that is rooted in God's promise. As we celebrate the freedom of our country this July, I invite you to ponder the freedom that God has given you, to think, pray and give thanks to God for the things you have been freed FROM, and wonder about and ask God to guide you in the work that you have been freed FOR!

Financial Summary

THANK YOU to everyone who has helped make ministry at Peace Lutheran Church possible through your generous support! Please take some time to look at our current budget numbers.

Fund	Amount	Notes
Designated Giving through May 2025	\$13,117.62	Gifts to building fund, capital campaign, memorials, flowers, and other dedicated accounts
Undesignated Giving through May 2025	\$86,819.28	Funds for general operating costs
General Account Investment through May 2025	\$119,925	We had to withdraw \$10,000 from this account so far to meet general budget
Total Spent through May 2025	\$132,384.47	Currently we are running about \$8,000 behind for 2025
Total to benevolence through May 2025	\$ 2,942.54	Based on giving
Total to local hunger through May 2025	\$1,500	\$300 per month
Total to world hunger through May 2025	\$403.50	Based on giving
Total for May Fund of the Month - WellSpring Social Services	\$175.00	Local Lutheran Social Services Branch that helps with foster care and adoption.

Are you a Thrivent Member?

Let Pastor Megan know if you are a member of Thrivent, you may have access to Thrivent Action Team Grants and Thrivent Choice Dollars that can help us at the church! Action team grants are one time grants of \$250 that can be used for church and community events. Choice Dollars are funds you can direct to a non-profit of your choice! Please get in touch with Pastor Megan or your Thrivent Representative if you have any questions!

A Note about Online Giving

When you give online, please consider using a debit card, or accepting the processing fees so that your whole gift will be given to Peace Lutheran Church. Thank you so much for your generosity!

Stay in Touch Throughout the Month!!!

There is always a lot going on at Peace Lutheran! Stay in touch with us throughout the month by checking out our website www.peacegaylord.net or following us on Facebook! You can see pictures, get Bible readings, find out what's going on, take quizzes, watch Bible Studies, and so much more!!!

Faith in Action

Our congregation is working at the *Otsego County Food Pantry* this month and the dates are: **July 10th and July 24th** Volunteers are needed from 11:45 am-2 pm to help pack food, stock shelves, and hand out donations. If you are able to volunteer, please get in touch with Graydon Blank.



Today's Women of Faith

Today's Women of Faith will meet on **July 22nd at 12-noon** to make soup and then at 1 pm to discuss the latest issue of Living Lutheran Magazine. All are welcome! Also, there will be some delicious soup in the freezer for anyone who would like some to take home. Any questions you can contact Gloria Varty 989-657-2107

Community Meal



Peace Lutheran Church will be hosting the **Community Meal on August 15th . @ 4:00-5:30** at the Congregational Church. Volunteers are needed starting at 12:00 pm to prepare. And we will need help for serving and clean up from 4pm-7pm. There is a sign-up sheet in the Narthex, or Please call Glenn Deakin at 231-585-6760 if you are able to volunteer your time, or bring cookies.

Phone Tree Captains Needed

Peace Lutheran is updating our phone tree! Please see Pastor Megan or Tammy if you are willing to serve as a captain on the tree! Being a captain means being willing to call 15 or so families from the congregation in case of an emergency.

Fund of the Month -

Our July Fund of the Month is the **Health for Life Ministry in Honduras!** Each year volunteers from our companion synod work hard to promote the physical, mental, and spiritual health of their faith communities. They do this by training health volunteers to monitor child development, promote nutrition and hygiene, monitor blood pressure and blood sugar, promote cancer screenings, help support those with HIV / AIDs, and speak out against domestic abuse. To fully fund this ministry the church in Honduras would need \$20,000 a year, currently our synod is able to provide them with \$17,000. Each gift you give to this month's F.O.M. helps make that \$17,000 possible, and helps us move closer to fully funding this ministry! Thank you for your gifts!

Prayer Requests This Month:

Allen Ketterwell	Gary Boyd	Marsha Fountain
Ann Iseler	Glenn Deakin	Marliese Bahlman
Barbara Warren	James Merrifield	Norman Olson
Bill Taylor	Janet McCall	Pat Blake
Bruce Leseski	Jen Buhr	Patrice Manz
Candy Gardner	Jennifer Gadberry	Steve & Jan Seacrest
Carol Schubert	Jimmy Lappan	Terry Graunke
Chris Boulis	Joe Chew	Tom Johnson
Chuck Forrester	John Curtis	Tyler Fuller
Darren Bergquist	John Mattson	Rich Hempel
David Olson	Kelly Quinn	Ryan Kerr
Dee Malhoit	Ken McGrann	
Dean Varty	Ken Richardson	
Dick Hunter	Linda Robinson	
Donna Bostwick	Linda Wilson	
Duane Stanford	Mark and Laurie Clear	
Ellen Van Alstine		

Greetings everyone! There is a binder located outside the sanctuary and anyone is welcome to write down the name of someone they would like to be prayed for. While we are always happy to pray for anyone, we also want to ensure that our prayer list is up to date and meaningful. To help us with that, we will normally remove a name from the prayer list after four weeks unless we have heard from the person or the person making the request. Thank you as always for holding each up in prayer!!

Worship and Music Survey

We will be inviting the congregation to participate in a survey in mid July about worship and music at Peace Lutheran. This is part of our getting ready to celebrate our 50th anniversary and invites you to tell us what is most important to you about worship and music at Peace and to share your dreams for the future! The survey will be emailed out and printed out in mid July, please respond by July 20th

Share the Love

One of the easiest ways you can help out Peace Lutheran is to like, share, and comment on Facebook or Google posts you see come from the church. This is especially helpful when we have community events and special worship services, but anytime you do it we are widening our reach and inviting new people to connect with the church! Don't be shy, share the love!!!!

Lutheran World Relief

We have just passed the season of giving, but the needs around the world and at home continue year round. Take a look at the annual report to see some of the many things that we have accomplished in 2024. Again this year, we will be collecting items every month for Lutheran World Relief. Please see below for a list of items needed:

- July/August-School Supplies; Spiral Notebooks (70 pg); Rulers; Pencil Sharpeners; Blunt Scissors; Ballpoint Pens (Blue or Black); Crayons (16 or 24 ct); No. 2 Pencils; 2 ½ Scissors



Taste of Honduras July 26th 1pm-3pm

Come get a taste of Honduras on July 26th at Peace Lutheran Church. Our synod's Honduran Ministry team will be serving a traditional Honduran meal of grilled chicken, corn tortillas, beans, rice, fruit, and more! There will be a short presentation to tell us about the ministry being done by our companion synod, and a pinata!!!! This is a free event hosted by the synod, and any donations given during the event will go to help fund the Health of Life Ministry in Honduras! Great food, door prize, lot's of fun, and a great cause! Sign up in the church narthex or by visiting this link <https://forms.gle/6Y9y65gDLSiBxajw9>



Summer Bonfires

Join us at **5:00pm** on the third Wednesday of the month in June, July, and August as we have a backyard bonfire at the church! We will have hotdogs, marshmallows, music, and more! Bring your own chair and come join the fun! Dates for these events will be **July 16th, and August 20th**



Get Your Newsletter Online!

Would you like to get your newsletter faster? Simply call the church office and ask to have your newsletter emailed to! You will get an email instead of a paper copy of the Newsletter right to your inbox! Also Snowbirds-we can add you to the online mailing list for the time you are south and move you back to paper copy when you return.

This helps save paper and postage for the church!

Traverse City Pit Spitters Game

Take me out to the Ball game! Peace Lutheran will once again cheer on the *Traverse City Pit Spitters* at Turtle Creek Stadium! Mark your calendars now for a lot of fun. We will be going to the **Sunday 5:05 game on July 20th.**

You can sign up in the Narthex or call the church office by **July 15th** to reserve your seats. Tickets are \$14 per person. If you have any questions, you can also contact Lora Blank.



Prayer Shawl Ministry

Nancy Pike has restocked the supply of yarn, patters, knitting needles, and crochet hooks! If anyone is interested in making prayer shawls or lap robes to be given to folks in need of God's comfort and healing, please talk to Nancy! Thank you to all our current prayer shawl makers!



Recycling at the Church

Care for creation and good stewardship practices are important to us here at Peace Lutheran. We offer two ways that you can recycle while in the church building. Paper, plastic, and glass can be placed in the large bin in the kitchen, and cans or bottles with a deposit on them can be placed in the bin in the back pantry of the kitchen.

We will be looking for several people to take the regular recycling to the bins in town several times a month, and if you are willing to help with this, there is a signup sheet in the Narthex. Also, we encourage you to get in touch with Pastor Megan or Mike Ruegsegger.



Gaylord Women's Retreat-'Get Your Pink On!'-August 9th

We have a lot of fun planned with the goal for every attendee to get a good dose of 'Pink'. We will take a look at what we can learn from our pink sister, the Flamingo. She can lose her pink from spreading herself too thin. We've all done it. Women give of themselves to everyone else and then there is little left for us. This retreat is about taking care of YOU! Please join us for worship, music, prayer, food, games and testimonies. Please embrace the theme and wear some Pink!

The retreat begins at 8:30 am until 3:00 pm at the Gaylord Methodist Church. (215 S. Center Ave.) There is a \$15 registration fee which covers morning nibbles, lunch, and more.

The deadline to register is July 27th, and you can pick up a registration form at the church, or you can register at www.gaylordmethodist.org/womensretreatpay



Jim Kurbel	July 2		Kelly Boylan	July 6
Matthew Daenzer	July 6		Barbara Moriarity	July 9
Nancy Pike	July 11		Hope Kirt	July 17
Emma Jurewicz	July 19		Kristien Peterson	July 21
Peyton Thomasma	July 22		Joseph Jurewicz II	July 23
Isiah Peterson	July 24		Hunter Daenzer	July 26
Karilyn Morrison-Bearup	July 28		Pastor Tom Mammoser	July 29
Vicki Putnam	July 31			

If your name does not appear on our celebration listing, Please contact the office so we can include it



Bill & Hope Kirt	July 3		Darin & Michelle Childs	July 15
Joseph & Linda Jurewicz	July 25		Terri & Pete Thomasma	July 25
Gary & Cheryl Ogonowski	July 29			

UPCOMING EVENTS!!!!

There will be a lot of great things happening throughout the next few months at Peace Lutheran Church! Please be sure to put the following date in your family calendar so you can join in all the fun! You can sign up to host an event in the church office, or on the sign up sheet in the narthex. Hosting involves making sure the space is set up and decorated, shopping for supplies if needed, and coordinating volunteers on the day of the event. We encourage you to sign up as teams to host different events that you enjoy,

- July 6th-Cub Scout Hot Dog Cookout -10:30 am
- July 16th - Bonfire and Music - 5:00pm
- July 18th-Blood Drive 9:00 am to -2:00 pm
- July 20th-Pit Spitters Game in Traverse City
- August 9th-Women's Retreat @ the Methodist Church 12:00 pm
- August 10th-Ice Cream Social for Fellowship-10:30
- August 15th-Community Meal-12:00-5:00 pm

Parish Council Members and Roles:

Ellen Bonter-*President*

Pam Richardson-*Vice President and Recording Secretary*

Jan Ruegsegger-*Financial Secretary*

Barb Paulins-*Service and Mission*

Chris Olson-*Worship and Music*
Treasurer

Cheryl Collins-Thompson-*Congregational Life and*

Mike Ruegsegger-*Property and Finance*

June 17th Council Meeting Highlights:

Greetings from your church council. At our meeting on June 17, our discussion included:

- A review of chapter 5 from the “Power Surge” book entitled Marks of Discipleship. This chapter revolved around the ways we each commit to our faith by practicing these Marks of Discipleship. We talked about encouraging spiritual growth in others in the way we live our lives. Ultimately, these are the habits of the soul that open us to the wonder & mystery of God’s active presence in our lives.
- Our financial position deteriorated a bit in May, as gifts were down. As of May 31, 2025, our results show a deficit of \$8,247. We are hopeful that over the next few months we can make up that difference and then some. Please prayerfully consider if you can help. Our mission of serving remains steadfast.
- As a community, Peace has experienced awesome fellowship recently, with the Father’s Day potluck on June 15, the picnic on June 17, and the parking lot/indoor sale, along with other events. We look forward to seeing you at some of our upcoming events – and bring your friends and neighbors!
- Roadside cleanup will take place on June 22 @ 11:30 after worship & fellowship time. Please see Chris Olson for more details.
- Bonfire on Wednesday, July 16 @ 5:00 pm, with hotdogs, marshmallows and music. Bring your lawn chairs if you have them (we’ll fix you up for the evening if you don’t) and enjoy fellowship time around the glow of a bonfire at the back of our parking lot.
- Traverse City Pit Spitters baseball outing is July 20. Please let Lora Blank know if you are interested in attending.
- THANK YOU to all of those who participated in our spring cleanup projects around the building – everything is sparkling!
- Are you interested in the piano? We have a spare that’s been moved from the fellowship area to a storage space. The piano was free to us, so we are looking to give it to anyone that is interested – for use as a musical instrument or creatively modified to be a conversation piece, you decide. Please let us know if you would like it.
- We are seeking volunteers to participate in the planning of the 50th anniversary celebration for Peace Evangelical Lutheran Church. We are looking forward to this joyful celebration of all that God has done with us, and for us.
- A few more items in conjunction with the 50th celebration:
- We are considering a new church directory, complete with photos. Is this something that interests you? We are looking for somebody to research our options, determine if there is interest, and coordinate the completion of this project. Of course you won’t need to do it alone, as you can see from above we have a community full of willing volunteers. If this is something that appeals to you, please reach out to Pastor Megan.
- We will be taking a “deep dive” into the way we worship, and what are the things that are central to the identity of Peace Lutheran Church. Watch for a survey in the next few months – we want to hear your voice.

Please contact any Council member with any questions, thoughts or ideas. Together we are Peace!

Reaching Office Staff

While Pastor Megan and Tammy have access to all the email accounts at Peace Lutheran, the best way to reach them with items for the newsletter, announcements, or questions is at the following emails.

Pastor Megan - gaylordpeace@gmail.com

Tammy - plcgoffice@gmail.com

Michelle - apeacelutheran@gmail.com

Please do not text announcements, reports, newsletter info, or letters as this makes it harder for staff to work with the information. If you are ever in need of pastoral care in an emergency situation please reach out to Pastor Megan directly on her cell phone via call or text at 231-730-4127.

Do you have something you want added to our next month's newsletter?

Please contact the office for more information.

Peace Lutheran Church
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Address Service Requested



Rev. Megan Crouch, Pastor

SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP

Live Stream Service @ 9:30 am

Drive-up Communion @ 11:00 am

Website: www.peacegaylord.net