

# *Peace Lutheran Church*

## **June 2025**



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### **Pastor Megan's Peaceful Ponderings**

The election of Pope Leo the XIV this past month got me thinking a bit about what church's call their leadership, and what those leadership roles mean in various church bodies. While there was understandably a good amount of news coverage talking about everything from who elects the new pope to how they make the smoke that sends up the results of each vote out to the world, there is considerably less public awareness about how leaders in other other church bodies elect their leadership, and even less awareness of what that leadership does. Since I can only claim to have a true understanding of how this process works in the ELCA, and since our synod had a Bishop's election at our Synod Assembly this past May, I thought now might be a good time to talk about what it means to be a Bishop in the ELCA, and how we elect them.

To start with, it is important that you understand two things about the ELCA. One is that it is not a hierarchy. The Synod and National Church Bodies exist as equal and overlapping expressions of the church alongside Congregations. This means that a Bishop in the ELCA cannot take away a church's property, close a church down, or dictate worship practices or policies. They are not more powerful bodies of the church, they are just different church bodies that operate at a state or national level.

The Second thing that is vital to understand is that Bishops are always elected in assembly (either synod or national) and the voting membership of each assembly in the ELCA is made up of 60% lay people (non-clergy) and 40% active and retired clergy. That means that the most powerful voice in an ELCA assembly comes from the people sitting in the pews. This is why I find it so important for people to stay in touch with our synod and national church bodies. You can do this by subscribing to the synod newsletter at

<https://www.mittensynod.org/resources/publications/>

A Bishop serves a 6 year term in the ELCA. Depending on the synod, there may or may not be limits to how many terms a bishop can serve. Our synod, the Northwest Lower MI Synod, does not have term limits.

The role of a bishop in the ELCA is to work with synod council and synod staff to care for the pastors and congregations of the synod in many ways, including but not limited to;

- They are a link between the synod and churchwide.
- Providing guidance and accountability for Pastors and lay people looking to serve as rostered leaders.
- Helping congregation and pastor navigate change and conflict
- Bringing Congregations together to achieve larger goals, such as working with our Global Mission Partners, dealing with social issues, and helping offer learning events for pastors and lay people.
- Offering guidance, care, and inspiration to pastors and congregations throughout the synod.

A bishop is elected through a series of prayerful votes, and there are no nominees when the voting starts. It is an Ecclesiastical Ballot, which means that after prayer, voting members may write down the name of any ordained pastor in the ELCA that they feel would make a good Bishop. If someone gets 3/4s of the votes on the first ballot, they are elected. If not, the top seven vote getters are put on the second ballot. If one of them gets 3/4s of the vote, they are elected, if they don't, we go through a series of profiles, interviews, question and answers, and more votes, all done in the midst of prayer and worship. As the votes progress, candidates are eliminated, and you need less total votes to be elected. Finally if we make it all the way to the 5th ballot, there are only two names left, and the winner just needs a simple majority.

This can be a fascinating and spiritual process, one I find I like a lot better than most of the other elections I've seen recently. I've heard the process called the world's strangest job interview, but what it really is, is a group discernment process, in which we invite the Holy Spirit to guide us as we come together to elect leadership for the church. Everything from who the voters will be to how the process will unfold invites the Holy Spirit in and asks God to grant us wisdom, vision, compassion, and guidance as we discern who our bishop should be. I consider myself blessed to be a part of this, and I encourage you to learn more about the synod and our bishop by visiting <https://www.mittensynod.org/>.

## **Synod Assembly Report**

Our synod met in assembly May 18th-May 20th. At the meeting roughly 262 people representing congregations and worshiping communities from across our synod met in Mount Pleasant to worship, learn, and do the business of the church. This business included

- Adopting a synod budget for 2027
- Adopting compensation guidelines for 2026
- Memorializing the National Church Body to continue and expand its efforts IN SUPPORT OF ADDRESSING THE LEGACY OF AMERICAN INDIAN BOARDING SCHOOLS IN THE UNITED STATES
- Electing new members to synod council, the synod consultation committee, and the synod disciplinary committee.
- Electing a Bishop for our synod for the next 6 years. (please see pastoral report)
- And much more!

Thank you to Barb and Bill Paulines who served as voting members from Peace Lutheran Church along Pastor Megan. Please note that all each synod assembly is made up of 60% lay people (non-clergy) and 40% active and retired clergy.

## **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.

| <b>Fund</b>                                   | <b>Amount</b> | <b>Notes</b>                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-----------------------------------------------|---------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Designated Giving through April 2025          | \$11,776.00   | Gifts to building fund, capital campaign, memorials, flowers, and other dedicated accounts                                                                                     |
| Undesignated Giving through April 2025        | \$78,732.28   | Funds for general operating costs                                                                                                                                              |
| General Account Investment through April 2025 | \$119,925     | We had to <b>withdraw \$5,000</b> from this account over the winter. On average we have withdrawn \$30,000 from this account for the last year to help meet the general budget |
| Total Spent through April 2025                | \$108,496.11  | This includes roughly \$33,000 for new flooring through the capital campaign                                                                                                   |
| Total to benevolence through April 2025       | \$2,320.53    | Based on giving                                                                                                                                                                |

|                                                |          |                                                                                     |
|------------------------------------------------|----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Total to local hunger through April 2025       | \$1,200  | \$300 per month                                                                     |
| Total to world hunger through April 2025       | \$281.25 | Based on giving                                                                     |
| Total for April Fund of the Month - Campership | \$60.00  | Used to help send kids to camp. This year we will have 3 young people going to camp |

### **Faith in Action**

Our congregation is working at the *Otsego County Food Pantry* this month and the dates are: **June 5th and June 19th.** *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 **June 24th 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 June 20th. @ 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, bring soup, or bring cookies.

### **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](http://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!!!

### **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! If you know of someone in our community who might benefit from a prayer shawl, please let Nancy or the office know. Thank you to all our current prayer shawl makers!

### **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!!!!

### **Prayer Requests This Month:**

|                   |                   |                      |
|-------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| Allen Ketterwell  | Fran Morse        | Linda Wilson         |
| Ann Iseler        | Glenn Deakin      | Marsha Fountain      |
| Anthony Iseler    | Janet McCall      | Norman Olson         |
| Barbara Warren    | Jennifer Gadberry | Pat Blake            |
| Bill Taylor       | Jen Buhr          | Robert Morse, Jr.    |
| Bob Clark         | Jim Pratt         | Steve & Jan Seacrest |
| Bruce Leseski     | Jimmy Lappan      | Terry Graunke        |
| Candy Gardner     | John Curtis       | Tom Johnson          |
| Chuck Forrester   | John Mattson      | Tyler Fuller         |
| David Olson       | Jon Coultres      | Ryan Kerr            |
| Dee Malhoit       | Julie LaCombe     |                      |
| Dick Hunter       | Kelly Quinn       |                      |
| Donna Bostwick    | Ken McGrann       |                      |
| Duane Stanford    | Kent Boylan       |                      |
| Ellen Van Alstine | Linda Robinson    |                      |

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!!

### **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:

- June-Metal nail clippers
- 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

### **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.

### **Father's Day Fellowship Event**

Join us after worship on **June 15th** after Worship Service, as we have a special fellowship hour to honor *Fathers and Father Figures*! We will be Grilling Outside with a Potluck; and we will be giving away a small gift to the father figures attending. You can sign up to help with this event in the Narthex. **ALL are welcome!**

### **Potluck at the Thompson's**

Please join us for a special fellowship event at Mike and Cheryl Thompson's house.

**1604 E. Hart Lake Dr.; on June 17th at 12-Noon.**

They are grilling ribs; and if you plan to attend, please indicate which dish to pass you will be bringing on the sign up sheet in the Narthex. BYOB anything other than water and ice tea.

Also, please bring a fun game that you might want to play and a folding chair.

### **Fund of the Month - Inmate Ministry**

Since 2023 Peace Lutheran has had a caring ministry to inmates in our local jail who are those most in need.

Every two weeks Ron Iseler visits the jail and meets with the administrator. The administrator determines which inmates have been indigent for at least two weeks. We then deposit a small \$30 to their commissary account along with a message that it is from Peace Lutheran, and a reminder that they are loved by God.

Staff at the jail reports that the most frequently purchased items are socks, phone cards, lotion, and ramen noodles. And, that these gifts are received with surprise, gratitude, and often, with tears. Last year we helped care for 24 individuals. You can support this ministry by placing donations in the Blue Fund of the Month box in the narthex throughout the month

of June. You can also speak with Ron Iseler if you would like to know more about this ministry and how you can be involved with it.

### **Cub Scouts Cookout**

Plan to join us after worship on **July 6th** as our cub scouts cookout to celebrate the 4th of July! They will be serving hotdogs, potato salad, watermelon, and dessert! All are welcome so bring your friends and enjoy some summer fun with our cub scouts!

### **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 **June 18th, July 16th, and August 20th**



|                 |                       |  |                     |                       |
|-----------------|-----------------------|--|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Rob Weaver      | J<br>u<br>n<br>e<br>1 |  | Bill Kurt           | J<br>u<br>n<br>e<br>2 |
| Gayle Underwood | J<br>u<br>n<br>e<br>3 |  | Pastor Megan Crouch | J<br>u<br>n<br>e<br>4 |
| Brian Adam      | J<br>u<br>n<br>e<br>7 |  | Kris Diegel         | J<br>u<br>n<br>e<br>8 |
| Chloe Erwin     | J<br>u                |  | Miller Hoover       | J<br>u                |

|                 |                            |  |                           |                            |
|-----------------|----------------------------|--|---------------------------|----------------------------|
|                 | n<br>e<br>1<br>3           |  |                           | n<br>e<br>1<br>5           |
| Jacob Adam      | J<br>u<br>n<br>e<br>2<br>5 |  | Michelle<br>Devine-Childs | J<br>u<br>n<br>e<br>2<br>5 |
| Mike Ruegsegger | J<br>u<br>n<br>e<br>2<br>7 |  |                           |                            |
|                 |                            |  |                           |                            |

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



|                        |            |  |                          |                       |
|------------------------|------------|--|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| Glenn & Beth<br>Smith  | June<br>3  |  | Paul & Pam<br>Richardson | J<br>u<br>n<br>e<br>3 |
| Gary & Barb<br>Grieger | June<br>5  |  | Marv & Pam<br>Carlson    | J<br>u<br>n<br>e<br>6 |
| Jim & Erica Hopp       | June<br>14 |  | Jim & Nancy Pike         | J<br>u                |

|                           |            |  |                            |                            |
|---------------------------|------------|--|----------------------------|----------------------------|
|                           |            |  |                            | n<br>e<br>1<br>8           |
| Graydon & Lora<br>Blank   | June<br>18 |  | Bob & Sherry<br>Portner    | J<br>u<br>n<br>e<br>2<br>0 |
| Ken & Linda Gries         | June<br>22 |  | Jeremiah & Nadia<br>Hoover | J<br>u<br>n<br>e<br>2<br>3 |
| Mike & Cheryl<br>Thompson | June<br>26 |  | Joe & Megan<br>Noeske      | J<br>u<br>n<br>e<br>2<br>9 |

### **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 \$12 per person. If you have any questions, you can also contact Lora Blank.



### **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!

### **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!

### **Prayer Shawl Ministry**

Nancy Pike has restocked the supply of yarn, pattens, knitting needles, and crochet hooks! If anyone is interested in making prayer shawls or lap robes 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!



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### **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 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.



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### **Audio / Video Ministry Volunteers Needed!**

We are looking for volunteers to help with the Sunday morning Audio/Video Ministry. Although the equipment may seem intimidating at first, it's really just following a list of repetitive steps, following along in the service, pushing a button or two, moving the camera now and then, or clicking on slides on a computer screen. A detailed handbook is available for anyone who would like to learn. Lessons are free to anyone willing to give it a try! Join Jim any Sunday just to observe if you are curious.

### **Stewardship Thoughts**

"You'll never truly feel connected to a church until you serve in it". -Anonymous-

The Stewardship Committee has been reading a book entitled *Giving to God* by Mark Allen Powell. In quoting Mr. Powell, "faithful stewardship involves giving to God as an act of worship".

Our offering of time, talent and treasures is an act of worship. We come to church to worship God and what better way to show our devotion than to give of our time and money, things valuable to us. We give of our time and money not just because our church needs it, but because we *want* and *need* to give it as an expression of our love and appreciation of God.

When we give cheerfully, as an act of worship, giving moves us to devote ourselves to God.

I have much to be grateful to God for; family, health, comfortable home and lifestyle. I try to express my gratitude by supporting the running of my church, a church and church family who spiritually fill my soul with peace and happiness.

Submitted by Jan Ruegsegger

### **May 20th Council Meeting Highlights:**

At their May 20 meeting, Council discussion included:

- A review of chapter 4 from the “Power Surge” book entitled Culture Shock. This chapter helped us further focus on understanding the unique gifts provided by the Holy Spirit to each and every one of us and how to encourage one another to use those gifts. Specifically, we discussed how we care for one another in various ways: prayer, visits, deeds, etc. It’s not just the role of the pastor! A study guide question we considered: In your congregation is pastoral care provided by the Pastor only, or is everybody trained and encouraged to provide this care? How would you respond to this question? The Council, including Pastor Megan, would like to hear your perspective.
- On May 20, our synod elected a new Bishop. You’ll read more about her elsewhere in this newsletter.
- Upcoming events to be aware of (and participate in!):
- Roadside cleanup will take place on June 22 @ 11:30 after worship & fellowship time. Please see Chris Olson for more details.
- Peace is providing coverage for the Food Pantry on June 5, 19<sup>th</sup> and one other date (to be named soon). We are always looking for volunteers to serve in this mission. Please contact Graydon Blank to sign up or get more information.
- Fathers Day Potluck on June 15 after worship. Come celebrate with us.
- The first of three scheduled bonfire evenings for 2025 will be on June 18 @ 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.
- We don't have a specific date yet but watch for info on how you can help some of our neighbors with debris cleanup from the ice storm. A team is forming, so please let Kris & Bob Diegel know if you can help – OR if you need help.
- We learned that our Cub Scouts celebrated crossing over to their next rank last weekend! Good job, and thanks for being a part of our community.
- You'll soon see a sign-up sheet (we love our sign-up sheets!) to assist with spring cleaning around the church. A list of the areas that need attention will be provided, so there are many opportunities, both large and small, for all of us to participate. We're asking that you complete the task you've elected to perform by June 15.
- We're still looking for volunteers to be phone tree "captains" for those events that require notification to worshippers (i.e., like the church closure from the recent ice storm). Please let Pastor Megan know if you can help. The only skills required are talking on the phone.
- Finally, we are seeking volunteers to participate in the planning of the 50<sup>th</sup> 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.

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

### **Parish Council Members and Roles:**

Ellen Bonter-*President*  
*Secretary*

Pam Richardson-*Vice President and Recording*

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*

### **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,

- June 5th-Otsego County Food Pantry-12:00 pm
- June 8th-Cub Scout Breakfast after Worship Service-10:30 am

- June 15th-Fathers Day Potluck-10:30 am
- June 18th - Bonfire and Music -5:00pm
- June 17th-Picnic at Mike and Cheryl Thompson's house-12 pm
- June 19th-Otsego County Food Pantry-12:00 pm
- June 20th-Community Meal-12:00-5:00 pm
- June 26th-Otsego County Food Pantry-12:00 pm
- July 6th-Cub Scout Hot Dog Cookout -10:30 am
- July 16th - Bonfire and Music - 5:00pm
- July 20th-Pit Spitters Game in Traverse City
- August 10th-Ice Cream Social for Fellowship-10:30
- August 15th-Community Meal-12:00-5:00 pm

### **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](mailto:gaylordpeace@gmail.com)

Tammy - [plcgoffice@gmail.com](mailto:plcgoffice@gmail.com)

Michelle - [apeacelutheran@gmail.com](mailto: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  
3703 Old 27 South  
P.O. Box 1153  
Gaylord, MI 49734

**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](http://www.peacegaylord.net)**