

Peace Offerings

The Newsletter of Peace Lutheran Church

January & February 2024

Rev. Terry L. McKee, Pastor

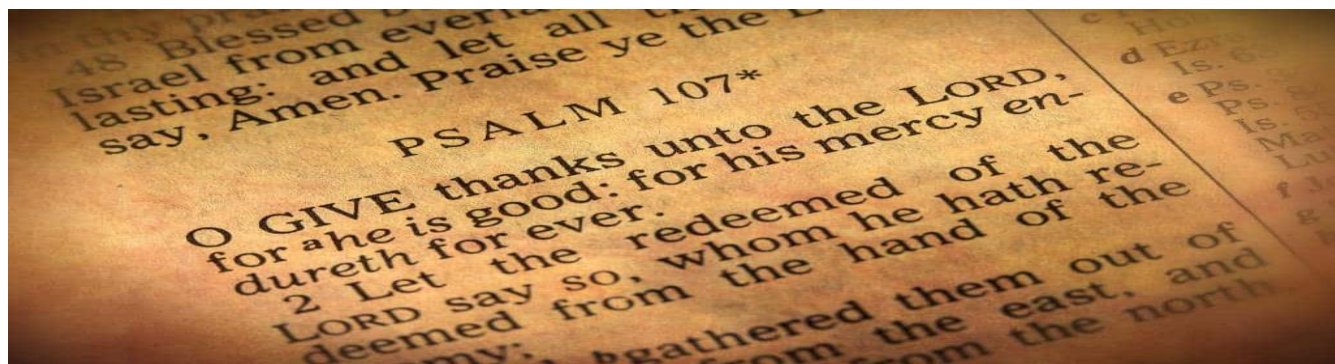
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Our Mission: We are a family of Christians called, equipped, and empowered by the Holy Spirit to proclaim the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ in word and deed.



New Year Greetings!

As we begin the new year let us take time to reflect upon the blessings and trials of last year. We had losses to our Peace family and individually but amid our sadness we celebrated the new lives of those we lost and wait to see them again in the Church Triumphant. We also thank our Lord for the continued blessings upon our Peace family and individually. 2023 had its ups and downs but through it all we were never alone God is always with us in both the good times and the not so good times. And we are blessed to have

each other. Each week as I close my recording of the readings and message for the week, I end with a reminder to take care of one another. We need each other and God blesses us with our Peace family our friends and our home families. So, in this dark and sometimes hard world let us strive to take care of one another this year.

And as we close out 2023, we immediately start planning for Ash Wednesday (February 14, 2024) and the Lenten season. Ash Wednesday is a very special service with the Corporate

Confession and Imposition of Ashes. It's a great way to begin the Season of Lent. We used the Vespers service during our mid-week Advent services and will once again use it during Lent as we gather each Wednesday. Our service time will be 5pm each Wednesday. Maundy Thursday and Good Friday will remain at 7pm.

A big "Thank You!" to all who host and help with our community meals. This is a wonderful way to reach out to our community showing Christ's love to those in need and those who come for the fellowship. I pray that if you haven't attended one of our meals, please do so in 2024 and if you are so moved lend a hand or host one of the monthly meals. I'm reminded of our Lord's Words in Matthew 25: "For I was hungry and you gave me

food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me. Then the righteous will answer him, saying Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you? And the King will answer them, Truly I say to you as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me."

Whatever we do let us do it to the glory of God with thankful hearts!

Blessings to all! And Happy New Year!

Pastor Terry

LADIES OF PEACE / LWML

Hi, All,

Thank you to all who donated cookies for our sick and shut-ins! We filled more than 15 containers to deliver/hand out. I know the recipients appreciated them a lot, and I'm sure knowing they came from "family" made them taste all the better.

We had a lot of fun at the Ocala Light Spectacular on November 30! The lights are beautiful, and although it was chilly that night, we were still able to get out at the end and walk through the

labyrinth that scripturally told the story of Christmas. Wish more of you could have joined us!

Thank you to those faithfully bringing in filled mite boxes! Our collection for December 3 was \$116! Pamphlets are available on our pamphlet wall (just inside the fellowship hall) explaining our mite boxes and how the money gets used. Our next two Mite Box Sundays are January 7 and February 4.

Thank you, too, for all who spent money at our Rummage Sale, as we received a portion of that money for our

treasury. That is money we can use to give to local charities/missions. This year we gave \$300 to Pastor to give to folks who come to our door asking for gas money, \$100 to SOZO Kids- who, along with their families live in the Ocala National Forest (homeless, or at least need food & clothes), and \$100 to St. John Lutheran in Ocala to help with their Christmas Light outreach.

Our Bible study from “Chosen: A Study of Esther”, by Donna Snow is every Tuesday at 10am. Come when you can!

Our LWML Zone Spring Rally will be held April 27 at Our Redeemer. More info in the March-April newsletter.

In His Service,
Sheryl Lutz

ALTAR FLOWER NEWS

We have a new Flower Chart that is posted on the Bulletin Area just left of doors going into the Sanctuary. If you would like to have flowers placed behind the Altar, on either side of the big, stained glass window, you must sign the Flower Chart. The price is still \$25.00 for each bouquet. There is space for you to write your name, for the occasion for which you would like them and a color choice or a particular flower choice. (Your name and the reason for your purchase will be printed in the our weekly Order of Service program on the same date on which will receive your flowers following the service.

Once again, there may be changes in the near future. Presently, the flowers are set by the Winn Dixie store in Dunnellon. However, that store may have some changes of its own. The present price may be increased in the new year and/or the floral department, as we know it right now,

may no longer exist. However, it still is the best floral deal that we could find and, relatively convenient in location to Peace Lutheran Church.

For all our new members, you need to know that we no longer have a Flower Fund. If you sign the Flower Chart, the flowers are yours to take home or give away.

I have been asked more than once, “What is the procedure for payment of the flowers?” You are expected to put a check or cash, the amount being \$25.00, into one of your church envelopes that has your personal, identifying number on it, mark the sealed envelope “For Flowers” and put it into the Collection plate during service. You do NOT pay me.

The Chart has two dark lines under the date of each Sunday for the new calendar year. That is so that we can be accommodating, if by chance, two

different members want the same date. If two bouquets are ordered, they must look the same. They cannot be different in color or style. Therefore, the first signature signed will possibly dictate the type of flower or possibly the color choices.

It is important that our Peace Family member know that I must place the order for flowers one month in advance of the date you want them. I give the order to the store, usually, on the 18th of the previous month. The new Flower Chart

has no signatures on it for January and as of this writing, December 21, I am past my order date; BUT, have no fear, Cyndy is here.....if I see a signature on the chart for January, I'll get you Flowers for the Altar, they will be pretty; but likely you can't have a color choice or a particular type of flower this time!

HAPPY NEW YEAR, EVERYONE!

Submitted by Cyndy Cotter

Who? What? Where? Why? When? How? a/k/a WWWWWH?

Happy New Year 2024! We are blessed to be able to worship and gather together, serving the Lord in various ways benefiting one another and our neighbors.

The Church Year began with the First Sunday in Advent. We've celebrated Christmas and now another calendar year has begun. Here are some dates and celebrations for us to recognize:

Epiphany is on Saturday, January 6, and if it isn't on a Sunday, it is celebrated between the 2nd and 8th, recognizing the Visit of the Magi to the Infant Christchild. The Epiphany Season extends for 40 days and has been celebrated since 361 AD. The paraments are white for perfection, joy and purity until the 2nd Sunday after Epiphany when they are changed to green,

symbolizing our life in Christ, being nourished by His Word and encouraging our growth in faith.

Sunday, January 14th, recalls the Baptism of Our Lord. The paraments are also white on the Sunday when the Purification of Mary and Presentation of Our Lord is remembered and the last Sunday of Epiphany, Transfiguration Sunday, February 11th.

Shrove Tuesday (Fat Tuesday or Pancake Day), Tuesday, February 13th, is 47 days before Easter. Pancakes use up eggs, milk and sugar before the 40 days of Lent begin with Ash Wednesday, February 14th. The paraments are white and then changed to violet during Lententide, the color used to mourn royalty and signify repentance of sins. Ashes may be imposed

in the shape of a cross on the forehead or back of a hand during the Ash Wednesday worship service. The Church does not mandate that we give something up for Lent, however, doing so can remind us of how our Lord gave His life so that we may live with Him eternally. We do not use altar flowers during Lent, giving them up for the solemnity of the season.

Valentine's Day is also on Wednesday, February 14th. Lutherans commemorate it as a feast day because St. Valentine is remembered for his witness for Christ.

Sunday, February 18th, is the date of Doctor Martin Luther's death. He never wanted a church body to be named after him. He lost that argument. There are at least 40 recognized Lutheran church bodies in the United States alone and there are Lutherans in countries on every continent!

Submitted by Becky Williams

Do You Know Who St. Valentine Was?

In the third century, he was a Roman priest and the Bishop of Terni, in what is now Central Italy. While under arrest for marrying Christian couples and aiding the persecuted, which was considered a crime, he became friends with a judge with whom he discussed the Christian faith. The judge's daughter was blind and he told Valentine that if he could restore the girl's sight, he would believe. When the girl regained her sight, the judge had all of his idols broken, he fasted for three days, and he, his family and forty members of his household were baptized. He then freed all the Christian inmates. When Valentine was arrested once again for persisting in preaching Christianity, he was sent to Emperor Claudius in Rome. He tried to

lead Claudius to faith, which angered Claudius, who had him condemned to death by beating, stoning and ultimately beheading on February 14th, 269AD. It wasn't until the 1300s that St. Valentine became associated with romantic love. Since the 1600s, his feast day has been on the liturgical calendars of Catholic, Anglican, Lutheran and other church bodies. Now you know the rest of the story! Happy St. Valentine's Day!

Feb 18 Luther's death, never wanted church body named after him. There are at least 40 Lutheran church bodies in the United States alone.

Submitted by Becky Williams

Recap of Church Council and Voters' Assembly Meetings November and December 2023

November 6th Council Meeting:

President Randy Priem noted that attendance at our Community Meal in October was over 170 and expressed his appreciation for the tremendous cooperation of our Peace family in hosting these events. Treasurer Cindy McKee reported that the church's expenses require contributions averaging \$2,000 each week and although they are on track at the end of October, the bank balance is very low. Financial Secretary Sue Holloway noted that a monthly comparison of member giving reflected a strong start for November. A number of larger year-end expenses will need to be met in December. The Trustees are complying with requirements to test our water weekly and a 4th Quarter test will be done in November to meet State regulation requirements. They are monitoring the status of our lawn equipment regarding repair and/or replacement during 2024.

Pastor McKee is regularly visiting hospitalized or homebound members.

Vice President Bob Sullivan reported a tremendous response to requests for Toys for Tots donations from our members

and the community. In addition to donated items, in excess of \$700 has been contributed in offerings dedicated to this annual drive.

December 3rd Annual Voters' Assembly Meeting: President Priem remarked that it is exciting to be a part of this congregation. He noted our participation in providing Community Meals, activities of the LWML, the collection of toys and funds for Toys for Tots, is an indication of Peace being a giving church. He mentioned that our offerings of over \$98,000 did not fully cover expenses of just under \$117,000 through 44 weeks of the year, resulting in the need to transfer \$23,000 from LCEF Savings to cover expenditures through year-end. He expressed his joy over receiving nine members on Reformation Sunday.

Treasurer Cindy McKee presented actual year-to-date financial figures through November and explained dedicated accounts whose funds cannot be used for general expenses and mentioned that in many instances, expenses for maintenance, meals, wine, etc., were borne by members and no church funds were expended. With Pastor

planning to retire in early 2027, someone will need to be trained by Cindy McKee to administer the Shepherd's Staff financial program.

Trustee Bob Holloway provided a list of the Trustees activities and accomplishments during 2023 and specifically thanked the lawn crew for maintaining the property. They are monitoring the condition of the a/c units, parking lot, and roof regarding future repair and/or replacement.

Pastor McKee reported that our baptized membership is 64. He will confirm two young men in 2024. He regularly visits six shut-ins. We will use a Vesper Service during Advent and Lent. The Sunday Psalm, readings and sermon are recorded weekly on You-Tube and included on www.peacelutheranonline.com

Paulette Arnold, William and Rebecca Dellinger, Sherry Dee, Michael and Cynthia Ferrier, Richard Myers, Rick Pascoe, and Shirley Runke were received into membership.

Sheryl Lutz expressed thanks from the LWML for the congregation's support in quarterly collections of food and other items for the Little Food Pantry and the Family Hope Resource Center. Over \$800

in Mite monies were donated and sent to the District LWML and our LWML unit funded \$500 for various mission efforts. Cindy McKee thanked the congregation for their support in providing items and funds to supply our pantry.

The Proposed Spending Guide for 2024 was approved. The increase over 2023 is 3.6%. The Proposed Slate of Officers for 2024 was approved by acclamation. Those elected are: Bryan Reagan, Vice President; Becky Williams, Recording Secretary; Cindy McKee, Treasurer; and Bob Holloway, Garry Kurth, Hope Kurth, and Sharon Zavertrnik, Trustees. Garry Kurth will serve as an Elder.

December 11th Council Meeting: Randy Priem remarked that he finds Peace to be an awesome congregation as we continue to work together for the benefit of our members and our surrounding communities. He thanked out-going Council members Vice President Bob Sullivan, and Trustees Chet Rochette and Bill Langstaff for their faithfulness in serving.

It was noted that 40 members and two guests were present for the Annual Voters' Assembly meeting on Sunday, December 3rd.

Emphasis will be given to assure contributions meet expenditures for 2024.

Toys for Tots money contributed was \$755; the shopping team spent \$896, absorbing the difference. We will continue to offer monthly Community Meals, the costs of which were donated during 2023, with no expenditures other than paper goods impacting General Funds.

Bryan Reagan will serve as publisher of *Peace Offerings* beginning with the January and February 2024 issue. Ron Bornander will monitor insurance policies, costs, and issues. James Spiegelberg was thanked for photographing members and compiling a pictorial directory.

Submitted by Becky Williams

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
LCMS Stewardship Ministry – lcms.org/stewardship
Newsletter Article – January 2024

The Chief Stewards of Humanity: Mom and Dad

St. Paul tells the Ephesians that the first commandment with a specific promise attached to it is, “Honor your father and mother so that it may go well with you, and you may live long in the land” (Eph. 6:2). This promise is one indication of the importance of this commandment. The other thing that highlights the special nature of this commandment is its placement within the Ten Commandments.

The Ten Commandments are clearly organized in two big categories. The first three commandments deal with our relationship with God. This category is called the First Table of the Law. The last seven commandments, the Second Table of the Law, tell us how we should relate to

other people. These two tables correspond to what Jesus calls the two greatest commandments: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind,” and “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Matt. 22:37–39).

The order of the Second Table of the Law is also important. Murder is a greater sin than adultery, which is a greater sin than stealing, or lying, or coveting. But why is the Fourth Commandment first in the Second Table, ahead of “you shall not murder”? Is disobeying your parents really worse than murder? Or maybe we should give up on thinking these commandments are ordered?

The overall effect of this order is to get us to see our parents as a connection point between our neighbors and our God. Throughout our upbringing our father and mother stand between us and God and deliver His gifts to us: God clothes us, feeds us, protects us and teaches His Word to us through our parents.

So, parents have a very high calling from God. They are called to be stewards of the greatest gift: the gift of life.

Parenting thus gives us a keen insight into all our stewardship. Parents

know that they have been given a great treasure in their children, a treasure that does not belong to them, yet for which they feel a great deal of responsibility. Truth be told, every gift we have been given is like this, because everything we have — whether our own personal skills and powers or our wealth and time — is all from God. He entrusts it all to us so that we can use it all and take care of it all for His great purposes.

Submitted by Jacki Hucker

Happy Birthday

1/1 Linda Bohannon
1/2 Pat Doan
1/14 Mona Bermudez
1/23 Eileen Nuce
1/29 Stephen Cassan
1/31 Glenn DeChello

2/2 Terry McKee
2/2 Sue Holloway
2/20 Sheryl Lutz
2/27 Rosemary Sheehan

Happy Anniversaries

2/10 Jean & James Crapps

2/13 Louise & Alan Plocharczyk

Submissions

Please submit all articles to Bryan Reagan
by e-mail at
BRYANCELT@HOTMAIL.COM.

Those Serving January 2024

Sunday, January 7, 2024

Ushers: Ron Bornander & Sandra Doubt

Communion assistant: Jeremy McKee

Greeter: Joanie & Rich Hulse

Lay reader: Becky Williams

Counting team: Gene & Sheryl Lutz

Sunday, January 14, 2024

Ushers: Jeremy & Samuel McKee

Communion assistant: Randy Priem

Greeter: Bob Holloway

Lay reader: Sheryl Lutz

Counting team: Jackie Hucker & Carol Hummel

Sunday, January 21, 2024

Ushers: Garry & Hope Kurth

Communion assistant: Samuel McKee

Greeter: Becky Williams

Lay reader: Samuel McKee

Counting team: Linda Williams & Jan Pinkerton

Sunday, January 28, 2024

Ushers: Sharon Zavertrnik & Linda Williams

Communion assistant: Jeremy McKee

Greeter: Cynthia Cotter

Lay reader: Bob Sullivan

Counting team: Steve & Sharon Cassan

Altar Guild January 2014

Linda Williams

Those Serving February 2024

Sunday, February 4, 2024

Ushers: Gene Lutz & Bob Holloway
Communion assistant: Samuel McKee
Greeter: Carol Hummel
Lay reader: Cynthia Cotter
Counting team: Pat Doan & Ron Bornander

Sunday, February 11, 2024

Ushers: Ron Bornander & Sandra Doudt
Communion assistant: Jeremy McKee
Greeter: Sharon Zavertrnik
Lay reader: Laurie DeChello
Counting team: Becky Williams & Linda Bohannon

Sunday, February 18, 2024

Ushers: Jeremy & Samuel McKee
Communion assistant: Randy Priem
Greeter: Linda Williams
Lay reader: Randy Priem
Counting team: Gene & Sheryl Lutz

Sunday, February 25, 2024

Ushers: Garry & Hope Kurth
Communion assistant: Samuel McKee
Greeter: Pat Doan
Lay reader: Pat Doan
Counting team: Jackie Hucker & Carol Hummel

Altar Guild February 2024

Linda Bohannon
