



# Herald of Peace

January 2019

Peace Lutheran Church,  
1301 Ave. D, Billings, MT 59102

(406) 252-5504  
peacelutheranbillings.com

## ***Making Christ Available to All by Rejoicing, Renewing and Reaching Out***

Peace Lutheran Church Mission Statement

### **Leadership Directory**

Pastor: Rev. Will Sappington  
[prsappington@gmail.com](mailto:prsappington@gmail.com)  
office 252-5504 Home 647-8568  
Office Manager: Dean Jenson  
[peaceoffice@bresnan.net](mailto:peaceoffice@bresnan.net)  
252-5504  
Youth Director: Vanessa Stieger  
[peacelcyouth@gmail.com](mailto:peacelcyouth@gmail.com)  
office 252-5504 cell 698-5576  
Intern Pastor: Ann Bjorklund  
[internpeace@gmail.com](mailto:internpeace@gmail.com)  
252-5504

Treasurer	Steve Frank
Organist	Robin Goodheart
Bells of Peace	Julie Draeger
Altar Guild Treasure	Molly Johnson
WELCA Treasurer	Connie Hausauer

### **Church Council**

Anderson, Dewey	656-1709
Brown, Mike	855-1588
Christensen, Randy	701-260-5016
Draeger, Dave	698-1333
Finn, Susan	534-1860
Miller, Holli	656-6847
Peterson, Bryan	671-1301
Sider, Melissa	281-7334
Strosky, Linda	661-2626
Strosky, Paul	661-2626

### **Peace Office Hours**

8am-12pm & 1pm-4pm  
Mon. Tues. Thurs. & Fri.

### **Worship Schedule**

**Saturdays: 5:00 pm**  
**Sundays: 10:00 am**  
**Education Hour: 11:00 am**  
**Sunday Channel 7 at 9:00 am**



**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**  
God's work. Our hands.



*Sing to God a brand-new song,  
sing his praises all over the world!  
Let the sea and its fish give a round of applause,  
with all the far-flung islands joining in.  
Let the desert and its camps raise a tune,  
calling the Kedar nomads to join in.  
Let the villagers in Sela round up a choir  
and perform from the tops of the mountains.*

### **Isaiah 42:10-11**

The reality of newsletter writing is that we are always looking at least a month ahead. I'm listening to beautiful Christmas carols as I write this and hoping for at least a little snow on the ground (and hopefully clear roads). By the time you read this the grand celebration of Christmas Eve will probably be a memory. The candlelight, the voices, and the beauty of so many gathered together to worship our God who is sent for us is a highlight of my year. And just as Jesus told the disciples they couldn't stay on the mountaintop we cannot stay on Christmas Eve. We are called into the new. We are called to sing different and new songs of praise.



When I was the age my kids are now I thought the year 2000 seemed like the distant future. We are entering 2019 and I am no longer a child short on memo-

## ***Prayer Concerns of those we prayed for December 2018***

### **We Believe in Prayer For praise and thanksgiving ...**

Elizabeth A. Eaton - Presiding Bishop, ELCA  
Jessica Christ - Bishop - Montana Synod;

### **For people around the world in need ...**

New Members to come to Peace  
Needs of our neighborhood  
Visitors to Peace Food Pantry  
President Donald Trump (requested by Peace member)  
Christine & Scotty Soileau – Quantico, VA. (member of Peace)

### **For illness or injuries .. of members**

Ron & Karen Johnson - on Karen's surgery  
LaWanda Sherseth - healing  
Annette Reich - Aspen View  
Gary Broeder - healing  
Tina Fritz - healing  
Phyllis McGrath - recovery  
John Modde - recovery  
Kathleen Gregg - healing  
Lisa Grimsley - healing  
Ken, Carol Hoefner and family  
Larry Heiser –

### **For illness or injuries .. of family and friends.**

Loretta - Marge Peterson's sister in the hospital  
Malcom - 6 yrs. old with a brain tumor  
Butch - Intern Ann's father - healing

**P**rayer Concerns is a published list of those on the prayer chain, who have given permission to publish their names. If you are interested in praying for these, as well as others, please join the prayer chain. They have leaders who call or email. Please call Lone Bloom at 652-2441 or Lisa Grimsley (698-4121).

### ***With sincere gratitude***

**T**hank You so much for all of the goodies while I'm at college! It was nice to get something from home and have treats to share with my friends. Love Sydney Overstreet

Rako Zech & family, Ron's Zech son - cancer diagnosis

Lisa Miller - Bonnie Clausen's friend reoccurrence cancer

Warren Peterson - healing

Gary Fink - healing

Ann Strecker - friend of Rick & Barb Olson - healing

Joan and Jerrie - Jackie Fayram sisters, memory loss

Marissa - college student diagnosed with Leukemia

Laura Fisher (Jodi Peterson's cousin) cancer

Carolyn Campbell - diagnosed with breast cancer

Micah Hilario, son-in-law of Linda & Gary

Branae, (Lois Gorseth friends) has been diagnosed with ALS

Shawn Hanser

Greg Goodheart

Bonnie & Kevin - healing and strength

Pr. Ellen Skatrud-Mickelson - healing

Emily - prayers for strength

Bob Miller - Rod Miller's father. stroke, surgery and recovery

Kari - healing and strength

Bud Leuthold - friend of Joy Lindberg leukemia

### **For those grieving...**

Larry Heiser and family on the death of Shirley



## Congregational News

### A Day in the Life of the Intern

**W**e have been in a season of anticipation as we were awaiting the arrival of the Christ Child. His arrival brought about a new way of doing things for Mary and Joseph, for his followers during the time of his ministry, and brings about new ways to do things in our lives today.

Mary and Joseph had to make adjustments. They were first time parents. They had to adjust their schedules and plan for the unexpected because babies are messy. There are diaper changes, feedings all hours of the day and night, fevers and getting sick, teething, packing extra clothes or blankets for visits and trips, etc. Those who have had children have intimate knowledge of the adjustments that needed to be made.

The arrival of Jesus also brought about changes in the lives of his followers in his day. And because Jesus is who he is, he recognizes that people are messy. His words and actions challenged the law and displayed his radical love for others, especially those often seen as insignificant, lowly, and unworthy. He up-ended the tables of money changers, he hung out with questionable people, he healed people on the Sabbath, had contact with the unclean, and met people where they were. He extended love and grace...

The arrival of Jesus also allows us to bring about changes here and now and do things differently. Because it's a new year, you might call them resolutions, but maybe we just want to refer to ourselves as being disciples...following Jesus' examples of love and care for our neighbors. And our neighbors are messy, but we can tend to them because they're hungry...they're crying...they're in pain... And in accompaniment, there is relationship...there is joy...there is grace...and there is Jesus. Will we allow Jesus into the messy and unexpected places?

Matthew 25:40 *"The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'"*

Blessings in the new year and always!  
Intern Pastor Ann

## Peace Lutheran Church Annual Meeting

Sunday January 27th at 11:45 am

Potluck with meeting immediately following the meal

Meeting of our congregation is Sunday, January 27th. The schedule is:  
10:00 am Worship Service 11:15 am Potluck – please bring what you would like to eat to share with others (brunch or lunch type food) 11:45 pm Annual Meeting. Contact Holli Miller, Melissa Sider or Linda Strosky if there are questions regarding the meeting.



## Congregational News

ries and long on possibility. I hopefully have gained a bit of wisdom and now I don't think too much about 20 years in the future. I think about today and tomorrow. I also reflect on how God has been leading me in all my yesterdays. I sing a different song these days and hopefully it is a song that leads to care for others and the world God made. Hopefully it is a less selfish song than the one I've sung so often.

My favorite Christmas carol and one of my favorite songs is "I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day." The carol is based on the poem, "Christmas Bells," by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. It was written on Christmas Day 1863. In the midst of personal tragedy and the Civil War Longfellow wrote these final stanzas of his poem:

And in despair I bowed my head;  
 "There is no peace on earth," I said;  
 "For hate is strong,  
 And mocks the song  
 Of peace on earth, good-will to men!"

Then pealed the bells more loud and deep:  
 "God is not dead, nor doth He sleep;  
 The Wrong shall fail,  
 The Right prevail,  
 With peace on earth, good-will to men."

As you enter this new calendar year and this new season in your life what is the new song you are going to sing? Isaiah 42 after telling us that God is doing something new invites us into this work and this song. How do you see yourself as part of God's desire? How is your life a testament to God's love? God is not dead. God does not sleep. God invites us to sing. In 2019 let us sing of and live peace on earth and good will to all.

Peace,  
 Will +

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### ELCA Christmas Message 2018

Christmas comes at a descending time. The old year is coming to an end, the new year is not yet here. It is too late to accomplish goals set on the previous New Year's Day, and just enough time to realize that whatever shape or state you are in will be the shape or state in which you end the year. There is a hefty dose of "what-might-have-been."

In the Northern Hemisphere the trees are bare, fields are barren, birds have migrated, animals are hibernating, the days are short and the nights are long. The earth's colors are muted, and when there is snow the world becomes silent. Sometimes during these short days and long nights I find myself thinking about the brevity of life. This conflicts with my tendency to believe that the possibility of self-improvement and renewal is limitless: there is always another day, more time, another chance. I remember watching our first child as she slept in her cradle, thinking about the future before her and, at the same time, the reality that there would be an end. The Ash Wednesday declaration, "Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return," became more pointed and more poignant. The cradle-to-grave progression is our path; the inevitable decline of our strength.

*"As for mortals, their days are like grass; they flourish like a flower of the field; for the wind passes over it, and it is gone, and its place knows it no more"* (Psalm 103:15).



# Worship News

## January Worship Themes

Epiphany, baptism, temptation, teaching! Join us as we hear from Matthew's Gospel

*(Sermon focus texts are in bold.)*

**January 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup>** Epiphany

*We Saw the Light*

**Readings:** Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14; **Matthew 2:1-23**

*An "epiphany" is a revelation or manifestation. We hear about Jesus being manifested as God and man. Find out what that means for us.*

**January 12<sup>th</sup> & 13<sup>th</sup>** Baptism of Our Lord

*Beloved*

**Readings:** Psalm 29; **Matthew 3:1-17**

*There are powerful words we hear spoken into our lives. Being told we are loved are some of the most powerful. The God who loves us sent Jesus to demonstrate that love. Come and listen.*

**January 19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup>** Second weekend after Epiphany

*Beginning*

**Readings:** Psalm 36:5-10; **Matthew 4:1-17**

*How does a journey start? First you need to know who you are and where you are going. Before Jesus begins his earthly ministry he is tested. This testing shows where Jesus' foundation is found.*

**January 26<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup>** Third weekend after Epiphany

*Blessed Are*

**Readings:** Psalm 19; **Matthew 5:1-20**

*What does this life of following look like? Jesus tells the crowd the words of comfort and challenge that we know as The Beattitudes. They speak to us today still. You are blessed!*

## Mid-Week Worship Service at Peace!!!

Everyone is invited to attend

Compline (night prayer) service

The Second Wednesday of the month Jan. 9 at 7:00 p.m.

Holden Evening Prayer Service

The Fourth Wednesday of the month Jan. 23 at 7:00

**Holden  
Evening  
Prayer**

Marty Haugen



Compline Worship

## Capital Campaign Update

We are over halfway to our goal! We

Thank you! Thank you!

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## Coffee with the Council

Following worship on January 19th and 20th your council will walk you through the proposed budget for 2019.



**Help Needed!** On January 5th at 9am we are looking for volunteers to help us recycle the old lights and the cardboard boxes that the new lights came in. We are looking for folks willing to help load and unload trucks.

# Mission and Service News

## Mission & Service Happenings

The Mission and Service committee hopes that you had a wonderful Christmas and wishes you a fruitful start to the New Year! With a new year comes opportunity to serve those in need.

Here are the upcoming Mission and Service opportunities. Please consider praying for where you can personally serve others, and pray for those that will actively participate.

### January/February

➔ All Congregation Day of Service/Family Promise set-up- Join us after service on January 20<sup>th</sup> as we set up for hosting Family Promise. We will also be making sandwiches for Salvation Army if "playing chef" is more of your thing.



➔ Souper Bowl of Caring- Our annual time of giving will take place on February 3<sup>rd</sup>. Come support your football favorite for the big game while supporting a great cause.

*Please give consideration to getting involved with hosting Family Promise. Opportunities exist to assist other than setting up rooms. Your Mission & Service committee, along with the other committees at Peace Lutheran Church, is always looking for new committee volunteers. Consider checking into one of the many committee opportunities Peace has to offer. Happy New Year to all!*

### Family Promise at Peace

Our next event for hosting Family Promise is Jan. 20-27<sup>th</sup>. If you would like to help with meals, set up, take down, laundry or staying overnight in the church on Wed. 23<sup>rd</sup>, and Sat. the 26<sup>th</sup> It would be greatly appreciated. A board will be available to sign up in the hallway. If you have any questions, I will find the answer for you. Please call me and /or come to our informational session on Wed. Jan. 9<sup>th</sup> at 7 p.m. Thank you for helping the homeless achieve and sustain their independence!! God's Blessing on you all. Debbie Sider

### Informational Session set for Family Promise

Thursday eve January 10. 7 p.m. Come and ask questions, learn what is involved in volunteering for Family Promise at Peace Lutheran Church. There will be information available for you to take with you.

Thank you for all the diapers given for Family Promise!!!



### Peace Quilters



The Quilters will meet on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesdays in January as the 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday is the day after New Years!! We have on the average put together 4 quilts each time we meet. Also several ladies cut squares and layout tops to bundle for others to take home to sew together. These bundles are placed in the basket under the coat rack in the community room upstairs for anyone interested in sewing them together to

take home. Just bring back the finished top and we will make it into a warm quilt.

Everyone is welcome to join us on Wednesday morning, Coffee is ready about 10:30.

# Congregational News

**Doughnuts and Coffee;** What a great time of fellowship we have after Sunday worship with Coffee and Doughnuts. We are looking for sponsors each week to defray the cost of the Doughnuts. The cost is \$32 per week. If you are interested the sign-up sheet is located in the narthex. Thank you!!



**Do you want to dig deeper into the word?** Join us January . 2nd & 16th at 7pm as we begin our study of the Gospel of Matthew.

Women and men, young and old are welcome! This Bible study will be meeting on the 1st & 3rd Wednesday of each month at 7pm.

## FOOD DONATION WEEKEND

January 5th & 6th

We will be collecting for the **Peace Food Pantry,**

This month there is especially a need for single-serving canned fruit, canned meals with pull top lids, soup, cereal and granola bars.



**Altar Flowers:** The new altar flower chart is on the wall next to the church office. The charge per Sunday is \$20.00. Please sign up with memorial or remembrance for 2019. Lamp oil sign up



## Altar Flowers

## Food Pantry Update

Thanks to a generous donation of a Thriven Action Grant the Food Pantry can now receive frozen foods. As you are out shopping please think of the many families that come to our pantry and consider a gift of frozen vegetables, fruit, or meats. Thank you for your generosity!

Peace Lutheran Church ELCA



**Living Lutheran Magazine** Please check the sign up in the narthex to renew your "Living Lutheran " subscription. New subscribers add your name, address and zip code to the list. The price is \$8.95 for the year. Make checks payable to Peace and either drop in the offering plate or in the office. Please note that it is for your subscription. Thanks



January 21<sup>st</sup>

*I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made straight and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together. ...*

*"The first question which the priest and the Levite asked was: 'If I stop to help this man, what will happen to me?' But... the good Samaritan reversed the question: 'If I do not stop to help this man, what will happen to him?'"*

*"I have the audacity to believe that peoples everywhere can have three meals a day for their bodies, education and culture for their mind and dignity, equality, and freedom for their spirits."*

*Acceptance Speech at Nobel Peace Prize Ceremony, December 10, 1964*

~ Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. ~



# Congregational News

## Church E-mail Addresses



### Pastor Will

[prsappington@gmail.com](mailto:prsappington@gmail.com)

### Church Office

[peaceoffice@bresnan.net](mailto:peaceoffice@bresnan.net)

### Intern Pastor

[internpeace@gmail.com](mailto:internpeace@gmail.com)

### Youth Director

[peacelcyouth@gmail.com](mailto:peacelcyouth@gmail.com)

## Check out the web site:

[peacelutheranbillings.com](http://peacelutheranbillings.com). Web site is updated with, up to date calendar, newsletter in color, Youth page, and photo page.



## Church Council Minutes

The approved church council minutes are available at the bulletin board outside the church office. Thank you

Find us on facebook:  
Peace Lutheran Church, Billings MT

**Simply Giving Program** - Would you find it helpful to have your offerings taken from your bank account as you do other monthly drafts? Thrivent Financial for Lutherans sponsors a program called Simply Giving which offers this service for people who wish to have offerings transferred electronically to Peace Lutheran Church account. For those who travel, this is particularly helpful in keeping up with their intended offerings, and it will keep you from having to make up the difference later. Contact the church office for more details.



## Bible Studies

The Regular schedule for Women's Circles returns:

**Ruth** Circle meets on the second Tuesday at 11:30 am at Hardees on 24th

**Martha** Circle meets on the third Wednesday of the month at 10:00 am in the fellowship hall

**Deborah/Katie Circle** meets Second Saturday at 10:30 am at Peace

## Congregational Life Committee

The Congregational Life Committee is responsible to touch the lives of the people of Peace Lutheran Church by involving them in the life and ministry of the church. One of the most visible responsibilities is fellowship following worship services. We moved from asking service committee members to bring cookies, etc., to providing doughnuts from the IGA. So, the duties have been reduced and only one or two people are needed for each Sunday. We will continue to assign monthly service committees as we have done in the past. If we have a potluck or other congregational function during the month, the committee may be asked to help. A committee chairperson will be assigned each month and will ask committee members to help with the fellowship/coffee following Sunday worship.

## January Serving group

Molly Johnson, chair  
Keith Johnson  
Karmen/Lew Hammermeister  
Amy/Jeff McGough  
Karen Johnson  
Nola McCafferty  
Doris Berg  
Dick Berg  
Rhonda Sappington  
Monica Aalgaard  
Ron Amunrud  
Gayle Kingston



# Congregational News

### 2018 Circles & Bible Studies:

Everyone is welcome!

#### **Martha Circle**

*Meets Third Wednesday, at 10:00 am  
in the Fellowship hall*

#### **Deborah-Katie Circle**

*Meets 2nd Saturday at 10:30 am  
at Peace*

#### **Ruth Circle**

*Meets second Tuesday at 11:30 am  
at Hardees on 24th*

### Peace Lutheran Church Council

President - Holli Miller

Vice President - Melissa Sider

Secretary - Linda Strosky

Dewey Anderson - Abundant Life, Property

Mike Brown - Abundant Life, Property

Randy Christensen - Abundant Life

Dave Draeger - Worship

Susan Finn - Congregational Life

Holli Miller - Congregational Life, Executive

Bryan Peterson- Mission & Service

Melissa Sider - Youth/Education, Executive

Linda Strosky- Mission & Service, Executive

Paul Strosky - Youth/Education

### Men's Breakfast and Bible Study

Meets every

**Wednesday at 6:30 am in the  
Fellowship Hall. New-comers  
and one-timers are  
always welcome**



### Boards/Committees

#### St John's Ministries

Rich Robbins

Rhonda Sappington

#### Christikon

Jerilyn Dukart

Vanessa Steiger

Kaia Sappington

#### Lutheran Center

Debbie Sider

Kay Rossow

#### Shepherd Cluster

Bonnie Hovik Calusen

John Goodheart

#### Endowment Trustee

Gary Broeder            Ed Popp

Molly Johnson        Bernie Mason

Rhonda Hanson

#### Nominating Committee

### Questions about Council Activities? If

you have any questions or comments  
regarding any council action - pending or  
complete - please contact

President Holli Miller

Vice-President Melissa Sider

RELIEVE EDITORIAL STRESS:

**TURN IN  
YOUR ARTICLES  
EARLY!**

RE M I N D E R :

**DEADLINE FOR  
NEWSLETTER  
ARTICLES IS**

**January 17<sup>th</sup>**

Catch  
Worship  
Service  
Broad-  
cast on  
Community  
Channel 7  
Sunday Mornings  
at 9:00 am



## Education and Youth News

Spring Fundraiser Dinner  
Date: February/March (TBA)

We are getting ready for this year's Youth Fundraiser Dinner. All are invited to join us! It's a blast. Each ticket is \$8, which provides a meal and beverages. There will also be silent auction items and an interactive group dessert auction.

We are looking for Silent Auction items and desserts to be donated!



Fat Tuesday  
Date: March 5<sup>th</sup>

Fat Tuesday is on March 5<sup>th</sup> this year! Come join us for Pancakes and Jambalaya. There is a little bit for everyone on Fat Tuesday. Will always rounds up a great crew to sing and there are activities for the kids. It's always a fun night!

The free will offering proceeds go to the Youth program.



### ReFuel Meals

January 2<sup>nd</sup>- Pizza

\*January 9<sup>th</sup>- Walking Tacos

January 16<sup>th</sup>- Corn Dogs

\*January 23<sup>rd</sup>- Breakfast for Dinner

January 30<sup>th</sup>- Grilled Cheese and Tomato Soup

\*Worship nights

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We are looking for Chefs! If you would be willing to cook any of these meals, please let Will or Vanessa know!

Wow! I can't believe 2018 is already coming to an end. What a fun year it has been! First, I would like to thank all of the volunteers who helped the Youth this past year. Without the help of volunteers, donations, and prayers, the youth program would not be what it is. You all make Peace an incredible place to call "home".

The Youth gets to do other great things at Peace, too like the Christmas Program, Lock Ins, and more. 2018 was awesome, and I can't wait for 2019. As we look forward to the year ahead, the Education/Youth Team and I would like to thank all the Peace members for their financial support, guidance, and prayer over the course of 2018 and future years. You are a blessing.

Peace to you,

Vanessa Steiger, Youth Director

## Community News

### Words from the Bishop:

#### It's the week before Christmas, and all through the house...

At the start of the Christmas season, I love to read the Christmas story in Luke 2. The story has such power, and is accompanied by so many memories... Memories of getting my first Bible in second grade and reading it in the King James Version... Memories of hearing it in church, reading it in church, preaching it in church... Memories of pageants, elaborate and simple, agonizing and sweet... Memories of reading the story to our children.

This year will be the first time in 35 years that Turner and I will wake up on Christmas morning with just the 2 of us in the house. Our children have both married in the last year, and they are rotating to the in-laws. We will plug in the tree and the lights, eat breakfast, and sit in the living room opening a few presents. Then we will try to call family members in three different time zones.

Later in the day we'll drive to Helena and have dinner with our son, daughter-in-law, and her family visiting from points east and south. We'll probably do the cooking while they pick up the relatives at the airport. There's an anticipation in the air—our daughter-in-law is pregnant, and next year we expect a baby to be the center of attention in our family's gathering. Somehow our waiting for a baby this Advent seems so appropriate.

On Christmas Eve we will have dinner with the Jewish side of the family. Then, later on, we'll go to church. Our sister-in-law and nieces are Jewish, and always honor our tradition by having a Christmas dinner with us. We reciprocate at Passover, when it doesn't conflict with Maundy Thursday. The Jewish community in Great Falls has a nice tradition at Christmas time. Volunteers from the Jewish community staff the Mercy Home, the shelter for women and children escaping domestic violence.

The Jewish volunteers stay in the shelter so that the staff can have Christmas with their families. We'll work our Christmas Eve dinner around our church schedule and their volunteer schedule.

This phenomenon is widespread. Across the country, and without making a big deal of it, Jewish doctors and nurses, firefighters and law enforcement and many others volunteer to work on Christmas so that their Christian colleagues can spend the holiday with their families. Jesus was a Jew, brought up in a Jewish family. Christians and Jews are cousins, with all kinds of reasons not only to get along, but to love one another. Come to think of it, Christians might use Christmas to love all kinds of people who coexist on this earth with us.

In our family we are a bit old-fashioned about Christmas. We celebrate the 12 days of Christmas—after Christmas and not before, as so many commercial businesses seem to be doing these days. We go from Christmas to Epiphany with lights and boughs, and with the Magi moving incrementally closer to the baby Jesus in the creches that aren't immobilized. We enjoy the slow buildup to Christmas that Advent affords, and we relish the slow movement towards Epiphany that our tradition provides.

So you won't see our Christmas tree in the recycling on December 26. And if you come by our house in early January, you'll still see the creche sets around the house, and the decorations on the doors. We are in no hurry to eradicate Christmas.

Right now generosity is in the air. My inbox and my mail box are full of requests from good causes encouraging us to consider them in our year-end giving. My van driver from the auto shop this morning asked if I knew anyone who needed a Christmas tree. She had an extra one and wanted to share it with someone who is needy. We brainstormed about how to accomplish that. The grocery store has gift coupons to add to your bill, to provide food for the hungry.

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Montana Synod

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

## Congregational News

### Our letters from Council Members continue: From Randy Christensen

Our's is truly a blessed and wonderful congregation, and as much a vibrant community. I visited two different Lutheran churches when I came to Billings, and after attending just one service here at Peace, I was hooked and found a home. As a smaller congregation too, it was rather amazing how a dozen people warmly greeted me and introduced themselves at just that first service, and then several more to follow over the weeks to come. I think it's also wonderful that Communion is offered to all, which is so coherent to Peace's Mission statement.

It has then been a privilege then to serve on the council these past two years, and has been a very insightful experience. You have about ten very unique individuals who devotedly follow common threads meeting after meeting. Each and every topic is addressed with great care, wisdom and spiritual strength. Fiscal matters are dealt with and handled superbly. There is great leadership and devotion from Pastor Will and our president Holli Miller. I also served (ironically) on the council at Peace Lutheran in Dickinson, N.D. where I came from, and there often was dissension and conflict, which makes me appreciate our council all the more.

The atmosphere at Peace is wonderful, and always moving forward in great, positive directions.



### Words from the Bishop cont.

And many congregations and businesses have giving trees, as a way to help a person or a ministry in need. The Montana Synod got in on the giving tree idea, by offering opportunities to support Freedom in Christ Prison Ministry, Spirit of Life Ministry, Our Saviour's Rocky Boy, NRIT, the Cape Orange Diocese, and children's scholarships in Bolivia. Like you, we are weighing options, and writing out checks.

At the end of the Christmas season, I love to read the beginning of the Gospel of John. It, too, tells the Christmas story, from a different perspective than the narrative of Luke. It catapults the touching story of the extraordinary birth of a baby into a promise of salvation for all nations. As the days lengthen we hear the words: "The light shines in the darkness; and the darkness did not overcome it."

Thanks be to God.

Merry Christmas!

Jessica Crist, Bishop

**Our 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Beach Blizzard** - Party for the Promise will be taking place on Saturday, February 16th, 2019. We will be celebrating 'Under the Sea', a warm escape from the chills of winter. There will be an amazing dinner, and live and silent auctions planned for you! We hope you can join us to celebrate the many successes of our organization as well as continue to support our future families.

Tickets are \$125 per person or \$1500 for a fun table of 8. For donation or sponsorship information, call our office at (406) 294-7432 or email [marketing@familypromiseyv.org](mailto:marketing@familypromiseyv.org). All proceeds go to Family Promise of Yellowstone Valley to help homeless families achieve and sustain independence.





## Community News

### Christikon Clips January 2019

Watch this month for Christikon brochures on opportunities for youth. It's not too early to start thinking about this summer. Youth brochures will be mailed to every young person in grades 4-12 in our congregations this month. Those brochures will detail some very special deals for registering early for camp. We hope to serve even more people from our member congregations in 2019!



Save the date: Christikon Benefit Auction at the Billings Depot is scheduled for April 7.

Too few of our nation's young people (not to mention adults) have significant outdoor experience. Christikon combines spirited outdoor experience with a community experience that helps open people to the life of faith. Think about joining the Christikon life this coming summer. It can do a world of good...

*It is the mission of Christikon to awaken and nurture faith in Christ—exploring God's creation and the adventure of life together.*



### ELCA Christmas Message 2017 cont.

Maybe this is why the Christmas season can be so fraught. Of course, there is anticipation and celebration, but there is also pressure and stress. Perhaps we are trying to greet the Lord's birth with our best efforts (when I was a girl, Christmas preparations were not complete until the silver was polished, and that job fell to me), but desperation can creep into the urgency to get Christmas right, to hold back the night. "The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight" (ELW, 279). This is freight that Christmas can't carry when Christmas depends on us.

But Christmas also comes at an opportune time. God did not come to us that first Christmas when we were at the top of our game or when the world was perfect. Even the circumstances of Jesus' birth were a sharp reminder that all was not well – forced migration to Bethlehem, no room for the young family, born in a stall. Emmanuel – God with us – came to us and comes to us precisely at the time when our need is greatest. Our attempts to bring about perfection actually get in the way of receiving the gift. When we try to fit into an unrealistic ideal of who we ought to be instead of welcoming God into our real self, no matter how messy, then what is left on the 13th day of Christmas? Fatigue, certainly, but also the dull acceptance that life moves from cradle to grave.

On Christmas, God has reversed the cradle to grave progression. The angel announced to the shepherds:

*"I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: for to you is born this day in the city of David a savior, who is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger."*

Here is the new reality. Here is the truth. Our lives are not a meaningless trudge from cradle to grave, but a joyful journey – true and lasting joy – from grave to cradle. All our brokenness and death meet life and healing and hope in the child in the manger. His cradle defeats the grave. We are loved. We are alive. Now we are free to greet this holy season.

Merry Christmas, dear church.

Elizabeth A. Eaton



## January 2019

**1** *New Years Day* We join all creation in praising God and pray that everything we do and say reflects God's glory and wonder-filled love.

**2** National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month We remember and pray for those who are victims of sex trafficking, involuntary servitude, debt bondage and forced labor in our nation and around the world, and we ask God to guide us in caring for victims and taking an active role in ending this abuse, injustice and oppression.

**3** Ask God for the strength and patience we need to move forward with and accomplish new goals and endeavors; give thanks for the people in our lives who offer support, encouragement and wisdom, and who reassure us of God's grace and forgiveness when we feel like we are failing or struggling.

**4** Remember in prayer people who have lost their homes and places of shelter as a result of recent natural disasters; pray they receive assistance — including emotional and spiritual care — and resources needed for rebuilding their lives and homes; pray we are generous in our support of Lutheran Disaster Response's work of bringing God's hope, healing and renewal to people and places suffering loss and disruption.

**5** We come to God in prayer with grateful hearts, curiosity and awe that, as insignificant and small as we seem in comparison to the universe, God is mindful of us and cares for us.

**6** Pray the Holy Spirit is at work in us expanding our vision of whom we include when we think and speak of "neighbors," that our prayers, concerns and actions consider people and situations beyond our congregations, social circles, communities and nation.

**7** Give thanks for the generous support of donors to The Campaign for the ELCA that has enabled the ELCA's International Women Leaders initiative to grow in its accompaniment and support of international women leaders through educational seminars, south-to-south exchanges, in-country study programs and degree programs at ELCA colleges and universities.

**8** Pray for newly elected leaders, judges and officials across our nation, that they be filled with wisdom, compassion, a deep sense of justice, and a desire to build relationships where schisms exist — for the well-being of all people and communities, especially where there is poverty, hardship and inequality.

**9** Give thanks for faith communities, church leaders, Christian educators, friends and mentors who help us understand the mystery of Christ and the gospel, leading us to greater boldness and confidence of faith.

**10** Pray for our elders, especially those who are homebound or living alone, that we will seek ways to keep them connected and cared for through our congregations and communities during the long winter months and throughout the year.

**11** There is no greater advocate, defender and deliverer of the poor and oppressed than God. Pray we are faithful, unwavering partners in God's work of bringing justice, healing, hope, relief and peace to the world.

**12** Pray for the ELCA Disability Ministries Team and its work of advocating, equipping congregations and synods, and supporting new and existing ministries for the sake of all who live with mental illness, their families, and people who offer care, support and treatment.

**13** Ask that the Holy Spirit shape our words, teachings and actions to enable us to be clear and articulate witnesses of who Jesus is: Son of God, the promised Messiah, our true salvation and hope.

**14** Pray for J-term students returning to colleges and universities, that their experiences, new perspectives, knowledge and renewed faith help clarify, enrich and equip them for their vocations and discernment of what God may be calling them to.

**15** Give thanks that God is with us in every situation, disaster, uncertainty and difficulty and that we can trust God's promise and reassurance: "Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine."

**16** As many of our Christmas gifts fall into disuse, break, lose their appeal or are regifted, we ask God to remind us of the gifts and blessings in our lives that give us joy and are lasting — day after day.



## January 2019

**17** Ask the Holy Spirit to help us support, pray for, encourage and accompany those who are new Christians and beginning their journey of faith following Jesus.

**18** Week of Prayer for Christian Unity We are one in the body of Christ. Pray for our ecumenical partners, global church companions, and our brothers and sisters in Christ everywhere that God will draw us closer to one another and bless our work together for the purpose of building up Christ's church in the world.

**19** The voice of God can be sensed throughout all creation and in every nation. Pray we are attentive to God's voice that it will assure us of God's glory and power, give us strength and bless us with peace.

**20** In the miracle of turning water into wine for wedding guests to enjoy, Jesus demonstrates the power and presence of God in our everyday lives and situations. With joy and humility, give thanks for God's ability to accomplish the unimaginable for the sake of the world.

**21** *Martin Luther King Jr. Day* Give thanks for the life, vision and sacrifice of Martin Luther King Jr. and all those who have worked tirelessly and at great personal risk throughout history for justice, peace, freedom and equality for all people, especially the oppressed and poor.

**22** Give thanks for the service and witness of ELCA federal chaplains who work with members of the military, patients, families and staff at Veterans Affairs medical centers, and among the staff and inmates of federal prisons.

**23** Pray for those who are cold and homeless this winter that they find warm, safe shelter and for the work of congregations and community programs that offer temporary shelter, meals and assistance for individuals and families in need of long-term, affordable, safe housing.

**24** Though we have many and sometimes uncommon spiritual gifts and abilities, we pray we are always mindful that they are gifts from God to be used for God's glory and to uplift and complement each other to be bearers of the good news in the world.

**25** Pray we take comfort and encouragement in knowing we are not measured by our successes or failures or whether or not we achieve our goals and resolutions, but by our identity as baptized children of God, we are loved, forgiven, renewed and set free to share our faith, spread hope, serve our neighbor and do good in the world.

**26** Pray for the ELCA Peace Not Walls Young Adult Initiative and its trips to the Holy Land for young adults of color to explore issues of faith, justice and culture through awareness-raising experiences, relationship building and practicing accompaniment in Palestine and Israel.

**27** Give thanks for the word of God and the work of the Holy Spirit that strengthens our faith and understanding of the work, purpose and truth of Jesus Christ — the light of truth, salvation and hope in the world.

**28** Pray our long-standing congregations grow, adapt and thrive for God's work in the world; ask that the Holy Spirit inspire, equip and renew their leadership and members for ministry and service in the midst of everchanging social, cultural, economic and technological contexts.

**29** Pray for participants, including leaders from the ELCA, gathered in Udon Thani, Thailand, for the Asian Lutheran International Conference, a network supported by the ELCA Association of Asian and Pacific Islanders.

**30** Thank God for the special relationship we have with the United Methodist Church, a full communion partner with the ELCA since 2009; pray for their church, its members and leaders, and that together we find strength and new resources for the work of sharing the gospel and serving our neighbor.

**31** Our diverse gifts, experiences and perspectives are brought together with purpose in the body of Christ. Pray our differences do not divide us, but instead enrich our lives and faith communities for mutual care and encouragement, doing God's work in the world and sharing the good news of our salvation and unity in Jesus Christ.

# Peace Lutheran Church

Non-Profit Organization  
1301 Avenue D  
Billings, MT 59102-3196

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**God's Work.  
Our hands.**

## Congregational Meeting



Annual meeting is scheduled for Sunday January 27th There will be a potluck brunch following worship with the meeting commencing after the meal.