

Good News of Peace

January 2015 A.D.

A *Caring Family* ✦ *Reaching Out* ✦ *Sharing Christ's Love* ✦ *Teaching God's Word!*

From the Pastor's Desk

Dear Friends in Christ,

First, as I am writing this during the week of Christmas, I would like to take a moment to wish each of you and yours, from myself and Julie and our family, both a blessed Christmas and a blessed New Year!

As we are reflecting upon the old year behind and looking ahead at the beginning of a new year, I would like to continue to use this space to look back upon our "Vision Cast" event on Sunday, October 26, an event which was designed to help us to look forward as a congregation, into 2015 and beyond. This event, held in conjunction with our Mission Festival Sunday, provided an opportunity for our members to be involved in our current strategic planning discussion by sharing a few ideas for ways in which we might better carry out our mission of caring, reaching, sharing, and teaching.

Prior to that discussion, it was my job to answer five questions in order to set the tone for the congregational discussion that would follow. Those questions were "who are we?", "what is our address?", "what time is it?", "what is God calling us to do?", and "what is our strategy?" For the benefit of the entire congregation, I thought it might be worth reviewing how I attempted to answer those five questions. In November and December, I reviewed the first two questions, "Who are we?" and "What is our address?" This month I will continue with the third question, especially appropriate as one year ends and a new one begins, "What time is it?"

What time is it? In other words, where are we in our congregation's history?

1. Whether or not we are conscious of it, we are at a critical point in our congregation's "life cycle." Congregations don't necessarily last forever, and continued growth can't just be assumed without our taking some intentional steps. (Of course, we must remember that all growth is finally up to the Lord!) Look around at the other local congregations (not for the purpose of being critical, but for the purpose of evaluating both similarities and differences) and consider where they are. Now is the time for us to recognize where we are in our history, to re-establish our identity as a congregation, and to reclaim a clear sense of mission. If we don't, it is entirely possible that we are going to be stuck where we are or, even worse, start to see our numbers decline: 140-150 in worship, 175 on a good Sunday, 200 on a really good Sunday. How exciting would it be to break through that 200 barrier, instead of 2-3 times a year, 2-3 times a month!

2. In good Lutheran fashion, what does this mean? It is important for us to recognize that we are at a size as a congregation (by the grace of God, and this is a good problem to have), beyond which it may be challenging to grow with a single pastor. Our congregation's age and make-up contributes to this reality. Being available for members in need, for visiting, counseling, etc., all of which is important, limits what your pastor is able to do in many other areas.

3. Historically, Peace has relied heavily on its lay leadership. This is one of our core values, in fact. Our core membership is aging, however. And our younger members are already over-worked in their busy lives. How are we going to address these realities as a congregation? Here are a few questions to consider: Are we recruiting and training new lay leaders? Are we willing to take risks and to experiment with doing things differently than we've done them in the past? Are we willing to make financial sacrifices to enable our congregation to take the next step and to be all that it can be over the next 20 years and beyond? And finally, are we willing to break with tradition and do a better job, where necessary (and it could be argued that this is more necessary than ever before), of partnering with the congregations around us in order to better minister to our community?

Next month I will continue with the fourth question, "What is God calling us to do?" For now, I continue to be excited about the work He has before us in the months and years ahead, especially as a new year lies before us! I pray that you are, too! And I invite you to continue to pray with me that the Lord will make His vision for our congregation's ministry our vision.

In the meantime, His richest blessings to each and every one of you in Christ, our Savior, especially during this Christmas season, as we joyously celebrate His birth, and throughout the new year ahead!

In His Service,

Pastor Derek Riddle

BOARD OF ELDERS

Lord, lead me this year, and guide me on a journey that I may reach out to others who need your love. As opportunities come my way throughout this New Year, give me that "nudge" through the Holy Spirit to speak to others of Jesus. There are people where we work, in our school, in our families, waiting to hear about Jesus. *Will you be the one who tells them the love of Jesus?* May the Lord guide us all as a caring family, reaching out to all, by sharing God's love and teaching his Word.

We pray that our Lord will bless us this year as we grow in our mission and vision work.

BOARD OF STEWARDSHIP

Oh, give thanks unto the Lord for He is good and His mercy endures forever. We pray daily and give thanks to God for everything He has given us. We also gave a thank you to those who gave us Christmas gifts that we will enjoy for a short while, but the gift from God, His Son, will last forever. This baby Jesus came, died on the cross, and rose again on the third day. Jesus gave us this gift of life that will last forever.

As we walk with Jesus by our side we give thanks as we receive His Word and Sacraments and grow in faith. This faith helps us to support the work of the Gospel by using our time, talent and treasures to share the love of Jesus. May we walk the walk and talk the talk by living the life of thanksgiving for the gift of eternal life with Jesus.

Have a blessed New Year as we pray, praise, and give thanks to God.

The Lutheran Hour

The Lutheran Hour can be heard locally on Sunday mornings at 7:00 a.m. on 92.5 FM and at 11:00 a.m. on 1450 AM. You can also listen on-line or via podcast at www.lutheranhour.org. Now you can also download the new Lutheran Hour Mobile App to your mobile device. Instructions for doing so can be found at www.lhm.org/apps/.

January 2015 Schedule:

January 4

"Gospel Power for Personal Patience"

Lutheran Hour Speaker: Rev.

Gregory Seltz

Jesus teaches us to be patient and wait with hope in God's promises. (Luke 2:40-52)

January 11

"Are You Qualified?"

Lutheran Hour Speaker: Rev.

Gregory Seltz

God qualifies us for eternal life through our baptism into Christ's death and resurrection. (Romans 6:1-11)

January 18

"The Antidote"

Lutheran Hour Speaker: Rev.

Gregory Seltz

Jesus is the antidote for our cynicism and doubt. (John 1:43-51)

January 25

"Just the Facts"

Speaker Emeritus of The Lutheran Hour: Rev. Ken Klaus

God's truth, as revealed in the Bible, remains true regardless of whether anyone believes it or not. (Isaiah 5:20-21)

Stewardship Corner

Stewardship doesn't have to be difficult. We often make it more difficult than it need be. The fundamentals of stewardship come from answering these basic questions: Who are you? To whom do I give? And how much? It's that simple.

So who are you? Look at the Table of Duties in the Small Catechism. Are you a hearer of God's Word? Are you a citizen of society? Are you a member of a family? Stewardship covers

these three estates: church, society, family. We don't particularly struggle to give to society or family. Our struggles, our difficulties and questions, arise in giving to the church.

So what are our stewardship duties as members of the church? The Table of Duties gives us a guide. If you are a hearer, a member of the church who receives instruction, St. Paul taught: "Anyone who receives instruction in the word must share all good things with his instructor" (Gal 6:6). This means that the local congregation is primary.

The primary recipient of stewardship resides here.. Your pastor is the one called to preach the Gospel to you and administer the Lord's blessed sacraments to you. Your congregation is the place where those things are given out. Therefore, we give to the local congregation to ensure that this continues. We don't vote with our giving. We don't let the pastor or the congregation know we are unhappy by how we give: because we are supposed to see our giving as giving to our Lord!

Thus, when God calls us to give to the church, He has His work in mind – especially right where we live. For "the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel" (1 Cor 9:14). "Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows" (Gal 6:7).

How much do we give to the local congregation? Our only instructions are these: to give regularly (1 Cor 6:1-2), proportionally (1 Cor 16:1-2; 2 Cor 8:12), and generously (2 Cor 8:20) of our first fruits (Gen 4:4; Prov 3:9; Lev 27:30) with a spirit of eagerness (2 Cor 9:2), earnestness (2 Cor 8:7), cheerfulness (2 Cor 9:7), and love (2 Cor 8:23).

In other words, giving to the church is not to be an afterthought, given after everything else is spent. In this way, it is deliberate. We set it aside beforehand, before anything else is spent. From those first fruits, we set aside a proportionate and generous amount. Ten percent was the standard for the Israelites. This was a command for them. We're not bound to that command in the same way as they were. Just like we are not bound to all the regulations of the Sabbath day (no physical labor, no hot meals, etc.). But the pattern remains: Christians still gather for worship once a week, for how could we do less than the Israelites did? Likewise, does it seem right that we would support the New Testament ministry at a rate less than the Israelites supported the Old Testament ministry?

And how are we to give it? We give it with eagerness and earnestness. We give it cheerfully and with love, not out of compulsion. For through the preaching of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments, God has made us His children, forgiven us all our sins, given us grace upon grace, promised us life everlasting with Him in His kingdom, and filled us with His own Spirit, the Holy Spirit. This makes giving a joy. For it is more blessed to give than to receive (Acts 20:35).

It's that easy. And it is joyful. For in stewardship, our gracious and giving Lord invites us to take part in the work that He accomplishes here on earth, providing for the ongoing preaching of the Gospel as well as those who are in need. Taking part in that, makes all our work holy work, work that is done in service to the Lord as priestly members of His kingdom.

Taken from www.lcms.org

January Anniversaries

	Date	Yrs
Bob & June Heller	1/1	66
Phil & Amy Henry	1/25	18
Tom & Tricia Selke	1/31	17

If you notice your name is missing from the birthday or anniversary sections, please let the church office know so we can update our records... and celebrate these milestones with you!!

January Birthdays

Mateah Schleben	1/2
Cheryl Kortman	1/3
Margaret (Peg) Grulke	1/4
Cole Henry	1/4
Gail Martens	1/7
Shana Myers	1/8
Jack Schalk	1/8
Julius (J.D.) Marshall	1/9
Peggy Prell	1/12
Jon Kortman	1/13
Abby Muller	1/13
Marlin Schalk	1/13
Ryan Schaudt	1/16
Joan Sorgenfrei	1/16
Jacob Yarch	1/19
Jack Mosher, Sr.	1/20
Elise Muller	1/20
Cindy Srebniak	1/20
Sharon Hein	1/21
Valarie Peltz	1/21
Holly Ehrke	1/23
Michael Sobeck	1/23
Russell Sobeck	1/23
Dreyden Kandal	1/24
William Peetz	1/24
Catheryn Hart	1/26
Joyce Peetz	1/26
Jessica Olden	1/27
Ann Reisener	1/27
Raelyn Hoeft	1/28
Lisa Coolman	1/29
Edward Rothe	1/30
Larry Darga	1/31

This service you perform is not only supplying the needs of God's people, but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God.

—2 Corinthians 9:12

LCMS Servant Events

For more than 30 years, thousands of Lutheran youth have participated in LCMS Servant Events, learning that serving others can make a difference because of Jesus Christ. LCMS Servant Events equip God's people to grow in their faith through serving, sharing Christ and developing relationships.

LCMS Servant Events provide opportunities for Christian service to the Church and world. They include personal Bible study, group building, and connection with other Christian youth. They give youth a chance to live what they believe by relating acts of service to daily life. They take youth out of their comfort zone and into the reality of others. They give youth the desire to share their love of Christ with the people of the world.

Here are some of the upcoming Servant Events in the State of Michigan:

2015 Camp Concordia Challenge

Revitalizing Camp Concordia through construction, repair and community service.

Location: Camp Concordia, Gowen, MI
Dates: 07/05/2015 – 07/10/2015

Copper Country Servant Events (2)

Help grow a new ministry in Michigan's beautiful Keweenaw Peninsula! Keweenaw Base Camp offers on-site building projects as well as service and outreach opportunities in local communities.

Location: Keweenaw Base Camp, Atlantic Mine, MI

Dates: 07/12/2015 – 07/17/2015 **AND**
07/19/2015 – 07/24/2015

Fixin' Up the Thumb

Servants will repair 5 – 8 homes by painting, roofing, insulating, plumbing, and repairing rotted or damaged floors, walls, or ceilings. Youth will work for elderly, poor, or disabled people.

Location: St. Paul Lutheran Church, Caro, MI

Dates: 06/20/2015 – 06/28/2015

Forts and Sorts 2015

Servants will be involved in construction, painting, and general maintenance of Youth Haven Ranch camp grounds. They will also interact with campers who are underprivileged children aged 6 – 12.

Location: Youth Haven Ranch, Rives Junction, MI

Dates: 06/21/2015 – 06/27/2015