

APR 2026

THE LATEST @ PRINCE OF PEACE



ENEWS Each Friday and Sunday we send an e-news with up-to-date info about what's going on at PoP and in our community and how you can be involved. Sign up by contacting the church office today!

FACEBOOK Follow us on Facebook (Prince of Peace Lutheran Church) and share our nearly-daily posts with friends

YOUTUBE Our online worship is published each Sunday on our YouTube page, Prince of Peace Lutheran Church

WEBSITE Our website has current info, updates, and links for worship and ministry. Visit poplargo.org for more.

BEHOLD THE WOOD

The bloom is off the rose. The shine is off the penny. The oak is trying to drive me crazy. I know the third one isn't quite as popular, but they are all fairly well linked as far as I'm concerned.

When we bought our house, we were particularly pleased to find that our neighbors' property has a massive live oak tree. Much of this tree stands tall, reaching out over our back fence, providing shade over a healthy portion of our backyard. I've loved live oaks since I first saw them on family vacations as a child. The tree itself appears quite healthy, which eased any concerns we might have

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BEHOLD THE WOOD *Continued...*

otherwise had about it. Those giant limbs can be a real problem if they should fall, after all. It turns out, though, I might have overlooked a couple of additional challenges. Now, having lived here for the better part of a year, I have discovered that this beautiful tree and its serene shade come with a cost: nearly constant chores.

The tree drops little sticks on a weekly basis. I can't begin to guess how many leaves it has shared with us, but the sheer quantity and frequency is enough to make our leaf raking efforts look totally impotent. In the past week or two, it began to dump pollen on the yard, which affects our allergies and sticks in the dogs' fur. On top of that, the branches above are the perpetual playground of birds and squirrels, which invite our dogs' attention at times we most need them to use the bathroom and get back in the house. This tree is beautiful, but the totality of its impact reminds us: looks aren't everything.

But then, what can be done? This tree was here long before we were. We have no plans to try to cut it down, or pare it back; we benefit from its shade. We have to adjust. Sometimes there is something so big, so imposing, that it humbles us and we realize we are the ones who have to do the changing.

I'm writing this more than halfway through Lent. We're on day 22, to be specific. What looms even larger in my days than this mighty tree? Holy Week.

Every year, it moves. Every year, we adjust. Every year, we take the journey through the heavy weight that is the Passion of Christ. We are reminded of our feeble faith in the stories of disciples falling away from their Lord; we know we fall away, too. Acknowledging these shortcomings is hard, but we don't shy away from it. We embrace it, because we don't just see ourselves more clearly in this lens; we see Jesus more clearly, too. We exist under the protection of our loving Lord, whose arms are stretched out for us, enduring suffering for our sake. Knowing what he provides, we willingly enter into that story again, year after year, season after season. We are open once more to whatever this journey may call forth from us.

*In the shade
of that cross,
we find rest in
this life, and
the promise of
eternity with
the one who
gave his life
upon it.*

We all live in the shadow of the cross. Though intended to be a reminder of Rome's power, it remains for us the sign of God's love, and the beginning of that love's redeeming gift of life. In the shade of that cross, we find rest in this life, and the promise of eternity with the one who gave his life upon it.

MAR CONGREGATION COUNCIL

- + Approved First Fruits contribution of \$500 to Undue Medical Debt
- + Completed language for and agreed to Council Covenant (self-governing document)
- + Continued discernment of Sanctuary add-on for Nursery
- + Discussed possible alternative meeting times for Council
- + Discussed options for honoring memory of pets at PoP
- + Celebrated recent successful events (Go & Do Likewise, Beer & Hymns, Picnic)
- + Celebrated new flooring in Parish Hall (Choir Room, Care Room, Hallway)
- + Previewed Ministry Celebration Day (Sun, Apr 26)

PASTOR RACHEL'S REMARKS

The first thing I do when writing a sermon is read the four texts assigned for the day. This may seem like an obvious first step, and it is. But I am trying to read these texts as though I had never heard them before, to see what questions, thoughts, and surprises might appear. This is easier for some texts than others, of course. We focus on some texts more often than others, and some scripture passages are even so familiar that we can recite them, remember where we were the last time we heard them, or think of a particular sermon we heard about them. In those cases, there are usually some 'things we know' that accompany those texts, things we've been taught about what's going on.

A few weeks ago, as I began reading the gospel text about Jesus meeting the Samaritan woman at the well, I tried to hold back the 'things I knew' about this story as I read it. And when I then compared the 'things I knew' with the 'things I just read', I found some inconsistencies. I remember learning about this woman as a child, that she was brazen, scandalous, outcast. Yet what I read was an earnest exchange between her and Jesus, with no judgment shared, and open curiosity leading the conversation. I took my surprise to a commentary, aptly called "Back to the Well", and as I read, I discovered that over time, the way this woman was characterized by religious leaders changed quite a bit. For centuries, she was portrayed as polite, sweet-spirited, well-meaning, and eager to learn. However, Reformation-era theologians were emphasizing stories of God intervening with mercy for sinners, and the bigger the sinner, the better the mercy. To make the story more striking, the woman was now described as brash, saucy, insolent, impertinent, and jeering (at least, until Jesus brings her mercy). There's also been a layer of sexism brushed onto her story over time, while the church was teaching that only men could be apostles, disciples, and evangelists – as a woman, she could not be seen as someone sharing the gospel, so her 'poor reputation' removed that concern.

While I was disappointed to learn how the woman's story has been used to carry forward agendas of church leaders over the centuries, I was not surprised. I was glad, however, to find that her story is being reclaimed, and we have the chance to learn how her story was originally understood.

Discovering incorrect, or even manipulated, scriptural interpretations can be confusing. It leads quickly to the question, "How do we know if we're interpreting scripture correctly?" It's an important question, one we should take seriously, because this is God's word, and we want to hear what God has to say.

There are several key pieces I have found in interpreting Scripture well. First, we read Scripture with others. If we only bring our own thoughts to Scripture, we will, at the least, have a limited view; we may be outright incorrect. When we read and learn together, we hear different viewpoints, questions, and ideas, which broaden our perspectives.

And we read not only with our peers, but with those who have gone before and who have studied more deeply – there is a wealth of commentaries, articles, books, and other media full of information about the context, culture, language, and agendas of a society we no longer know personally. When we explore more fully, we find much more can be revealed.

Second, we must be open to hearing something new, and possibly contradictory to what we have learned before. As technology expands, as research continues, as history is reviewed, we find that some things have been missed, misinterpreted, and sometimes, even intentionally manipulated. While it certainly wasn't all malicious, we do want to correct mistakes in past interpretation or teaching.

Third, we hold our interpretation up to our knowledge of Scripture, and of God, as a whole. We know God

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PASTOR RACHEL'S REMARKS *Continued...*

to be loving, merciful, just, and kind, working to bring humanity back into right relationship with God and one another. If we find our interpretation to contradict that wholistic understanding of God, we probably have more work to do.

There are many other ways and resources for interpreting Scripture, of course, and there is always more to learn from God's word. If we are open to learning, willing to engage with God and one another,

and trusting in the Spirit to guide us – much like the woman at the well – we will find that God has plenty to say! As we near Holy Week, and the many texts that we hear year after year, I wonder if you would join me in trying to hear them with fresh ears, as though they were brand new. And then, if you hear something new, or different, or surprising, I invite you to share it, with me and with others, so that we might all grow a bit in how we hear God's word.

FIRST FRUITS: UNDUE MEDICAL DEBT - \$500 GIFT

Undue Medical Debt is a national 501(c)(3) nonprofit whose purpose is to strengthen communities by erasing financially burdensome medical debt. Powered by donors, they buy and erase the medical debts of everyday people, freeing them from the undue burden of medical bills they can't afford. UMD is able to buy medical debt at a steep discount. This way, each \$1

donation erases about \$100 of medical debt. This means our \$500 gift will erase \$50,000 of medical debt! UMD also advocates for structural changes to the broken U.S. healthcare financing system, to ensure a future where everyone can access healthcare without fear.

Learn more at unduemedicaldebt.org

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE

GO & DO LIKEWISE THANK YOU

Thank you to everyone who participated in our Go & Do Likewise service day! From preparing meals and creating care kits, to quilting, cleaning, crafting, singing, and serving our neighbors—your time, energy, and generosity made a meaningful impact both within our church and throughout the community.

It was a joy to come together in service and then gather for fellowship, sharing stories of all that was

accomplished. Whether you volunteered on Saturday or helped during the week with Ruth's Promise, each act of care reflected God's love in action.

We are so grateful for this community and the many ways you live out your faith through service. Thank you for being part of such a special day!

Check out photos and a video: tinyurl.com/mt74vsxe



FLOWERS FOR EASTER CROSS

Join us for a PoP tradition on Easter Day as we bring flowers to put on the cross outside the Sanctuary. Bring your beautiful blooms from home, and as you enter the sanctuary, place them on the cross outside and let us rejoice in the beauty of the Resurrection on Easter Sunday.

 PALM SUNDAY	 HOLY MONDAY, TUESDAY, & WEDNESDAY	 MAUNDY THURSDAY	 GOOD FRIDAY	 HOLY SATURDAY	 EASTER SUNDAY
 PASSION SUNDAY	March 30- April 1	April 2	April 3	April 4	April 5
March 29 Worship with Holy Communion 8:45am & 11am Palm Sunday Breakfast 10am - Free	Worship with Holy Communion Noon	Worship with Holy Communion and Stripping of the Altar 7pm	Worship with the Reading of the Passion of the Christ Noon Tenebrae Service 7pm	Easter Vigil 7pm	Worship with Holy Communion 8:45am & 11am

HOLY WEEK & EASTER SUNDAY

MAR 30-APR 1 AT NOON

HOLY MONDAY, TUESDAY & WEDNESDAY

Brief Holy Communion at noon with readings, and prayer

THURS, APR 2 / 7PM

MAUNDY THURSDAY

The Lenten confession culminates with words of absolution. Our Lord feeds his followers with a different meal and a new commandment. We watch as the sanctuary is stripped of all vessels and vestments, reflecting the treatment our Lord receives. Choir and handbells support our song together.

FRI, APR 3 / NOON & 7PM

GOOD FRIDAY

At noon in the sanctuary, we will sing, pray and hear the reading of our Lord's passion from John's gospel account. In the evening, through the Solemn Tenebrae, we hear the story of our Lord's movement to the cross.

Extinguished candles represent a coming darkness as his companions leave his side. We sing responsively with choir and flute.

SAT, APR 4 / 7PM

GREAT VIGIL OF EASTER

The story. Our story. To be precise, God's story. The story of how God created and creates, has loved us all and, despite our tendency to take other paths, continues to love—to come for us! The Vigil of Easter opens our eyes to the whole story, culminating with victory over death for all creation. Come to this blessed, unique time of worship.

SUN, APR 5 / 8:45 & 11AM

RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD

"Do not be afraid...He is not here; for he has been raised." What blessed good news! Choir, handbells, and brass quintet support our celebration that our Lord Jesus is risen indeed!

OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN

**TUES, APR 28 / 10AM-NOON
PARISH HALL**

WELCA BIBLE STUDY

All women are invited and welcome to join us in lively discussion. The 4th Tuesday of each month a volunteer leader guides us through a lesson from the Gather Magazine. Varying service projects are decided upon and we also have countywide events in which to participate.

**SUN, APR 12, 19, MAY 3, 10, 17, 24 /
10AM COC, PEACE**

SHARE THE DREAM

Pamela and Mark Iusi will facilitate this 6-week study based on the teachings of Martin Luther King, Jr. He shared his dream that was “rooted in the love of God for all his children made in his image.” Each session is based on the Biblical principles that motivated him to speak on behalf on African Americans during the Civil Rights Movement. It is decades since his death yet his life and teachings are profoundly important

and relevant. He dedicated his life to these beliefs and maybe we can too! It'll be great discussion that you don't want to miss!

**WED, APRIL 8, 15, 22, 29, MAY 6, 13
6PM / COC, PEACE**

THE SMALL CATECHISM

Where did I put my Small Catechism? I know it is here somewhere! Start by looking for your copy of the Small Catechism (SC)--in that pile of older mementoes, programs, etc. I could be on a book shelf in the den. Second, dust it off and bring it to our review classes in April. Has it been a few years or decades since you peered inside the cover? Well, now is the time to join Dianna Voss and the energetic Wednesday adult group as we ponder how Martin Luther connected discipleship to a life based on the components of the SC. There are six main parts to the SC and we'll review them all. Join us as we gather for a time to apply the SC to today's world.

OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE

**APR 5-9, COLLECTING FOR PACK-A-SACK
FOOD COLLECTION**

Our First Sunday Food partner is Pack-a-Sack. Each week we prepare more than fifty bags of nutritious food and snacks for students at Fuguitt Elementary and our own PoP Preschool - to make sure that disadvantaged children have something to eat over the weekends. We are collecting individually packaged snacks of Goldfish, pudding, mac 'n cheese, peanut butter, juice boxes/pouches, squeeze applesauce, peanut butter or cheese crackers, instant oatmeal, cereal, and breakfast bars. Bring to worship Apr 5 or to the church office during the week.

**MON, APR 6 / 9AM
EASTER FLOWER
DELIVERY**

Bring Easter joy of our risen Christ to those who are homebound, hospitalized or residing in assisted care facilities. We will meet at church at 9am and you will be given names and addresses. This special delivery brings hope and promise to recipients of this iconic flower. Sign up on your attendance sheet to serve as a delivery driver. Questions? Contact Debbie Freedman or the church office.

OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE CONT...

WED, APR 15 / 10AM / PARISH HALL QUILT MINISTRY

Learn how to create a LWR quilt from start to finish. Session includes cutting squares, piecing the quilt top, stitching the backing, building the sandwich, zigzagging to secure, and tying to finish. Not familiar with these terms? We will demonstrate. **Contact:** Jan Brewster or the church office

FRI, APR 24 / 10AM / PARISH HALL CARD PRAYER MINISTRY

We gather to write words of love, hope and compassion for those who are homebound, hospitalized, living in assisted care or needing words of encouragement. **Contact:** Debbie Freedman or the church office

SUMMER SHARING POP PRESCHOOL

Do you or someone you know have a cool talent or a connection to a great company or organization that the preschoolers would enjoy? We would love to have you come to PoP Preschool and do an “onsite field trip” when we have our summer classes! Reach out to Priscilla Luster or contact the church office to talk about possibilities.



OPPORTUNITIES TO CONNECT

THURS, APR 23 / 7PM / PARISH HALL BOOKED FOR DESSERT

The book selection is “The Emperor of Gladness” by Ocean Vuong. All are welcome to join the group for lively conversation, fellowship and refreshments whether or not you have read the book. Contact the church office for information.

APRIL 26 / AFTER BOTH WORSHIP SERVICES PARISH HALL MINISTRY CELEBRATION

Join us on April 26 as we celebrate the ministries of Prince of Peace! We will gather in the Parish Hall to see the great work that’s been happening this past year. Our PoP ministries will have displays and stories to share, so we hope you will come and give thanks for the many ways we are doing God’s work here and in our community!

SUN, APRIL 26 EARTH DAY PLANT GIVEAWAY

PoP will be having our Earth Day Plant Giveaway Celebration on Sunday, April 26. You can supply this plant giveaway by bringing a plant to exchange on this day or drop your plant off on April 19. Your prized plants will be offered to a good home, and you can pick out new ones! You do not have to bring plants to get plants! If you have any questions please contact John Baringer or Beth Behrendt.





PRINCE of PEACE
LUTHERAN CHURCH

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Sally Loesch

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Nora McEntegart

Mackenzie Mendenhall

Ricky Mendenhall

Addison Potts

Angie Pryor

Jason Roe

Susan Wood

David Wuertz

Steven Wuertz



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