

MAY 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.

MORNING BY MORNING

During my CPE rotation, I served as part of a hospital chaplain team. This is a component of the seminary formation process for becoming a pastor and it affords the unique opportunity to provide pastoral care as part of a group of clergy, each of whom represents a distinct (and, oftentimes diverse) expression of the Christian faith. I remember a story one of my colleagues told one day as we all sat in the conference room where we met to review our pastoral care experiences.

He was an elderly man, and a pastor in the Southern Baptist Convention, with a lifetime of ministry already completed. He recalled one of the more difficult times affecting his life and ministry,

Continued...

MORNING BY MORNING *Continued...*

in which his family suffered a terrible fire in their home. Fortunately, no one was hurt; each member of the family was away when the fire started. The house itself, however, was a total loss. This pastor got a far off look in his eye as he was transported back to the moment when he returned to what was left of his home. He stood in the nearly smoldering remains of the entryway to the house, surrounded by ashes and the scarce remains of the walls that once framed a loving family life.

"...and standing there, just then, something truly powerful swept over me." He said.

"It came from nowhere and everywhere at the same time. The words, 'Great Is Thy Faithfulness' started coming out of my mouth. First, they were whispers. Then, the tune followed. And, soon enough, the prayer became a song. And before I knew it, I was standing in ashes with nothing, but I sang about how I still had everything. I sang that whole hymn right there. And then, when the hymn was complete, we got to work."

I hadn't thought about that story for some time, but it came back to me, unexpectedly, this week.

This week I have been discouraged to see how some of the politicians in this country are forgetting that their work is politics, and not theology. There have been multiple statements and social media posts reflecting not only a warped understanding of the role of church leaders in the world, but a failure to understand the content of Christian Scripture. These politicians have gone so far as to chastise clergy - even chastising the Pope himself - for doing the work of public theology. Some have tried to remind these politicians that clergy and theologians are, indeed, called to give public witness to the faith. I have appreciated these reminders, but the need for them led to my discouragement.

We are in the season of Easter. All should be alleluia! This is a time for us to rejoice in our Lord's triumph

over the forces of sin, death, and evil. Easter should encourage us to welcome reproach and correction, precisely because the profound witness of the empty tomb is proof that we can be different now! We can embrace the new life Jesus came to bring, because he has demonstrated its triumph!

Instead, this week I heard and read several statements suggesting the Gospel of Jesus Christ ought to take a diminished role, particularly when it conflicts with the geopolitical ambitions of the present moment. I know this is not the perspective of most people (and I doubt anyone reading these remarks thinks like that), but even so, this attempt at subjugating the Christian witness struck me as just about the worst way possible to keep the Easter feast.

Then, amid my disappointment, I thought of that pastor's story. I thought of a man who seemed to have lost everything. Yet, in his loss, he remembered the most important thing he had was a gift that no fire could destroy, and no circumstance could invalidate. And, the words came to me, just like in his story. Line after line came to mind, reminding me of God's goodness, which does not - and cannot - fail.

Sing or pray some of these words with me:

*Great is thy faithfulness, O God my Father;
there is no shadow of turning with thee;
thou changest not, thy compassions they fail not;
as thou hast been, thou forever wilt be.*

*Great is thy faithfulness! Great is thy faithfulness!
Morning by morning new mercies I see;
all I have needed thy hand hath provided;
great is thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!*

Whatever discourages you these days, I pray you are also awakened each day to God's unfolding mercies, the compassionate provision of the Spirit, and the faithfulness of our Risen Lord Jesus Christ.

—Pr. Gregg

PASTOR RACHEL'S REMARKS

Easter Vigil is one of my favorite worship services. I particularly enjoy how we have extra readings that night. We get to hear some 'classics', like Jonah, and the Valley of Dry Bones, but obviously we don't tell all of the stories of the Bible. And, even though there are 12 readings assigned for the Easter Vigil, we also don't usually read all 12; that would be a very long service! Still, the stories we do hear are chosen intentionally, to remind us how God has worked through the ages. We hear about God's redeeming work throughout the life of the world.

Something similar happens in children's story Bibles. Not every story or passage of the Bible is in these (there are plenty of biblical stories that are not appropriate for small children!) But also, which stories are included vary by children's Bible. Some stories are in all of them – like Creation and Easter day – and there are others you can be pretty sure you'll see, like Psalm 23. But other stories are hit or miss, and I have been surprised several times by what is NOT included. For example, I have 7 different children's Bibles in my office, and only 1 of them has the story of Jesus meeting the disciples on the road to Emmaus! I thought this would surely be in all of them; to me, that's a pretty important story!

This realization led me to wonder, if I was going to create my own children's Bible, which stories would

I want to include? What would 'make the cut'? Or, if I were choosing the Easter Vigil readings from scratch, which stories and passages would I choose as the 12 that highlight the most central things God has been doing since time began? What are the most central truths I would want to share?

This is actually a great wondering for all of us, on a broader scale. If you had to pick a certain number of stories or passages from Scripture (you can decide your own limit), which ones would you include? And then, why? What makes them most important to you? What do you hope people will learn and believe from them? Much like the children's Bibles in my office, I imagine each of our compilations would have overlapping stories, and also stories that only a few of us chose. And I think each compilation would be a gift to share, because we'd be able to see how each person connects with God through Scripture, and I think we'd all learn a bit more about God and our neighbor as we explored how and why we find God most present in these stories.

I encourage you to take a little time this month and consider what stories and passages your compilation might include. And I hope you'll share a few of them with me, and tell me why they matter to you!

–Pr. Rachel

APR CONGREGATION COUNCIL

- + Approved First Fruits contributions of \$300 to both Kimberly House and Angels Against Abuse, so that each organization can purchase four Pack-and-Plays
- + Council members signed the approved covenant
- + Made final plans for Ministry Celebration
- + Discussed survey results regarding possible change to Council meeting schedule
- + Reviewed Balance Sheet in-depth
- + Discussed recent positive feedback from visitors



FIRST FRUITS: PACK 'N' PLAYS

This month, in connection with our Mother's Day Drive, we are sending \$300 each to Kimberly House and Angels Against Abuse, specifically to purchase Pack 'n' Plays.

Having a safe, separate place for a baby or toddler to sleep is vital, as well as required by DCFS, who often takes part in family crisis care. However, families in crisis or transition do not always have a consistent place to stay, meaning they cannot use a traditional stationary crib or toddler bed. Pack 'n' Plays are portable, storable, multi-functional furniture that provide this secure space, increasing the abilities of families to care for their children wherever they are. Thanks to your support of our First Fruits fund, more children will have a safe place to sleep. Thank you!



REGISTRATION NOW OPEN!
JULY 13-17, 9AM-4PM

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

Registration is open for VBS! This year, "Creation Speaks" at Prince of Peace Vacation Bible School! We will meet the week of July 13-17, from 9am-4pm, to hear stories from the Bible, make crafts, sing songs, play games, and more!

For Children & Youth who have completed K-12th grade

Participants and volunteers can register today at www.poplargo.org/vbs. If you have any questions, please reach out to the church office.



FREE SMOKE ALARM CHECKS!

Spring is a great time to make sure your home's smoke alarms are working properly. The American Red Cross offers a free nationwide service where volunteers will visit your home to check existing alarms, replace batteries or units as needed, and install up to three smoke alarms in recommended areas (note: hard-wired units cannot be serviced). To get started, call 833.244.0724 and follow the automated prompts to provide your zip code and contact information. A local volunteer will then reach out to schedule your visit—an easy step toward a safer home!

OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE



Ruth's Promise Adult Day Program



MAY 3-7, COLLECTING FOOD FOR RUTH'S PROMISE

FOOD COLLECTION

The first week of May, we are collecting snack items for Ruth's Promise, our adult respite care ministry. Each day, our clients are provided with a snack as well as lunch. Thank you for your support of this vital ministry. Our clients and their caregivers thank you!

- SF (Sugar Free) Puddings
- Fun size candy bars
- Snack pack crackers
- SF candy (individually wrapped)
- Nutrigrain Bars
- Crystal Light lemonade mix
- Canned fruit or fruit cups
- SF Sprite (2 liter)
- Applesauce
- SF Jello cups
- Brownies
- Belvita breakfast crackers
- Keto breakfast bars
- Pop Tarts



COLLECTING MAY 10 & 17

MOTHER'S DAY BABY ITEMS DONATIONS

Each Mother's Day, Prince of Peace collects baby care items and clothing to be donated to agencies in our community to support families in need.

Most needed items include: Infant and toddler clothing and sleepers, infant and toddler diapers and unscented baby wipes, lotion and shampoo, infant socks and booties.

All clothing must be new and unused. Baby food and infant formula is not accepted.



WED, MAY 20 / 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

OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE CONT...



FRI, MAY 22 / 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

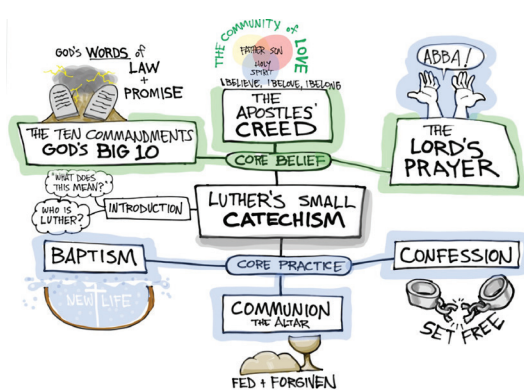
Note: Card Prayer Ministry is *not meeting in June*.

OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN



SUN, MAY 3, 10, 17, 24 / 10AM / COC, PEACE SHARE THE DREAM

Martin Luther King, Jr.'s life, writings, and speeches reflected biblical truths of love, conscience, freedom, justice, perseverance, and hope. Through videos featuring Matthew Daniels and Chris Broussard, we explore these principles and how he consistently lived them—even in prison, after his home was bombed, and during marches. His peaceful, strong example continues to shape us, and our discussions have been meaningful. We'd love your input!



WED, MAY 6, 13 / 6PM / COC, PEACE THE SMALL CATECHISM

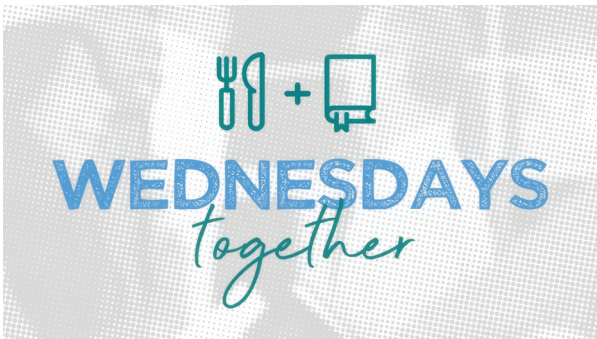
“What does this mean?” and “This is most certainly true!” are two of Martin Luther’s best-known phrases. We’re revisiting the Small Catechism—exploring the Ten Commandments, the Apostles’ Creed, and the Lord’s Prayer—so we can better understand God’s Law, His Gospel, and His grace that rescues us from sin. As His disciples, we are equipped to share His love with the world. Need a refresher? Join us!



TUES, MAY 26 / 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.

OPPORTUNITIES TO CONNECT



STARTING AT 5:15PM / PARISH HALL WEDNESDAYS TOGETHER

Wednesdays Together mark the center of our week at Prince of Peace. Dinner is served at 5:15pm (\$6/adults, \$3/kids), then we move to activities for youth and children, as well as adult Bible Study, at 6pm. Choir rehearsal follows at 7:30pm. Please join us for a delicious meal and good conversation!

Our final Wednesday Together and Prayer Around the Cross for Spring 2026 will be May 20.



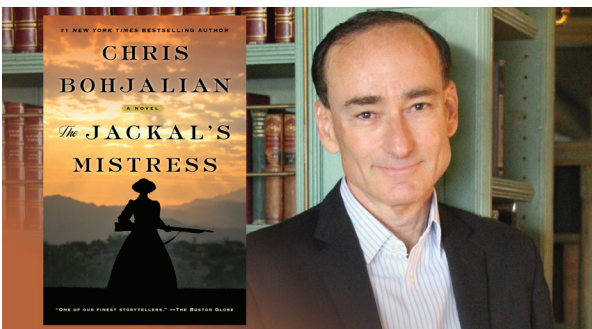
SUN, MAY 17 2026 GRADUATES

We will celebrate our 2026 High School Graduates on Sunday, May 17. Join us in worship and between services as we give thanks and bless Vivian Adams, Kristina Hartmann, and James Helland as they reach this milestone and move into the next stage of their lives. You are invited to bring cards with messages of encouragement and celebration to place in keepsake boxes for each graduate. There will also be cards available if you'd like to write something for them on that day.



WED, MAY 27 / 6PM / SANCTUARY PRESCHOOL GRADUATION

Our PoP Preschoolers will graduate on Wednesday, May 27 at 6pm in the Sanctuary. A reception will follow. Please consider attending to support our school, and pray for our graduates as they continue their education.



THURS, MAY 28 / 7PM / PARISH HALL BOOKED FOR DESSERT

The book selection is "The Jackal's Mistress" by Chris Bohjalian. 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.



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MAY BAPTISMAL ANNIVERSARIES

Don Bitting

Emma Byrne

Janice Frye

Rex Frye

Kenndal Helland

Virginia Higgins

Pamela lusi

Amy Johnson

Nancy Kaufman

Melissa Kobema

MaryAnn Kuefer

Jill Lonas

Mike Lowry

Thomas Lowry

Susan Mateo

Mary Osgood

Christa Robbins

Jacquelyn Robinson

Kari Sheppard

Sharon Smith

Dale Voss



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