

SEPT 2026

THE LATEST @ PRINCE OF PEACE

*Everybody
Knows
Your Name* 



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.

WHERE EVERYBODY KNOWS YOUR NAME

If I were to play just the first seven quick notes of the theme song, I'd wager most of you would be able to name the tune.

The television sitcom Cheers is not only one of the most popular sitcoms of all time, but it also boasts one of the most iconic opening title sequences, accompanied by that familiar music. The familiar refrain written by Gary Portnoy still rings true:

*"Sometimes you wanna go
where everybody knows your name
and they're always glad you came..."*

Continued...

WHERE EVERYBODY KNOWS YOUR NAME *Continued...*

We are, of course, not a fictional pub in Boston. We are a very real community in Largo. While some of us gather around a pint to sing hymns now and then, we offer something rather different from the Bull & Finch pub. We are a community of disciples who gather first for connection with Jesus Christ. We do not look for an *escape* from the world (as the theme song suggests), but rather, a better way to *engage* with it. Still, there remains a powerful sense of belonging when we come together in a community where we do know one another by name.

I have heard so many positive comments regarding the new nametags and I am not surprised. Everybody needs a little help remembering names now and then, no matter how familiar a face may be. I can't guess the number of times my mother used to mistakenly call me by my brother's name growing up before quickly correcting herself. She only had the two boys, but often, when one was requiring correction, it was the opposite child's name that came forth at that moment. If only we'd been wearing nametags at home!

To those of you who have been wearing your nametags, thank you. I know it seems like a small thing, but when we make our names readily available to others, it really makes a big difference. When Pastor Rachel and I were leading a campus ministry, nametags were like manna from heaven. Most

weeks, at least one of the students would bring a friend with them to the evening's activities. When a newcomer arrived, nametags were introduced at the door. From the start of each event, each person wrote their name and wore it, which meant any new faces didn't have to be marginalized. Instead, someone brand new to the group could participate fully in the conversations. Nametags were a way of jump-starting a community and fostering an environment where everyone could more quickly get a sense that they discovered a place where they belong. Their function is the same for us in the church, too.

Beyond the nametags, I also want to thank all those who participated in the pictorial directory project. I know the process took longer than any of us in the office anticipated, but the end result is a useful tool that will continue to help people know more members of this family of faith. If you have not picked up your household's pictorial directory, please be sure to do so (or request a copy, if your household was not listed on the sheet).

These tools will continue to strengthen our community, draw us nearer together, and better equip us for another program year. As we emerge from the summer months, I am excited for our regular programming to resume. I have missed the classes and Wednesday dinners. I look forward to Prayer Around the Cross and the various



Pastor Gregg

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festivals we will celebrate again this year. Most of all, I am eager to make a 'second pass' at all of it.

The first year of ministry with you has been a delight, but now, free from being entirely new to the rhythm of life here at Prince of Peace, we can embrace each opportunity more fully, being more present for all of it. The first year requires so much effort just to keep track of everything (including names). Fortunately, we now have a better sense of what to expect, and we are ready to get started once more. Together we will work on serving Christ, and nurturing a community of believers where names are known, people are appreciated, newcomers are welcomed, and everybody knows they belong.

PASTOR RACHEL'S REMARKS

When this summer started, I had big plans for all I was going to get done. I was looking forward to reading several books that were on my desk. I had curriculum to evaluate and schedules to organize. I had odds and ends that had been on my to-do list for months, just waiting for a spare couple of hours to dive into. I had hopes of getting ahead and feeling on top of things. And when the first day of school arrived in August, I looked at my to-do list, and I saw a substantial number of those things still waiting to be done. Things did not go according to plan. Those last few 'firsts' of coordinating VBS and the Teacher Appreciate Drive took so much more time than I anticipated. I had not planned on needing to travel to take care of family business once, let alone twice, this summer. There were last minute necessary things that popped up, as they are wont to do, throughout the summer days. There were conversations that needed to be had. Plenty of these things were GOOD things. They were ministry. They were faithful. I'm glad to have done them. And still, as I look at my list of things to do, I feel disappointment, and even some guilt, that I did not accomplish what I had hoped.

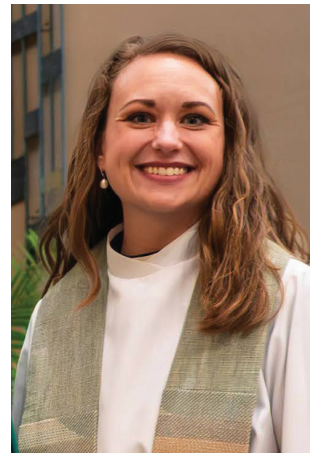
I imagine some, if not all, of you have felt this before. We make plans for what will happen, we look forward to getting things done, and then life intervenes. Great opportunities come up. Emergencies arise. Fatigue limits what we can do. Other people need our time and effort. Even when we're glad to have taken the

side-quests, we lament not getting to follow our plans. What do we do when this happens?

My first instinct is to overwork in order to get those undone things done. But that instinct often leads to exhaustion and missing out on important opportunities or connections. And it is not very faithful either; when I shift into the mindset that all these things must be done, by me, right now, I am leaning only on myself. I am making myself a savior – and no one needs me to be a savior. We have a savior, and he has already done the saving work that we all need. Everything else that we do is an opportunity to join in joyful response to this good news. I sometimes lose sight of this truth. Fortunately, as we gather together as church on Sunday, at Wednesday Noonday Prayer, in Bible Study, and other faith-centered moments of community, I am reminded. And I can take a breath and be a little more reasonable about how to move forward.

This doesn't mean my work – or your work! – isn't important. Our work IS important – God calls us to vocations, to service, to ministry, to community. We are called to be faithful to this work. I don't just throw my to-do list in the trash. But I take comfort in the knowledge that if I end up reading a book a few months later than I planned, the world still turns. The good news is still good. God is still working, and I am still able to take part. And so are you.

—Pastor Rachel



Pastor Rachel

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FIRST FRUITS FOR: LARGO MIDDLE SCHOOL UNIFORMS

This school year, Largo Middle School is implementing a new uniform policy designed to promote equity, reduce distractions, and help the students feel confident and prepared for success. At the same time, the school recognized that some families may face financial challenges in purchasing the required uniforms. Largo Middle School reached out to PoP and asked if we would be able to donate funds toward uniforms for the students

whose families would not be able to afford the required clothes.

We are glad to share that we donated \$1,000 from First Fruits to the uniform fund at Largo Middle School this month. These funds will be used to purchase uniform items for the school's clothing closet. Students who need uniforms will then be able to 'shop' at no cost and pick out the sizes and items they need.

Ruth's Promise Adult Day Program



THANK YOU!

RUTH'S PROMISE

Ruth's Promise would like to thank the congregation for your generous food donations to our program! Our participants are very thankful for all of the yummy treats!



SPOTS OPEN AT POP PRESCHOOL!

POP PRESCHOOL

Thank you for your Teacher Appreciation Drive donations! As we are starting our school year, we still have open spots in our 2s, 3s and VPK classes! Tell your family and friends to check out our webpage at poplargo.org/preschool to learn more.

OPPORTUNITIES TO WORSHIP



WED, SEPT 16 AT 7:07PM / INVITE FRIENDS

PRAYER AROUND THE CROSS

Prayer Around the Cross is a brief time in the middle of our noisy, busy weeks to enter a quiet moment of prayer, song and scripture with all the brothers and sisters. We sit and listen together, voicing our own prayers in silence, while the pastor speaks prayers for us all. During our time together, friends rise and light candles, placing them around a cross laid across the chancel steps as they bring loved ones before the Lord. Join us on this special evening, after our meal and classes, as we end the day together in prayer.

OPPORTUNITIES TO CONNECT



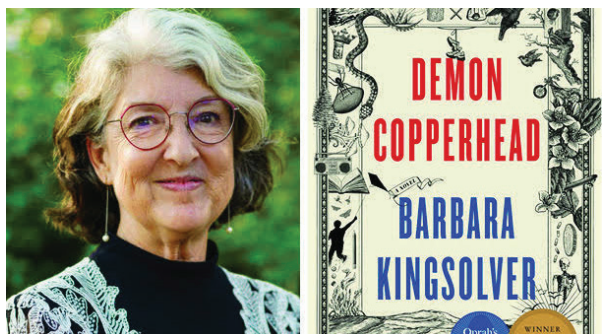
STARTING AT 5:15PM / PARISH HALL WEDNESDAYS TOGETHER RESUMES SEPT 9

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!



MON, SEPT 14 / 6-8PM / COMMERCE BREWING 521 S COMMERCE DR, LARGO 33770 BEER AND HYMNS

Join Shawn Thomas on the keyboard for an evening of Beer and Hymns at Commerce Brewing. This is a community sing-a-long event that will feature a variety of hymns and other familiar songs. Beer is optional, singing is mandatory! Food Truck (Memphis Style BBQ Co.) will be onsite, or feel free to bring your own food. Commerce Brewing is located in an adjacent building to the north of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church. Ample parking available at PoP.



THURS, SEPT 24 / 7PM / PARISH HALL BOOKED FOR DESSERT

The book selection is "Demon Copperhead" by Barbara Kingsolver. 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.



THURS, OCT 15 / 10:30AM / CHOIR ROOM GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP

When someone we love dies, our grief manifests in physical, emotional, and spiritual ways, and while we may wish to avoid pain, engaging in the work of grieving is a vital step in the journey toward healing. To aid in that work, Jane Corcoran and Susan Wood will be leading a 6-week Grief Support Group, starting Thursday, Oct 15. Those who have lost a loved one and are seeking to better understand or process their grief, are encouraged to consider being part of this group. This is not therapy, but it is an opportunity to work through and find

support for the difficulty of grief with others on a similar journey. If you would like to learn more, or to sign up to be part of this group, please contact Jane (727.953.3846), Susan (321.947.8316), or the church office.

AUG CONGREGATION COUNCIL

- + Council's study focused on our goals for 2027, which will be shared with the congregation starting in late September through our Stewardship materials. These goals include a Strategic Plan process, which will guide our ministry for the next several years.
- + Council received and voted on distribution for a bequest to the congregation. The bequest will be distributed at 10% to First Fruits, 25% to Endowment, and 65% to Major Maintenance.
- + Treasurer Kim Adams led a review of the Year to Date spending and expenses.
- + Council voted to approve a landscape improvement project to clean up several areas of the campus, including areas that have become overgrown.
- + As Commissions are now meeting at various times throughout the month, rather than all at once, Council decided to stop the communal devotion time on the first Monday of the month, and instead, each commission will be invited to take part in a monthly rotation of sharing something God is up to in their ministry in our newsletter.

OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE



SEPT 6-10, COLLECTING FOOD FOR HOPE VILLAGES

FOOD COLLECTION

Our First Sunday Food partner for September is Hope Villages of America. Bring canned goods and other non-perishables to worship on September 6 or during the week through September 10. Thank you for your support of this vital ministry which provides food for thousands of families in need across central Pinellas County!



WED, SEPT 16 / 9:30AM / 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, SEPT 25 / 10AM / PARISH HALL

CARD PRAYER MINISTRY

Prayer Card Ministry has returned! We meet the 4th Friday of each month at 10am in Parish Hall. All supplies are provided, we just need you to help us send notes of encouragement, love and support to those who are ill, in hospital, or unable to worship with us. Any questions, please contact Debbie Freedman or call the church office.

OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN



WED, SEPT 9, 16, 23, 30 / 6PM / COC, PEACE GROUNDED IN CONNECTION

Join us on Wednesdays starting September 9 for "Grounded in Connection" from the resources of Church Anew. Each week, through a series of five well-known Bible stories, we'll explore the joys and challenges of human relationship, community, and living with one another. In the midst of complex human relationships, we will be reminded yet again that God is here, showing us the way of connection, mercy, and grace.



TUES, SEPT 22 / 10AM-NOON / PARISH HALL WELCA BIBLE STUDY

Beginning September 22, we meet at 10am in Parish Hall. Meetings are the 4th Tuesday of each month. Themes for each lesson come from the WELCA Gather magazine. Volunteers lead us in readings, bible verses, and discussions. We also engage in monthly service projects and countywide events with other churches in our area. Please come and see what we are all about. Any questions, please contact Debbie Freedman or call the church office.



STARTS SUN, SEPT 13 / 10AM SUNDAY SCHOOL

Join our Adult Sunday School Class and Pr. Rachel for a 5-week study of the ELCA Social Statement "For Peace in God's World." Adopted in 1995, this Social Statement is as relevant as ever, focusing on the peace of God's eternal reign and the Christian call to proclaim and work for God's peace in this world. In 2024, the ELCA released an updated study guide for this Statement, which will direct our 5 weeks of exploration and conversation. We hope you will join us as we consider what it means to be peacemakers in our world today.



SAVE THE DATE

- Sept 9:** Wednesdays Together Resumes
- Sept 13:** Sunday School Starts
- Sept 14:** Beer & Hymns at Commerce Brewing
- Sept 16:** Prayer Around the Cross
- Oct 11:** Blood Drive
- Oct 12:** Beer & Hymns at VooDoo Brewing



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SEPT BAPTISMAL ANNIVERSARIES

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Cara Carmody

Carson Carmody

Barry Herter

Megan Holland

Melony Leidy

Rene Lowry

Adele Luxa

Sue Mendenhall

Sam Phillips

Simone Rumbaugh

Nils Sheppard

Kathleen Sweetman

Chloe Tyner

Karen Webb

Judith Wilkowski

Linda Zachow



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