

OCT 2026

THE LATEST @ PRINCE OF PEACE

Stretching

in body and in faith



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.

ARE YOU STRETCHING?

Among the many wonders of the aging process includes the stiffness felt when first rising in the morning. It isn't a problem for everybody, but I've heard enough people talking about it that I know I'm not alone in this. I also know, based on similar reports, some folks experience waking pains as something that worsens with age.

For me, each morning I get up, and the first little bit of walking is rather painful. The tops of my feet are stiff and, at first, not entirely ready to hold the weight they will have to bear all day. However, after a little walking around and some gentle exercise, my body begins to accept the reality of the new day: the night is over

Continued...

ARE YOU STRETCHING? *Continued...*

and it is time to move once again. It's the stretching that helps - whether I do that intentionally, or it comes through taking a walk - the movement that makes the difference

Now and then, someone will ask me why we switch liturgical settings so often. I can relate to those who wish to keep it the same always; there are benefits to the familiarity of song and text, to be sure. Yet, at the same time, there are risks associated with a liturgical approach that never changes. Foremost in my mind is this: we are called to change things up all the time. The liturgy, when it is never altered, can be a subtle cue that our faith does not lead us to adjusting our approach on a regular basis. On the other hand, the liturgy can be a familiar reminder that we do need to change!

The promise of repentance and the hope of forgiveness is precisely that, through Christ, we are actually able to change. On our own, we are captive to sin, unable to free ourselves from its power, and sin's hold on our living is all too familiar. Yet

we are not just prone to sin; we are also forgiven. Forgiven through the death and resurrection of Jesus, we are able to live anew, unbound and ready to reclaim the promise of God's will for our days. We need as many reminders as possible to help us break the cyclical nature of our own sin, and the chance to hear the liturgy in a variety of settings can be just such a reminder.

So, when we next arrive at a change in liturgy, I encourage you to think of it as stretching. We are always in need of stretching, particularly as we continue to grow. Stretching keeps us limber, ready to move, and a little less susceptible to pain.

And, if we are moving away from one of your favorite settings, trust me when I tell you we'll be coming back to it later. We are not looking for the perfect setting to serve us always. We will be back to your favorite in time. In the meantime, hopefully you'll find some new favorites as you remember the ongoing promise of a God who never changes, never fails us, but frees us to become something new.



Pastor Gregg

pastorgregg@poplargo.org
727.585.9969



SUNDAYS / 10AM

SUNDAY SCHOOL

In October, the Adult Sunday School Class will continue exploring ELCA Social Statements. On Oct 4 & 11, we will finish the "For Peace in God's World" study with Pr. Rachel, and on Oct 18, we will begin exploring the 2025 Statement "Faith and Civic Life: Seeking the Wellbeing of All" with Pr. Gregg. This 6-week study explores how our faith guides us to engage as citizens in the world and how our theology directs our participation in civic life.

PASTOR RACHEL'S REMARKS

When I was a child, I did not know much about seashells, but I loved them. My grandparents would travel from Pennsylvania to Florida in their RV each winter, and on their way home, they would stop to visit us in South Carolina. At various moments during the visit, my grandfather would put out both hands, fists closed, and invite me to tap one. He would then open the hand I tapped, and there would be a beautiful seashell for me. I still have those shells; some are in my office. And though I knew my grandparents had been in Florida, I assumed they bought those shells at a beach store. I did not realize that you could find beautiful, whole, non-clam shells on beaches in the continental United States.

Even when I was a teenager, and my family started going on our church's annual week-long beach trip to the Isle of Palms, the shells were often broken, and I don't think I found anything more interesting than a cockle shell.

When Pr. Gregg and I moved to Florida, I was looking forward to going to the beach, but it never crossed my mind that seashells would be part of the adventure. Imagine my surprise when my social media algorithms learned that I was living in Clearwater and local shelling videos started showing up as I scrolled. I was shocked to learn that I COULD actually find whelks, augers, calico scallops, conchs, cones, olives, and shark eyes, right on the beach, whole and beautiful!

For my birthday this year, I asked for a Florida shell identification book, a shelling scoop, and a net bag. I have been reading about tides and local beaches and

the 'best' spots and times for shelling. Then, on one of our Thursdays off this last month, Pr. Gregg and I went to the beach for a few hours, and my moment had arrived. I was delighted by what I found in just a few minutes, including bubble shells, which I didn't know about!

My shell journey makes me wonder what else we love, what else we think is amazing but rare, might actually be available to us here and now – we just haven't realized it yet. I wonder what the 'seashells' are in our congregation.

This is what excites me about our upcoming Strategic Plan process. As part of the process, we'll talk about what's happening at PoP and in our community. We'll take stock of the gifts and passions in our congregation. We'll consider how to use our gifts to the fullest, for PoP, Pinellas County, and the larger church and world. We'll explore our congregation's mission and consider where God is calling us to focus in the coming years. I expect we'll have moments where we say "wouldn't it be great if we could..." and then moments when we realize, we CAN, because we do actually have what's needed.

I also expect we'll have moments of recognizing it's time to let some things go, to make space for the next thing God has in store for us, things we maybe didn't know were even possibilities. I imagine, if we're open to the future God has in mind, it will be like tapping on God's hand and finding a beautiful surprise, ready to be shared.

—Pastor Rachel

SEPT CONGREGATION COUNCIL

- + Created a Monthly Tasks Outline to schedule and track annual Council work
- + Reviewed this fall's Stewardship emphasis plans, including a financial goal
- + Approved \$500 in First Fruits for CASA

FIRST FRUITS: CASA



This month, we are sending \$500 to CASA, our local domestic violence center, to purchase menstrual products for their clients. These products are necessary, but expensive, and infrequently included in general donations.

COMMISSION CONVERSATION

This month, we are beginning a new series of newsletter articles which will highlight the activities of our congregation's five Commissions. Four of these Commissions - Worship, Service, Proclamation, and Nurture - focus on programs, events, and activities, while the fifth, Management, connects with the administrative and financial work of the congregation, as well as cares for our campus and buildings. A member of the Congregation Council acts as liaison between each Commission and the Council. All of our Commissions help accomplish our church's mission, "to live and share the good news of God's love as followers of Jesus Christ."

Did you know? All of our Commissions are "open to the public"! Anyone who is interested in guiding and participating in our Commissions is welcome to join at any time! Our Commissions generally meet once a month to evaluate completed or ongoing

programs, work together on planned projects, and brainstorm new ideas.

The Nurture Commission's work is just that - to nurture: to care for, feed, and support someone or something so they can grow, develop, or succeed - in this case, in faith. Our faith-supporting work includes Adult and Youth Sunday School, Confirmation, VBS, Wednesdays Together, Fellowship Events, and Youth Group. The next time the Nurture Commission is featured in this article, we'll share more details about the many activities we are guiding!

In the meantime, if there is any aspect of church life you are especially interested in, please ask one of the Pastors or a Council member to point you to the right Commission so you can get involved! I promise you, you will not regret it and will, with the Lord's help, grow and blossom in doing God's work!

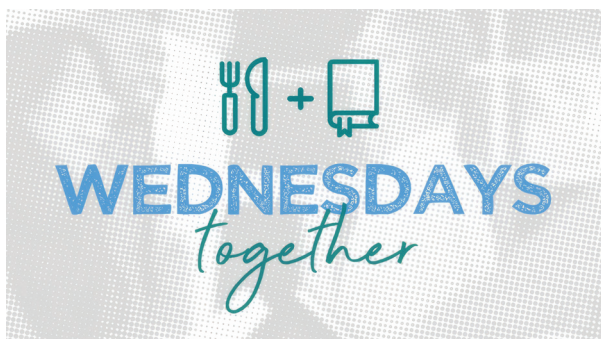
—Linda LaVine
Chair of Nurture Commission



SUN, OCT 11, 8AM-1PM COMMERCE DRIVE SOUTH / BLOOD MOBILE BLOOD DRIVE

We have a new Blood Drive schedule! We will now be holding Blood Drives quarterly, on the 2nd Sunday of every 3rd month. We will start this rotation on Oct 11; the OneBlood bus will be on Commerce Drive from 8am to 1pm. You can sign up to donate at oneblood.org. Use their 'find a drive' feature, searching for our zip code (33770) on Oct 11. Then, go ahead and mark your calendars for the first three drives of 2027: January 10, April 11, and July 11. Thank you for giving the gift of life!

OPPORTUNITIES TO CONNECT



STARTING AT 5:15PM / PARISH HALL

WEDNESDAYS TOGETHER

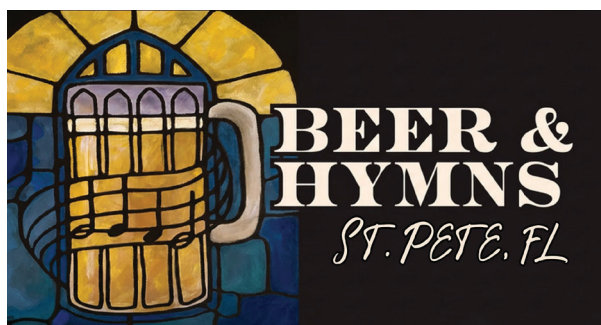
Wednesdays Together mark the center of our week at Prince of Peace. Dinner is served at 5:15pm (\$6/adults, \$3/kids), then we move to classes at 6pm. Choir rehearsal follows at 7:30pm. Please join us for a delicious meal and good conversation! Use the Sunday attendance sheet or call the church office to let us know you're coming, so we can have a headcount for dinner!



**WEDNESDAYS, OCT 14-NOV 18 / 6PM
COC, FAITH**

WEDNESDAY ADULT CLASS

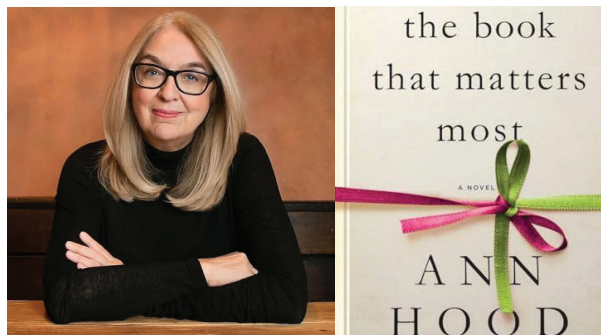
For six Wednesdays in October and November, the Adult class will welcome Pr. Gregg and Pr. Rachel as they lead several different discussions. Oct 14 and Nov 18 will be Q&A with the pastors, and the 4 weeks in between will focus on topics that have come up in congregational life and study recently. We hope you will join us!



**MON, OCT 12 / 6-8PM / VOODOO BREWING CO
220 4TH ST N, ST. PETERSBURG, FL 33701**

BEER AND HYMNS ST PETE EDITION

This month, we are traveling! Join Shawn Thomas on the keyboard for an evening of Beer and Hymns at Voodoo Brewing Co., St. Pete. 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! VooDoo Brewing has an in-house kitchen with a wide menu, as well as numerous non-alcoholic beverage options.



THURS, OCT 22 / 7PM / PARISH HALL

BOOKED FOR DESSERT

The book selection is "The Book that Matters Most" by Ann Hood. 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.



SUN, NOV 1 / 3PM / SANCTUARY

AFFS: PHANTOM OF THE OPERA

Experience The Phantom of the Opera like never before! Join us November 1 at 3pm for a special showing of the 1925 silent film classic starring Lon Chaney. Immerse yourself in the eerie and enchanting world of this timeless story as it plays on the big screen, accompanied by the hauntingly beautiful sounds of our Austin pipe organ performed live by concert organist Thomas Helms. A reception follows in the Parish Hall.

OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE



**Ruth's Promise
Adult Day Program**



OCT 4-8, COLLECTING FOR RUTH'S PROMISE FOOD COLLECTION

The first week of October, 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
- Snack Pack Cracker
- Nutrigrain Bars
- Cookies
- Brownies
- Keto Breakfast Bars
- Fun Size Candy Bars
- Snack Cakes
- SF Candy (Individually Wrapped)
- SF Sprite (2 liter)
- SF Jello cups
- Belvita Breakfast Crackers
- Pop Tarts



WED, OCT 21 / 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, OCT 23 / 10AM / PARISH HALL

CARD PRAYER MINISTRY

Card Prayer 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, OCT 7 / 6PM / COC, PEACE

GROUNDING IN CONNECTION

Join us as we explore Bible stories about relationships as the cornerstone of who we are as people of faith. In this last week we consider how Peter denies Jesus three times and yet is re-joined to the community with a meal and three questions. There is always a path back to community, and always a place at the table for those who are hungry.

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.

TUES, OCT 27 / 10AM-NOON / PARISH HALL

WELCA BIBLE STUDY

PoP's WELCA group welcomes you! The PoP Women of the ELCA meet once a month to grow in faith and fellowship. We center our meetings on an ELCA Bible Study, and together, we talk about Scripture, share our own thoughts and stories, and find ways to put our faith into action through charitable projects. All women are invited to join us; we have a seat waiting for you! If you'd like to know more, please contact Debbie Friedman.



DUE SAT, OCT 31

ENDOWMENT GRANT APPLICATIONS

PoP Endowment Grant Applications for 2026 are now open! The Prince of Peace Endowment Fund was established to enhance the mission, outreach and ministry of our congregation by providing funding for worthwhile ministries that are outside the scope of the regular church budget. This

Endowment Fund allows PoP to award grants for ministry activities not covered in the general budget, as well as ministries beyond PoP that share our love, faith, and hope in the Gospel. It is not necessary that proposed grant recipients be associated with PoP; however, organizations receiving grants must have 501(c)3 status.

The Endowment Board invites you to apply for grants by completing the Endowment Fund Grant Request form found online, in the e-news, or in the church office. **2026 Grant Requests are due by Oct 31, 2026.** Decisions regarding requests will be made in November, and approved grants will be distributed in December of 2026.

For more information, please contact members of the Endowment Board: Amy Helland, Charlie Campbell, Jane Corcoran, Linda Simons, and MaryEllen Svaren.



455 MISSOURI AVENUE / LARGO FL 33770 / poplargo.org

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OCT BAPTISMAL ANNIVERSARIES

Lang Adams

Dave Babbitt

Maxine Bitting

Benjaminn Blesener

David Burgin

Christine Edens

David Grassick

Gloria Grassick

Royce Haddad

Kristina Hartmann

Barb Lindenmeyer

Alexander Luxa

Jack Mallard

Kaye Marudas

Hailey McEntegart

Linda McPherson

Brian Mendenhall

Sandra Olson

Vicki Painter

Beryle Patton

Sharon Sutherland

Christian Swanson

Sue Swanson

Marian Wuertz

Carolyn Zill



WEB poplargo.org | **FACEBOOK** @POPLargo | **ON YOUTUBE**

HOURS MON-THURS 8:30am-2pm | 727.585.9969 | info@poplargo.org

PRESCHOOL | 727.585.9790 | preschool@poplargo.org