



Dear Friends in Christ,

An idea for a new mission statement for Peace Lutheran Church has been running around in my head for the past several months. There is nothing wrong with our old mission statement, but something about this new mission statement idea keeps sticking in my brain.

Here is what I have been thinking about for a mission statement. Peace Lutheran Church seeks, celebrates, and shares the peace of Christ with each other, our community, and our world.

As Peace Lutheran Church we are all about the peace of Christ. The peace of Christ is healing, wholeness, reconciliation, unity, love, and joy. We have come together as a congregation because we seek that peace in our sinful lives and in our broken world. That peace has been promised to us in Christ and therefore we celebrate that peace together. And we have tasted that peace in the gifts of God's grace and so we share that peace with one another.

We have just come through the season of Lent. Lent is the season of seeking and longing for the peace of Christ in our lives and in our world. We seek the peace of Christ through our prayers and through our study of God's Word. We seek the peace of Christ through our giving to Lutheran Disaster Response and other forms of ministry with hurting people around the world.

Now we are entering the season of Easter which is the season of celebrating the peace of Christ. Celebration is a vital part of life. Without something to celebrate,

we die the slow death of despair. In our daily lives we celebrate new beginnings, gifts, achievements, and so on. There is no more profound or powerful a celebration than the Easter celebration of the peace won through the resurrection of Christ Jesus. It is a celebration that gives life to the world. Every Sunday is really an Easter celebration of the peace of Christ.

After Easter we enter Pentecost, the long season when we focus on sharing the peace of Christ with others. We work to share the peace of Christ with our children through our children's programming. We work to share the peace of Christ with our community through service and outreach. We work to share the peace of Christ with our world through our mission giving.

Our April mission giving will go to Lutheran World Relief. Every day in 35 countries, Lutheran World Relief works to combat the causes of poverty and to restore the dignity poverty robs from people's lives. Through LWR we advocate for Fair Trade that helps farming families and artisans earn a better income. Through LWR we teach people to better care for themselves and their communities. Through LWR we counsel people after disasters and help them recover with material aid. LWR does all of this exclusively with local partners from the communities they serve. LWR's partners help it remain incredibly efficient and effective in helping people help themselves toward the day when they won't need our help at all.

Thanks to the 40 plus people who filled out worship surveys for the Worship and Evangelism Team. We totaled the surveys and begun to study the results. We have a few late surveys we want to add to the total. Unfortunately we did not get any surveys returned from young people. We would have like to have had their input in this survey. Eventually, we will make copies available of the results so that you can see what people think about worship at Peace Lutheran Church.

I would like to invite you to consider joining our Crossways Bible study this month. On Wednesday, April 7, we will conclude our last Old Testament section. On Wednesday, April 14, we will begin the first of twenty weeks on the New Testament. Even if you have missed out on the Old Testament studies,

you will find the New Testament studies very enlightening. We will meet on Wednesdays, 1:30 and 7:00 P.M., in the months of April and May. Then we will break for the summer and resume in September. If you would like to join us, come check it out on Wednesday, April 14. You can purchase the textbook and workbook in advance from my office.

Later this month (April 25-27) I will be attending the annual LCMC leadership conference which this year just happens to be in Omaha. Every year the conference encourages, informs, and raises issues to help congregational leaders move forward as God's servants. This year the conference theme focuses on the core commitments and mission values of LCMC. Pastor Christine Nelson will speak on "Free in

Christ". Barry Anderson will speak on "Accountable to One Another." Pastor Dave Housholder will speak on "Rooted in Scripture". Dr. Walt Sundburg (one of my favorite professors from Luther Seminary) will speak on "Rooted in the Lutheran Confessions". Pastor Dave Drum will speak on "Working Together to Fulfill Christ's Great Commission". Lay leaders are also invited to these gatherings. If you are interested in attending, let me know.

May all of our activities and efforts this month help us to seek, celebrate, and share the peace of Christ with each other, our community, and our world.

Yours in Christ, *Phil Nielsen*

A New Program from Thrivent Financial for Lutherans

Thrivent Financial for Lutherans is the largest fraternal benefit society in the nation with nearly 2.6 million members. As a not-for-profit organization, Thrivent must use its tax-free status for charitable giving that benefits its members.

In recent years Peace has received \$1500 each year in Thrivent Matching Fund grants. Over time that has been a significant source of funding for our Men's, Women's, and Youth groups and for other church projects. This year Thrivent has discontinued the congregational matching fund program. It is being replaced by a new Thrivent member-directed giving program called Thrivent Choice.

In the new Thrivent Choice program all Thrivent members will be invited to vote at least once or twice a year to direct Thrivent grants to particular national charities. The first vote takes place this month, April 2010.

In addition Thrivent Choice will allow about 30 percent of Thrivent members (based on product ownership and/or volunteer involvement) to direct funds to enrolled Lutheran organizations including their own congregations. Our hope is that we will have enough Thrivent members who will direct their funds to Peace Lutheran Church or Peace Lutheran preschool to replace the \$1500 in matching funds we will no longer be receiving.

If you are a Thrivent member, we invite you to a very brief informational meeting about Thrivent Choice, on Sunday, April 11, at 11 A.M. Please join us and help Peace Lutheran Church and Preschool benefit from the new Thrivent Choice program.