



Peace Lutheran Church
2540 Applegate Street
Philomath, OR 97370

Peace Progress

December 2025



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From the Pastor

Dear Peace family,
Blessed Advent and Merry Christmas!

Don't settle for the ordinary when the extraordinary is right around the corner.

I remember one of the first orientations I received when I began seminary in St. Louis. A seminary official explained to all of the new students that by the end of the summer one out of every six students wouldn't make it through the first year. He detailed that the Greek and Hebrew courses would automatically weed out those people that really didn't belong. After this inspiring speech, I recall looking to my left and counting to the number six. What if I was the one of the six in my row not to make it!?! I remember thinking, "Perhaps I shouldn't have journeyed all the way to St. Louis!"

Maybe you can relate? Isn't it true that fear makes us settle for something less? We settle for being dissatisfied just because the familiar is safer. We settle for what we know even though there may be something extraordinary right around the corner. We settle for the status quo even though God may have something planned that is better for us!

Consider the book of Hebrews. This book in the Bible was originally addressed to Christians in Rome experiencing persecution. Fear was setting in. Pressure was being placed upon these Christians to stick to the familiar and return to Judaism. The author is reminding the people to not drift away (Hebrews 2:1). The author points out the danger of losing confidence in God's promises (Hebrews 3:6). The author then notices that the Hebrews had not progressed into Christian maturity (Heb. 5:11-6:2). Over and over again the author is reminding God's people that they have Something Better in Jesus Christ.

The Christmas story reminds us of heroic people that didn't settle for the status quo; they kept looking for the extraordinary miracle God would provide in giving us His Son, Jesus. No one would have blamed Mary for keeping with her routines and not participating in God's plan. But Mary said, "Let it be done to me according to your word (Luke 1:38)." No one would have blamed the three wisemen for missing the star and cutting their journey short. But they didn't. The text tells us that "they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy (Matthew 2)." No one would have blamed the shepherds for calling it a day and going to bed after they saw the angels. But they said, "Let us go to Bethlehem (Luke 2:15)." They all knew that in Jesus they were receiving Something Better.

We join Mary, the shepherds and the wisemen in seeking Something Better. Something better is coming to us this Christmas. It is Jesus. When the prophet Isaiah was describing Jesus, he would write, “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6).” This was Isaiah’s poetic way of saying that Jesus is beyond any counselor we’ve had...Jesus is beyond any kind of God we could imagine...Jesus is beyond any father we are blessed to have...Jesus is a prince unlike any other. When Jesus was born, something better is ours!

We’ll be thinking about Something Better in our worship services in Advent. Jesus was born for you! Here is the plan:

- November 30: Advent 1 “A Better Word” (Hebrews 1:1-2)
- December 7: Advent 2 “A Better Glory” (Hebrews 1:3a)
- December 14: Children’s Christmas Program
- December 21: Advent 4 “A Better Absolution” (Hebrews 1:3b)
- December 24: Christmas Eve “A Better Name” (Hebrews 1:4-14)

Peace is yours in Christ,

Pastor J

PEACE BY THE NUMBERS

Date	Attendance	Offering
October 19	101 in person (157 online)	\$4,431
October 26	115 in person (317 online)	\$9,822
November 2	117 in person (72 online)	\$9,223
November 9	112 in person (125 online)	\$3,291
November 16	96 in person (55 online)	\$1,783
November 23	110 in person (155 online)	\$5,824



PLAN FOR WORSHIP

December 3 – 6:00pm Advent Midweek Service – Holden Evening Prayer

December 7 – 10:00am Worship service with Communion. Second Sunday in Advent

December 10 – 6:00pm Advent Midweek Service – Holden Evening Prayer

December 14 – 10:00am Worship service outside on the patio. Third Sunday in Advent

December 17 – 6:00pm Advent Midweek Service – Holden Evening Prayer

December 21 – 10:00am Worship Service with Communion. Fourth Sunday in Advent

December 24 – 7:00pm Christmas Eve Worship Service with Communion and Candles

December 28 – 10:00am Worship Service. First Sunday after Christmas

December 31 – 7:00pm New Year's Eve Worship Service



HALLMARK MOVIE NIGHT



Calling all ladies! It's that time of year! Hallmark Christmas Movies!!! We are going to have a Hallmark Christmas movie night on December 5 at 5pm in the fellowship hall. Wear your most comfortable clothes (yes, even pajamas), bring your most favorite snack, bring a comfy chair/air mattress, blanket, and your ability to enjoy predictable whimsical romance placed in the Yuletide season. See you there!!

HOLDEN EVENING PRAYER

All are welcome to join us for our midweek Advent worship opportunities in December. We gather on the Wednesdays of December 3, 10, and 17 at 6:00 pm in the sanctuary. The order of worship is Holden Evening Prayer and includes a brief devotional message.

Holden Evening Prayer is a sung liturgy mostly based on God's direct Word found in the Bible. The prayers, readings, and songs highlight the themes of anticipation, expectation and preparation that are so central to the season of Advent. Come and invite a friend!

HOLIDAY CHEER

Holiday Cheer, a program of Philomath Community Services, strives to help parents with the added costs of Christmas so that they may provide gifts to their children. We have often helped out in the past but this year it is a bit different. We will be collecting items for children of all different sizes, babies through Seniors in high school. We have put labeled boxes in the Narthex ready to collect any donations you may have to offer. These should be new unwrapped items. The categories are:

- 1) Coats or sweatshirts
- 2) Winter clothing
- 3) Toys or Books

ALL items must be placed in the boxes no later than **December 7th**, the sooner the better.

Thank you all for your continued generosity!

Please see Pastor or Diane Crocker if you have questions.



LADIES GUILD UPDATE



Our December meeting will be combined with our Ladies Retreat on December 4 at Susan Durham's home in Lewisburg. The meeting/retreat will start at 11:00am. There will be food, and an ornament gift exchange for those who wish to participate. We will also be picking up our Homebound person's gift and cookies. Please let Susan or Holly Bendixen know if you plan on coming as they want to have a head count for the food (provided by a chef)! If you want to carpool please be at the church by 10:15. Cars will leave at 10:30.

Oh yes, at the retreat we will be voting on the 2026 officers presented by the nominating committee. Results of the vote will be announced in the January newsletter. See you there! Don't be square!

This is my final article on the Ladies Guild as I will be resigning as Guild President in December. I just want to say it has been a wonderful 10 years of leading the ladies here at Peace. We have grown so much and accomplished care giving at a level I only have dreamt about. We established a Mission Statement that says it all. "Our mission is to build community and fellowship through spiritual, social and charitable activities in Corvallis and Philomath and the missions of the LWML." Yes, we are community care givers!

Peggy Krueger, Guild President

VINA MOSES CHRISTMAS PROGRAM



For many years, Peace has supported the annual Vina Moses Center Christmas program. This year will be no different. We will place gift tags on Sunday, November 23rd, on the side windows of the front door that contain the Christmas gift wishes of children from financially challenged families in Benton County. We hope that you will take a tag or two. If you do not have an opportunity to get a tag but still would like to participate, we are asking you to consider purchasing a new toy, game, book, or puzzle for the program. The children participating in the program are between infancy and 18 years of age. For many children, the gift that they receive through this program will be the only gift they receive this Christmas.

Please bring the *unwrapped* toy, game, book, or puzzle to the worship service on Sunday, December 7th. We will collect them in the Narthex.

If you are unable to bring the toy to the service, please contact George Abele at 541-730-0476 or georgeabele@aol.com to make arrangements to pick up the toy. Thank you!

GIFTS TO THE PCS FOOD PANTRY

In October and November, Peace was able to make donations to the local Philomath Community Services Food Bank totaling nearly 100 pounds of food. Praise God! Your donations left in the boxes in the Narthex really do add up!

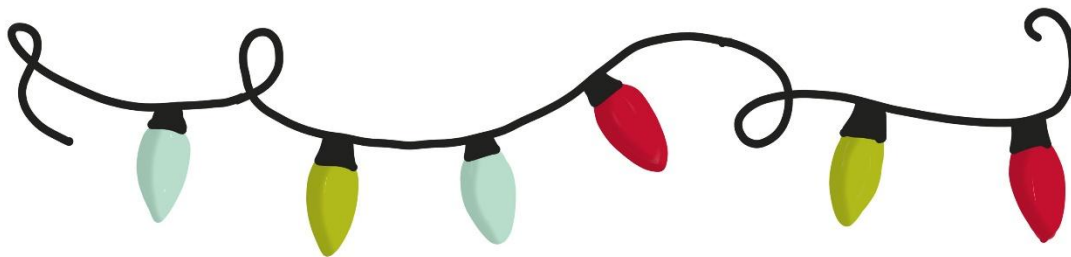
In addition to this, we collected \$766 from the Red Envelopes for the PCS Food Bank in the service on November 23rd. The council voted in October to share another \$500, as well.

Thank you for caring for our neighbors in need and for shining the light of Jesus in our community.



RED CROSS BLOOD DRIVE

Peace will host a Red Cross Blood Drive on Friday December 19th from 12 – 5 pm. There is a critical need for blood supplies, and your donation will most definitely help save a life. Plenty of spots are available for sign-up, Our blood drives have become famous within the Red Cross organization for wonderful volunteers and delicious treats. If you can help in either aspect, please let Cheryl Narver know.



ADVENT WREATH & THE MEANING OF ADVENT

You might notice something different on the altar on Sunday, November 30. The Advent Wreath will be placed on the altar and a candle will be lit in the service. What is the Advent Wreath and what does Advent mean? The Advent Wreath is a Christian tradition that dates to the 4th century and symbolizes the passage of the four weeks of Advent. It is a circular candle holder that typically holds five candles. During the season of Advent one candle of the wreath is lit each Sunday until all of the candles, including the fifth candle, are lit on Christmas Day. Each candle represents an aspect of the spiritual preparation for the celebration of the birth of our Lord, Jesus Christ. Most Advent wreaths use three colors of candles—purple, pink, and white. However, some may use blue in place of the purple.



1st Candle (blue)—Candle of Hope. We can have hope because God is faithful and will keep the promises made to us. See Romans 15:12-13.

2nd Candle (blue)—Candle of Peace. God kept his promise of a Savior who would be born in Bethlehem. The message of Jesus would be one of peace. See Luke 3:4-6.

3rd Candle (pink)—Candle of Joy. The angels sang a message of Joy! See Luke 2:15.

4th candle (blue)—Candle of Love. The angels announced the good news of a Savior. Hear again their announcement in Luke 2:10-11.

5th candle (white)—Christ Candle. The white candle reminds us that Jesus is the spotless lamb of God, sent to wash away our sins! John 1:29

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

The “Getting to know You” section of the newsletter will highlight a member or two of our congregation so you can get to know your neighbors better.

John and Lou Ann Mergl



First of all, they want to say that joining Peace Lutheran a little over two years ago has been a gift for both of them. They had been active church members at Corvallis United Methodist for... well let's say Lou Ann was baptized there as an infant. They were missing something though and didn't know what it was until they joined Peace. They say: “Community and family pretty much describes what we were missing. This church is special! A big thank you to all of you that made our transition so seamless.”

Lou Ann was born in Prairie City Oregon and moved to Corvallis soon after. She lived in Corvallis until 2nd grade and moved to Pendleton for 5 years and then to Tigard until she married John and moved back to Corvallis. Lou Ann worked at the Philomath School District for 21 years as the Middle School front office secretary. Lou Ann is already involved with the Bazaar Committee and Pieces by Peace crafting group.

John was born in El Paso TX and moved soon after birth to Nebraska with his parents. They eventually ended up in San Jose California where he graduated from high school and left for a brief stint in Montana. He ended up at Crater Lake one summer and that is where he met Lou Ann. Both worked for the Park Concession that summer of 74. John is active in Peace's church choir. They were married in 1977 and moved to Corvallis. They went to school, worked and had three children here and then moved to Philomath where they have stayed for the last 40 years.

John retired from Hewlett Packard after 23 years as a process technician. Leaving out the ups and downs and in-between's that made them who they are today they look forward to sharing more with you as they get to know you better. They state: “Life has been a blessing for the two of them, full of laughter and love. We look forward to sharing the rest of our story with each of you as we make this “family” a part of our faith journey.”

THANK YOU FROM OUR MISSION PARTNERS



PHILOMATH YOUTH ACTIVITIES CLUB

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Eddie Van Vlack
Executive Director

November 11, 2025

Peace Lutheran Church
2540 Applegate St
Philomath, OR 97370

Dear Peace Lutheran Church,

Please accept my personal thanks as well as the thanks of our entire organization for your generous contribution of \$240 to the Philomath Youth Activities Club as a Q3 2025 Mission Donation. Your support is a vital piece in allowing PYAC to support the kids and their families of the Philomath area.

Thanks to your help, we will be able to ensure that every child who wants to participate in our programs is given the opportunity to do so. We know that simply by giving youth an opportunity to get involved, we are helping them to develop their self-esteem and discover who they are and who they would like to be.

Our goal is to help youth develop as many positive assets as possible. They will then have the tools necessary to not only meet the many challenges of adolescence, but to conquer and grow from them. That is why your support of our organization is so very much appreciated.

Again, on behalf of the board of directors, staff, parents, and children involved with our organization, thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eddie Van Vlack".

Eddie Van Vlack
Executive Director

PYAC is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt charitable organization. Your gift is tax deductible to the extent the law allows. This letter serves as your receipt. Let it be known that no goods or services were received for this donation. EIN #93-1127754



DECEMBER

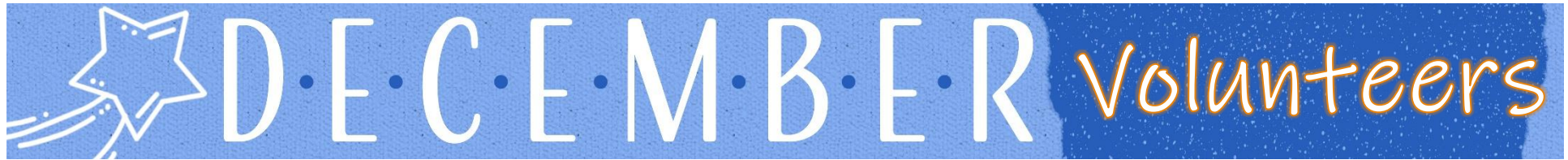
Birthdays and Anniversaries

Birthdays

4 Henry Post
10 Mark Koeppe
10 Susan Leding
13 Caleb Santora
16 Karla Rhoads
16 Trudy Ewing
19 Kathy Post
19 Jim Kilgore
19 Janette Payne
20 Debbi Weiler
21 Nora Stanley
22 Kade Hobin
22 Cheryl Narver
22 John Croy
25 Merry Lowe
26 Kate Sommers
27 Chris Schulze
28 Lisa MacDonald
29 Ryan Guenther
30 Andrea Galvin
31 Jan Kilgore

Anniversaries

3 John & Lou Ann Mergl
22 Jim & Lynn Reams
31 John & Lucy Leach



D·E·C·E·M·B·E·R Volunteers

December 7	
Ushers	
Reader	Wilson Schroeder
Fellowship	
Flowers	Schroeder Family
Communion	Bill & Peggy Krueger

December 14	
Ushers	
Reader	Youth Program - No Reader
Fellowship	Maggie Baker & Sally Stouder
Flowers	Youth Program

December 21	
Ushers	
Reader	Debbi Weiler
Fellowship	Elaine Schwartz & Ellen Holroyd
Flowers	Bill & Cheryl Narver
Communion	Debbie Weiler & Maggie Baker

December 28	
Ushers	
Reader	Seamus Harrington
Fellowship	
Flowers	



Save the Date
February 1, 2026 – Annual Congregational Meeting

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1 8:15 TOPS	2 12:00 Rotary Club Meeting	3 7:30 Eat, Chat, Pray 2:30 Dementia Warriors 6:00 Advent Service	4 7:00 Men @ Imagine 10:00 Ladies Guild Meeting	5 5:00 Ladies Hallmark Movie Night	6 8:00am Men's Breakfast
7 8:30 Healing Service 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Worship Service with Communion	8 8:15 TOPS 10:00 Pieces by Peace	9 9:00-12:00 Circuit Pastor's Meeting	10 7:30 Eat, Chat, Pray 4:00 Elders Meeting 6:00 Advent Service	11 7:00 Men @ Imagine	12	13
14 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Youth Christmas Program	15 8:15 TOPS	16 12:00 Rotary Club Meeting 7:00 Church Council Meeting	17 7:30 Eat, Chat, Pray 2:30 Dementia Warriors 6:00 Advent Service	18 7:00 Men @ Imagine 12:00 Chamber of Commerce Luncheon	19 12:00 Red Cross Blood Drive	20
21 9:00 Sunday School – Adult Only 10:00 Worship Service with Communion	22 8:15 TOPS	23	24 7:30 Eat, Chat, Pray 7:00 Worship Service with Communion and Candles	25 Christmas Day	26	27
28 10:00 Worship Service	29 8:15 TOPS	30	Office Closed			
			31 New Year's Eve 7:30 Eat, Chat, Pray 7:00 Worship Service			
			Office Closed			