



## Mid-Week Update for the week of March 8 to 15, 2020

Published March 11, 2020

### Grand Friends Cookie Decorating Is Cancelled

While Minnesota still has no known community transmission of the coronavirus, Peace church has mostly a high-risk congregation. Therefore, based on present recommendations and possibly as excess of caution, we are postponing Friday's cookie decorating.



### From the Pastor: “Order Unruly Powers”

I just got off the phone with Robin Councilman, our church member medical doctor who goes out of her way to share up-to-date news about Covid-19 with the church. Right now, she tells us, public health officials have classified the Twin Cities and the whole state of Minnesota as being at the lowest level of risk—and we have

the lowest level of warning. At least that was the case at 12:00 noon on March 11 when I wrote this—but it is liable to change. At the present time, we are advised to observe the universal precautions that Peace church has already adopted: washing hands, fist-bumps rather than handshake, covering your cough, being extra careful about the serving and preparation of food, sanitizing tables, staying home if you feel unwell. There has not yet been a case of person-to-person community transmission of Covid-19 in Minnesota – but that could change at any minute. When that happens, then we will go to a higher level of warning and Peace Church will make some big changes, including the cancelling of worship services and group meals. We aren't there yet, but we need to look ahead. If any cancellations take place, you will be notified by e-mail. We will also put the announcement on the church's voicemail and activate the Deacons' network to get telephone calls out. If you get an e-mail about a cancellation and have a church friend who does not do e-mail, please give them a call. It is important at times like this that we stay in touch.

We are grateful to Robin looking out for us. She herself is at higher risk of contracting the virus, as medical professionals are constantly exposed to all kinds of viruses and bacteria. We pray for Robin, David, Joan (Joan Amara is a new member who is a nurse's aide) and all medical professionals throughout the world. This disease is infecting caregivers and overburdening whole medical systems. Italy is running out of respirators and oxygen. It is a frightening prospect.

The Prayers of the People in the Presbyterian Book of Common Worship begin with a prayer for the world, asking God to “order the unruly powers.” When I pray this prayer I usually think about warfare and natural disasters, but now we need to think about disease. Covid-19 is one such “unruly power” that threatens the well-being of the world. It reminds us how important it is for the nations of the world to cooperate and for our own elected and appointed officials to do their jobs. It has been a long time since we as a nation—and as a global community—have faced something so challenging. Even without anyone becoming ill with the virus, it is already affecting us. So far only one church event has been cancelled (the Grandfriends' cookie-decorating party this Friday). At the present time Peace church will continue to hold Sunday services and Wednesday evening meals and services – with added preventative practices. We are blessed to have access to up-to-date and accurate public health information. Discussions are taking place about what Peace Church will do and we will let you know as soon as decisions are made.

Remember to keep praying for people who have been negatively affected by this disease: those who have lost loved ones, are sick and quarantined and those who will lose wages and

do not have paid days off, parents in other states and countries who are facing school and daycare closings, small business owners who are facing economic hardships, the national guard members who have been called out to deliver food in a quarantined suburban city in New York State, TSA workers in airports who have contracted the virus. Pray for Italy, South Korea, China. The list will continue to grow. Let us pray for community, national and international leaders who need to cooperate and make difficult decisions.

Robin told me that she had heard someone comment that one way to look at this is to consider that it is possible that eventually we will all get the disease. With that as a possibility, then, our most prudent measures are to take steps to slow the transmission of the disease—that is, adopt practices so that our own medical system won't be overwhelmed and can take care of people who are sick. If we follow the advice of our medical professionals and public health people, we can do our part in cooperating with God to “order the unruly powers” and slow down the transmission of this disease.

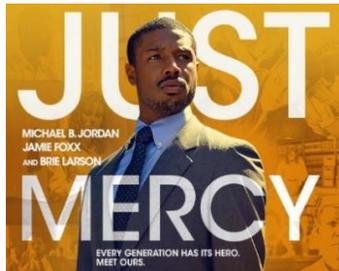
In the time being, then, your church leaders will figure out the best way for us to move forward. We'll look into live streaming worship on Facebook or other ways through internet, look into ways that we could help out with shopping or food if someone gets sick, observe practices that will slow down the disease and, above all, keep praying for those who are suffering and for leaders in all nations who have difficult decisions to make.

Although my family's vacation to Florida next week will be cancelled, I am still going to travel there by myself in order to help Frank (and Zest) to gather up their things and come home to

Minnesota. I am grateful that our seminarian intern Katrina Bergman is here to take on pastoral responsibilities while I am away and that we have such strong leaders in our congregation to look after things.



Pastor Heidi Vardeman



### Meet at the Movies!

The time has finally arrived when the movie “Just Mercy” is showing at the Hopkins Theater. The Mission committee is sponsoring an outing this Thursday, March 12, at 6 pm. We hope you can come and view this inspirational story with us!

**Where:** Mann Hopkins Cinema 6, 1118 Mainstreet, Hopkins, MN 55343  
Phone: 952-931-7992

**When:** Buy your ticket, then meet in the lobby at 6 pm. Showtime is 6:25 pm.

**Who:** All Peace Church members, friends and family. Call or text Mary Ann Christenson at 612-998-8110 with questions, a request for a ride, or to let us know you'll be there.

**Why:** This is a story worth sharing. By viewing it together, it will mean ever so much more.



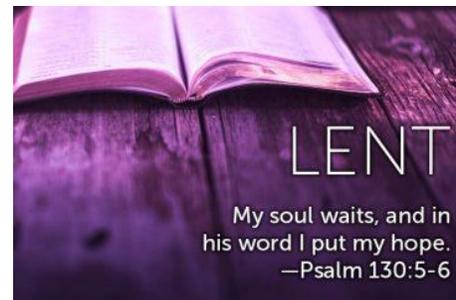
### Calling All Writers!

The next Tidings of Peace will be published in time for

Easter. If you have a reflection on Lent and Easter, or a story, poem or event to share, please send them to the office by **March 30**.

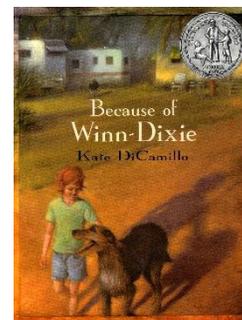
### Special Wednesday Night Supper

This Wednesday, March 11<sup>th</sup>, the Mission Committee will be cooking dinner for the Wednesday night supper. All donations will go to purchase socks for St. Stephen Human Services for the homeless. Join us for good food and a great cause!



### Lent Services

Lenten services continue on Wednesdays at 7:00 pm in the sanctuary, after our 6:00 pm Wednesday night supper. Each service, about 30 minutes long, will be based upon a Lenten hymn. All are welcome to come just to the soup supper, just to the worship service, or come to both.



### Book Club

The Book Club will be meeting on March 28 in the Intermission room at 10:00 am. Our book for the month is *Because of Winn-Dixie* by Kate DiCamillo, a children’s book with a lot of heart.



## Holy Week

This year our Holy Week services will be slightly different.

On **Palm Sunday** (April 5) we are making an intentional effort to invite children to start off our 10:30 am worship service. They will lead a palm parade, and then be excused for activities in the nursery for younger children and other activities for older children on the lower level.

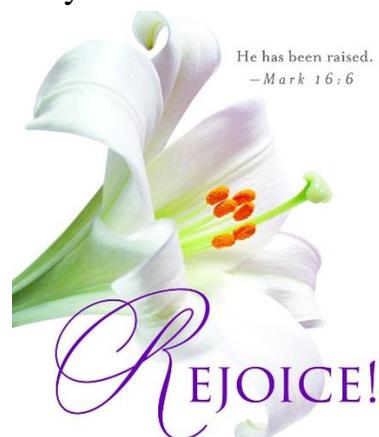
On **Maundy Thursday** we will observe the Lord's Supper remembering Jesus' last supper with his disciples. We will begin the service by sitting down to eat good food typical of Palestine: olives, hummus, pita bread and grape juice/red wine. After we eat and talk with one another, the service will begin with the regular communion service text: "On the night that he was betrayed he took the bread that was already on the table. . ." The point of bringing food and wine into the sanctuary and to sit down to eat it is to help us remember that the sacrament of communion remembers an actual meal, the Last Supper that Jesus ate on that terrible night. Keeping in mind the importance of observing appropriate public health practices, every person will have their own cup and plate.

For **Good Friday and Holy Saturday**, Pastor Heidi, aided by seminarian Katrina Bergman, will bring communion to church members who are unable to attend regular worship services.

Please let your deacon know if you would like to receive communion in your home. You can also contact the church office at 952-545-2586 and leave a message, or email [peaceprezslp@gmail.com](mailto:peaceprezslp@gmail.com). Katrina will be in touch to schedule a time for communion to be brought to you.

We will continue our tradition of attending **Good Friday** services at Westminster Presbyterian in downtown Minneapolis. Peace Church members will join together to attend the 12:00 pm Good Friday service, and then go to nearby Brit's Pub for lunch. If you are interested in joining the group, there is a sign-up sheet on the Welcome Center counter in the church lobby. If you'd like to ride with the group, the carpool will leave from Peace at 11:30am.

**Easter Sunday**, the high point of the Christian calendar, will celebrate the Resurrection with special music (including trumpet!) and joyous acclamation. At 9:00 am, a continental breakfast will be served, sponsored by the Deacons. Please come early to church to celebrate the good news. This will also be a great Sunday to join the choir for the day. The choir rehearsal will begin at 9:30 am, and all are welcome. If you used to sing in a chorus or choir, but are unable to make the commitment now, join us for this special day.



## Announcements



### Calling All Social Justice Seekers!

The annual interfaith social justice “Day on the Hill” at the MN state capitol is fast approaching! The event is on April 1<sup>st</sup>, from 8am to about 3pm. Sponsored by the Joint Religious Legislative Coalition, it is a gathering of religious people of many traditions including Jews, Muslims, Protestants, Catholics, and Eastern Orthodox Christians. Together we will meet, be briefed on important issues that are coming before the state legislature — mostly issues having to do with people who are poor — and then go to the capitol to meet with legislators. **The Mission committee is offering at least one scholarship to attend.** Pat Wilson and Heidi Vardeman are both attending; we can carpool. The day starts at 8:00 am and concludes at about 3:00 pm. If you are interested in attending or in receiving a scholarship, please sign up and pick up an information form from the Welcome center in the church lobby, or email the church office at [peaceprezslp@gmail.com](mailto:peaceprezslp@gmail.com).

### Donate Fabric and Used Linens

The Quilters are in urgent need of fabric for more quilts. Anything will be helpful. Donated fabric will be used for the fronts and backs.

Old worn-out bedsheets, mattress toppers, linens, drapes, tablecloths, and batting can be used to fill the quilts instead of being thrown

out. New and gently used items will be donated to Alliance Housing, and anything they won't take will become a part of donated quilts.



### Alliance Housing

The Missions Committee is working to collect items for Alliance Housing this month. Alliance's work makes it possible for individuals and families to create homes for themselves, regardless of income and background. Their current needs are: new or gently used blankets, pillows, twin sheets, and kitchenware. If you have any items to donate, please bring them to church and put in the designated area in the narthex. If you want to donate money to Alliance, please make the check to Peace Presbyterian Church and put Alliance in the memo.

### Westminster Town Hall Forum

#### Bill McKibben: Building a Movement to Stop Climate Change

Tuesday, March 17, Noon

Bill McKibben is an environmentalist, educator, and author. A prolific author, his 1989 book, *The End of Nature*, is regarded as the first book for a general audience on climate change. He is the founder of 350.org, the world's largest grassroots campaign to counter the effects of climate change. He was awarded the Gandhi Prize, the Thomas Merton Prize, and the Right Livelihood Prize.

The Westminster Town Hall Forum is held at Westminster Presbyterian Church, located on Nicollet Mall and 12th Street in downtown

Minneapolis. Forums are one hour in length with a speaker presentation and Q&A. Music precedes each forum a half hour in advance and a public reception follows. Learn more at [westminsterforum.org](http://westminsterforum.org).

## Responding to the Coronavirus (COVID-19)

As we hear more about the spread of the Coronavirus and anxieties rise, it is important that we think cautiously and carefully about our response as a church.

**AT CHURCH:** During our regular worship services and gatherings we have already adopted these practices:

- Sharing a “fist bump,” “elbow bump,” or a bow rather than shaking hands when we greet one another.
- Serving communion differently, with each person receiving into their cupped hands the bread from the server (wearing plastic gloves). We already use individual communion glasses.
- Not passing the offering plate hand to hand, but the usher will continue to hold the offering plate.
- The prudent practices in our kitchen (gloves, use of bleach for sanitization) are already in place.

**IN GENERAL:** We need to focus on the facts and the warnings that come from official sources rather than get caught up in the fearful buzz that is out there now. We at Peace Church are taking steps in keeping with the advice of public health officials. Most of them are things we should be doing anyway in flu season. We will continue to gather for worship and church programs as usual unless directed otherwise by the Minnesota Department of Health. Meanwhile, everyone should:

- Stay home if you are feeling sick.

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Avoid touching your face with unwashed hands.
- Disinfect surfaces used regularly, including your phone.
- Use hand sanitizer.
- Avoid close contact with someone who is sick.
- If you have traveled internationally during the last 14 days, feel sick with fever or cough, or have difficulty breathing, seek medical attention.

Practice these precautionary measures at home and pass this information along to family and friends.

Let us remember to pray for those who are sick, those who are afraid, and those who are working hard to contain the outbreak.

Church leaders, advised by our medical professionals, continue to consider other actions that may be helpful and will let you know if there are any additional changes.

If you would like to learn more about the virus or view local updates, the Minnesota Department of Health is an excellent resource.

**Join the Choir** The choir rehearses on the second, third and fourth Sunday and sings on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month. Interested in providing special music on the first and third Sunday of the month? Please contact Patrice! **Remember, if you come at 9:30 for rehearsal, you can sing with the choir!** No permanent commitment needed!

**If You Have Information** that needs to be in the weekly update such as meeting dates and times, special events or prayer requests, please get this information to our office manager Beth

by Wednesday morning. Please email or call [peaceprezSLP@gmail.com](mailto:peaceprezSLP@gmail.com) or 952-545-2586.

mail them to [peaceprezslp@gmail.com](mailto:peaceprezslp@gmail.com) or call the church office at 952-545-2586 and leave a message.

## Prayers

### Prayers of Gratitude

**Jim Moffet** is back at home, new and improved, feeling fine. He had a pacemaker implanted last week.

**Lynne Kubista** gives thanks that grandson Angel telephoned her from his treatment center in Utah and is improving.

**Rev. Alison Bucklin** reports that her dear friend facing a mental health crisis is receiving appropriate care.

We pray for all our **new elders and deacons** who are preparing to be ordained and/or installed during worship on March 29. We also give thanks to God for the faithful service of those “retiring” from active service: Deacons Patty Schmeling and Judy Huebner, and Elder Greg Stauffer.

### Prayers of Petition

**Karen Meyer** asks for prayers for her brother, who was admitted to Methodist Hospital with chest pains.

**Donna Howard** shared news of her mother, who is undergoing cancer treatment in Rochester. She asked for prayers for her mother's medical team and her family.

**Val Eng's mother** has been ill and needs nursing home placement. Please pray for Val and her mother as they seek appropriate care.

**Betts Snyder** shared that her daughter **Mary Kay** has suffered a return of breast cancer. Pray for her as she enters treatment again.

*If you have any prayer requests that you would like printed in the Mid-Week Update, please e-*

## Calendar

This coming Sunday, March 15, Pastor Heidi will preach on John 4:5-42, and seminarian Katrina Bergman will lead the 9:00 am bible study. Because the Bible group discusses the scripture that will serve as the basis for the next week's worship service, Katrina will lead the March 15 discussion (on John 9:1-41) as she is preaching on March 22.

Pastor Heidi will be visiting her husband Frank in Florida on March 17-24. While she is away, our seminarian intern Katrina Bergman will be leading the midweek Lenten service (March 18), preaching at Sunday's 10:30 service (March 22) and providing pastoral care.

### This Week

#### Tuesday, March 10

9:00 am – Quilters  
6:00 pm – Yoga

#### Wednesday, March 11

6:00 pm – Wednesday Night Supper  
7:00 pm – Lent Service

#### Thursday, March 12

6:00 pm – Peace at the Movies: “Just Mercy” at Hopkins Cinema

#### Friday, March 13

5:00 pm – InterMission's Gathering and Community Meal

## This Coming Sunday

### Sunday, March 15

9:00 am – Adult Bible discussion: John 9:1-41  
9:30 am – Choir Rehearsal  
10:30 am – Worship  
11:30 am – Coffee Fellowship  
1:00 pm – Nutifafa

**Liturgist:** Katrina Bergman

**Greeters and Coffee Captains:** Betts Snyder  
(Greeters) and Eileen Bengry (Coffee).

**Greeters:** Patty Schmeling, Marcia Curley

**Coffee Fellowship:** none

**Elder for the month of March:** Bob Unze



## March Birthdays

Jim Clayton	March 12
Dana Prestly	March 14
Eileen Bengry	March 18
Ruth Slatter	March 30
Betsy Twedell	March 30
Rosemary Hall	March 31
Judy Huebner	March 31

## Coming up Next Week

### Tuesday, March 17

9:00 am – Quilters  
6:00 pm – Yoga

### Wednesday, March 18

6:00 pm – Wednesday Night Supper  
7:00 pm – Lent Service

### Thursday, March 19

7:00 pm – Session Meeting

### Friday, March 20

5:00 pm – InterMission's Gathering and  
Community Meal

### Sunday, March 22

9:00 am – Adult Bible discussion:  
John 11:1-45  
9:30 am – Choir Rehearsal  
10:30 am – Worship  
11:30 am – Coffee Fellowship  
1:00 pm – Nutifafa