

APRIL

NEWSLETTER

Peace United Church of Christ 9123 Aboite Center Rd 260-432-8290

Peace Church Website:- www.peaceucc.net

Email Address:-Peaceucc@frontier.com

Adult Sunday School 9:00 a.m.

Family Worship 10:15 a.m.

Pastor's Page

Sabbath

I find it hard to believe that my Sabbatical is so fast approaching. I'm at the place where I'm clearing off my desk, and mapping out my last few sermons, and starting to respond to community and clergy circle emails with the words, *"I will be on Sabbatical until July 25th, and will look forward to meeting with you when I return."* It feels a little surreal. And I find I'm feeling both a sense of anticipation and a sense of anxiety. And so before close the office door after worship on April 15th, let me share a few words with you.

I will be carrying you in my heart. In spite of the time away, in spite of the distance that there may be at times, I will be holding this congregation and our members in my heart. Even as I am traveling, and studying, and spending time on retreat, Peace Church will be very much going along with me.

I am deeply thankful. I find it almost inconceivable that I have been ordained for almost twenty years and in those twenty years, this is the first Sabbatical I have ever taken. I am so grateful for the gift of a denomination, a conference, and a congregation that value the importance of Sabbatical in the life of a pastor, and am thankful for the opportunity to delve deeply into studies I wouldn't have time for in my day-to-day life. And so while I am in Memphis, Tennessee or Cincinnati, Ohio or Paso Robles, California, or Asheville, North Carolina, or Denver, Colorado, or Three Rivers, Michigan, or my own front porch staring at the woods, I will be ever mindful of the gift it is to step away and renew my call to ministry.

I look forward to renewal. Part of the joy of Sabbatical comes with having the chance to simply rest in the lap of God, to reconnect with the Sacred. And with this time, I look forward to listening for the voice of God. I look forward to returning to that space where I can spend concentrated time in prayer, and in silence, where I can be still and simply know that God is.

I will be back. Soon. As I began contemplating Sabbatical over eighteen months ago and meeting with colleagues in ministry who had taken Sabbaticals a recurrent theme I heard was, "Make sure that your congregation knows that you will be back." And, "Make sure that your community knows that the ministries of the congregation carry on and grow!" Naively, I thought, "Well, of course! That's obvious!" But, I have come to realize that my colleagues words have rung true, so many of you have asked whether or not I am coming back. And my answer is this: "Absolutely, and with renewed energy, and reinvigorated hope, and deeper awareness of systems of racial inequality (which I will be studying while I am gone), and with a revitalized call to ministry. I am blessed to be called to ministry at Peace United Church of Christ and I look forward to where God will be calling us to ministry next!

I trust God to keep us. I trust the still speaking God to be with all of us in the coming three months, and to invite all of us to keep growing in faith, to keep trusting in God's grace, and to keep following the teachings of Jesus.

I look forward to stepping back into the pulpit again on July 29th with new stories to tell, and with a deeper awareness of how God moves among us, and with renewed energy to lead.



*Blessings and peace,
Pastor Christen*

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**Peace Church Mission Statement:**

**Peace United Church of Christ is a family of God's people who strives daily to demonstrate Christian witness in the community by celebrating worship, learning and teaching, caring for others and seeking justice and peace. As an open and affirming congregation, our door is open to all.**

**PLEASE KEEP THE FOLLOWING FRIENDS IN YOUR PRAYERS:**

*We hold in prayer the family of Thelma Newcomb, who passed away on March 1st. She will be missed by us all.*



*Vivian Albert, hospitalized this past week at Lutheran, recovering at home.  
Ron Lewellyn, hospitalized at Lutheran.  
Mike Vandenburg, hospitalized at Lutheran.*

**Continuing Prayers:** *Nate Ross and Judy Miller  
And we hold in prayer all those concerns that remain unspoken...*



A big thanks to Rick Hinton for his assistance in installing new lights in the church sign out by the street. Thanks Rick.

Peace Church Friends,

Thank you for the cards, flowers, small gifts and your presence at my mom's birthday celebration. She was surrounded by love on her special day.!

*Bill & Joyce Blosser*



**SMO - Saturday Morning Out** - has been around almost as long as Peace Church.

Many of you must wonder what this stands for when you see it on the calendar each month. On the second Saturday at 8:00am, a group of people meet for breakfast, no reservation required. Right now the group meets at SYRO'S on Jefferson. Not always the same people each time so you get a chance to meet and have conversation with your Peace Church family. Give it a try !!!!





## *Peace Youth, Children and Christian Education News*

### **Macro-Miracles and Micro-Miracles**

It's just about alleluia time as I write this. By alleluia time, of course, I mean Easter, the time in the life of the church that brings us from sorrow to joy, from despair to amazement, from the mundane and hard truths of life to the incredible truths of life in God. It's our Christian macro-miracle. Forget fishes and loaves, forget walking on water, forget healing the blind. This is THE miracle of miracles, that Christ who is God has died (what?!) and has risen (how?!) to be reunited with God (where?!) and lives forever (huh?!). We thinking types boggle over the enormity of it, the impossibility of it, the absurdity of it. Christ is Risen! Alleluia!

But what if we take a step back from this macro-miracle and start with something easier to examine. If we trust that micro-miracles are possible, we are on the path to trusting in the absurd promise of Christ, that we, too, can live for eternity with God. The good news is that micro-miracles abound. The fact of our individual existence, a reality we did not bring about of our own accord, is one such small wonder. The fact that we are inexplicably, and often overwhelmingly moved to love a fellow person, is a small wonder. The feeling of wholeness when we hug our children, confide in our parents, laugh with a friend, and cry with neighbor – these are micro-miracles. That we would ever come together for the sole purpose of providing love and comfort is the miracle we believe, we know to be true, we have experienced in our very own lives, but which should boggle the mind as much as the Resurrection.

That we are capable of empathy and love are the daily miracles we too often dismiss because of their proximity and the general ease with which we experience them. But do not, for even a second, imagine that they are not made of the same stuff as the miracle of Resurrection. Just as Christ contained God in part, shared God's nature, and revealed God's love to us all in this all-too-real world, we, too, participate in the miracle of Christ. His humanity is ours. His love is ours. His miraculous return to God is ours, too.

So take a moment this Easter to marvel at the blooms pushing up out of the ground. Take a moment to savor the warmth of a child's hand in yours. Take a moment to examine the mirco-miracles in your life and breathe, "Alleluia, Christ is risen."

*Yours in Christ,  
Pastor Nikki, Director of Christian Education*

### *Children's Church*

April will continue with the Easter season stories:

Easter Sunday we'll discuss Jesus rising from the dead. Don't be afraid to talk with your kids about this otherwise strange story. Christianity is strange! It would have to be because God is acting in a very special way in the world. Instead, ask your kids things like: Why do you think some many miraculous things happen concerning Jesus? Why do you think God causes miracles sometimes?

In the Book of Acts, we get the second half of the story following Luke's Gospel. We hear about what happens after Jesus goes to be with God and sends the Holy Spirit to remain with us on earth. You might want to talk with your kids about the ways that learning and thinking about Jesus makes them feel like they can do good in the world.

They'll hear a story about Jesus returning and appearing to his disciples. What does it take for us to believe? What do we see, hear, feel, smell, and taste that helps us to understand God's presence?

The fourth week in April the kids will learn about Jesus as the Good Shepherd. They will probably be familiar with this image of Jesus. Ask them to talk with you about what a shepherd does for the flock.

The final week in April the children will hear about God's love, and we'll have our Children's Nursery School friends with us. It's a great opportunity to talk about welcoming new people as neighbors and how we show love to people we might be meeting for the first time.

### *Youth News*

**NEXT MEETING:** Sunday, May 6. **ALL THE CHILDREN**, pre-k through 12<sup>th</sup> grade, are invited to participate in a group event in which we will examine poetry and expression, with our guest Youth Group Leader, Trina Leshay-Johnson, poet and chaplain. We'll have some found poetry making, limerick fun, and other crafty, poetry-related activities. Children will meet from 11:30-12:30, youth will stay until 1 pm to work with Trina on creating poetry of their own to share, as they choose, in our June 3 worship service.

### *Adult Sunday School*

We will continue to meet in April to study *Glorify*, by Emily C. Heath. No need to buy the book, you can come join in the discussion any time. We meet every Sunday (except Easter) at 9 am.

In May we'll study the Gospel of John. More information to come.



Pastor: Christen Pettit Miller  
 Associate Pastor / Director of Christian Education: Nikki Shaw  
 Administrative Assistant: Susan Tite  
 Organist: Dennis Bowman  
 Director of Angelus Bells: Rochelle Starnes  
 Director of Celebration Choir: Jan Reams  
 Director of Children's Music: Lorie Krouse  
 Children's Nursery School Director: Tonja Ashton

### April~~~Birthdays



|               |    |                |    |
|---------------|----|----------------|----|
| Clare Walter  | 9  | Dodie Graham   | 18 |
| Susan Clark   | 11 | Carl Ring      | 20 |
| Porter Vucich | 11 | Cora Brooks    | 21 |
| Laura Donnell | 12 | Trish Brooks   | 21 |
| Dave Collins  | 15 | Fran Frellick  | 22 |
|               |    | Henry Shaw     | 22 |
|               |    | Karen Moessner | 25 |
|               |    | Wally Thomas   | 26 |

### Nursery School News



We spent what few days of snow we had this winter out on the playground sledding, building snowmen, and just shoveling the snow. The last few weeks have been nice enough for us to wear our spring jackets, open the sandbox, and get our bikes out to ride.

April is Month of the Young Child and we will be celebrating our children and our staff this month. The children will be participating in different activities throughout the month. We will begin by wearing purple which is the designated color of the month. Ribbons will be available for anyone to wear in celebration on the table outside of the Nursery School office. We will be learning about different animals with a visit from Mark's Ark. We will also be learning how to dribble and shoot a goal with some friends from the Plex soccer. At the end of the month we will have a visit from Taekwondo. There will be no **Nursery School classes March 30 - April 6** as we take a week off to celebrate spring.

We are still taking registrations for the Fall 2018. If you know of anyone looking for a quality preschool, please send them our way.

*Celebrate the Empty Tomb – The Lord has Risen, He is Risen Indeed!*

Tonja Ashton  
 Director

## Prayer Shawl Ministry Meeting

Crafters will meet Saturday April 14, 2018 at the church from 9:30-1:00 or as long as you can stay. We will send out for a light lunch. Bring a friend.

This is for knitters of all kinds, beginner, want-to-be, or more advanced and those who crochet. For those who have never done this before, we will have yarn and needles or hooks with which to practice. Dishcloths are a good project for the novice.

For those who want to make a prayer shawl and cannot join us on the 14<sup>th</sup>, a prayer shawl pattern and more information is available on the web site [www.shawlministry.com](http://www.shawlministry.com)



Come join the fellowship.

### Head Ushers for April: Carl & Barbara Bauer

#### GREETERS

April 1 George & Linn Bartling  
April 8 Traci Rivera & Diana West  
April 15 Darren, Carrie & Anna Waggoner  
April 22 John & Marilyn Nussbaum  
April 29 Samantha Dikeolakos & Beth Ring

#### SCRIPTURE READER

April 1 Jim Miller  
April 8 Beth Ring  
April 15 Carlie Sennett  
April 22 Samantha Dikeolakos  
April 29 Bethany Perkins

#### INFANT CARE

April 1 John Paul Rivera  
April 8 Jane Thomas  
April 15 Kim Brown  
April 22 Ann Frellick  
April 29 Barbara Bauer

#### ACOLYTES

Peace Youth

#### COUNTERS

April 1 Mike Krouse & Marilyn Nussbaum  
April 8 Bev Hauptert & Larry Hoyle  
April 16 George Bartling & Risë Vandenburg  
April 22 Kim Brown & Beth Ring  
April 29 George Bartling & Risë Vandenburg

## Faithful Giving

| Month    | Faithful Giving Actual YTD | Faithful Giving Budget YTD | YTD Over/(Under) | Current Bank Balance |
|----------|----------------------------|----------------------------|------------------|----------------------|
| February | 27,519.78                  | 26,984.62                  | 535.16           | 34,576.44            |
| January  | 14,798.96                  | 13,492.31                  | 1,306.65         | 51,797.49            |

## CHURCH BOARD

| Name                   | Title                     | Contact Info                              |
|------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Bill Blosser           | Facilities Chair          | 260-432-7005<br>wlbns@yahoo.com           |
| Kim Brown              | Treasurer                 | 260-437-4015<br>dandkbrown715@msn.com     |
| Rise Vandenburg        | Pastor Relations Rep      | 260-436-2827<br>teachrv@juno.com          |
| Jon Vucich             | Financial Secretary       | 412-977-6790<br>jgv740@gmail.com          |
| Gary Dexheimer         | Mission Chair             | 206-436-1954<br>Garyd8949@aol.com         |
| Michael Krouse         | President                 | 260-436-6205<br>mkrouse@comcast.net       |
| Paul McGrath           | Recording Secretary       | 260-438-2432<br>dadmcg53@gmail.com        |
| Liz Graham             | Congregational Life Chair | 260-704-5499<br>grahame800@aol.com        |
| Christen Pettit-Miller | Pastor                    | 260-338-2913<br>cpettitmiller@comcast.net |

The IKC Annual Gathering 2018 is scheduled for June 1-2 with Education Day May 31, 2018 at Friedens UCC, Indianapolis.

Peace UCC would like to send a dedicated contingent to be Ignited by:

- A concert with singer-songwriter and author **Carrie Newcomer**
- Worship, workshops and keynote with Marcia McFee, **Worship Design Studio**
- Preaching by Rev. Leah Robberts-Mosser and Rev. Vince Amlin
- Church vitality and research Education Day with Rev. Dr. Kristina Lizardy-Hajbi
- Opportunities for conversation that will fuel your fire for mission and outreach

If you are interested in attending the IKC Annual Gathering, please contact **Bill Hogg** or **Mike Krouse**.