



PRINCE OF PEACE
Evangelical Lutheran Church
Basye, Virginia

VIRGINIA SYNOD – ELCA
CONGREGATIONAL MEETING
AND ANNUAL REPORT

MAY 19, 2024

Annual Congregational Meeting Opening Liturgy

Recognizing that our faith is a living, busy, active and mighty thing, may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with each of you.

And also with you.

Teach us to love you with all our heart, soul, mind and strength.

Receive our prayer, O God.

Descend on our hearts, that we may love others in the ways Jesus loves us.

Receive our prayer, O God.

Empower us to be enthusiastic in pursuing your vision for our congregation.

Receive our prayer, O God.

Move us to engage issues in our community in Christlike ways, and to pursue deep and authentic relationships with those with whom we serve and partner.

Receive our prayer, O God.

Strengthen us to face the barriers we encounter in doing your work, learning to work with others amid disagreement.

Receive our prayer, O God.

Give us the ability to adapt to the cultural, economic and social changes that occur in the neighborhoods we serve.

Receive our prayer, O God.

Guide us to be a healthy congregation that learns from its failures as well as its successes and offers wisdom to others.

Receive our prayer, O God.

As we strive to become the church that we proclaim to be, raise up leaders who focus on the gospel of freedom, forgiveness and reconciliation as given to us through God's indescribable act of love in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Renew us daily in our baptism, that we may discover vitality in our relationships with you, each other and those we serve in the world.

Amen

CONGREGATION MEETING AGENDA

I. Call to Order

II. Order for the Beginning of a Congregational Meeting

III. Reports: Secretary's Report / Minutes of Previous Meetings Pastor's Report – Pastor Sherrie Hofmann President's Report – Ann Davison

IV. Elections to Council

Nomination from Council: **Debbie Helsley and Winnie McDermott**

Nominations from the Assembly

V. 2024-2025 Budget

Treasurer's Report
Presentation & Discussion
Vote

VI. Proposed Constitutional Updates

VII. Adjournment

Pastor's Report



Matthew 28: 18-20 (The MSG) *Jesus, undeterred, went right ahead and gave his charge: “God authorized and commanded me to commission you: Go out and train everyone you meet, far and near, in this way of life, marking them by baptism in the threefold name: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Then instruct them in the practice of all I have commanded you. I will be with you as you do this, day after day after day, right up to the end of the age.”*

Prince of Peace Lutheran Church has faithfully participated in the proclamation of the Gospel in the Orkney Springs/Basye VA community for more than 150 years. This past year we have experienced joy, loss, and other changes in the congregation and in the world. There is war between Ukraine and Russia. Now there is war between Israel and Palestine, people are impatient and unforgiving with each other. There is injustice and inequity in the world.

Yet with all of this going on in the world, God is still here embracing us all in God's loving arms. When we worship, we are reminded of God's love, forgiveness, mercy and all of the gifts and blessings that God grants each of us daily. WE are a blessed people called to serve others that are feeling inadequate, insecure, lonely.

This year the theme for the Virginia Synod is “Strong Connections.” What does that mean for us at Prince of Peace? I have been thinking about our relationship with each other, our relationship with God, and our relationship with our local community. How strong are our connections? Do people identify Prince of Peace as a place where faith is nurtured? A place where faith is renewed and birthed in each of us?

What is our relationship with the Virginia Synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America? How well do we know each other? This year we have made the time for opportunities to share our stories and have a meal together. We enjoyed the company of a faithful few and learned more about our congregation and community. Although we had minimal attendance at some of these functions, our people enjoyed being in each other's company and sharing meals while learning more about each other.

How can we broaden our relationships with God and deepen our faith and all our relationships? One way to begin to do that is through “The LEAD Journey” which we begin in September 2024. We as a congregation are investing in our future and asking God to lead us from being stalled and out of breath to growth and vitality. Is this going to be a quick and easy process? No, it will be a process that encourages us to stretch our wings, to **Listen, Center, Explore, and Connect**. These are the four growth factors that will help us to be better disciples who lead with hope and see a vision for the future while working together.

I hope and pray that, as we prepare to begin this process, you all will join me and the council in prayer and spiritual exercises such as exploring scripture and other Christian education resources

during this time. What spiritual exercises can we use to help us begin this process? Let's begin with reading the book of Acts and as we study, we can keep a spiritual journal, pray daily for our neighbors, and ask clarifying questions to be reminded of where our story begins while we spend some time in the wilderness. These are a few ways we can begin our prayer and study life. Jesus calls us to abide in him as he abides in the father. How can we become better abiders or dwellers in the Word? If you have any suggestions on how we can explore the books of Acts together, I would love to hear from you. What are your thoughts or ideas of how we can study together?

Let's have some fun! The first five people who can answer all the following questions will win a prize. Email you answers to poppastor2021@gmail.com.

- 1. Name five artists that worship at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church.**
- 2. Who once worked for Vice President Al Gore?**
- 3. Who was awarded a Purple Heart?**
- 4. Who received a writing award?**
- 5. Who was born in Cuba?**
- 6. Name three avid hikers that worship at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church.**
- 7. Who are the two Biblical storytellers who worship at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church?**
- 8. Who are the two pilots in our congregation?**
- 9. Who holds a Doctorate in Economics?**
- 10. Who are the two people that worship at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church who make beautiful baskets?**

I thank all of you who volunteer and serve at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in any capacity. Your gifts and presence are a blessing to all of us and to all those who worship with us, in person and virtually. May the God of Peace be with you all.

-- Pastor Sherrie Hofmann

Pastoral Acts and Statistics for the Church Year 2023-2024

Baptisms: 2 (Evan Lewis and Kiera Ann Flores)

Members received: 2

Members removed by transfer: 3

Deaths: 7 (Barbara Thompson, Shirley Girod, Helen Ball, Anna Mae Vest, Mara Crabtree, Theresa C. Perry and Peter F. Dieck)

Marriages: 0

Confirmations: 0

Baptized membership as of 12/23: 95

Average in-person worship attendance: 27

Average online worshiop attendance: 12

Regular Giving: \$103, 998*

Designated Giving: \$23,736*

*(*Figures reflect amounts reported to the ELCA for calendar year 2023 first four months of 2024.)*

Church Council Report

Members: Ann Davison, Kate Isom, McDermott, Elaine Bennett, Debbie Helsley, and Pastor Sherie Hofmann

The Church Council met monthly throughout the year and on several Saturdays to consider important matters and build relationships among members. We were delighted to welcome Debbie Helseley to the Council in April 2024.

In response to the motion approved at the 2023 congregation meeting, the Council committed significant time exploring the concept shared and/or part time ministerial leadership. In October, a congregation meeting was held to share the learnings and insights gathered from that study. The Council shared its finding that consideration of part time or shared ministry did not require immediate action but continued deep prayer, contemplation, and discussion across the church for an extended period.

The lead the Council to a deeper conversation on what is God calling for Prince of Peace to be and do in this community? We live in radically different times than even just a decade ago and, like all churches, we must re-evaluate and re-calibrate how we respond to those changes. This line of exploration led Council to propose to the congregation that we participate in approach to discernment called The Lead Journey. A generous donor provided a gift to fund our enrollment in the first year of this year-year program and a group of volunteers stepped forward to participate. We will begin our work with Lead in Fall 2024.

Council was particularly excited to bring to the congregation a proposal to make the sanctuary more accessible informed by research and recommendations by Kate Isom and Farley Peechatka. Two pews (one front row and one back row) were replaced with space for wheelchairs and accompanying chairs.

The Council was also drove several initiatives to support church ministries and increase our presence in the community including:

- Promotion of the Friday Open Door ministry
- Organization of a widely-attended Friendsgiving community dinner
- Participation in the July Bryce Fest and November Bryce Arts & Crafts Festival
- Support for the monthly Celebration Sundays recognizing birthdays and anniversaries.



Finally, Council and a taskforce of volunteers took on the task of reviewing and updating our church constitution which will be presented at our May 2024 annual meeting for discussion.

--Respectfully submitted by Ann Davison

Finance Committee Report

Members: Treasurer Dave Franz, Farley Peechatka, Dick Perry

Below is the estimated final income/expense report for 2023-24 and the proposed Prince of Peace budget for 2024-25 which the council has recommended. For those who wish further details, please see the treasurer. The 23-24 report also includes an estimate of our financial assets as of June 30, 2024.

We expect to have a deficit for 2023-24 of about \$32,000. The pledged total was considerably lower than hoped for, and relocation and death of members further reduced and will continue to reduce the congregation's active participants and giving. While we have attempted to cut back on expenses where possible in the 24-25 budget, we still expect a deficit of \$34,000 in the coming year.

This next church fiscal year, 2024-2025, is probably the last year that we can sustain that much loss. We cannot expect a large increase in giving numbers, nor can we reasonably ask the current congregation to increase their giving by over 40%. While the Funds on Hand report shows that we have over \$190,000 in savings, \$68,000 of that is not convertible to operating funds, and \$34,000 of that will be used in the coming year. To continue the current level of spending beyond 2024-2025 would severely limit our options for continued operation.

2023-2024 Expense Categories

• Fixed Expenses

• Expense	23-24
• Insurance	\$5,479.00
• Bank Svc Charges	\$208.00
• <u>Telephone/Alarm/Internet</u>	<u>\$1,419.00</u>
• TOTAL Fixed	\$7,106.00

• Semi-Fixed Expenses

• Electricity	\$2,450.00
• <u>Propane</u>	<u>\$5,825.00</u>
• TOTAL Semi-Fixed	\$8,275.00

• Variable Expenses

• Expense	23-24
• Pastor Expenses	\$90,568.00
• Music Expenses	\$9,342.00
• Worship Supplies	\$600.00
• Office Expenses	\$3,477.00
• Cleaning	\$1,495.00
• Lawn Care	\$1,890.00
• Maintenance	\$285.00
• <u>Synod Mission Support</u>	<u>\$11,100.00</u>
• TOTAL Variable	\$118,723.00

Discretionary Expenses		23-24 Operating Income	
Expense	23-24	Source	Final Estimated Amount
• Designated Charities	\$1,000.00	• Non-Pledge & Loose	\$23,197.00
• Learning	\$1750.00	• Pledge	\$74,733.00
• Fellowship	\$56.00	• Fund Raisers	
• <u>Conferences</u>	<u>\$655.00</u>	• Lions' Breakfast	\$3,762.00
• TOTAL	\$3,461.00	• Spaghetti Dinner	\$600.00?
• Estimated Funds on Hand June 30, 2024		• Apple Butter	\$775.00
• Operating(Checking)	\$17,852.00	• <u>Other 23-24 Operating Income</u>	<u>\$1,553.00</u>
• Operating(Thrivent)	\$38,552.00	• TOTAL	\$104,620.00
• Mission Investment(Outreach)	\$34,371.00		
• Capital Improvement	\$29,372.00	<u>ESTIMATED TOTAL EXPENSES 23-24:</u>	<u>\$137,565.00</u>
• Memorial Funds	\$4,525.00	<u>ESTIMATED FINAL INCOME 23-24</u>	<u>\$104,620.00</u>
• <i>Good Samaritan</i>	\$36,500.00	<u>ESTIMATED 2023-24 DEFICIT</u>	<u>\$32,945.00</u>
• <u>Cemetery</u>	<u>\$31,737.00</u>		
• TOTAL	\$192,909.00		

Stewardship Report

The annual stewardship campaign was conducted in September 2023. Appeals were made via the weekly church newsletter and a letter was sent to members and friends the congregation – one by U.S. mail and the second by email – inviting all households involved in the life of the church to make a pledge for 2023-2024 and to consider a special one-time gift. Pledges and one-time gifts were made by 19 individuals and families totaling \$75,292.

- Respectfully submitted by Ann Davison



Worship and Music

Members: Pastor Hofmann, Pat Werner, Julie Moomaw, Judy Franz, and Karen Schmitt

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA) states that worship is a foundation of faith for everything we do. “For Lutherans, worship stands at the center of our life of faith. Through God’s word, water, bread and prayer we are

nurtured in faith and sent out into the world. Connected with and central to everything we do, worship unites us in celebration, engages us in thoughtful dialogue and helps us grow in faith. It grounds us in our Christian and Lutheran roots, while demonstrating practical relevance for today's world.”

While some of the approaches to worship may differ from one ELCA congregation to another, we hold certain things in common. Central to our worship life is the presence of God through word and sacrament. The **word** proclaimed and the **sacraments** —both Holy Baptism and Holy Communion — are called **the means of grace**. We believe that Jesus Christ is present in these means through the power of the Holy Spirit. Sometimes we describe worship as a “gathering around the means of grace.”

There is also a basic pattern for worship among Lutherans. We *gather*. We encounter God's *word*. We share a *meal* at the Lord's table. And we are *sent* into the world. But we do not think about worship so much in terms of what we do. Worship is fundamentally about what God is doing and our response to God's action. Worship is an encounter with God, who saves us through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.” You can access more information regarding worship at [Worship - Evangelical Lutheran Church in America \(elca.org\)](http://www.elca.org)

The Worship and Music committee strives to provide worship that honors God and informs our faith. This past year we have worshipped every Sunday in person and on You-Tube for a total of 52 services. We also held 11 special services in addition to weekly worship including five weekly Lenten services; Easter Sunrise Service, an Ascension Service, Memorial Day Prayers and Recognition, Veterans Day Worship, Blue Christmas, and a Christmas Eve service. We also held a Blessing of the Animals by the Basye Library and Dog Park. Our Bluegrass Service was a wonderful uplifting service and was the most viewed service on YouTube.

We continue to stream all our services live on You-Tube for the benefit of our shut-ins and those who cannot worship with us in person. This keeps people connected with Prince of Peace Lutheran Church. We welcome new worshippers weekly. People worship with us from Florida, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Virginia.

We appreciate the talented musicians who frequently supported our worship services including Karen Schmitt, Susan Edelman, Gail Carten and Joe Kittle. These people are invaluable to our worship experience, and we thank them for their dedication and gift of music that they share with us.



Social Ministry Committee

Members: Don Kienzle, Monica Kienzle, Ann Davison, Pat Werner, Yoshi Gildark, Winnie McDermott, Delores Coffman

Over the course of the year, the Social Ministry Committee continued fulfilling our role of facilitating opportunities for members of Prince of Peace to respond to needs outside of the church walls in our local and global community. During the 2023 holiday season, we

collected six bags of groceries for the Shenandoah Community Health Clinic Empty Stocking Fund and fulfilled the Christmas wishes of 12 girls and boys as part of the Empty Stocking Fund.

During the 2024 Lent season, we collected \$150 to buy bus tokens that were donated to local nonprofit Response that serves victims of domestic and sexual violence for their clients use. Committee and church members remain active in the Shenandoah Valley Local Ministries efforts including ongoing collection of items for Luke's Backpack.

--Respectfully submitted by Ann Davison

The Good Samaritan Fund

Committee Members: Judy Franz, Kate Isom, Don Kienzle, Joe Battaglia and Cathy Street.

The Good Samaritan Fund was established in September 2013 after an anonymous donor contributed a substantial sum of money. The Fund is governed by the policies and procedures set forth by the congregation. A Good Samaritan Fund Committee, appointed by the Church Council, fields requests for assistance and monitors the needs of our community.



The direction for the Fund comes from Christ himself who has challenged us to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, welcome the stranger, visit the prisoner and heal the sick. The Committee's mission is to respond to God's call to help those with needs in our congregation and in our local community.

The Fund has disbursed over \$92,000 and currently has a balance of \$37,036.58 as of April 14, 2024 thanks to fundraisers and donations. There was one large donor who gave over \$10,000. Between May 2023 and April 14 2024, the fund paid out \$5,014 to help four individuals including one individual is helped every month with utility bills and prescriptions.

Since last May we have helped recipients pay heating and electric bills. We continue to help one individual with car insurance payments. One family was helped with the cost of rehab care after a hospitalization and also helped to pay for prescription medications. The fund has also helped with rent payments. The primary goal of the Fund for the coming year is to raise awareness of the availability of funds to help those in need. In this, we need your help. If you know someone who needs help with medical bills, credit card debt, car repairs or replacement, or has other financial needs, tell them about the Good Samaritan Fund. We are here to help our neighbors in the community, not just members of Prince of Peace.

The committee expresses its appreciation to the initial donor and subsequent donors and hopes that others will prayerfully consider supporting the fund in the future.

--Respectfully submitted by Cathy Street

Property Support Committee

HVAC UNITS- Mountain Valley Home Comfort inspected all of our units on April 10th and found all working properly with no maintenance required at this time.

SPRING CLEANUP= On March 21 st we held a grounds cleanup which included removing leaves and debris from around the church and pavilion, and mulching the landscape beds. We had 7 willing workers who pitched to make short work of all tasks. Thank you folks for a job well done.

GUTTERS ON STIDLEY HALL- Joe Battaglia cleaned the gutters on Stidley Hall. Thank you Joe.

PENDING PROJECT- The top railings on the stairs going to the lower parking lot need to be wrapped with an aluminum flashing to protect the wood from deterioration. Materials are on hand if someone would like to help with this project.

PENDING PROJECT- Dirt has piled up against the wall of the chair storage shed at the pavilion. Dirt removal and a small retaining wall will solve the problem. Help needed.



--Respectfully submitted by Farley Peechatka



President: Pat Werner
Vice President: Kate Isom
Secretary/ Treasurer: Cathy Street
Sunshine: Monica Kienzle

Members of WELCA make up the Altar Guild, provide meals following funerals or memorial services, and quarterly clean the kitchen in Stidley Hall. We also provide a prayer shawl ministry.

On December 9th, we worked alongside other church members welcoming more than 50 members of the community as we prepared to celebrate the birth of Christ at an Open House featuring more than 100 nativities from around the world. The tone chimes performed, and special activities were held for kids. The WELCA ladies also visited Luther Crest with cookies and carols at Christmas and again before Easter to decorate eggs. During the year collections of items have continued for Micah's House in Fredericksburg, Va.

President Pat Warner joined Pastor Sherie Hofmann to represent WELCA at the 2023 Virginia Synodical Women of the ELCA Convention at Roanoke College.

The women of the church made and served breakfast at the Lions Club meetings twice a month raising \$3,762 to benefit the church budget. Our community outreach this year also included the annual fall and spring Spaghetti Dinners co-hosted with the Lions Club of Basye/Bryce. The annual Ruritan dinner was served at their meeting in October. Funds from that enabled us to donate money to the Orkney Fire and Rescue and Response.

--Respectfully submitted by Kate Isom

Church Library

The purpose of the Prince of Peace library is to make available materials relevant for religious study, spiritual growth and church-based education. Many members enjoy perusing the shelves and checking out materials for home study.

Special thanks to Karen Schmidt for donating three Lutheran Study Bibles.

Members of the church are encouraged to make use of the library materials as well as provide suggestions for purchase and feedback to the church librarian. Our deep thanks to librarian Don Kienzle for keeping the library well organized and stocked!

Cemetery Committee Report

Members (elected 4/17/2024)

President/Chair: Farley Peechatka Treasurer – Jack Fansler

Secretary – Janice Phoebus

Committee Members – Margaret Fansler, Gary Coffman and Rich Armell

History and Facts

Total plots available = 99 (#27, 40, 47, 60 used for road. #99 does not exist)

Gravesites per plot = 2 – 5, (4 sites per plot is the most common)

Gravesite = 4.5' x 9'

Gravesites total = 433 (10 plots are not usable for various reasons and are removed from the total.) Gravesites sold = 236 (54.5% owned/occupied)

Gravesites sold since last report = 0 Gravesites returned to cemetery = 0

Burials since last report = Peter Dieck (body) – centered on 105A/B

Mara Crabtree (body) – 2D

Theresa Cheri Knauf (cremains) – 11D

Treasurer's Report

- Regular Checking = \$8232.37 at First Bank (Includes recent donations of \$1800)
- Memorial Fund (Savings) = \$2504.72
- CD = \$21,000 ELCA Mission Funds Investment (Quarterly interest is deposited automatically in the checking account for operating expenses. Interest was \$870.04 for this year.)

Actions by the committee

- We participated in the “Wreaths Across America” for our veterans. Wreaths were placed on 29 veteran graves in December 2023. We are thankful for the local Narrow Passage Chapter of the DAR and Cindy Moody for their hard work in including many of the local cemeteries in this event. The next “Wreaths Across America” will be December 14, 2024.
- In April 2024, topsoil and grass seed were added to the East side of the cemetery. This grounds maintenance and improvement was funded by donors.

Action Items for 2024-25

- Cemetery Annual Fund Appeal – The committee has decided to take on the task of contacting owners of gravesites and relatives of individuals interred in our cemetery to request donations to the cemetery. We the donations will be used to create a Perpetual Care Fund. Our long-term goal



is to make this an annual appeal. The goal is to have a large enough fund that will produce interest to cover annual costs such as mowing, fertilizing, pest control, and monument repairs, as needed.

- Working on methods to maintain monuments that have darkened or are growing lichens and such.
- The cemetery is experiencing a mole problem. The southeast section closest to the fencing has the largest area of impact. The committee is setting traps and spreading a mole repellent to address the problem. The committee will continue to monitor the situation after these methods have been tried.
- The committee is getting bids on cutting back the overgrowth around the cemetery.
- Continue flag placement on veterans' graves on Memorial Day, Independence Day, and Veteran's Day.

--Respectfully Submitted by Farley Peechatka

Mutual Ministry Committee

Members: Pastor Hofmann, Judy Franz, Ann Davison, Jack Fansler, Pat Werner, Rich Armell

The Mutual Ministry Committee met frequently throughout the year to provide a confidential forum for discussion. In February we welcomed Rev. Liz Radtke from the VA Synod Office. The committee has proven vital in creating a healthy opportunity to address any matters of concern and to seek opportunities to provide our minister with congregational support.

--Respectfully submitted by Ann Davison