



July 2023

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Tidings of Peace

Prince of Peace Lutheran Church ♦ 1747 W. Milham Avenue, Portage, MI 49024 ♦ 269-343-3453 ♦ popportage.org

Pastor's Page

"Touched by
the Gospel,
we seek to be
instruments of
God's Peace,
for the sake
of the world."

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Then Jesus said to those who questioned him, "Give therefore to the emperor the things that are the emperor's, and to God the things that are God's." – Matthew 22:21

As we approach the celebration of July 4, Independence Day, I believe it is important for us to consider these words of Jesus. What does it mean for us as modern-day Americans to give to God the things that are God's, and to our country the things we should be giving to it?

First, let's define two terms that often get used when we're talking about intersection of citizenship and faith:

Patriotism – the love of country

Christian Nationalism – the belief that the American nation is defined by Christianity, and that the government should take active steps to keep it that way.¹

Back in January, I learned of the existence of something called the "We the People" Bible, which is a KJV Bible with documents such as the US constitution and the bill of rights included in it. It is being marketed as patriotic. Let me be perfectly clear: I believe such a book is neither patriotic nor Christian. In fact, I think it is a rather dangerous form of Christian Nationalism.

Our faith teaches that Christ is Lord of all, regardless of how we humans draw the lines on our maps. The US government is based on the rule of law, one of which is the separation of church and state, which means the state can't force citizens to hold a particular faith. I am glad to live in a time and place where I am free to believe that Christ is my Lord. I believe it is equally important that my fellow Americans be free to believe other things and practice other faiths. Our diversity is one of our greatest strengths.

This misguided attempt to conflate Christian scripture with our governing documents is dangerous because it tries to combine good citizenship with faithfulness to God. Both are good things, but they aren't the same thing. The Bible has been around for centuries longer than our country. Its message of love and grace isn't limited just to Americans. And our country isn't made up only of people who read and love the Bible. You can be a patriot without it.

I deeply value both my Christian faith and the country whose laws give me the freedom to practice it without fear of government persecution, but the combination of these civil texts with scripture is the antithesis of both. If we are to give to God what is God's, we cannot combine the Bible with our country's governing documents.

I'm proud to be an American and a Christian, but you don't have to be one to be the other and that's part of what I love about them both.

This is a far bigger topic than can fit in a single newsletter article, so please don't hesitate to contact me with questions or to schedule a time for further discussion. pastorrachel@popportage.org

Shalom,
Pastor Rachel



¹ <https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2021/february-web-only/what-is-christian-nationalism.html>

What's Happening at POP!



BREAD AND BREAKFAST SATURDAY, JULY 1

Bread construction will begin at 7:00 a.m. and breakfast will be served at about 9:00 a.m. Come and bake bread, or just come for the breakfast and conversation...it's all good!

For more information, or to be included on the mailing list, talk with Wade Lawrence at church, email him at wade.b.lawrence@gmail.com, or call him at (269) 353-9885. We hope to see you there!

Prayer Shawl Ministry

Meets **Friday, July 7 at 10 AM**
in the Social Hall.

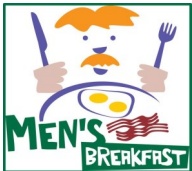
If you or someone you know would like a shawl, or for more information about becoming a prayer shawl creator, please contact Dianne Hellman, 323-9392.



When: Tuesday, July 11 at 1 PM

Where: POP Social Hall

Just a few rolls of the dice and you'll have this fun game mastered!
Bunko is easy to learn and offers wonderful opportunities for conversation and connection with others.



Men's Breakfast!

8:00 AM, Wednesday, July 12
Michelle's on Romance Rd. in Portage.

Join Pastor Rachel for breakfast, prayer, and conversation.

Tell them you're with Prince of Peace. We've got the back room reserved.

Prince of Peace Book Club

The book club will not meet again until September 20th when we will discuss "Waiting for Snow in Havana" by Carlos Eire. If you want to read ahead or are just interested in reading a good book, the one for October is "The Book of Lost Names" by Kristin Harmel.

Anyone is welcome to join us.



Learning S'more about Jesus!

July 9-11

Camp VBS is quickly approaching! We are still in need of a few volunteers.

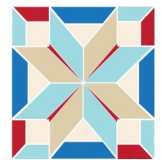
Mostly, though, we need your prayers!

Please keep the program, the participants, and the volunteers close to your thoughts and prayers in the coming weeks. We look forward to sharing about what we learn during the outdoor service on July 16! Bring your lawn chair and enjoy worship amidst God's creation.

Quilters

Tuesday, July 18th at 9:30 AM

Where: POP Social Hall



Can you tie a knot? Can you hold a pin? Can you use scissors or a rotary cutter? Can you sew a straight line? We'd love to see you at the Quilters group on the 1st & 3rd Tuesday mornings of the month. Or, do you have a sewing machine at home that's wanting to be used? Are Tuesday mornings busy for you? We have plenty of squares waiting that can be sewn together at home. Please consider contributing to this important ministry. **The Quilters group will not be meeting on July 4th!** We hope to see you whenever you're in town over the summer! Contact Sheryl for more information: 269-267-6274.

Ladies Lunch Bunch meets Tuesday, July 18

Meet at 11:45am at Louie's Corner Bar
7177 W Q Ave, Kalamazoo

Questions? Car pool? Need a ride?

Contact Dianne Hellman, 323-9392.

This is a great time for good food and fellowship.

Hope to see you there.

Women's Small Group is taking the summer off and will restart, **Monday, August 21**, 7:15 pm in the Social Hall! Please consider joining. We do book studies and Bible studies in a warm and friendly atmosphere!! A great bunch of ladies. We'd love to have you!! Hope to see you in August!! Questions? Contact Diane Snyder, dmsnyder1149@gmail.com.



Social Concerns Spotlight on . . . PoP Food Distribution and Free Store -

Beginning in 2019 as a grant partnership with Sherman Lake, our Food Distribution has been a blessing to many, including our own church members. We began distributing every Thursday for the first year and as the pandemic hit, the supply chain slowed down food accessibility. We now have two distributions per month, which PoP totally funds. An average of 125 boxes of fresh healthy foods are handed out at each distribution along with other supplements such as baked goods, gallons of milk, and in season, fresh produce, (green beans, corn, watermelon, squash, onions etc.) Boxes always include nutritious offerings (although not always the same), eggs, nuts, cereals, oranges, granola, potatoes, carrots, cheese, apples, etc.

One year ago, our Church Council came up with the idea of a Free Store to supplement the Food Distribution. They noticed folks were needing laundry detergent, cleaners, toilet paper, diapers, items that could not be purchased with food stamps or other programs. PoP totally funds this program as well, and once a month the FS is open for our guests to select 2 free store items. Working at the Food Distribution is a passion for Lynne, Cindy, Noel, Mike, Tamara, Pastor Rachel, Pam, Howard, and many more who have even brought their children to help out, like the Demings have. Here is what one of our helpers has said about the program.

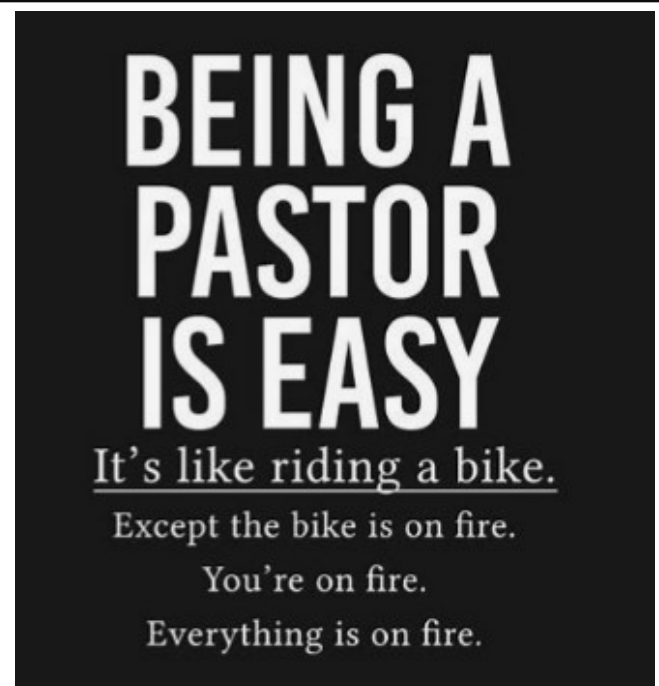
Lynne Wathan writes: *I think food distribution is an incredible way to connect with our community. We know many of the folks who come each time and they know and joke with us. We have an autistic artist who comes with his mother and brings art for Pam Timm. Two islamic women always know what Christian holiday is coming and greet us with Merry Christmas or Happy Easter. Other folks only take what they want from the boxes but that allows us to give the deleted items to those with greater needs. It's a special two hours every time we distribute!*

Everyone is welcome to help out.
Prince of Peace is totally committed to this
local community outreach mission.



Front row: Lynne Wathan, Pastor Rachel
Back row: Pastor Chris Laughlin, Greg Guthrie,
Pam Timm, Steve Pendziszewski

Once again this year the **Jubilee Garden** is partnering with **Mothers of Hope** to provide fresh produce to their northside neighborhood. We will again be accepting your donations of fresh produce beginning in July and through November. Look for the blue bin with the Mothers of Hope sign on it and place your donations of fresh produce in it by Thursday afternoon. You can also drop off produce at the garden prior to 11AM on Saturdays at which time the collected harvests will be delivered to Mothers of Hope. Thank you for your generosity in this ministry.



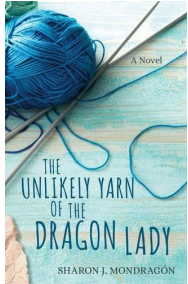
Will you help our neighbors?

It takes 4-5 people to help this ministry.
Please sign-up and **arrive by 12:30 to help set up. Sign up is on the website.**
<https://popportage.org/pages/food-distribution-signup>



Fellowship News

"Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing." – I Thessalonians 5:11



Need a book to read on your vacation? Grab "The Unlikely Yarn of the Dragon Lady" by Sharon Mondragon to read along with PoP reads! Amazon says, "Sharon Mondragon's debut is warm and delightful, full of real laughter, grief, and personality. It beautifully illustrates the power of women across generations to reach people for Christ." This is a charming book that is

an easy read and is perfect for the beach. The book is available on Amazon and Audible.

Beat the heat with a trivia night in August! Wade Lawrence will be our MC for a fun night of group trivia on Friday, August 18 with check in at 6:30PM and the game starting at 7:00PM. This will be held in the Gathering Space so we



can keep cool in the late summer heat with the A/C. Each team will be seated at a table to work together. There will be 10 tables of teams. There will be several rounds of trivia with breaks for fellowship with other attendees. Admission is \$10 per person. There will be food and beverages for purchase. All proceeds will go to the Good Samaritan Fund.

Watch this space and further announcements, as the fellowship committee is planning a couple of new events for the year!

Community Book Discussion

When: July 18, 10 AM

Where: Portage United Church of Christ (2731 W Milham Ave)

Join us in reading *They All Grow Up: Parenting Adult Children with Special Needs*. The author is Cindy Semark who is one of the "founders" of AACORN Farm, an education and activity center for adults with special needs here in Kalamazoo. Cindy is also a member of PUCC. The book is Cindy's memoir and story of her son Jeremiah who had Autism Spectrum Disorder and was the inspiration for establishing AACORN. Jeremiah died last year at the age of 48.

Council and Committees



Church Council met on Wednesday, June 21.

Several **God Moments** were shared including: 1) drivers are honking their approval of our food distribution as they drive past the church; 2) Lee and Darcy Banitt are new grandparents; 3) the new therapy dog at Jenn Jawahir's school made a connection with a student allowing him to open up; 4) the music on Sunday, June 18, was excellent (thank you to Keith Eiser, guest organist); and 5) Laura was moved during by the congregation's hymn singing during the 60th anniversary worship service.

Deacon Call Committee Update: The Mission Site Profile has been submitted and the committee is waiting to receive the names of candidates to consider. They are moving ahead preparing questions for the interview process.

Mission Statement Review: Committees have submitted information to council identifying how the work of their committee supports our mission statement. Pastor Rachel will be highlighting this in the August newsletter.

Sanctuary Chairs: Many members have difficulty standing up in worship when seated in the pews or the armless chairs. Council is considering the purchase of 10-12 chairs with arms for the sanctuary, pending a quote from the chair company.

Our next meeting is scheduled for July 19.

Impact Giving



The Need for Assistance continues to outmatch the funds we collect. At this time, we are only able to help members of the church. If you can help build the fund up again go to our pathways of giving page on the website or follow this link. <https://popportage.org/pages/pathways-of-giving>

For more detailed information on the policy for how we use the fund or to find an application form, see our website: <https://www.popportage.org/ministries/good-samaritan-fund>

On-Line Giving

On-line Giving Has Never Been So Easy!



You can click or copy and paste the link
<https://tithe.ly/give?c=2250097>
or use the QR code.

You can also go to the Prince of Peace website
& click on the giving button.

For questions contact either Marilyn or Tamara.



CAN YOU HELP?

Refugee Resettlement Needs!

Families are still arriving. We are running low on basic household items. If you can help, see the list at the link below:

<https://popportage.org/news/afghan-refugee-donations>

We need televisions, sofas, end tables & coffee tables. We also are looking for washing machines & electric dryers. If you are upgrading & looking for a place to get rid of your used, but working, appliances and furniture, call Paul MacNellis.

Monetary donations are also welcome. We can then purchase what we need when it is needed.



The church office will be closed on

Tuesday, July 4
in observance of
Independence Day.
We will reopen on
Wednesday, July 5.



Birthdays and Anniversaries



July 2 Lindan Smith
 Jennifer Deming
 July 3 Adam Schuhknecht
 July 4 Lisa Stucky
 Pamela Schuhknecht
 July 5 Kris Rieck
 July 7 Sophia DeRango
 Lillian Ross
 Matt Erdmann
 July 9 Tammy Cooper
 July 10 Gail Hoover
 July 10 Bette Stemaly
 July 11 Eric Nitz
 Terri Drafta
 Sandra Williams
 Sharon Clem
 July 12 Donald Jones
 Angela Dumler
 Matthew Lago
 Ellen Bradley
 July 14 Michael Wathen
 July 15 Timothy Kana'an
 Erika Baumann
 July 17 James Vogt
 Kimberly Banner

July 17 Chase Roberts
 July 18 Jeremy Zimmerman
 July 19 Max Todas
 David Morin
 Rebecka Creed
 Emily Hopper
 James Banner
 Donald Berdahl
 Derek Stepanski
 July 20 Alexander Eldridge
 Ken Lampos
 July 21 Justin Meier
 July 23 Jake Steele
 Christopher Barnett
 July 24 Linda Boeschstein
 Lukas Pederson
 July 27 Paul Swodzinski
 Megan Zimmerman
 July 28 Marleigh Vanden-
 Bussche
 July 29 Reece Howes
 Dave Karna
 July 31 Makayla Seelbinder
 Kyra Graham

Happy
ANNIVERSARY

Greg & Melissa Mickelson July 5
 Paul & Sheryl Swodzinski July 6
 Erica & Wade Seelbinder July 10
 Jim & Karen Douglass July 12
 Michael & Debbie Barnett July 13
 Melissa & Jonathan Ottesen July 17
 Bryce & Allyson Maurer July 18
 Douglas & Joyce Beak July 21
 Holly & Matthew Lago July 22
 David & Amy Cooper July 23
 Jason & Carly Davis July 31



**JULY BIRTHDAYS
& ANNIVERSARIES**

Prince of Peace Calendar — July

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
25 10:00am Worship 11:00am Fellowship Time 11:30am Shepherd Center Driver Orientation	26 9:00am Literacy Tutoring - Room 7 10:30am Literacy Tutoring - Library 1:30pm WMU Center for Disabilities 5:30pm AA "Promises" Support Group 6:00pm Justice and Diversity Meeting	27 Open Doors Men's Shelter Meal 9:15am Staff Meeting	28 9:00am Literacy Tutoring - Room 7 10:00am Keith Geiman Trumpet Studio - Music room 11:00am Pastor's Bible Study - Zoom	29 9:30am Keith Geiman Trumpet Studio - Music room	30 Office Closed 10:00am ESL Open Tutoring	1 9:00am Bread & Breakfast
2 10:00am Worship 11:00am Fellowship Time	3 9:00am Literacy Tutoring - Room 7 10:30am Literacy Tutoring - Library 1:30pm WMU Center for Disabilities 5:30pm AA "Promises" Support Group	4 Independence Day Office Closed in observance of Independence Day.	5 9:00am Literacy Tutoring - Room 7 11:00am Pastor's Bible Study - Zoom 5:30pm Great Lakes Adventure Club - Social Hall/Flex	6 1:00pm Food Distribution 1:00pm Free Store 6:30pm South County Fiber Arts	7 Office Closed 10:00am ESL Open Tutoring 10:00am Prayer Shawl Ministry - Social Hall	8 6:30am Kalamazoo Runners
9 10:00am Worship 11:00am Fellowship Time 11:30am Personnel/Executive Committee - Library 5:30pm VBS	10 9:00am Literacy Tutoring - Room 7 10:30am Literacy Tutoring - Library 1:30pm WMU Center for Disabilities 5:30pm AA "Promises" Support Group 5:30pm Finance Committee mtg. - Zoom 5:30pm VBS 6:00pm Social Concerns Meeting - Zoom	11 9:15am Staff Meeting 1:00pm Senior Bunko - Social Hall 5:30pm VBS	12 8:00am Men's Breakfast @ Michelle's 9:00am Literacy Tutoring - Room 7 11:00am Pastor's Bible Study - Zoom	13	14 Office Closed 10:00am ESL Open Tutoring	15
16 Youth at Stony Lake Camp 10:00am Worship - Outside 11:00am Fellowship Time	17 Youth at Stony Lake Camp 9:00am Literacy Tutoring - Room 7 10:30am Literacy Tutoring - Library 1:30pm WMU Center for Disabilities 5:30pm AA "Promises" Support Group 6:00pm Master Gardeners - Sanctuary 7:00pm Worship Committee Meeting - Zoom	18 Youth at Stony Lake Camp 9:15am Staff Meeting 9:30am Quilters - Social Hall 11:45am Ladies Lunch Bunch @ Louie's Corner Bar	19 Youth at Stony Lake Camp 9:00am Literacy Tutoring - Room 7 10:00am Book Club - Gathering Space 11:00am Library Committee - Library 11:00am Pastor's Bible Study - Zoom 7:00pm Church Council meeting - Zoom	20 Newsletter Deadline Youth at Stony Lake Camp 1:00pm Food Distribution	21 Office Closed Youth at Stony Lake Camp 10:00am ESL Open Tutoring	22
23 Sabrina at Stony Lake Bridge Builder Camp 10:00am Worship 11:00am Fellowship Time	24 Sabrina at Stony Lake Bridge Builder Camp 9:00am Literacy Tutoring - Room 7 9:30am Ruth Circle 10:30am Literacy Tutoring - Library 1:30pm WMU Center for Disabilities 5:30pm AA "Promises" Support Group 6:00pm Justice and Diversity Meeting	25 Open Doors Men's Shelter Meal Sabrina at Stony Lake Bridge Builder Camp 9:15am Staff Meeting	26 Sabrina at Stony Lake Bridge Builder Camp 9:00am Literacy Tutoring - Room 7 11:00am Pastor's Bible Study - Zoom	27 Sabrina at Stony Lake Bridge Builder Camp	28 Office Closed Sabrina at Stony Lake Bridge Builder Camp 10:00am ESL Open Tutoring	29
30 10:00am Worship 11:00am Fellowship Time	31 9:00am Literacy Tutoring - Room 7 10:30am Literacy Tutoring - Library 1:30pm WMU Center for Disabilities 5:30pm AA "Promises" Support Group	1 9:15am Staff Meeting 9:30am Quilters - Social Hall 5:30pm Great Lakes Adventure Club - Social Hall/Flex	2 9:00am Literacy Tutoring - Room 7 11:00am Pastor's Bible Study - Zoom	3 1:00pm Food Distribution 1:00pm Free Store 6:30pm South County Fiber Arts	4 Office Closed 10:00am ESL Open Tutoring 10:00am Prayer Shawl Ministry - Social Hall	5 9:00am Bread & Breakfast

Legend:

AA—Alcoholics Anonymous

ESL—English as a Second Language

Prince of Peace Lutheran Church

269/343-3453

www.poppottage.org

Facebook: Prince of Peace, Portage, MI-ELCA

60 Years of Ministry



Our Pastors



Charter Members:
Carolyn S, Nancy M, and Ellen B



Thanks Karen D