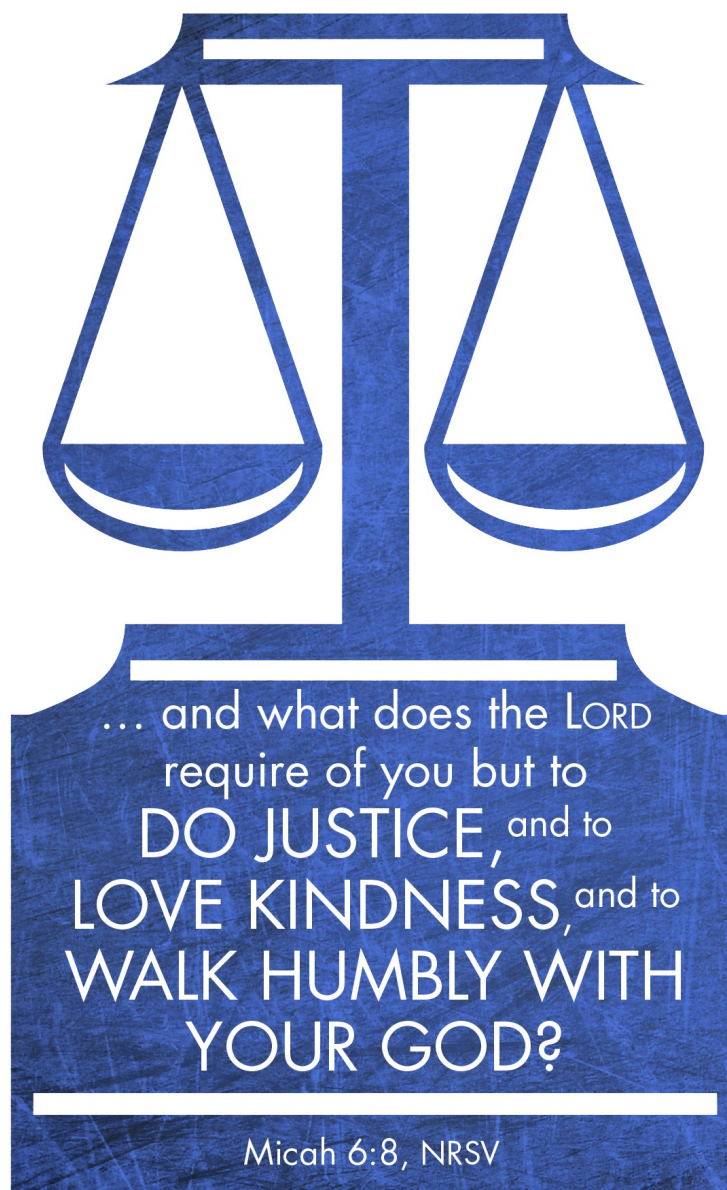


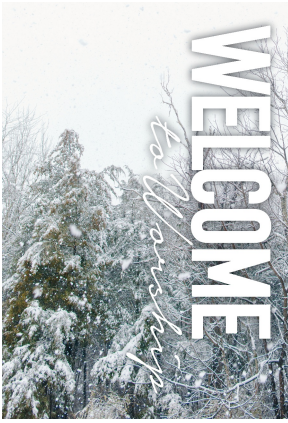
Third Sunday after Epiphany

Sunday, February 1, 2026



*"Touched by the Gospel, we see to be instruments of God's Peace,
for the sake of the World."*

Prince of Peace Lutheran Church
1747 W. Milham Avenue ♦ Portage, MI 49024
Pastor Rachel Laughlin
Church phone: 269/343-3453 ♦ fax: 269/343-2025
Website: popportage.org
Prayer-mail: prayer@popportage.org
Find us on Facebook: *Prince of Peace, Portage, MI-ELCA*



Welcome in the name of Christ

Worshipping with kids?

- ❖ We love having people of all ages and abilities worshipping together!
- ❖ There is a family restroom in the Gathering Space and a changing table in the nursery to accommodate your family's needs.
- ❖ The nursery is staffed from 9-12 on Sundays. You can drop your youngster off before faith formation or at any time during these hours.
- ❖ Children are invited forward during the Children's sermon, where they can hear the bible story told in words and context they can understand. Older siblings and other friends are welcome to accompany children if that would make them more comfortable.
- ❖ Children's bibles are available in the pews, and ushers can provide children's bulletins upon request.
- ❖ Wiggles and noise are welcome! If your child needs more room to move, feel free to take them to the Playground in the Gathering Space. This area is stocked with quiet activities, coloring pages, and kid-sized furniture. This is also a great spot to enjoy refreshments after the conclusion of the worship service!

Wondering about communion?

- ❖ We believe Christ is fully present in the meal and it is Christ who invites us to share it.
- ❖ All are welcome to share communion with us regardless of age or faith tradition.
- ❖ Gluten free bread and wafers, wine, and grape juice are available.

Want to know more about our community?

- ❖ We strive to be an open, welcoming place for all people.
- ❖ Pastor Rachel enjoys meeting people after worship but never wants anyone to feel pressured to talk to her. Come say hi!
- ❖ Visit the welcome table in the gathering space if you have questions about Lutherans, the Christian faith, or Prince of Peace; if you have a specific prayer request, or want to share your contact information so we can get back to you about something in particular.

Thank you for joining us for worship today. May God bless you and give you peace this week.

WE GATHER TO WORSHIP

Worshippers responses in bold.

Music for the Beginning of Worship "Dearest Jesus, We Are Here"

J. S. Bach

Welcome

Stand and face the font

Confession and Forgiveness

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

Pastor: Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God, the Creator of heaven and earth, the Word who spoke life into being, the Wind stirring the waters.

All: **Amen.**

Pastor: Let us turn in confession to the one who knows us completely.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Pastor: Mighty God, lover of justice,

All: you call us to life in community, but we have served our own interests at the expense of our neighbors. We have sown deceit where honesty was needed. We say the right words, but our hearts are far from you. Turn us to seek your face. Knit us together and give us the mind of Christ, that we may do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with you, our God. Amen.

Pastor: The former things have passed away, and new things God now declares: Like a spring of water that never fails, God covers you in the righteousness of Christ, and forgives your sin in Jesus' name. May the Spirit give you strength to live for others, and bless you with the gift of peace.

All: Amen.

Gathering Hymn

"As We Gather at Your Table"

No. 522

Greeting and Prayer of the Day

Pastor: The grace of the Lord, Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

All: And also with you.

Pastor: Let us pray,

All: Holy God, you confound the world's wisdom in giving your kingdom to the lowly and the pure in heart. Give us such a hunger and thirst for justice, and perseverance in striving for peace, that in our words and deeds the world may see the life of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

Sit

The Children's Sermon

WE HEAR THE WORD OF GOD

First Reading

Micah 6:1-8

Hear what the Lord says: Rise, plead your case before the mountains, and let the hills hear your voice. Hear, you mountains, the case of the Lord, and you enduring foundations of the earth, for the Lord has a case against his people, and he will contend with Israel.

"O my people, what have I done to you? In what have I wearied you? Answer me! For I brought you up from the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of slavery, and I sent before you Moses, Aaron, and Miriam. O my people, remember now what King Balak of Moab devised, what Balaam son of Beor answered him, and what happened from Shittim to Gilgal, that you may know the saving acts of the Lord."

"With what shall I come before the Lord and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" He has told you, O mortal, what is good, and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God?

Word of God. Word of Life.

Thanks be to God.

Reader: Lord, who may dwell in your tabernacle? Who may abide upon your holy hill?

All: **Those who lead a blameless life and do what is right, who speak the truth from their heart; they do not slander with the tongue, they do no evil to their friends; they do not cast discredit upon a neighbor.**

Reader: In their sight the wicked are rejected, but they honor those who fear the Lord. They have sworn upon their health and do not take back their word.

All: **They do not give their money in hope of gain, nor do they take bribes against the innocent. Those who do these things shall never be overthrown.**

Second Reading

1 Corinthians 1:18-31

The message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart." Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scholar? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of the proclamation, to save those who believe. For Jews ask for signs and Greeks desire wisdom, but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to gentiles, but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.

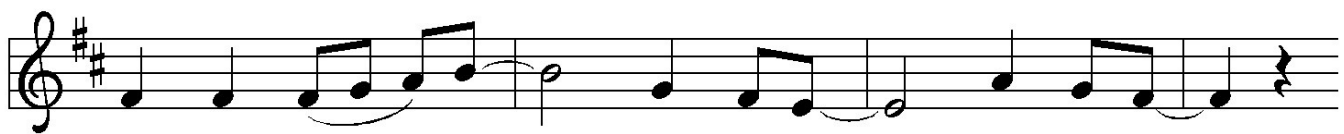
Consider your own call, brothers and sisters: not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to abolish things that are, so that no one might boast in the presence of God. In contrast, God is why you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption, in order that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."

Word of God. Word of Life.

Thanks be to God.

Stand

Gospel Acclamation



Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go?



You have the words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia.

Gospel Reading

Matthew 5:1-12

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew the 5th chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord.

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain, and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. And he began to speak and taught them, saying:

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. “Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. “Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. “Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy. “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. “Blessed are those who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. “Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.

Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Sit

Sermon

Pastor Rachel Laughlin

Stand

Hymn of the Day

“Oh, Praise the Gracious Power ”

No. 651

vs. 1, 2, 3, 7

Sit

Installation of the 2026 Congregational Council

Pastor: The following people have been *elected* [by the congregation] to positions of leadership. We give thanks for their willingness to serve. In baptism we are welcomed into the body of Christ and sent to share in the mission of God; we rejoice now that these siblings will lead us in our common life and our mutual mission as a congregation.

The offices and names of those who are to be installed are read by a representative of the congregation.

Pastor: *A reading from First Corinthians:* There are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. (1 Corinthians 12:4-7)

You have been elected to positions of leadership and trust in this congregation. This entrusts you with rights and responsibilities that affect all of us and the ministry we hold dear. As leaders of this congregation, we ask for your commitment to the values and mission we share in Christ:

Do you promise to be faithful to the gospel of Jesus in the governance of this congregation?

Council: *We will, and we ask God to help us.*

Pastor: Will you notice and nurture the gifts, questions, and ideas of the people you serve in this role?

Council: *We will, and we ask God to help us.*

Pastor: Will you communicate with proactive and faithful transparency for the sake of our whole community?

Council: *We will, and we ask God to help us.*

Pastor: Will you acknowledge the unknown and unknowable about being God's people together, practicing honesty, humility, and courage in times of change?

Council: *We will, and we ask God to help us.*

Pastor: Do you promise to prayerfully discern and strive to do what is right, even when it disrupts the status quo, and especially when it asks something difficult of us for the sake of our neighbors?

Council: *We will, and we ask God to help us.*

Pastor: People of God, do you promise to support our council leaders with your blessing and your prayers?

All: We will, and we ask God to help us.

Pastor: Let us pray: Equipping God, you give us new eyes to see as you see, new ears to hear what you speak, and new hearts to welcome the love you give us to share. As we lead and serve, help us to remember that our labor is not in vain. Bless each of these leaders with courage and kindness, patience and tenacity, good humor and great hope, so that together we may serve as instruments of your peace for the sake of the world.

All: Amen.

I now declare you installed as *officers / council members* of this congregation. Almighty God bless you, and direct your days and your deeds in peace, that you may be faithful servants of Christ.

All: Amen.

Apostles' Creed

Asst: Joining the saints of every time and place, we confess our faith:

All: I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Prayers of the Church

Je - sus, name a - bove all names, beau - ti - ful

Sa - vior, glo - ri - ous Lord, Em -

man - u - el, God is with us, bles - sed Re -

deem - er, liv - ing Word.

After "Generous God," worshipers respond **"Pour out your Love."**
 Repeat **"Jesus, Name Above All Names"** after completion of the intercessory prayers.

WE SHARE IN HIS MEAL

Sharing the Peace

Pastor: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

All: **And also with you.**

*Worshipers share a sign of God's peace with one another,
 greeting each other with words like "Peace be with you. . .and also with you"*

Sit

Offering

Please **date** and complete the fellowship registration pad

Anthem

"Sing Gently"

Eric Whitacre

*May we sing together, always.
 May our voice be soft.
 May our singing be music for others
 and may it keep others aloft.
 Sing gently, always.
 Sing, sing as one.
 May we stand together always
 May our voice be strong.
 May we hear the singing and
 may we always sing along.
 Sing, sing gently, always.
 Sing, sing as one.
 Sing gently as one.*

Liturgical Hand Washing

*I wash my hands in innocence, and go around your altar, O Lord, singing aloud a song of thanksgiving,
and telling all your wondrous deeds. - Psalm 26:6-7*

Offering Prayer

Asst: God of majesty, no eye has seen, no ear has heard what you have prepared for those who love you, yet in this meal you reveal the wideness of your mercy. Use what we have gathered to feed us with the reign of God come near, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

All: Amen.

Stand

Great Thanksgiving - Grace Before the Meal

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

All: And also with you.

Pastor: Lift up your hearts.

All: We lift them to the Lord.

Pastor: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All: It is right to give God thanks and praise.

Pastor: . . . and join in their unending hymn.

Sanctus

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, Lord God of pow - er and might,
heav - en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho -
san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who
comes in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

Pastor: You are indeed holy, O God, the fountain of all that is good; you bring joy from despair, life from death. We worship you for our lives and for the world you give us. We thank you for the new world to come and for the love that will rule all in all.

We praise you for the grace shown to Israel, your chosen, the people of your promise: the rescue from Egypt, the gift of the promised land, the memory of the ancestors, the homecoming from exile, and the prophets' words that will not be in vain. In all this we bless you for your only-begotten Son, who fulfilled and will fulfill all your promises.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

For as often as we eat of this bread and drink from this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

All: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

Pastor: Join our prayers with those of your servants of every time and every place, and unite them with the ceaseless petitions of our great high priest until he comes as victorious Lord of all. Through him, with him, in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honor and glory is yours, almighty Father, now and forever.

All: Amen, amen, amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Pastor: With the confidence of the children of God, we are bold to pray:

All: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

Invitation to the Meal

Pastor: If you desire to receive what God offers, come to this Table. Come with your faith and your doubt. Come with your questions and your hopes. Come with your grief and your love. Come taste the Lord's goodness. There is room for you here because this is Christ's table. You are welcome.

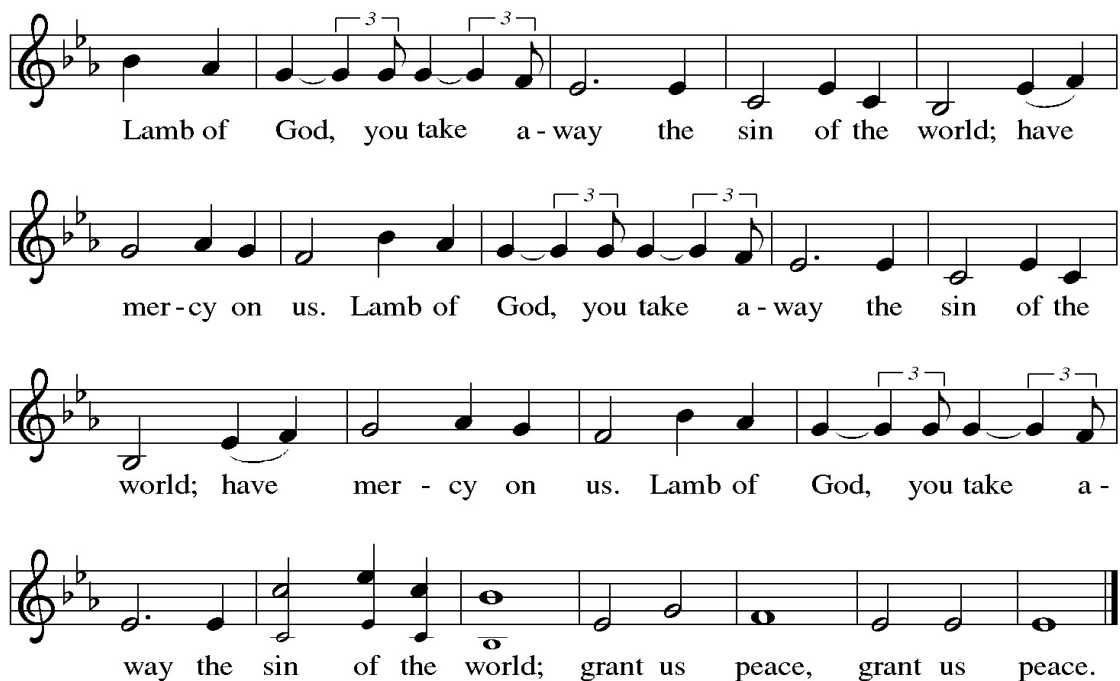
Sit

Holy Communion - the Lord's Supper

All are welcome at Christ's table regardless of age or membership status. All communion servers will have sanitized their hands before handling the communion elements. Ushers will direct you to come forward. The pastor and assisting minister will distribute the bread (gluten-free) and the other servers will distribute the wine (red) or grape juice (white). Individually packaged gluten free wafers and sets of completely sealed elements (wheat wafer and grape juice) are available on the stands near the bread distributors. You may pick one of those up yourself, if you prefer. You may place your empty cup in the baskets on the tables as you return to your seat.

If you would prefer not to receive communion, you are invited to come forward for a blessing. Please cross your arms over your chest to indicate your preference to the servers.

Lamb of God



Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have
mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the
world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a -
way the sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

Communion Hymns

"Build a Longer Table"

ACS No. 1062



1 Build a long - er ta - ble, not a high - er wall,
2 Build a saf - er ref - uge, not a larg - er jail;
3 Build a broad - er door - way, not a long - er fence.
4 When we lived as ex - iles, ref - u - gees a - broad,
feed - ing those who hun - ger, mak - ing room for all.
where the weak find shel - ter, mer - cy will not fail.
Love pro - tects all peo - ple, spar - ing no ex - pense.
Christ be - came our door - way to the reign of God.
Feast - ing to - geth - er, strang - er turns to friend,
For an - y place where jus - tice is de - nied,
When we em - brace com - pas - sion more than fear,
So must our ta - bles wel - come those who roam.
Christ breaks walls to piec - es; false di - vi - sions end.
Christ will breach the jail wall, free - ing all in - side.
Christ tears down our fenc - es: all are wel - come here.
None can be ex - clud - ed; all must find a home.

Table Blessing

Pastor: The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

All: Amen.

Asst: Radiant God, we have seen your glory in the face of Jesus Christ. In the sacrament of his body and blood you have drawn us to your heart. Send us from this table with delight, that our lives may reflect the beauty of your love, and bear witness to all we have seen and heard, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

All: Amen.

Sending of Communion

Communion ministers may be sent to take the sacrament to those who are absent.

Pastor: O God, whose grace and truth are revealed in the Word-made-flesh, bless those who go forth to share your word and sacrament with those who are sick, homebound, or imprisoned. Nourish and strengthen those who receive this holy communion, that through the body and blood of your Son, all may rejoice at his birth and in his presence among us now and forever.

All: Amen.

WE ARE SENT TO OUT TO SERVE

Announcements

Worshippers are invited to share announcements not listed in the weekly Peace Proclamations:

*blessings: like anniversaries, birthdays, births or new jobs, prayer concerns and answered prayers. So that all present on person and livestreaming can see and hear you, **come up the ramp to the chancel then go to the pulpit** to give your announcement.*

Stand

Final Blessing

Pastor: May the triune God, who has put a new song in your mouth and tuned your heart for praise ✠ bless you now and forever.

All: Amen.

Sending Hymn

"Rejoice, Ye Pure in Heart!"

No. 873

Dismissal

Asst: Go in peace. Do justice. Love mercy.

All: Thanks be to God.

Music for the Close of Worship

"Two Little Preludes"

J. S. Bach

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Today's Servers
February 1, 2026

Worship Asst.: Intern Kathleen
Reader: Gabe Carlson
Ushers: Lee Banitt, Kay Kincaid
Technology: Mark Clyne, Jackson Seguin, Mike Whately
Prayer Station: Jan Ellwitz
Sacristy Asst.: Laila Poisson
Communion Assts.: Karen Adams
Altar Guild: Linda Timm
Fellowship Host: Gail MacNellis
Fellowship Treats: Dianne Hellman, Micki Holder
Church Lockup: Mary Clyne

Next Week's Servers
February 8, 2026

Worship Asst.: Harry Biles
Reader: Lee Banitt
Ushers:
Technology: Mark Clyne, Mike Whately
Prayer Station: Laurie Brown
Sacristy Asst.: Kathy Eklov
Communion Assts.: Gary Bischof
Altar Guild: Sandy Bennett
Fellowship Host:
Fellowship Treats: Alex Baas-Peterson
Church Lockup:

Use this QR code to donate online to
Prince of Peace Lutheran Church
and it's ministries.
See the Peace Proclamations for more details.



Prince of Peace Lutheran Church Staff

Church phone: 269/343-3453

Staff

Pastor: Rachel Laughlin ext 11

Administrative Asst: Tamara Preston ext 10

Accountant: Marilyn Storch ext 14

Technology Manager: Mike Whately ext 13

Engagement Coor: Em Witteveen ext 12

Intern: Kathleen Robinson ext 15

Music Director: Janet Hill ext 16

Custodian: Steve Haddix ext 20

Nursery: Melissa Copeland & Megan Zimmerman ext 17

Care Team Email: prayer@popportage.org