

Prints of Peace



September 2026

Volume 31 Issue 9



Your voice is important! We need your voice at the World Café on Sunday, September 27!

I'll tell you about the World Café, but first a little history as to how we got here.

It has been a joy this year to work with the "Future Building Task Force." We were assigned the task of guiding the congregation to "prayerfully think and dream about the future, especially in regard to our building."

Please know this: that does **not** mean that we have plans for a new building. There are no plans. However, the *idea* of a new building has been percolating for years. For many years (my entire tenure here at least), there's been kind of a background hum in this congregation about a building, with wondering: *Is there more we could do with our building? Are there new things we could do with a building addition?* The Task Force has been starting to bring that background hum to the foreground.

We have noticed that there is enthusiasm and interest right now in the future of Prince of Peace, and the Task Force is trying to help us use that enthusiasm well. I have absolutely no idea if this will lead to a building project or not, but I believe that this process will lead to a bright future for the congregation, no matter what we discern about the building.

The current step in the Task Force's work is to develop a tool to help our congregation identify what our *passion* is for mission. "Why do we do the things we do? What does mission mean to us?" We believe that we need to start *there*, long before talking about capital campaigns and architects. The *mission* must come first! If we focus on that, the rest will fall into place. (Matthew 6:33)

The tool we've settled on is an activity called a **World Café**. More detailed information about the event is found elsewhere in this newsletter, but what I want to say here is this: *this event works*. It's a remarkable tool to get to the core of *what matters*. The Task Force led a World Café here at the beginning of August, just for young adults and news members, partially to ensure that their voices are heard in this discussion. Participants said this afterward: **"Pretty incredible that so much clarity and structure can emerge from something that began as a completely open-ended prompt!"** and **"That experience changed how I live out my faith every day!"**

That's what the Task Force is looking to provide right now: clarity and structure emerging from that background hum. That's what we're striving for. And we need **your** voice to join the hum. Please join us at the World Café on Sunday, September 27. Worship will be shortened a bit that morning, so we have as much time as we need for this very important discernment process. Please join us. Your voice will help to discern the future of Prince of Peace.

In Christ,


Pastor Scholtes

HAPPY Birthday

Please keep these people in prayer on the anniversary of their birth!

Christopher Confalone
Alani Blount
Douglas Hock
Micah Smith
Mary Jane Hower
Brittany Walters
Athena Holecz
Sheri Oessenick
Ronald Getz
Melissa Frack
Jessica Reinhart
Dominic Walters
Thomas Amy
Janessa Baker
Alyce Hower
Phyllis Bisher
Samuel Blakeslee
Wanda McCammon
Levi Ott
Dominic Holecz
Justin Ott
Kay Parsons
Patricia Duran
Arlene Miller
Mckenna Baker
Staci Hock
Jayden Garis
Bruce Antonioli
Matthew Schipps

Missing:

Several grey restaurant-style bus totes are missing from the kitchen. If you've moved their location or borrowed them, please contact the property committee.

Join us . . .

Worship with us on-site at 9:45 a.m. on Sundays

Online / Facebook

Watch our worship each week at our website (popbangor.org/video-worship). Or watch it on our Facebook page (facebook.com/popbangor).

Outdoor Worship

The Worship and Music Committee has scheduled worship in our grove. Weather permitting, we will worship in the Place of Peace Grove September 6. In case of inclement weather, we will hold worship inside that day.



August Council Meeting Highlights

1. The official name of the grove is **Place of Peace Grove**
2. World Café will take place on Sunday September 27, 2026, following a shortened worship service and a meal. All are invited.
3. Congregational Meeting will be on November 22, 2026

Recent Pastoral Acts

Funerals: Joseph Daley, July 25
Terry Steinmetz, July 30 (non-member)
Sandra Brodt, August 13



Join us for Faith by Firelight

Faith by Firelight will be held in the grove on the following dates: September 26, and October 24. We will begin around 6:30 p.m. Hot dogs and s'mores will be provided. Feel free to bring your own beverage and a snack to share. In case of inclement weather or fire ban we will cancel. Questions? See Connie Itterly or Scott Schipps.



September Altar Guild: Connie Itterly, Diane Searfass **October Altar Guild:** Cathy Mullen, Phyllis Bisher

	September 6	September 13	September 20	September 27	October 4
Greeters	Connie Itterly, Sue Reinhart	Kale Baker, Brooks Baker	Sherk and June Jones	Justine Saviat, Tina Johns	Lisa and Wayne Jones
Lay Readers	Tina Johns	Kim Jennings	Brooks Baker	Connie Itterly	Janet Martocci
Assisting Ministers	Tina Smith	Alex Scholtes	Kale Baker	Marlene Stana	Laraine Brands
Com. Assts.	Jim Jennings, Marlene Stana	April Miller, Tina Johns	Laraine Brands, Brooks Baker	Tina Smith, Alex Scholtes	Tina Johns, Marlene Stana
Ushers	Kale Baker, Brooks Baker	Georgia and John Suranofsky	Traci Rumsey, Connie Itterly	Sue Reinhart, Sara Godshalk	Tina Smith, Sadie Baker
Power Point Camera	Antonioli Family	Cathy Mullen	Tara Flyte	Jim Jennings	Kim Jennings
Acolytes	Fabian Vargas	Taylor Baker	Ben Scholtes	Landon Horn	Fabian Vargas
Offering Counters	Georgia Suranfosky	John Suranofsky	Brenda Hughes	Jean Janosa	Connie Itterly
Pew Tenders	Sara Godshalk	Sara Godshalk	June Jones	Rhonda Montgomery	Sherry and Maci Hock
Bread Baker		Connie Itterly		Diane Serfass	Alex Scholtes, Ben Scholtes

Would you like to join the volunteer team? Contact the church office at 610-588-2355.

If you are unable to fulfill your assignment, please find a replacement and let Pastor Scholtes know of the change.

Real Readers: Join Us! We meet at 2 p.m. the 1st Thursday of each month...

September 3 – “The Paper Palace” by Miranda Heller (Terry)
 October 1 – “Broken Country” by Clare Leslie Hall (Patti)
 November 5 – “The Secret of Secrets” by Dan Brown (Cindy)
 December 3 – “Atmosphere” by Taylor Reid (Janet)



How can I make a difference at Prince of Peace?

There are so many ways you can volunteer here at Prince of Peace and support our ministries.

It's not too early to think about the Jacktown events on October 17 & 18. Please prayerfully consider spending some time to help in this important ministry here at Prince of Peace.

As always please feel free to reach out to me with any questions you may have.

—April Miller, Volunteer Coordinator



Thanks to all for your continued support of our Weis 1% Rebate program. Please continue to bring your slips (including those paid with Weis gift cards - we can use these also for our 1% program). Thanks again! --*Janet Martocci*

POP's Treasures Moment

While I was reflecting upon what update to give on what has been happening at POP's Treasures, I thought about what type of ministry is POP's Treasures? ...Or, should we call it outreach? So, I took some time to really understand how the words ministry and outreach were defined. Ministry was defined simply as "an act of service". It is a reflection of duty, "involving believers performing service and sharing Christ's teachings within and beyond our churches boundary". Outreach is "when a religious group steps outside its walls, to help the local community, share its faith, and cares for people in need".

POP's Treasures monthly sale promotes sales of items. Hum. Is it as simple as that? Well, I can tell you it is way more than that. Outreach has been our main focus. Raising money to help support many different programs helping others. Feeding those that currently may be having a difficult time, providing clothing to veterans, children and others in need. Supporting local food pantries with financial support, supporting animal shelters and fire companies, EMS, and animals to build a farm, or mosquito nets and medical attention in other parts of the world are just some of our outreach recipients. Oh wait, what about that word ministry? Are we teaching Christ's words; hum, maybe not, or are we sharing Christ's words through action. By our action, we are showing our community at large how to show grace and mercy...even love to those that may need compassion and comfort.

Could it be that simple? Could it be that through accepting gently used items from the community that knows we will recycle it for our outreach ministry, or could it be that showing our visitors where their support goes, only affirms that they are walking with us in ministry "in an act of service"? I believe so!

Monthly, we are inviting others into our building, showing them that we believe in Christ's ministry. Our treasure has been a gift from God. Our treasures have come from our donors, our shoppers, and our recipients, so much so that they have started creating ways to help in this journey, coming up with ideas, food and financial donations to create and spread our outreach. So, today I can say that we have been uplifted through our outreach program by the many who have ministered to us. We may be doing a lot of work to make it happen, but from the continued growth of POP's Treasures we are shown that our community supports all the good outreach we recognize in our ministry here at POP church. --*Jackie Horn*

POP'S Treasures:

Come, Shop, Donate

Our next sale will be on
September 11th

(10 a.m. - 2 p.m.) and
the 12th (9 a.m. - Noon)

Drop Offs on
September 14th and 21st,
(1-2 p.m. and 6-7 p.m.)

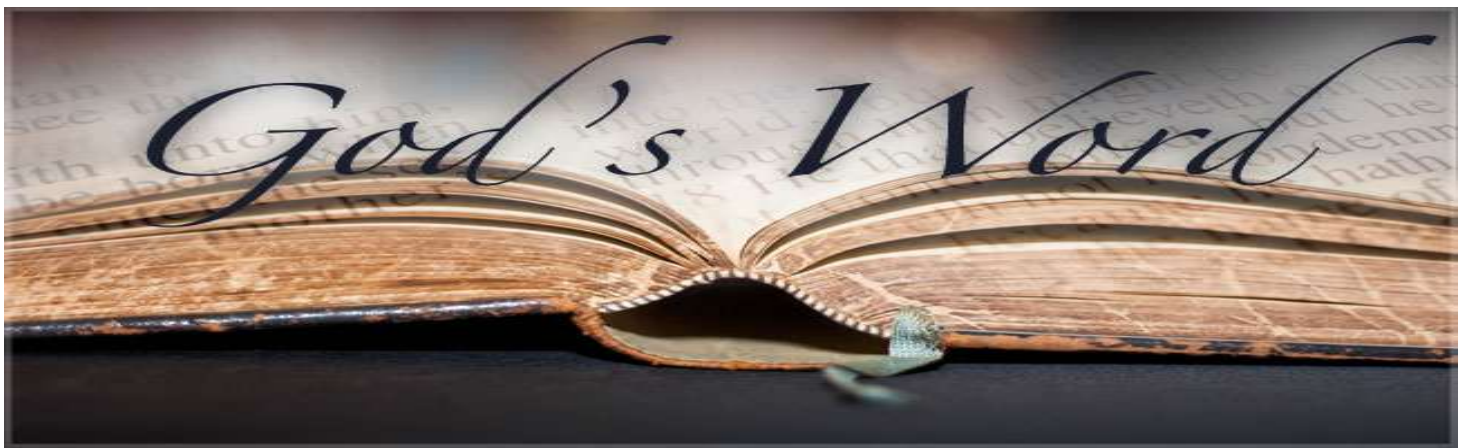


Who's ready for Sunday School??

Sunday School will resume on
Sunday, September 13,
8:30 a.m.—9:30 a.m.



JOIN US FOR SUNDAY SCHOOL



Read these on your computer or on your phone! Go to DailyLectio.net, where you can sign up for daily emails or download the app for iPhone or Android!

Tuesday, Sept. 01	Psalm 17; 2 Samuel 11:27b-12:15; Revelation 3:7-13;
Wednesday, Sept. 02	Psalm 17; Jeremiah 17:5-18; Matthew 12:22-32;
Thursday, Sept. 03	Psalm 119:33-40; Ezekiel 24:1-14; 2 Corinthians 12:11-21;
Friday, Sept. 04	Psalm 119:33-40; Ezekiel 24:15-27; Romans 10:15b-21;
Saturday, Sept. 05	Psalm 119:33-40; Ezekiel 33:1-6; Matthew 23:29-36;
Sunday, Sept. 06	Ezekiel 33:7-11; Ps. 119:33-40; Romans 13:8-14; Mat. 18:15-20
Monday, Sept. 07	Psalm 119:65-72; Leviticus 4:27-31; 5:14-16; 1 Peter 2:11-17;
Tuesday, Sept. 08	Psalm 119:65-72; Deuteronomy 17:2-13; Romans 13:1-7;
Wednesday, Sept. 09	Psalm 119:65-72; Leviticus 16:1-5, 20-28; Matthew 21:18-22;
Thursday, Sept. 10	Psalm 103:8-13; Genesis 37:12-36; 1 John 3:11-16;
Friday, Sept. 11	Psalm 103:8-13; Genesis 41:53-42:17; Acts 7:9-16;
Saturday, Sept. 12	Psalm 103:8-13; Genesis 45:1-20; Matthew 6:7-15;
Sunday, Sept. 13	Genesis 50:15-21; Ps. 103:8-13; Rom. 14:1-12; Matt. 18:21-35
Holy Cross (Sept. 14)	Numbers 21:4b-9; Ps. 98:1-5; 1 Corin. 1:18-24; John 3:3-17
Tuesday, Sept. 15	Psalm 133; Genesis 49:29-50:14; Romans 14:13-15:2;
Wednesday, Sept. 16	Psalm 133; Genesis 50:22-26; Mark 11:20-25;
Thursday, Sept. 17	Psalm 145:1-8; Nahum 1:1, 14-2:2; 2 Corinthians 13:1-4;
Friday, Sept. 18	Psalm 145:1-8; Nahum 2:3-13; 2 Corinthians 13:5-10;
Saturday, Sept. 19	Psalm 145:1-8; Zephaniah 2:13-15; Matthew 19:23-30;
Sunday, Sept. 20	Jonah 3:10 – 4:11; Ps. 145:1-8; Philippians 1:21-30; Matt. 20:1-16
Monday, Sept. 21	Psalm 106:1-12; Genesis 27:1-29; Romans 16:1-16;
Tuesday, Sept. 22	Psalm 106:1-12; Genesis 28:10-17; Romans 16:17-20;
Wednesday, Sept. 23	Psalm 106:1-12; Isaiah 41:1-13; Matthew 18:1-5;
Thursday, Sept. 24	Psalm 25:1-9; Ezekiel 12:17-28; James 4:11-16;
Friday, Sept. 25	Psalm 25:1-9; Ezekiel 18:5-18; Acts 13:32-41;
Saturday, Sept. 26	Psalm 25:1-9; Ezekiel 18:19-24; Mark 11:27-33;
Sunday, Sept. 27	Ezek. 18:1-4, 25-32; Ps. 25:1-9; Philippians 2:1-13; Mat. 21:23-32
Monday, Sept. 28	Psalm 28; Judges 14:1-20; Philippians 1:3-14;
Tuesday, Sept. 29	Psalm 28; Judges 16:1-22; Philippians 1:15-21;
Wednesday, Sept. 30	Psalm 28; Judges 16:23-31; Matthew 9:2-8;

You are invited to a World Café (Note: Date Change!)



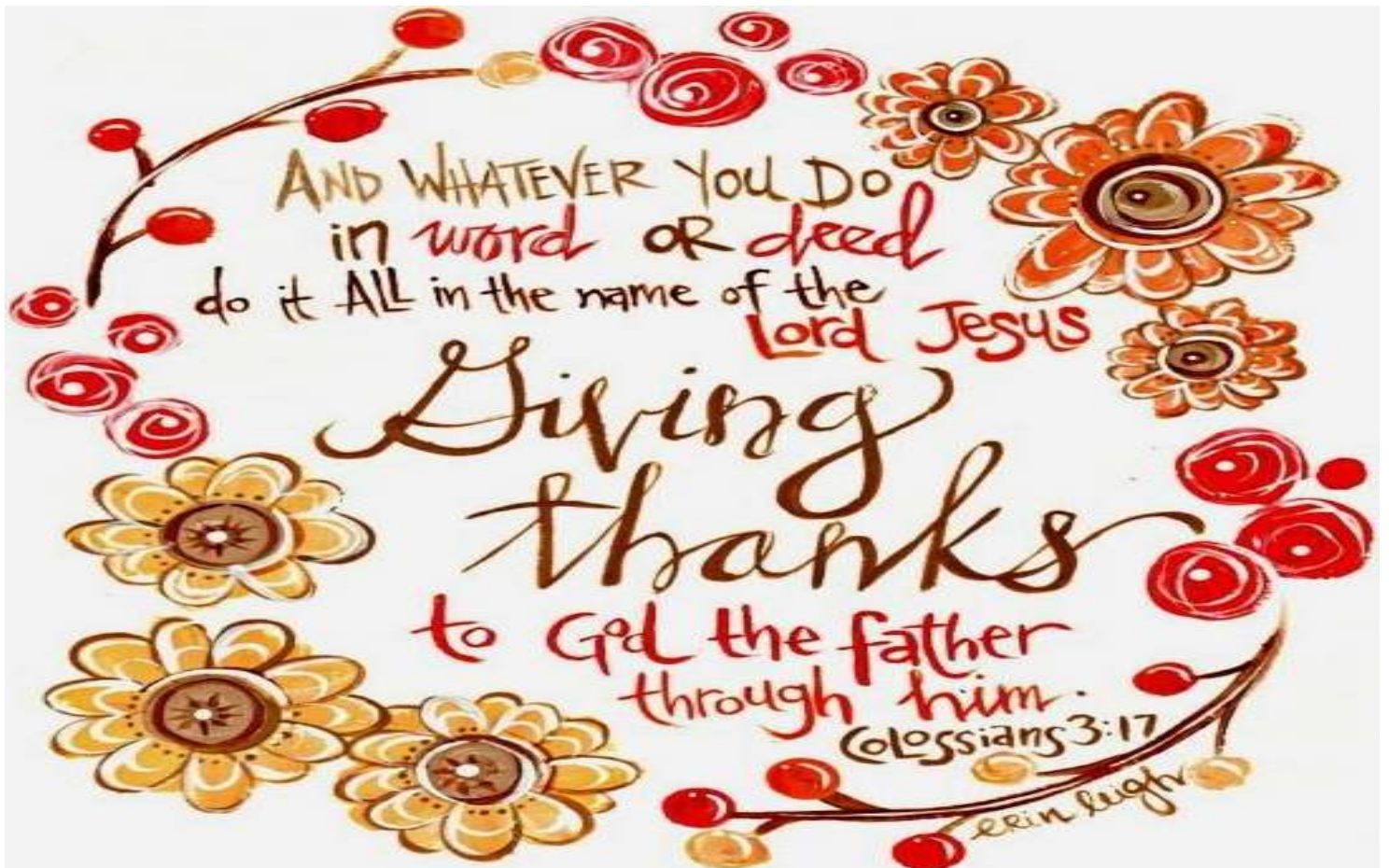
On **Sunday, September 27**, we are going to have a very special event, and we need **your** voice there! It's called a **World Café**. Pastor Scholtes will facilitate this event, which will involve people sharing stories, listening to one another, and together finding shared wisdom. Together we will explore what "Mission" means to us.

This event is sponsored by the Future Building Task Force, and it's a way for us to explore and discern together what "Mission" means to us as a congregation. This event was originally planned for a Saturday, but we felt it was so important that we moved it to Sunday, and we're even going to shorten worship a bit to make sure we can spend as much time at the World Café as possible. The schedule for the morning of Sunday, September 27 will be as follows:

- 9:45 am – Worship
- 10:20 am – World Café
- 12:30 pm – Luncheon

We've already done two World Cafés with small groups – first, the Task Force and Congregation Council participated in a World Café led by an expert at a retreat in April. Having learned how to lead it, we then led a World Café with a group of young adults and new members in the congregation in August. Now we are ready to lead the whole congregation, and we are excited to see the results of this event.

Why are we doing this? To help answer the question, "What is our congregation's deepest passion?" By answering that, we believe we will be one step closer to starting to discern the future of our ministry, and our building, at Prince of Peace.



Thank You

“Special people can turn an ordinary day into an extraordinary one.” Dear POP, You made my day wonderful and my heart very glad. Thank you! Thank you so much for all the cards you sent me after my 10th back surgery. It was very much appreciated! —*Petrina Billger*

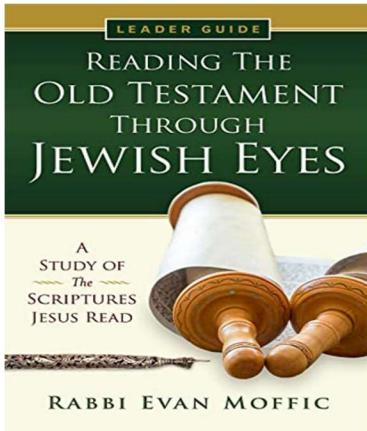
Thank you to each and every one for all the beautiful cards I received and for all the prayers for me. Thank you to Pastor Scholtes for delivering them to me and for his visit. My family put the cards on display taped on my wall and they continue to brighten my day! Thank you for thinking of me and praying for me. —*Gladys Steinmetz*



Prince of Peace Seekers (POPS):

Prince of Peace Seekers (POPS) resumes on **September 10**, from 10 a.m.—Noon, in the Fellowship Hall. Coffee, tea, and snacks are available. We meet for a time of spiritual growth, discussion, and fellowship. We have some topics planned to spark your spiritual imagination!

On September 10, we will celebrate our “homecoming” and welcome anyone who may be joining us for the first time. This will be a wonderful opportunity to share ideas for POPS gatherings in the future.



Pastor Scholtes and Kim Jennings will lead a six-part series titled: “Reading the Old Testament through Jewish Eyes” from September 17 through October 22. The study written by Rabbi Evan Moffic who has a passion for sharing Judaism and its traditions with Christian audiences. A short video will accompany each session in which Rabbi Moffic explores the Torah, the first five books of the Hebrew Bible, and highlights points of interest to Christians. He describes the role of the Torah in Jewish worship and practice and explores the key themes of each book guided by the wisdom of Jewish interpreters through the centuries. During the six sessions we will also be reading various passages and discussing how the Torah can be a source of wisdom, truth and transformation in our lives today. If you have any questions, please contact Karen Karner or Janet Martocci.

COOKBOOK UPDATE:



We are so excited to report that there are approximately 225 recipes in the book! Thank you to everyone who added their special recipes! The cost of the cookbook will be \$15 each. Brenda Hughes will be collecting orders and money for them during the coming weeks. Please contact Brenda to place your order! You are all in for an AMAZING treat with this cookbook!

P.U.M.P Special Request Update:

P.U.M.P. requests canned vegetables, canned fruit, soup, spaghetti sauce, pasta and cereal. As always, staples are always appreciated too.



FOOD PANTRY



The Health and Wellness Committee announces some upcoming events!

If these events sound familiar, you would be correct! The Health and Wellness Committee completed the following events many years ago and we felt it was time to take them off the shelf, dust them off and freshen them up a bit for 2026 and 2027!

One Week Journey- September always feels like a good time to re-establish good habits like keeping to a routine and organizing one's thoughts after the loose-goosey summer months! How about taking a One-Week Journey of exploration in mind, body, and spirit. Just 10-20 minutes a day of reading, prayer, light exercise, and reflection can really set you on the path to wellness! The Health and Wellness committee will provide the packets with easy-to-follow instructions, you just need to provide the gumption! We will take our One-Week Journey from Sunday, September 13 through Sunday, September 20th. Too busy that week? Take a packet anyway to complete on your own later! Stay tuned for information in the upcoming announcements!

Walk to Bethlehem- Feeling inspired by the One-Week Journey? Let's plan ahead for Spring 2027! Have you ever thought about "visiting" the Holy Land? Well now you can have the experience of a lifetime without leaving the Slate Belt! The Health and Wellness Committee is planning a Walk to Bethlehem for the Spring of 2027! As a group, we will plan to use our time spent enriching our mind, body, and spirit through prayer, movement, reading the Bible, exercise, volunteering, good deeds, church activities and the like to record our "miles" as we "walk" the path to Bethlehem over a 12-week period! Just minutes a day from many people can make an impact on your health and wellness! Our vision is to do this in conjunction with other Lutheran churches in the Slate Belt to collaborate and grow with our neighbors. Want to learn more? Please join us for a brief brainstorming and planning meeting on Sunday, November 1st after coffee hour! Can't make it that day? Join our Health and Wellness Committee meeting on Monday, November 2nd at 6:30 p.m. Zoom attendees are welcome!

Please see any Health and Wellness Committee member or Justine Saviet, RN Parish Nurse if you have any questions!



God's Work Our Hands Project 2026



Last year for God's Work Our Hands Project we made 100 birthday kits for P.U.M.P!

This year our goal is 50 again, and with the matching donation from the Helper's Helpers sub fund, we would like to make about 100+++.

If you have an action team available from Thrivent, would you consider applying for it so we could meet our goal? Please see Georgia Suranofsky if you want more information on using an Action Team.

The items that go into the birthday kit are: cake mix and frosting; balloons; birthday napkins and plates; happy birthday banner, candles and a can of soda (cola or sprite depending on the cake mix). We will also need gift bags from Dollar Tree; there are 2 in a package for \$1.25. The items in the kit can be purchased at Dollar Tree. Look for the sign-up sheet on the counter in the Narthex, if you prefer not to shop for items envelopes are provided for monetary donations, or see Mary O'Meally, Sherry Hock, or Holly Blakeslee. Items need to be at church on September 6th.

We will celebrate with a birthday party and put the kits together on Sunday, September 20th.

Thank you for always supporting our projects and ministries!

Watch God's Refrigerator Door:

Coming soon- more great ways we are doing ministry!

**THANK
YOU!**

A message from Justine Saviet... I was asked to write an article for the newsletter about *why* I am the Parish Nurse for Prince of Peace Church. When someone asks you, "Why did you become a _____?" it can really send you down a mental rabbit hole. After all, just because someone is a nurse and goes to church, doesn't mean that parish nursing is for them. For me, the reason I became a parish nurse at Prince of Peace can have a practical answer: I was asked, my experience and background met the criteria, I was willing to attend additional classes to obtain certification, and I said yes!

But as I go deeper into the rabbit hole, I start to think about what really *pulled* me to *become* a Parish Nurse. What is the personal, or better yet, spiritual answer to the *why* question? I realize this is something I am still learning, even after my 12+ years of being the Parish Nurse at Prince of Peace! I have always loved people. I have always enjoyed caring for people in their homes and the community at large. I have always tried to follow the Golden Rule and keep Christ at the center of my life.

But is that all that parish nursing is? Serving the congregation as the Parish Nurse means that, in the words of Prince of Peace, I must seek and serve Christ in all people. The Parish Nurse is an educational and supportive role, centered on referring those in need to outside resources and supporting congregation members through difficult life stages. I am honored to work with our Health and Wellness Committee, which meets quarterly to discuss how we can better support those in need. In this role, I strive to identify new and traditional ways to bring wellness of mind, body, and spirit to our members. In every interaction I have—whether it's leading the committee, making a phone call, having a conversation at church, or writing this article—I use my nursing experience to help YOU see and feel God in your life, no matter how sick, injured, confused, anxious, or sad you may be. To that end, I hope you feel some amount of healing to your body and spirit in the process. Sometimes I am successful, and sometimes I am not. The beautiful thing about Christ is that while we sometimes fail, He never does. He knows what we need in all things, even when we can't see it. I believe that I was pulled, poked, and maybe even pushed by the Holy Spirit to become the second Parish Nurse at Prince of Peace to serve this congregation. And in that process, I think I have been blessed with a deeper understanding of what it really means to be in service to God and His people. Thank you for allowing me to continue in this ministry at Prince of Peace! Blessings, --*Justine Saviet* RN, Parish Nurse

We say, "Thank you" for being our Parish Nurse!



Joyful Noise Good News!
July's collection totaled \$103.00
The year-to-date total collected is \$723.00
Thank you for your continued generosity!



Prince of Peace Lutheran Church
 2445 Lake Minsi Drive (Johnsonville)
 Bangor, Pennsylvania 18013
 Office Phone: 610-588-2355

Website: www.popbangor.org

Web Master: Evelyn Diabo
Social Media Manager: Nick Walters

Worship and Holy Communion Schedule:
Sundays at 9:45 a.m. – Join us!!

- **Pastor:** Rev. Michael J. Scholtes
- **Minister of Youth and Worship:** Tina Johns
- **Minister of Music:** Martin Yazdzik
- **Bookkeeper:** Rev. Joyce Weishaupt
- **Financial Secretary:** Brenda Hughes
- **Custodian:** Brittnee Evans
- **Parish Nurse:** Justine Saviet, RN
- **Administrative Assistant:** Annette Buss

Congregation Council Members

Kale Baker, President	Jackie Horn
April Miller, Secretary	Justine Saviet
Tina Johns, Vice President	Brenda Hughes
Alex Scholtes, Youth Rep.	Connie Itterly
Jean Janosa	Kerri Miller
Mary O'Meally	Brittany Walters
Rev. Michael J. Scholtes	Holly Blakeslee

Would you like to place an article in the monthly newsletter? Highlight your ministry? Post a Thank you? Make an announcement?

EARLY SUBMISSIONS ARE APPRECIATED!

October 2026 Newsletter is:

Tuesday,
September 8 at Noon

****Please submit items in a Word Document not PDF format, thank you!****

****Items received after the deadline will go into next month's newsletter.****

**OUR PURPOSE
STATEMENT**

We, the people of Prince of Peace Evangelical Lutheran Church, will actively seek and serve Christ in all people.



NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA SYNOD MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Connections That Go Beyond Camp

Submitted by Stacey Burke, NEPA Synod Director of Communications and Bear Creek Camp Board Member

For generations, Bear Creek Camp has been a place where young people experience faith through community, creation, worship, play, and relationships. As a ministry supported by the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod through Mission Support, the connection between Bear Creek Camp and the synod extends far beyond financial gifts.

Each summer, pastors and deacons from across the Northeastern & Southeastern Pennsylvania Synods are among those who become part of the camp community by serving as volunteer chaplains. This summer, the Rev. Liz Koerner from St. John Lutheran Church in Stroudsburg, PA and Bishop-Elect the Rev. Jennifer Dee each spent a week at Bear Creek Camp, offering support to campers and staff while experiencing the ministry of camp firsthand.

For Pastor Koerner, who has served as a Bear Creek chaplain three times, camp has long held a special place in her heart. "Through my years as a chaperone for Confirmation Camp at Calumet in New Hampshire, to working at a United Methodist camp during my summers in college, I have seen how an immersive experience in God's creation with loving counselors and inclusive environments can change the mind and heart of a child," she shared.



The role of a chaplain can look different each week. Chaplains may lead Bible studies, accompany campers on activities, provide pastoral care, support counselors, or simply offer another trusted presence within the camp community.

Bear Creek Camp Executive Director Collin Grooms sees that flexibility as one of the strengths of the program. "Every chaplain brings themselves to the role, which, like our summer staff and campers, is different for everyone," Collin said. "Each person adds to the overall tapestry of our camp community for the week by sharing their unique gifts, interests, and passions."

For Bishop-Elect Dee, serving as a chaplain offered the opportunity to return to a ministry that has been part of her own faith journey. She grew up attending camp and later served on summer staff at Camp Calumet in New England. "A chaplain spends a week at camp getting to know campers and staff and being a support to them both," she

explained. “They are an additional trusted adult to listen, laugh, learn, and connect.”

Sometimes those connections happen in unexpected places. Bishop-Elect Dee recalled leading a Bible study from hammocks with a group of younger campers. As they ended their time together in prayer, voices began popping up from different hammocks as campers shared the things for which they were thankful.

Pastor Koerner experienced a similar moment during Family Camp while talking with a parent and their sons about trusting God, trusting themselves, and leaning on community during difficult times.



Camp ministry also has an impact on the clergy who serve. Pastor Koerner described a sense of God’s presence at camp. “The Spirit is always moving, and God is always at work in ways we can’t always know right away,” she said. “But at camp it feels all encompassing and that at any moment joy and love and growth in faith can happen.”

The relationship between Bear Creek Camp and the synod reaches beyond the camp property as well. During session five this summer, three Bear Creek Camp staff members traveled to Reading to serve alongside ministries including Café Esperanza, Refresh Berks, and Adventure Day Camp at Zion Spies Evangelical Lutheran Church.

Collin spent time at Café Esperanza, where he connected with the Rev. Rashon “Woody” Santiago and learned more about how another ministry supported by the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod navigates that relationship. Bear Creek staff also brought camp into the community in a tangible way, taking archery equipment to Adventure Day Camp so its campers and staff could experience an activity normally associated with a week at Bear Creek.

These connections demonstrate how Mission Support can bring ministries together, allowing them to share resources, learn from one another, and discover new opportunities to serve. The chaplain program creates another bridge between Bear Creek Camp and congregations throughout the region. “Having chaplains from different churches across our two synods is impactful because they can provide a direct perspective of our shared ministry back to their community and congregation,” Collin shared.

For families, seeing a familiar pastor or deacon at camp can provide an additional sense of connection and trust. The chaplain program also helps connect congregations more closely with the ministry they support. “It’s an opportunity for first-hand connection with ministry realities and a chance to connect to where congregational donations are supporting ongoing ministry through gifts that support facilities projects and year-round operational needs,” Collin said.

Through Mission Support, volunteer chaplains, shared resources, and relationships across ministries, Bear Creek Camp and the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod continue to strengthen one another. What happens during a week at camp does not stay at camp. It travels home through campers, clergy, staff, families, and congregations, creating connections that continue long after summer ends.



Help Make Ministry Possible

Mission Support strengthens congregations, supports leaders, and helps new ministries take root across our synod and the wider church. Thank you for being part of this shared ministry. Learn more about Mission Support and how your congregation can support at godslove.org/missionsupport.

Graceful Generosity

Published to help you grow as a steward of God's grace.

Labor Day

The Labor Day holiday is a day that is set aside to recognize and give thanks for the blessings that work gives people. We receive a day of rest from our labors. Most of this newsletter will focus on the gifts and abilities that God gives us for work as well as the desire and ability that God gives us to work.

God Blesses Us with Talents and Abilities

God has created us in his image (Genesis 1:26). He has given us tremendous talents. We are given intelligence, organization skills, creativity, decision-making powers, problem-solving capabilities, leadership abilities, and mechanical abilities, etc. God has given us labor so that we can use our God-given talents and provide for our needs. *"The Lord God took [Adam] and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it" Genesis 2:15*. Work is part of God's master plan for all people. Through our work, we not only take care of our needs, we receive fulfillment and growth as well as the joy of accomplishment.

Have you ever stopped to consider the differences in people? There are thousands of occupations in today's world, each requiring special talents. There are needs for carpenters, cooks, mechanics, tailors, pastors, teachers, farmers, servers, students, police officers, etc. The important thing to note here, however, is that, for every need, God has given to someone the ability to fulfill that need. Some people are able to take apart engines of cars, while others hardly know where to add the oil. Some can build houses, while others can barely nail boards together.

Some women sew fashionable clothes for their family and buy their bread at the store, while others cook and bake beyond compare but don't even own a sewing machine. God has made us

all unique. Along with all of our talents and abilities, God adds to them our desire and ability to work.

As Christians, we need to remember that our talents and abilities have come from God.



"You may say to yourself, 'My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me.' But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your forefathers, as it is today" (Deuteronomy 8:17-18).

Financial Equation

Earning income at our work is an essential part of the following financial equation:

***Earned income = giving,
saving, and spending.***

From the income that we earn, we give, save, and spend. For the financial equation to balance, we need to earn an income.

The Blessing of Work

Working is a blessing that God gives his people. God is not pleased with laziness or an indifferent attitude toward work. Solomon wrote, *"Lazy hands make a man poor, but diligent hands bring wealth."* (Proverbs 10:4). We are encouraged to be as ambitious, wise, and industrious as the ant. *"Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise! It has no commander, no overseer or ruler, yet it stores its provisions in summer and gathers its food at harvest"* (Proverbs 6:6).

God is concerned with our quality of work. The Apostle Paul wrote, *"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men"* (Colossians 3:23). Because we are serving the Lord in all that we do, including our work, we are to give our very best effort. When we add value to our employers, we not only put ourselves in a position for promotions and raises, God is glorified.



The Apostle Paul reminds us, *"Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously"* (2 Corinthians 9:6).

This sowing and reaping principle that Paul shares applies to our work. What is your attitude toward your work? Are you there to receive as much as you can while putting out the least amount of effort? Do you begrudge the hours your employer asks you to work, or are you willing to come in early and stay late at times? Are you learning more than you have to and doing more than you have to?

Another question to ask yourself about your work is how you plan to use this "wealth" that your "diligent hands" bring you. Is it your purpose to hoard it like the Rich Fool (Luke 12:13-21), so that you can *"take life easy; eat, drink and be merry"*? If you've read the parable, you know that plan is not pleasing to the Lord.

Our work is a gift from the Lord. As good stewards of that gift, we will work to the best of our ability so that we can care for our needs and give to the Lord by helping others in need. Paul talks about the service we can provide through our work: *"At the present time your plenty will supply what [others] need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need. Then there will be equality"* (2 Corinthians 8:14).

Besides providing for ourselves, God gives us two additional reasons for work:

- ✠ **Provide for our families:** *"If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever"* (1 Timothy 5:8).
- ✠ **Provide for the needy:** *"[He] must work . . . doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need"* (Ephesians 4:28).

Give thanks to God for your work. Work to the best of your ability. Share with others the rewards of your work.

Blessings on Your Stewardship Journey!