



## Peace Lutheran Church

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### Trans-spiritualism

A white woman identifies as black and becomes a leader in a black civil rights organization. A male Olympic champion in the decathlon identifies as female, has surgery, and buys a new wardrobe to be accepted as a woman. Welcome to the new cultural phenomenon of self-identification! According to this latest craze, a person can be part of a group regardless of whether he or she meets the physical qualifications for that group or not. All a person has to do is “identify” himself or herself as a member of a group and that person is in. Objective qualifications don’t matter anymore. Biology doesn’t matter anymore. Truth doesn’t matter anymore. All you have to do is *feel* a certain way and identify as a member of a group and you are in the group.

Many people are confused and shocked by this seemingly new practice. But it’s not really a new practice. Humanity has been practicing self-identification for millennia. It hasn’t been transgenderism (not identifying with the gender with which you were born) or trans racialism (not identifying with the race with which you were born). It has to do with something I’ll call “trans-spiritualism” which is not identifying with the spiritual state into which you were born.

The Bible says, “Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.” (Psalm 51:5) Since that is so negative and can damage self-esteem, many people prefer to self-identify as pretty good people rather than poor miserable sinners. As long as they try hard to be good and are really nice to other people, they feel that they are in the group of pretty good people who are accepted by God. They feel pretty good about themselves.

As part of the Great Commission, Jesus says, “[Teach] them to observe all that I have commanded you.” (Matthew 28:20) Since believing everything Jesus taught seems to be too restrictive or difficult, many people prefer to self-identify as Christians simply because they feel that they are Christians, speak of God, think Jesus is really cool, and talk about spiritual things.

Self-identification and trans-whatever are frauds which deny the truth, especially in spiritual matters. Self-identifying as being good does not make us good. Feeling that we are Christians does not make us Christians. Only God has the right to identify us and only God has the power to place us into any group.

While we identify ourselves as pretty good people, God clearly identifies us as sinners who are not good at all. In His Word, God says, “None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one.” (Romans 3:10-12)

While we would like to identify ourselves with the people of God by being religious and trying to do good, we are powerless to do so. To think that we are part of God’s people for those reasons is to delude ourselves. God is the only One who can place us into a different group than the group we were born into. And He did that very thing through His Son, Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ self-identified with sinful humanity by taking on human flesh, being baptized in the Jordan, living the perfect life God demanded, assuming the sin, guilt, and punishment for all people, and dying the death God required for it. God made Jesus the head of the new group (something the Bible calls “the Church”) by raising Him from the dead. Now, Jesus is the source of forgiveness, life, and salvation.

Through Christ, God now identifies us differently. The Word of God says, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.” (2 Corinthians 5:17) When we are “in Christ”, that is, joined to Christ through Holy Baptism, we have not been merely repaired or revamped, but we are totally new creations and members of the body of Christ. We did not choose this group for ourselves, but we have been chosen for this group by God’s grace for the sake of Jesus Christ.

So, don’t worry about trying to “self-identify” with a different group than the one into which you were born, namely, Adam’s family of death. Rather, rejoice that Jesus self-identified with you and made you members of a new group, namely, Christ’s family of life in which you now live and will live forever.

In Christ

Pastor Steven R. Schlund

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**Everyone who came to Deaf Camp and helped in anyway.**  
**Arnie Gidlow** for leading worship here at Peace while Pastor Schlund was at camp.  
**Everyone** who worked at the fair booth.  
**All of the ladies** who go to Benefis Skilled Nursing Center, Park Place Nursing Home, Bee Hive Home and Highgate House for hymn singing and devotions every month.  
**Gloria Creek and Val Martin** for playing the organ during our worship services.  
**All those who volunteer** to teach Sunday school, Bible class, and midweek classes.  
**Everyone on the Prayer Chain** for their time and prayers.  
**Everyone** who has donated treats for our fellowship time.  
**All of the men** who volunteer to usher.  
**Angelika Fisher** for cleaning the church.  
**All of the people** who stay after and clean the kitchen after Bible study.  
**Cheri Magnuson** for cleaning the Communion linens.  
 This list is not inclusive. Please accept our apologies if we have missed giving you credit for serving the Lord in any fashion. We know that the Lord knows your service to Him.

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David and Doris Wise say: "Thank you for coming to camp at Bigfork and for all of your help with food and preparations during the meals!!"

Rolph and Lois Foster say: "Thank you for coming to the Deaf Bible Camp Everybody looked like they were enjoying and having fun! THANK YOU to Rev. Steven who spoke of his "Holy Land" tour for the Bible Study. It was very interesting to all of us! THANK YOU for help in the kitchen!!"

## LWML

- ♥ **Our next meeting and Bible study will be Tuesday, September 15 at 6:30 p.m.** All ladies of Peace are invited to join us! Remember your Mite Boxes!
- ♥ **The Central Zone Fall Rally will be held at Peace Lutheran in Great Falls on October 10 from 10 a.m. to about 2 p.m.** The guest speaker will be **Helen Lewis** who was the Central Zone delegate to the national convention in Des Moines. She will be giving her presentation of her experiences and passing along information from the convention. We are in need of people to help us plan the noon meal and specifics. If you would like to help in anyway, please contact Gloria Creek, Central Zone President.
- ♥ **The Fall LWML Retreat will be at Camp Utmost this year on September 18 & 19.** The cost is \$55 per person and is now due. Elsie Huss and Ruth Denning will be going. If you want a ride, please let one of them know. Registration forms are in the church office or in the spring issue of the *Montana Missive*.
- ♥ **Remember to bring your new soap for Soap Sunday on the second Sunday of each month.** Soap collected will go to Lutheran World Relief. Thanks for your continued support.
- ♥ **The LWML Montana District Convention will be held at Peace Lutheran in Great Falls next year April 29, 30 and May 1.** We are in the planning stages and could use your help! **Ruth Denning and Val Martin** are the co-chairs of the convention. Please contact one of them if you are interested in helping in anyway.

## Finances

CHURCH INCOME	YTD ACTUAL	YTD BUDGET
Regular offerings	\$75,637.75	\$77,700.00
Other income	\$3959.01	\$630.00
Total income	\$79,596.76	\$78,330.00
CHURCH EXPENSES		
Personnel/Benefits	\$45,966.26	\$46,923.31
Administrative	\$4,580.56	\$5,022.50
Buildings & Grounds	\$13,684.19	\$14,087.57
Missions	\$6,459.45	\$6,708.31
Christian Education	\$2,573.20	\$3,062.57
Total expenses	\$73,266.36	\$75,804.26
Net Church Income	\$6,330.40	\$2,525.74



## September Anniversaries

Sept. 3	Darrell and Cindy Greenwood
Sept. 8	Ernie and Judy VanVleet
Sept. 10	Karen Schaefer and Dave Snuggs
Sept. 10	James and Susan Knoll
Sept. 19	Richard & Charlene Schotthey
Sept. 27	Jason and Brook Gerard
Sept. 29	Robert and Angela Fletcher
Sept. 30	Lyle and Joan Sivumaki

## Baptismal Anniversaries

September 1	Tara Onstad
1	Carl Kangas
4	Jill Keil
7	Jessamy Blomgren
9	Joe Furr I
19	Elsie Huss
24	Paul Rubino
29	Karin Steinke
30	Paul James Rubino



### INCLUDE THESE PEOPLE IN YOUR PRAYERS:

The following people are experiencing health problems:

- Tami Birkholz**, John's sister-in-law who is battling a rare skin tissue disorder
- June Foard**, June Meier's daughter
- Jane Hering**
- Dorothy Neuman**

Our members who are away serving in the military are **Kurt Mueller** and **Michael Lewis**.

## Rally Day

**Rally Day** will be on Sunday, September 13<sup>th</sup> as we begin Sunday School and Midweek Bible School for the fall. There will be Divine Service at 9:30 AM with the Installation of the Teaching Staff for 2015-2016. Afterwards, students will meet their teachers and have their first lesson. At noon, lunch will be provided and there will be 2 bouncy houses and lots of fun for all. Feel free to bring a dessert to share. Plan now to join us for this fun day!

## Choir practice begins...

The choir will begin practice **on Tuesday, September 1 at 5:45 p.m.** at Peace Lutheran. Anyone interested in joining the choir is welcome to come and give it a try! New voices are always welcome! If you have questions or want further information, please see Val Martin.

## Family Night Kickoff

Family Night with adult Bible study and midweek classes will begin on Wednesday, September 16 with an Italian themed potluck! Each Wednesday at 6:00 p.m. there will be a potluck meal followed at 6:30 p.m. by adult Bible study and midweek classes. **"Christianity and the Competition"** will be the topic of the Adult Study. There are so many competing religions and philosophies in our country and our world today. Which is right? How can we know? This video series by Dr. Paul Maier will look at world religions, what they teach, how they compare to Christianity, and how Christians can respond. Join us for this exciting study.

## Adult Inquirers' Class

**Adult Inquirers' Class** will begin on Sunday, September 20<sup>th</sup> and will run for approximately 12 Sunday evenings from 7:00 – 8:30 PM. The course covers the basic teachings of Christianity through the use of the Bible and Luther's Small Catechism. Welcome to attend are people who want to know what the Lutheran church and our congregation believes and practices; people who desire to become members of Peace Lutheran Church; and people who want to review what they learned in confirmation class. There is no obligation to become a member after completing the class. If you would like more information or know of someone who might be interested in receiving an invitation to this course, talk to Pastor Schlund.

## Ladies Bible Study Schedule

The **FRIDAY LADIES BIBLE CLASS** will not meet in September! They will resume their study of I CORINTHIANS in October.

Assisted Living Ministry with hymn singing and a devotion will be held at the following locations. On Tuesday, September 8th at 11 a.m. they will be at the newly expanded Bee Hive Home #2, 2816 15th Ave. So. Later in the month ladies and gentlemen will meet on Friday, September 18th for a no host lunch at 11:45 a.m. at the Montana Club, 907 Smelter Ave NE.

Afterward many in the group will go to Highgate House, 3000 11th Ave. So. Know that you are always welcome to "drop in" on any of these activities. God blesses the fellowship, the singing and the reading of His Word!

## Applying Biblical Teachings

“So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you” (Luke 11:9).

If the question, “Why do I not have?” is raised, the answer that must be given is, “Because you have not asked.” God commands us to ask. When we ask for something in prayer, according to His will, He will give it to us. That is His promise. The Apostle Paul wrote, “He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all — how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?” (Romans 8:32).

In his epistle, James powerfully captures what happens when self-interest and selfishness overshadow our Christian living and a proper and diligent prayer life is not maintained. “What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don’t they come from your desires that battle within you? You want something but don’t get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures. You adulterous people, don’t you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. Or do you think Scripture says without reason that the spirit he caused to live in us envies intensely? But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: ‘God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.’ Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded” (James 4:1-8).

One cannot separate the true Christian life, that of glorifying God and the giving of loving service to those around us, from prayer. If one were to view the heartbeat of the Christian life as the Holy Spirit working through Word and Sacrament, then most definitely, prayer would have to be the pulse. One cannot emphasize enough that prayer is a vital part of Christian life.

It is sad that we often relinquish ourselves and our church to the poverty of being without God’s full measure of power, riches, wisdom and strength simply because we fail to diligently ask in Christ’s name.

We are to take everything to God in prayer. First, we confess our sins and plead for forgiveness for Christ’s sake. Then, in Christ, we pray for power to overcome sin and the fury of Satan as we go about His work. In Christ, we pray for the financial resources we need to carry out His work and to provide for our earthly needs. In Christ, we pray for wisdom to properly use all that He has given us. In Christ, we pray for strength to do all things according to His will. When we pray diligently in faith, God answers and brings our will into conformity with His will.

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God” (Phil. 4:6).