



Peace Lutheran Church

3340 Eleventh Avenue South,
Great Falls, Montana 59405

761-7343

The Rev. Steven Schlund, Pastor

Office: 761-7343

Home: 952-4567

www.peacelutherangreatfalls.org

September, 2016

The Only Thing That Really Matters September 2017

The young man always had a reason for not being able to eat. During the week, he always had his reasons. He couldn't eat breakfast because that was the time he spent in the gym exercising and getting into shape. He had no time for lunch because that was when he would catch up on his homework at school. He declined invitations from his parents to join them for supper because that was when he worked at his part-time job.

On the weekends, nothing changed. He always had a reason for not being able to eat. He would sleep in on Saturday and Sunday and always miss breakfast. After all, it was his only time to sleep in. But once he was up, he always had a reason for not eating. Now was the time to take part in his hobbies and pastimes. Golfing, softball, camping, hunting, fishing, and many other things took up his every waking hour.

His parents were worried because he was becoming weaker and weaker. Soon, he was nothing but skin and bones and very ill. His parents urged him to change his ways and act differently, to take time and eat. But the young man refused to change and continued to maintain his reasons for not eating. He said, "But I need to work out and stay in shape. I need to study so that I can pass my classes. If I don't work, I'll never get by. And who doesn't need rest and relaxation on the weekends?" The young man finally died of starvation. And do you know what? While none of his reasons for avoiding food were bad or sinful in and of themselves, in the long run, the validity of these reasons made no difference at all. The young man won the argument about the excuses, but still lost his life.

Like many of Jesus' parables, this little story uses exaggeration to make its point. No one would've let this young man die of starvation while arguing about his reasons for doing so. Arguing about the reasons for not eating misses the point altogether. It is eating and receiving the nutrition necessary to sustain life which is most important here.

Many people are exactly like the young man in the story when it comes to participation in Divine Service. There are always reasons for not attending. Some are exactly the same as the young man's reasons for not eating: conflicts with school, work, and recreation. When it comes to discussing lack of attendance, especially with inactive members, attention is always focused on the validity of the reasons. People will say, "But I have to work;" "I need to study;" "It's my only time to sleep in;" "Everyone needs some fun in their lives."

Just for the sake of argument, even if we grant the validity of all of these arguments, does it really matter in the long run? If the only reason we attend Divine Service is to punch our religious attendance card, then maybe so. These things would all count as excused absences. But is that the reason we attend Divine Service? Is it because we have to in order to fulfill a religious duty?

In the story, the young man was not being urged simply to sit down at a dining room table. I'm sure he had more important things to do than that. He was being urged to come there in order to receive food which would nourish his body and keep him alive. If he saw his need for food and the benefit which food could get him, then he might've made different choices.

The same is true in our spiritual lives. The psalmist wrote, "I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go to the house of the Lord!'" (Psalm 122:1) The people of God come to the house of the Lord, not because they reluctantly have to, but because they joyfully want to. We come because we recognize our great need. We have sinned against a holy and just God in thought, word, and deed; by the evil we have done and by the good we have failed to do. We face death, both earthly and spiritual, because of it. We hunger and thirst for God's righteousness and forgiveness so we come to his Church to be fed. We receive His righteousness through His Word joined to the waters of Holy Baptism. We receive His forgiveness through His Word Holy Absolution, through the reading of the Holy Scriptures, and through the preaching of His Holy Word. We are fed His body and blood in Holy Communion. We come, literally starving to death, and we leave, fully fed and nourished.

Ultimately, no reason, whether we think it is valid or not, makes any difference at all. It does no good at all for you to end up in hell with the assurance that all of your reasons for not attending Divine Service were valid. The only thing that really matters is whether you are receiving the Word of God or not. Let us not starve ourselves to death spiritually as we debate whether we should attend Divine Service or not. Instead, let us joyfully come to the house of the Lord and gratefully be fed by His Word in its various forms without anything preventing us from doing so. Martin Luther sums it up well in his explanation to the Third Commandment where he writes, "We should fear and love God so that we do not despise preaching and His Word, but hold it sacred and gladly here and learn it."

In Christ, Our Lord,
Pastor Schlund

**T
H
A
N
K
S
TO**

Everyone who came to Deaf Camp and helped in anyway.
Everyone who donated items to Sunnyside school.
Donnalene, Jayden, Lauren, Kaylee, and Cole for delivering the school items to Sunnyside school.
Everyone who donated composition books to Cascade County Detention Center.
Arnie Gidlow and Pat Lewis for leading worship here at Peace while Pastor Schlund was at camp and on vacation.
Everyone who worked at the fair booth.
Donnalene McPartlin for working for Ruth in the church office while she was on vacation.
All of the people 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.

LWML

- ♥ **Our next meeting and Bible study will be Tuesday, September 12 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 on October 7 from 10 a.m. to about 2 p.m.** Val Martin will speak about her adventures and experiences at the LWML national convention in Albuquerque. If you would like to help in anyway, please contact Val Martin. Plan now to come!
- ♥ **From September 10 through October 8,** we will be collecting items for the Crow and Northern Cheyenne Native Americans, where Rev. Dan Jacobs and Rev. Dennis Bauer serve. Items being collected are **winter hats, gloves, mittens and warm socks, all sizes and for all ages.** Please purchase these items and bring them to the church anytime during these dates. We will be taking them to Billings on Friday, October 13.
- ♥ **The Fall LWML Retreat will be at Camp Utmost this year on September 15 & 17.** This is the first time we will be staying 2 nights and have a Sunday morning worship service as our closing. The cost is \$85 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.
- ♥ **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.

Ladies Bible Study Schedule

Fall is in the air. Gardens have produced in abundance, and September is the big harvest month. It's a joy to see the Lord's bounty ripen after a warm growing season. Now school bells are ringing and students are back in school eager to be one grade higher on the education ladder.

As school begins, the FRIDAY LADIES BIBLE CLASS is eager to pick up their study of MATTHEW'S GOSPEL. They will meet for Bible study on **September 8th, 15th, and 22nd from 1-3 pm** at the home of Marge Johnsten, 3000 8th Ave So. If you have not stopped in to one of their Bible studies in the past, try to attend one this month! Unlike students with the grade levels, this group all learns together, whether one is new to Bible study or has been studying for many years. Always know you are welcome to come as often or infrequently as your schedule allows.

Assisted Living Ministry continues through September with hymn singing and a devotion. Join them at the following locations. On Tuesday, **September 12th at 11:00 a.m.** ladies and gentlemen will meet at Bee Hive Home #2, 2816 15th Ave So. On **Friday, September 29th at 11:45 a.m.** they will gather for a no host lunch at the Bar S, 5100 North Star Blvd. After lunch many will go to Highgate House, 3000 11th Ave So. Treat yourself and bring a friend to lunch and join them at Highgate to spread the joy of God's promises!



September Anniversaries

Sept. 3 Darrell and Cindy Greenwood
 Sept. 8 Ernie and Judy VanVleet
 Sept. 10 James and Susan Knoll
 Sept. 19 Richard & Charlene Schottey
 Sept. 27 Jason and Brook Gerard
 Sept. 29 Robert and Angela Fletcher

Baptismal Anniversaries

September 1 Tara Onstad
 1 Carl Kangas
 7 Jessamy Blomgren
 13 Jayden McPartlin
 13 Cole McPartlin
 19 Elsie Huss
 20 Kate Creek
 24 Paul Rubino
 26 Ted Barnes
 29 Karin Steinke



INCLUDE THESE PEOPLE IN YOUR PRAYERS:

The following people are experiencing health problems:

Tami Birkholz, Karen's sister-in-law who is battling a rare skin tissue disorder
Michael Drummond – Lupus
Joseph Furr II (Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia).
Leonard Gidlow
Jane Hering
Connie Juden
Rev. Erich Kaelberer
June Meier
Bill and Dorothy Neuman
David Norman
Kathy Politz
Jean Radke

One member who is away serving in the military is **Michael Lewis**.

Choir practice begins...

The choir will begin practice **on Tuesday, September 12 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 Begins!

We will begin Family Night again on Wednesday, September 13th. This is a time for brothers and sisters in Christ to be together, share a meal, and study the Word of God. We begin with a potluck dinner at 6 PM. The theme for our first meeting is Italian. At 6:30 PM, there will be a preconfirmation class for the fifth and sixth grade students of our congregation. The Adult Bible Study will resume its study of Luther's Large Catechism. We are currently studying the 10 Commandments. We close with a short devotion at 7:30 PM. Come and join us for this time to be together as the family of God at Peace Lutheran Church. If you have any questions, please talk with Pastor Schlund.

Finances

JANUARY 1, TO JULY 31, 2017		
CHURCH INCOME	YTD ACTUAL	YTD BUDGET
Regular Offerings	\$ 78,256.73	\$ 79,916.69
Interest Income	\$ 709.20	\$ 583.31
Total Income	\$ 78,965.93	\$ 80,500.00
Church Expenses		
Personnel/Benefits	\$ 50,529.85	\$ 50,795.85
Administrative		
Buildings & Grounds	\$ 14,374.46	\$ 14,862.50
Missions	\$ 6,624.79	\$ 6,708.31
Christian Education	\$ 4,279.57	\$ 3,420.81
Total Expenses	\$ 80,074.38	\$80,576.59
Net Church Income	\$ (1,108.45)	\$ (76.59)

Composition Books - We are helping the Cascade County Detention Center by collecting composition books for them again this year. If you would like to donate composition books, which are now on sale during the Back to School sales, please bring them to the church and we will be sure they get to the Cascade County Detention Center. The Mental Health staff hands out about 1 journal per month to the inmates that request them. The inmates use these books to do their Bible studies, process and clarify their thoughts and feelings, reduce stress, problem solve, and work on their legal issues. **The books cannot have any staples, metal spiral or other sharp parts.**

2018 Calendars

Wall and pocket sized are on sale today! This is a fund raiser for the youth. Please see the display in the hallway.

“Life Quotes” from Lutherans For Life

September 3 “In every task you tackle, at every moment in life, in whatever situation you find yourself, you have a calling, a vocation. You get to bless people. You get to show God’s love. You get to elevate the conversation, change the perspective, and bring dignity into a difficult world. You get to live in the life that He gifts you with, love meant for you, love meant for all.” *Rev. Dr. Gregory Seltz, speaker on The Lutheran Hour – A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life* • www.lutheransforlife.org

September 10 “What do we have to share with the frail elderly who wonder about God’s purpose for their lives? They are created, redeemed, and called, and as long as God gives them life, He gives their lives meaning and purpose.” *Rev. Dr. James I. Lamb, former executive director of Lutherans For Life – A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life* • www.lutheransforlife.org