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A Message from Pastor Mark:

Why read the New Testament?

As we begin our New Testament Challenge, this is an important question to ask. Here are some of my answers. Yours may not be just the same, but I think you'll see some connections with your reasons.

- The New Testament gives us Christians *our language and our culture*, even literally the words that we worship with. Without knowing the New Testament we don't really know how to think, talk, feel, pray, and worship as Christians.
- The New Testament is *radical*. That means two things. The first is that it is way out there spiritually and morally. Take this one example from 1 Thessalonians 5:21b-22: "...hold fast to what is good; abstain from every form of evil." When Paul wrote those words he meant them quite literally and directly. But that's not the way most people live now. We tend to hold fast to what is profitable *for us*, and we don't so much abstain from evil as avoid direct contact with it, like it's hair lice. That is, our approach to good and evil tends to be selfish. But Paul is speaking morally and spiritually. He expects the church to be counter-cultural, to be **devoted to good** and to abstain literally **from every form of evil**.
- The second thing that the word *radical* means is *rooted*. The New Testament is way out there morally and spiritually exactly because it is *rooted* in Jesus Christ. Reading the New Testament grafts us into Jesus and his movement, his gospel. Through it he encounters us, teaches us, molds us, gives us his life. He also does this through the church's sacramental worship, but always along with his words and his presence.
- We read the New Testament to become surprised by God. If you think you already pretty much know what Christianity is and what is the gospel, and you haven't read

the NT, then God has a surprise for you! Without the NT, what we know and believe is merely *our gospel*, what we think we want and need from God, what we think God should be. But I promise you that God has far better ideas than we have, and we will find them in the NT.

- We read the New Testament to become equipped as Christians. Church leaders (especially Sunday School superintendents) *often* hear the excuse "But I don't know enough to _____ (teach, pray, lead, volunteer, give, worship, witness – fill in the blank yourself). And that argument often wins, because so many of us are in fact truly un-equipped. We don't know the textbook. So now we'll know it.
- We read the New Testament in order to become part of the Great Conversation. For 2000 years the church has been having a Great Conversation about God – God's surprising action in Jesus Christ, what that means for God's universe, God's future, God's relationship to us, God's struggle against evil, and much more. Think of it as a campfire that's been burning for 2000 years, around which generations upon generations of God's people have gathered, talked, sang, lived and died in hope of the Great Transformation that is coming. When we read the NT we get closer to that fire, we learn the language and the songs, we take our place at the campfire and grow up there and we keep the gathering going. There really is light and darkness in the world (I'm speaking spiritually), and there's no use pretending otherwise. The NT helps us to see both and to know where the light is coming from that the darkness cannot overcome.

Another thing we need to keep in mind in reading the New Testament is that it is various. We will encounter there different ideas about Jesus Christ, about the endtimes, about faith, about the church, about God. That doesn't have to upset us (although you may well find it surprising!), because we know that ultimately Jesus Christ is himself the Word of God in the fullest sense of that phrase. The NT is one of our primary witnesses to him and it is true



because he is true. But those who wrote the NT (over the course of nearly a century) didn't all agree on all matters, and neither do we. Reading the NT may not answer all your questions; indeed, it may give you more questions! But those questions will be better informed ones than before. Nonetheless, as Luther pointed out, the Bible bears Christ to us like a manger bearing a child.

See you in church! And online at <http://peaceholland.wordpress.com>

Pastor Mark

**From the Bishop
Called to Common Mission**

“We will actively collaborate with Lutheran, ecumenical, and inter-faith partners in

- forming and renewing nimble and sustainable ministries
- equipping servant leaders, and
- enhancing available financial resources for mission and ministry locally and globally.”

I invite you to think through and adopt these priorities as a way of “doing the faith” in your congregation, even as we are now, as synod leaders, seeking to fully embrace them for the synod during the next three years. I invite you to “own” as a core value that “we will not do alone what we can do better together” as you witness to the crucified and risen Christ present everywhere in our local and global networks and communities.

Ten years ago, on the Day of Epiphany in 2001, a new relationship of full communion with the Episcopal Church was celebrated in worship at the Washington National Cathedral. The document that would guide our life and work together, “Called to Common Mission,” was actually adopted in 1999. Full communion meant, and means, we have come to a point in our histories as expressions of the body of Christ that we can joyfully commune at each other’s celebrations of the Lord’s Supper. It means that, where most helpful, our rostered leaders, our ordained ministers, can be servant leaders in each other’s parishes. And it means, I think most importantly, that we are indeed called to a common mission, to live the three priorities above, for the sake of the world.

I frequently hear that we are being prayed for Sunday after Sunday in Episcopal congregations, large and small, all across the Lower Peninsula. Because we both believe that weekly worship is at the center of our life in Christ, this Episcopal practice is deeply heartening. Called to common mission means that in communities like Elk Rapids, Northport, Oscoda, DeWitt, and soon Kentwood, our spiritual leaders may be either Lutheran or Episcopalian. It is a way we enhance

our available financial resources to reach out together in deed and in word in Jesus’ name to bless the communities in which we live. It strengthens our witness to the redemptive work of Christ whose sacrificial love makes us one in God’s mission to save and renew the whole world.

Called to common mission goes far beyond our Lutheran-Episcopal relationships. In an interesting new move we are praying about and talking about is a possible consolidation with the Southeast Michigan Synod. With hoped-for Synod Council endorsement this month and Synod Assembly approval in May, we will seek insight and direction in the months ahead from every congregation and every conference toward creating a plan for missional action in the Lower Peninsula. This could be expressed, perhaps within two or three years, in the reconfiguration of our synods in a form we do not yet know. For us such a bold move, if taken, would be driven by those same three priorities stated above.

This is such a blessed time to be a member of Christ’s church. We live with the rich promise that the risen Christ is everywhere uniting us to work with him in bringing grace, mercy, and peace to all.

Waiting for the Crocuses

I write this while the snow is falling and ice covers the parking lot at St. Stephen’s in Lansing. It will be awhile before the crocuses show forth their simple beauty. Now they are little bulbs in the frigid earth. They wait, we wait until it is time for them to break through, to blossom forth, to evoke in us once more this sign of new life.

Meanwhile we are grounded. We are in the dark, rich soil of our sacred scriptures, always pointing to Christ, to salvation and to honor for the dis-graced. We are in communities of faith all over this synod where life-giving words are given every week to those dwelling in cold, hard and harsh environments where there is no liberating light except the gospel.

Surely we hope for that which we cannot yet see. And in the words of Romans 5, this hope does not disappoint us, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us. We wait for the crocuses, **and** because we are in Christ, we embrace, perhaps even love, the snow and the ice, knowing that God is keeping us, God is working in the quiet darkness of this humus, this frozen earth.

In the midst of a remarkable Winter Leadership Event earlier this week (January 16-18), I met with our conference deans. I shared with them my hopefulness, wondering with them whether I as your bishop, as an ELCA bishop, was in touch with reality, in this “winter of our discontent.” I see, virtually daily, glimpses of the

February Birthdays!

Bob Hunt	2
Brian Galioto	3
Foster Barnett	4
Ken Wollner	5
Irene Bartlett	7
Adam DeLand	7
Mary Moore	8
Jacalyn Cordero	10
Calin Nichols	23

death and burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. As nonsensical as it seems, life seems incredibly wonderful. Well, none of the deans said I had lost my sanity and should get a grip. Our conversation about our synod and our congregations and the talks about possible union with the Southeast Michigan Synod were earthy and honest, pretty “gloss-free,” **and** filled with hope in God.

We are grounded, in the best sense of the word. We are waiting for the crocuses. Marked with the cross of Christ forever, we are claimed, gathered, and sent for the sake of the world. We are filled with an indomitable hope.

Bishop Schleicher

Missions Minute

Benevolence of the Month

Meg Fryling is about two and a half years into her studies at the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Philadelphia. This year she is working with two congregations for an internship year. Megan does have a full tuition scholarship from our synod to attend seminary, but she is still responsible for her living expenses. As Peace Lutheran is Megan’s home congregation, we are expected to help support Meg with her living expenses. Our goal each year is to be able to send at least \$1500 to Meg through the seminary. We will be asking the congregation to contribute money to Meg four times this year as a Benevolence of the Month. February is the first month for this year. Thank you for your continued support of Meg, the ministry that she is doing and the knowledge that she is gaining in her seminary

WELCA

As usual January brought ice and snow to Michigan - school started back up, the sign went up in our narthex for all of our participants in the NTC to get their gold stars as they read through the Bible this year, and our “properties” workers went about the job of locating water leaks and handling the repairs. WELCA helped take down the Christmas decorations and sent in their annual synod offering. There are only seven women in this group in January because we lose a couple snowbirds in the winter.

At our last meeting we discussed our card ministry budget, use of WELCA funds, our health, the weather, the summer church picnic and the church council minutes. All this was preceded by a very interesting discussion led by Pastor Rich. We would like to enlarge our group any time so consider this an open invitation to join us in the front meeting room any Wednesday morning at 9:30 as we begin our NTC in February.

studies.

ELCA Good Gifts

In December we collected a total of \$475 for the ELCA Good Gifts. Thank you to everyone who contributed to this collection. Our goal initial goal of \$200 to help establish a community vegetable garden was easily met. We have decided that we will also contribute \$150 to purchase a hand water pump for a community. Safe drinking water is often a challenge for many communities in developing countries. To expand on the garden theme, we will purchase three sets of tools needed for growing food for a total of \$75 and five fruit tree seedlings at \$50. Our congregation has truly been able to do some good with the money that was collected during December! Thank you!!

God’s Mission is Taking Place Among Us...

I would like you to send to me digital photos of mission and ministry events in congregations and other settings, including outreach ministry. I plan to make a DVD for the Synod Assembly that will emphasize God’s mission that is taking place among us. Please send them to me by email (rogerhardy@mittensynod.org).

Pastor Roger Hardy, Director for Evangelical Mission, N/W Lower MI Synod



Jesus is here with in this building all the time. He supports and will help us read about His life and His plans for each of us. Mark DeLand also has plans. He gave me a set of four questions that each of us need to be considering as we do our reading: 1) What are the chapters you are read this week saying to you? 2) What is this assignment saying to our congregation as a whole? 3) What insight have you gained from what you have read? and 4) What questions are you left with? No, we won’t be required to write four essays every week. It’s just a guide to give us food for thought. In the meantime I was gifted with a laptop for Christmas and have discovered that my brain is a usless lump of mush when it comes to understanding the complexities of any complicated thoughts. So my two questions to Mark are: 1) Where is the Bible file located in my head? and 2) How do I retrieve any information I store there. I already know what Mark’s answer will be: “Say your prayers.”

February Baptism Dates

Zach Weatherbee	10
Janis Gibbs	21
Diane Wollner	23
Ashton MacLennan	25
Brayden MacLennan	25
Calin Nichols	25



Peace Lutheran Church
Congregation Council Meeting
January 11, 2011

Attending: Pastor Mark Rich, Bob Hunt, Mark DeLand, Julie Monetta, Connie Shakley, Dave Barnett & Laura Duckworth

Absent: Ellen Pearson & Julie Monetta—both excused

Quorum was established at 7:10 PM.

Mark DeLand opened with devotions at 7:20 PM.

Pastor Mark and Bob Hunt read thank you letters addressed to the congregation.

Pastor Mark announced that Ron Post is in a nursing home and is recovering nicely. Pastor Mark said he his planning to take vacation time during Spring Break.

Bob Hunt reported that we have paid 50 per cent of the roofing cost to Mihm Enterprises. Bob Hunt set up a Task Force to investigate roofing options and to examine the possibility of a new boiler. There will be three informational meetings on January 23, January 30, and February 6, 2011. Linda Hutchison has resigned from her Parish Nurse duties. She will be available on Sundays to answer health related questions and do blood pressure checks. There will be a thank you ceremony for Linda on February 12, 2011 during the congregation meeting.

Dave Barnett reported favorably on the new custodian's performance.

Laura Duckworth summarized the written Treasurer's Report. She reported that Pastor Mark's Continuing Education has not been paid for the year. She made a motion to set up a **Contingency/Undesignated Borrowing Fund**, which would separately reflect any general borrowings from Special Funds (negative balance), or contingency funds specifically set aside for times of shortage (positive balance). This account is meant to be for temporary borrowings in cash flow crunches or for emergencies. Connie Shakley 2nd. Motion passed unopposed.

Laura proposed a continuing resolution to allow the Treasurer to use the **Contingency/Undesignated Borrowing Fund** only down to a total negative balance of \$4000, and no more than \$3000 in one month, without special Council approval. Council must specifically approve any use other than these amounts or usage of this account for any other spending than "regular usage" bills and payroll. Council and Treasurer are to be diligent in repaying this account to a zero or positive balance as funds become available. Mark DeLand 2nd. Motion passed unopposed.

Mark DeLand made a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report. Connie Shakley 2nd. Motion passed unopposed.

Diane Oberlin submitted a written Financial Secretary report. Connie Shakley made a motion to approve the Financial Secretary's report. Dave Barnett 2nd. Motion passed unopposed.

Pastor Mark announced that the next Evangelism meeting is on January 16, 2011 at 7 PM.

Stewardship Committee—no report

The NTC-50 is up and running. We have a blog page that is updated with a reading list and helpful links.

Bob Hunt announced that a three stage above ground water line plan to permanently repair the water leak is completed. There is an additional water leak somewhere in the men's bathroom, and there is a more water damage to the ceiling in the women's bathroom.

Laura Duckworth made a motion to extend the meeting to 9:23 pm. Connie Shakley 2nd. Motion passed. One abstained. The nominating committee has a list of names for consideration on the ballot.

The Budget Committee will submit a budget proposal on Saturday January 15, 2011 at the retreat. The Council Assignments will be defined at the retreat.

Laura Duckworth made a motion to extend the meeting to 9:35 pm. Dave Barnett 2nd. Motion passed. One abstained.

Laura Duckworth made a motion to have council meeting times on the first Monday at 7 pm of each month except when the Monday falls on a Holiday, then the meeting time will be at 7 pm on the Monday following the Holiday. Connie Shakley 2nd. Motion passed unopposed.

Laura Duckworth made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Connie Shakley 2nd. The motion passed unopposed. The meeting closed with Pastor Mark leading the council in the Lord's Prayer at 9:35 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Mark DeLand

Congregational Meeting

You are called as people of God and of Peace to attend this important Congregational Meeting. We will vote on the new budget, vote for a new council member, and all other current business.

Fellowship Committee

The Cuisine of India cooking class was a great success (many thanks to Devadip Tracy Barnett and Sri Lori Haltenhoff). There is a scrapbook with photos in the Fellowship Hall. If you missed this one, be sure to come to the next class.

February is Mystery Month. Practice your yee-ha's and put on your chaps and spurs and mosey on over to church for a wild and wacky Western Mystery Night on Saturday, February 19th at 7:00 PM. More details available at church.

Stewardship Committee

The 2011 Stewardship Committee has been formed, and meets briefly every Sunday after worship. Please see Jim Oberstadt if you are interested in creating a congregation of generous people.

Calling All Men

Please join us for the Men's Breakfast at Peace on Saturday, February 12 @ 8 AM. Bring along your appetite, your prayers, some tools, and your sons if you've got 'em.

Lutheran World Relief

Lutheran World Relief (LWR) has named Kurt Buchholz its vice president for special initiatives, a newly created position. He will start on February 15.

In this new position, Buchholz will lead the Lutheran Malaria Initiative (LMI), a partnership of LWR and The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) to mobilize U.S. Lutherans in the global effort to eliminate malaria deaths in Africa by 2015. LMI is made possible through support from the United Nations Foundation and aims to raise \$45 million by 2015 for the global fight against malaria.

The Lutheran Malaria Initiative, currently in its pilot phase, has already begun making a difference in the fight against malaria. Congregations such as Central Lutheran Church in Minneapolis and Zion Lutheran Church in Dallas are already engaging members, and a national rollout of the campaign will take place later this year. Pilot programming in Africa has already started making a difference as well: a program with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania resulted in a significant increase in use of insecticide-treated bed nets among church members and marked improvements in the availability of medications to treat malaria at ELCT-run medical facilities.

Buchholz most recently served as interim executive director of LCMS World Mission in St. Louis, the \$30 million global mission outreach organization of the LCMS. He had worked for the organization since 1993, in a variety of positions, where he helped reverse a decade-long trend of decreasing revenue and led the organization to financial stability. Buchholz was instrumental in leading the rollout of a complex \$100 million fundraising campaign for LCMS World Mission scheduled to end this year.

Buchholz has lived and worked in Taiwan in various leadership roles, including school start-up and management, and he and his wife Jenny served as missionaries there for seven years. He is a graduate of Concordia University, Irvine, Calif., in the elementary education program and received his Director of Christian Education certification and a Master of Arts in organizational management from Concordia University, St Paul, Minn.

"We are very pleased to have Kurt on board, given his past successes in leading large scale initiatives and campaigns," said John Nunes, LWR's president and CEO. "He brings a wealth of experience and passion to this position and we are excited to welcome him to LWR."

"I worked closely with LWR in my previous position, and I'm thrilled to be joining such a respected and effective organization," Buchholz said. "As a person of faith, I consider it a great privilege to be able to live out my vocation in a way that has a positive impact on the world and shows care and support for others, and I look forward to doing that with LWR."

You Might Be A Lutheran If:

...you are referred to as the frozen chosen!

February

2011

February Benevolence
Meg Fryling

<u>Sunday</u>	<u>Monday</u> Office Hours Pastor 9-12	<u>Tuesday</u> Office Hours Pastor 9-12	<u>Wednesday</u> Office Hours Pastor 9-12 Business 11-3	<u>Thursday</u>	<u>Friday</u> Office Hours Pastor 9-12	<u>Saturday</u>
30 9:30 Communion Service w/ Fresh Food Offering 11:00 Sunday School 11:00 Introduction to Islam	31 10:00 HBPM 6:30 TOPS	1 10:00 HBPM 5:30 Yoga	2 9:30 WELCA 5:30 Dinner 6:15 Intro to Islam 7:00 Choir	3 7:00 Executive Committees	4	5 10:00 Yoga
6 9:30 Communion Service 11:00 Sunday School	7 10:00 HBPM 6:30 TOPS 7:00 Council	8 10:00 HBPM 5:30 Yoga	9 9:30 WELCA 5:30 Dinner 6:15 Intro to Islam 7:00 Choir	10	11 7:00 MAJIC - Eastern Blok @ Bethlehem Lutheran Church	12 8:00 Men's Breakfast 10:00 Yoga 8:00 Holland Chorale - Love Notes
13 9:30 Communion & Healing Service 11:00 Congregational Meeting	14 10:00 HBPM 6:30 TOPS	15 10:00 HBPM 5:30 Yoga	16 9:30 WELCA 5:30 Dinner 6:15 Bible Study/NTC 7:00 Choir	17	18	19 10:00 Yoga 7:00 Western Mystery Night
20 9:30 Communion Service 11:00 Sunday School	21 10:00 HBPM 6:30 TOPS 7:00 Committees	22 10:00 HBPM 5:30 Yoga	23 9:30 WELCA 5:30 Dinner 6:15 Bible Study/NTC 7:00 Choir	24	25	26 10:00 Yoga
27 9:30 Communion Service 11:00 Sunday School	28 10:00 HBPM 6:30 TOPS	1 10:00 HBPM 5:30 Yoga	2 9:30 WELCA 5:30 Dinner 6:15 Bible Study/NTC 7:00 Choir	3	4	5 10:00 Yoga

Assistants Schedule – February 2011

Please arrange for substitution if you are unable to assist!

WORSHIP LEADERS	2-6	2-13	2-20	2-27	3-6	3-13
ASSIST MINISTER	Mark DeLand	Tracy Barnett	Ellen Pearson	Bob Hunt	Jim Oberstadt	Mark DeLand
LECTOR	Julie Monetta	Mark DeLand	Ann Somero	Stu Fritz	Marsha Bly	Mitch Cordero
COMM ASST	Pat Bergeron	Bonnie MacLennan	Lois Doan	Marsha Bly	Diane Wollner	Julie Monetta
USHERS	Ernie Moore & Marsha Bly	Dave & Foster Barnett	Brian & Julie Olson	Randy VerHassel & Terry MacLennan	Ernie Moore & Marsha Bly	Dave & Foster Barnett
GREETERS	Connie Shakley & Diane Oberlin	Linda Hutchison	Bonnie MacLennan	Al & Jan White	Lois Doan	Connie Shakley & Diane Oberlin
COMM PREP	Charlotte Scheerer	Lois Doan	Charlotte Scheerer	Lois Doan	Charlotte Scheerer	Lois Doan
CRUCIFER	Ella Rich	Josh Reagle	David Somero	Ben Hutchison	Kristina VerHassel	Ella Rich
FLOWERS	Lois Doan	Tracy Barnett	Marsha Bly	Connie Shakley	Beth Hunt	Bonnie MacLennan
COUNTERS	Pete Anderson & Mitch Cordero	Stu Fritz & Yvette Fontaine	Mike Fontaine & Bob Hunt	Laura Duckworth & Karl Bly	Pete Anderson & Mitch Cordero	Stu Fritz & Yvette Fontaine
FELLOWSHIP	Donut Sunday	Monetta	Hunt	Barnett	Donut Sunday	MacLennan
CHILDREN'S LESSON	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA

Peace Lutheran Church Council and Leaders



COUNCIL

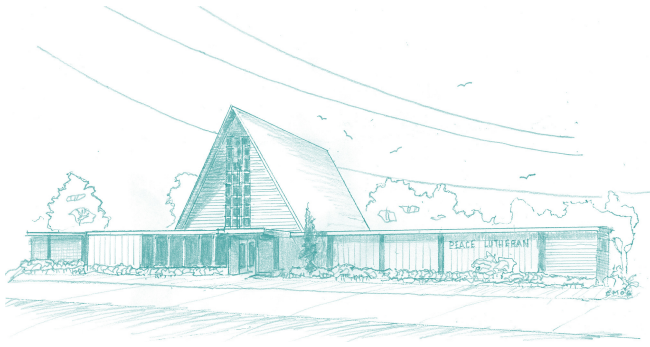
President: **Bob Hunt** 218-0201
 Vice President: **Dave Barnett** 395-5862
 Secretary: **Mark DeLand** 399-3551
 Treasurer: **Laura Duckworth** 994-0331
Julie Monetta 396-6391
Ellen Pearson 738-0771
Connie Shakley 786-0444

OTHER LEADERS OF PEACE

Evangelism Team:
Dawn Anderson 786-3481
 Missions Team: **Ellen Pearson** 738-0771
 Properties Team: **The Bob & Dave Show**

OTHER LEADERS OF PEACE (CONT'D)

Presiding Minister: **Pr. Mark Rich** 392-4475
 cell 566-0262
 Music Ministry: **John Eisenhauer** 796-0066
 Youth: **Pr. Mark Rich** 392-4475
Carol Fritz (HS) 395-8749
Yvette Fontaine (MS) 399-7864
 Peace Women ELCA: **Connie Shakley** 786-0444
 Men's Fellowship: **Pr. Mark Rich** 392-4475
 Flowers: **Marsha Bly** 842-5594
 Education Team: **Ann Somero** 748-1793
 Fellowship Team: **Tracy Barnett** 395-5862
 Stewardship: **Jim Oberstadt** 738-0120



**CONGREGATIONAL
MEETING SUNDAY,
FEBRUARY 13
FOLLOWING
SERVICE**

Sunday Worship & Fellowship

9:30 am

Healing Services

See calendar for schedule. Direct and intercessory prayer requests will be accepted. Talk with Pastor Mark in advance or just come.

**New Testament Challenge starts in
February**



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