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FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK - January 14, 2021



In our lessons for the Second Sunday after Epiphany, we see that one of the greatest blessings God has given to each of us is our body. What a wonder it is! With our five amazing senses, we connect with the astonishing world around us. We see the blue sky and the green hills in full color. We hear the sounds of birds singing, streams flowing, and music playing. We smell the aroma of a delicious pie baking in the oven and then we taste its delightful flavor! Our sense of touch brings great delight as we stroke the soft fur of a pet.

Yes, thank God for the gift of your body! But, we know we have troubles with our bodies. One of them is disease. It may sound weird, but I look at the numbers of COVID-19 positive rates with optimism. The higher that number is, the closer we are to herd immunity. I have asked the *Frederick News Post* to add in the number of those that have been vaccinated to show the true level of immunity this county has, to give encouragement to all who are weary of the troubles, to give hope that God will give us relief from the ravages of sin our bodies must endure.

Our bodies belong to the Lord. They are a temple to the Lord and will be resurrected in a perfect, sinless form at the Judgement Day. If our bodies belong to the Lord, we should not fear what sin, disease and the devil can do to it. We have the promise from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ that we will be gathered up into His arms free from all infirmities, like COVID, COPD, Cancer, heart ailments, Downs Syndrome, and all the other afflictions we suffer. I was taught some time ago by a Christian Counselor that we are in triage for the rest of our life on earth, waiting to be transported to the great healing Physician in Heaven. There is hope, there is comfort in knowing in the agony of the strain of the race, we will cross the finish line with joy.

Rejoice in the Lord always!

Renewal and/or Planting a new Church


I must confess I have never been involved with a church planting or a church reviving. I have always sought out an established church, even if it was a small one. Peace In Christ had only 11 families when I started attending back in 1987 but it grew over the years. So the idea of starting anew is a new experience for me. Maybe it is for you as well. When I say starting anew, that can include a new approach to reach out to those around this physical building we own, or to those around us in our "bubble" of friends or neighbors in our individual developments. I would ask you to examine yourselves and write down your responses to these questions. When we can get together, perhaps in a GoToMeeting environment, say within a month or two, sharing your responses can help us a group see our strengths and weaknesses as a congregation. For the first set of reflections (out of 4), consider the following questions:

1. What past experiences have prepared you for this move?
2. Witness. Mercy. Life Together. Do you feel that you have a strength in one of these areas? Which one? How does that strength manifest itself? What is your weakness and how can God transform it into a strength?

3. Think of someone in our congregation who exemplifies one of these. What do they do in their life and worship that makes you think so? How can you apply that to church planting or renewal?
4. Have you been a part of a church planting or renewal before? What worked well, what did not work well, and what will you do differently as you embark on a church planting or renewal in the future?

I will give you more questions over the next 6 weeks to consider. Please prayerfully look at and answer these questions.

~ Rev. Richard Benjamin

<p style="text-align: center;">The Fifth Commandment You shall not murder.</p> <p>What does this mean? <i>We should fear and love God so that we do not hurt or harm our neighbor in his body, but help and support him in every physical need.</i></p>	 <p>Find an interactive version of the Small Catechism at https://catechism.cph.org/</p>
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CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSES DURING SERVICE

A core group has been attending services in person since we resumed live services. They were asked last Sunday if they were OK with doing the responses in the service while wearing masks properly and maintaining the 6 foot distance rule. As a result of their affirmative answers, **we will start doing responses as a group beginning with the January 24 service.**

~ Rev. Richard Benjamin

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MALIM GRANT

We received a grant from Mid Atlantic Lutherans in Mission (MALIM) in the amount of \$3,000 to help fund our providing food for those in need in the Walkersville area. I have reached out to the coordinator for volunteers of Glade Valley Community Services to help put together a plan for us to be involved in the purchase and distribution of food. Look for more information coming soon either in the Dove or a broadcast email.

~ Rev. Richard Benjamin

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THE COX FAMILY

Some of you may have heard that a water pipe broke in the Coxes’ rental home while they were on a two-week vacation. Everything in the basement was ruined, and they have to discard all soft items throughout the house (clothing, fabric covered furniture, beds) because of the mold that filled the house. They are temporarily living in a hotel room while the basement is drained and repaired, which will be at least two weeks of work. Two adults, three children and a big dog in one hotel room – that is a challenge! If you are so moved, consider sending them a check or prepaid credit card to help them re-buy everything they lost. They have not asked for any help, but I am sure it would be appreciated. I suggest sending anything to his church to assure delivery. Richard Cox, Ascension Lutheran Church, 7415 Buchanan St, Landover Hills, MD 20784.

~ Rev. Richard Benjamin

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FROM THE CALL COMMITTEE

A Congregational Meeting was held via GotoMeeting on Sunday, January 10. There was a discussion regarding whether the congregation would like to continue waiting for a candidate list from President Denninger or request a Seminary graduate.

If we were to decide on the latter, then the former call process would be stopped for the time being. Even if we were to request a Seminary Graduate, we might not be assigned one.

Those present at the meeting voted to request a Seminary graduate. The Call Committee sent an email to President Denninger after the meeting. He returned our email, saying that he would get the process started. Now we continue to pray for God's will and wait.

~ The Call Committee: Jean Samuel, Randy Garrett, Cindy Hofflinger, and Amanda Weber

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THAT STIMULUS CHECK. . .

Many people have suffered financially since the pandemic began. If you have been blessed to avoid a loss of income, here's something to prayerfully consider. Why not give any government stimulus funds you receive to help those in our community who need assistance with food or shelter?

- [Glade Valley Community Services](#)
- [Frederick Rescue Mission](#)

- [The Religious Coalition of Frederick](#) (especially the Hayward House project)

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IN OUR PRAYERS

We offer thanks. . .

- Recovery of Jillian (Bolthouses' daughter-in-law) and family from COVID-19, as well as Debbie's brother Jerry (1/1)

Your prayers are solicited. . .

- Health needs
 - Pastor Vern in AZ ~ recovery from COVID-19 (12/20)
 - Mike (friend of Carseys) ~ diagnosed with stage 4 colon cancer, undergoing chemo starting 12/7 (12/3)
 - Christin Wehde (Staale Johannessen's sister) ~ continued recovery after brain surgery (updated 11/16)
 - Laura Stanley (Kim Lewis' aunt) ~ continues to battle COVID-19; other family members have recovered (11/22)
- Other needs
 - Cox family, after their basement flood--see above (1/14)
 - Josie & Arron Ochs, as they await the birth of their first child (12/13)
 - Missy and Cody ~ for better relationship between son and mother (12/13)
- Bereavements
 - Family of Barry Hostetter (12/27)
- Peace in Christ shut-in members/families:
 - Mary Jane Wagstaff
 - Ed Schlesinger ~ confined to bed (8/9)
 - Bob and Lori Carsey
 - Roger Johnson
- Our congregation and the call process
- Pastor Vance and Linda Becker

Please email any corrections or changes to office@peaceinchrist.org.

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FAMILY NEWS

- Several hard copies of this newsletter will be available each week on the small table in the Narthex. If you know someone who needs a printout, feel free to pick one up.

- An adult Sunday School class is offered in the Fellowship Hall on Sunday mornings from 9-10 AM. John Nolte is the instructor.
- Our [YouTube channel](#) has been updated with several new “playlists” that let you easily view our Daily Devotions, Sermons, Music, or Christian Education materials. Check it out!
- **2021 Stewardship pledge forms are still available on the bulletin board.** Thanks again to all who helped increase this year’s pledge rate!

<p>JANUARY BIRTHDAYS</p> <p>4 - Lori Carsey 5 - Darlene Quiram 5 - Ed Schlesinger 8 - John Jakupciak 10 - Tom Bolthouse 18 - Staale Johannessen 19 - John Nolte 23 - Dawn Treese 25 - Angie Mullins</p>	<p>FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS</p> <p>2 - Gwen Nolte, Feb 2 28 - Maggie Walton 28 - Peter Vrettos 28 - Anna Vrettos</p> <p>FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARIES</p> <p>3 - Daniel Hoang and KimThan Bui 26 - Tom and Debbie Bolthouse</p>
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