

December 2025

The Good News of Peace

Our Vision Statement: Sharing Peace Faithfully

*Our Mission: To bring people into contact with the gospel,
and help them grow in their relationship to God in Christ.*



PRAYERS REQUESTED:

- Conner & Logan
- Laura Collins & Family
- Bernice Novello
- Dora & Dean Tuntland
- Vivian Farbak
- Jim Elkow
- Mary Cox
- Alyssa
- Irwin Family
- Stacy Ghizoni
- Janice Musak (healing)
- Elle
- Larry Collier

EVERYBODY READ

Our desire to have people
read a common Bible
passage is part of our
Book of Faith effort.
December's passage is:
Psalm 136:1

A Letter From Your Pastor

Pastor Amy Michelson

If you have ever owned a home, you may know what it's like to watch interest rates, hoping for a drop and a chance to refinance and lower your monthly payment. Peace also has a mortgage; however, our mortgage is not a fixed rate, but rather a 10-year ARM (adjustable-rate mortgage). This means that every 10 years, the rate resets and is then fixed for 10 years until it resets again.

The next mortgage reset (and hopefully, our last!) is coming up on March 15th, 2026. Mortgage resets always present an opportunity to try to pay off some of the remaining principal before the rate resets and your payment changes. The more principal you pay off, the lower your payment will be. The lower our mortgage payment, the more funds we have available to care for our aging building and to put toward our ministries that bring people in contact with the gospel and help them grow in their relationship to God in Christ.

If you would like to make a special gift toward paying off the principal of our mortgage, now would be a great time to do so. You can make a one-time gift online or place it in an envelope in the offering plate or mail it in. If you do, please designate it to "mortgage principal" so we know to apply it to the mortgage.

Thank you for all the ways you generously participate in the Body of Christ here in this place!

Peace,
Pastor Amy

(PS: If you'd like to know more about our mortgage, here are some details – Current rate: 4.00%, Maturity date: 3/15/2031, however, we make an additional payment on principal each month, so we are hoping to pay off the mortgage around 4/2030, Current mortgage payable: \$299,705)



Financial Update as of October 31, 2025

Oct. Income	YTD Income	Annual Budget
\$43,385	\$241,934	\$602,158
Oct. Expense	YTD Expense	Annual Budget
\$45,260	\$242,735	\$602,158

Christmas Worship Schedule

Sat., Dec. 20 – 5pm

Shortest Day Longest Night Service

Wed., Dec. 24 – 4pm

We invite children to bring bells to ring,
there will be multiple children's sermons

Wed., Dec. 24 – 7pm & 10pm

candlelight and communion

Thurs., Dec. 25 – 10am

Christmas Day worship



Thank You

We are thankful for all the people who give of themselves to make ministry happen!

- Property Workday Volunteers
- Altar Guild for their help with All Saints Worship
- Youth and Quilters who made blankets for MorningStar Mission
- Our Committee members who helped prepare the building for carpet cleaning
- Thanksgiving volunteers and those who donated food



Dear Members and Friends of Peace,

Christmas time can be the most wonderful time of the year. There are moments of love and kindness. A crisp chill, that makes you feel alive, is hanging in the air. However, this time of the year can also be filled with memories of loved ones lost, financial struggle, and those who do not have a warm place to be or family to be with. If the holiday season is hard for you, you are not alone. Christ was born into a turbulent world bringing peace and hope into the reality that the world is not always Christmasy.

On Saturday December 20th we will hold our annual “Shortest Day, Longest Night” service. This service, which will be at 5pm, is meant to hold in tension the Christmas season with the loneliness of winter and holidays. It is a beautiful service with meaningful prayers, communion, and a hope filled message. You are invited to come as you are with whatever emotions you are bringing into Advent and Christmas. If you have friends or loved ones that would benefit from or enjoy this type of service, please invite them to come.

The Christ child was born in a manger not a pristine sanitized hospital. Jesus’s parents were unmarried, and his mother was a teenager. His birth was quietly celebrated by some and despised by others. The promise of Christmas is Christ dwelling among us in our pretty and in our ugliest of times. Come and hear the good news that you are loved and claimed in every emotion, in every celebration and in every trial.

God’s Peace,
Deacon Shari

Offerings & Opportunities

2026 Flower Sign-Up Now Open!

You're invited to sign up to provide flowers for the front of the church in 2026. This is a wonderful way to honor a loved one, celebrate a special occasion, or simply give thanks. Choose your week and help make our worship space beautiful all year long! Sign-up sheets are available next to the fellowship hall.

Electronic Giving

If you would like to sign up for automatic withdrawals, please contact the office. You can also give online at any time through our website www.peacenewelenox.org, click on the donate tab.

Special Holiday Envelopes

If you give electronically and do not receive offering envelopes, we will have the special holiday envelopes available on the counter in the narthex if you would like one.

Need Help with Medicare Part D?

Hi, I'm Dave Johnson, a fellow member of Peace Church. Open Enrollment can feel overwhelming—but you don't have to go through it alone! For over 10 years, I volunteered at Riverside Medical, helping people review and update their Medicare Part D plans. Have questions? Need a second look at your or a loved one's plan? I'd love to help!

Call me at (773) 965-0677. Open Enrollment: October 15 – December 7

Poinsettia Tributes - Due by Sun., Dec. 1

This year we will be able to once again buy our poinsettias from Trinity Services. A percentage of the money they receive goes for their clients with special needs. The deadline for placing your order will be December 1. Sign-up forms are available.

All Church Ugly Sweater Contest and Cookie Exchange – Sun. Dec. 14

Join us on Sunday at 12:15 for our annual Ugly Sweater and Cookie Exchange. Bring your most outrageous outfit and six dozen (and a few to share) cookies and enjoy refreshments and fun. Use the sign up or call the office.



Faith Development & Education

Wednesday Bible Study

Wednesday mornings at 10am. You do not need to know anything about the Bible to join us!

Sunday Adult Education Class

We meet every Sunday at 9:45am. All are welcome!

Free books!

Yes, you read that right! We are now giving away our "Questions Kids Ask About God" books. They are available in English and Spanish, hardcover, softcover and coloring books. If you know of anyone who would enjoy learning about God in a fun, creative way, help yourself to these books. They will be available on the counter in the narthex. They make great gifts.

Adult Sunday School, Led by Karin Knutson- Sunday, Dec. 7

Please join us on December 7th during the education hour as Karin Knutson shares a reflection on the life of theologian Gustavo Gutierrez and what it means to care for our neighbors. Following the reflection, we will be assembling blessing bags to share with those in need in our community.



Worship

Advent Midweek Service and Soup – Wednesday, Dec. 3, 10 & 17

Please join us for Advent midweek services on Wednesday, December 3rd, 10th, and 17th. Service will be at 6pm with soup supper to follow at 6:30pm. We will be using a service called Holden Evening Prayer and a member of Peace will speak on one of three Advent themes, Peace, Love, and Joy. We hope you can come and worship, eat, and fellowship with us. Please sign up in the office if you would like to bring soup for one of the weeks.

Sunday School Christmas Program – Sun., Dec. 7

Mark your calendars for our Sunday School Christmas Program! This year we will have one program for P3-12th grade on Sun., Dec. 7 at the 11am service! We would love to know if your youth can participate this year. We will also need help from our older youth, so if they need service hours for Confirmation or for school this will be a great way to get those hours.

Handbells

Join us Tuesday's at 7:30pm.

Do You Love to Sing?

Come join in the fun of making a joyful noise! Peace Choir and the Ladies Ensemble are looking for new singers. No experience or auditions are required. Have questions? Contact the office, and they will have us reach out to you.



Looking Ahead

Dec. 3rd, 10th, 17th - Weekly Advent Service & Soup Supper

Dec 6th-Trivia Night (6:15pm)

Dec 7th-Sunday School Christmas Program & Gingerbread with the Ginch

Dec 14th- Arboretum Christmas Lights

Dec 14th-Parents Day Out

Dec 14th-Ugly Sweater & Cookie Exchange



Groups

Peace Book Club - Tues. Dec 9 at 10:00am

Our next read is "The Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy" By: Douglas Adams

Coffee & Conversation - Mondays

Every Monday morning from 10-11am, Deacon Shari will be holding office hours at Gost Coffee on Schoolhouse Road in New Lenox. Please come grab a cup of joe and share in conversation.

Women's Fellowship and Discussion Group

Women of all ages - join us on the second Thursday of the month (Sept-May) at 7pm for fellowship and conversation. Each time we'll discuss a different topic based on a book, podcast, video, Bible study, etc. Sign up with the insert in the bulletin, email or by calling the church office.

GriefShare Surviving the Holidays Series - Reamining Date Dec 1st

We will be having a four-session version of GriefShare for those who have lost loved ones. We invite anyone who would like to participate regardless of when the loss took place. The dates will be Mon., Nov. 3, 10 & 17 and Dec. 1 from 7:00-8:00pm. If you would like to participate, please use the signup sheet or contact the office.

Peace Page Turners-Sun., Jan. 11 at 9:45am

The next meeting of the Peace Page Turners will be January 11, 2026. (We don't meet in December). We will discuss "The Borrowed Life of Frederick Fife" by Anna Johnston.

Adult Fellowship Trivia - Sat., Dec. 6

Come and join the fun on Sat., Dec. 6 at 6:15pm for the Peace trivia contest. We intend to have multiple teams of no more than six players each. Each of you is an expert at something, right?! We encourage you to assemble a team of your own. (Signing up individually? No problem! We will place everyone who wants to play on a team.) Although walk-ins are welcome, please help us by signing up in advance.

Ruth Circle Quilting - Mon., Dec 1, 15 & 29 at 9am

Please join us, all are welcome! Meets every other Monday.

Trailblazers - Tues., Dec 16 at 12pm

Group 65+ meets the third Tuesday of the month. Cost \$5, lunch will be provided.

Men's Breakfast - Sat., Dec 27 at 10:00am

Men ages 16 and older are invited to this fellowship opportunity that meets at Peace on the fourth Saturday of the month at 10am. Cost will be a free will offering - breakfast cost is approximately \$15 each.

Out To Eat Group - Sat., Jan 10 at 12:15pm

Join us January 10th at Gattos

Strong Seniors Exercise - Mon. & Wed.

Join us for a low impact program for seniors. Mondays 12 noon -1:00pm and Wednesdays 11:15am-12:15pm.

Mahjong Masters - Thursdays at 1pm

Don't worry, being a master is ABSOLUTELY not required! A group of Mahjong Minded Members have started gathering at Peace on Thursdays at 1:00pm. We would love to have you join us!

Youth

Peace Youth Group

Do you want to hang out with other awesome

Peace youth? Do you like to eat good food, play games, and talk about Jesus? Awesome!!!!

Peace Youth Group is for you! Our 7th - 12th grade youth group meets most Sundays from 12pm-2pm to enjoy fellowship, faith and fun.

Please check out the bulletin for upcoming events and get connected to our Youth Group Google calendar.



Christmas Party and Bible Study-Sun., Dec 7 at 12:00pm

Parents Day Out - Sun., Dec. 14

Please sign up by Dec. 7

Deacon Shari and our 7-12 grade youth group are setting aside some time to babysit! Sun., December 14, from 12-4 p.m., here at church. We are inviting successfully potty-trained 3-year-olds and older youth to this event. Maybe you would like time to go out shopping, make other preparations for Christmas, or just take some time for yourself. Please let us know if you would like to use our services by using the sign-up sheet on the counter in the narthex or contacting the church office. This is a fundraising event for our youth group, a goodwill donation is much appreciated!

Arboretum Christmas Lights- Sun., Dec. 14 at 4:30pm - 8:30pm **Deadline to sign up is November 30th!!

The youth group will be taking a trip to see the Illumination: Tree Lights display at The Morton Arboretum in Lisle, IL. This event offers a beautiful outdoor experience filled with dazzling light displays and festive atmosphere as we walk through the illuminated woods together. The cost is \$19 per person. Please sign up by November 30th to reserve your spot and join us for an evening of fun, fellowship, and holiday spirit.

December Youth Events

- Nov 30th -No Youth Group
- Dec 7th-Christmas Party & Bible Study
- Dec 7th-Gingerbread with the Grinch
- Dec 14- Parents Day Out
- Dec 14- Arboretum Christmas Lights



Helping Others

One Warm Coat Collection Nov. 1-Dec. 31

One Warm Coat is a collection of clean, reusable coats and other winter wear that are then distributed to MorningStar Mission and Santa Cruz church for local individuals in need. We are grateful for our ability in all circumstances to continue in our mission to meet basic human needs. Items can be dropped off at church in the bin in the narthex. Scarves, hats, gloves, mittens and boots are also accepted. Thank you for your continued support!

Christmas Giving Tree

Please check out the tree in the Narthex filled with Christmas gift giving tags for people who could use our help. There are three different organizations that we are supporting this year - the people of Santa Cruz & their neighbors, LSSI Joshua Arms residents and ELCA Good Gifts. Look for the tags towards the middle of November. Unwrapped gifts for Santa Cruz need to be brought to the church by Dec. 7. The other two are donations that are needed by Dec. 25th. Thank you for the care you show our neighbors this Christmas season!

Santa Cruz's Food Pantry Needs List

We are always collecting bottled water, juice, paper products, hand soap, shampoo, toothpaste, deodorant, shaving cream, canned soup, applesauce, cereal, Jell-O, pudding, beans, rice, coffee, powdered cream, sugar, pretzels, chips, popcorn, etc. for Santa Cruz's Food Pantry. Look for the baskets by Fellowship Hall.

Help Others Fund

Alongside our regular giving that helps all kinds of people in need, we also have a special "help others" fund within our general fund. It is targeted to help people who need food or gas. We continue to be diligent in making sure the money actually goes to people in need.

Serving Dinner at MorningStar Mission

Would you like to help serve meals at MorningStar Mission in 2026? Peace has been helping with this outreach for many years and would love to include you! The church serves meals on the 4th Sunday of each month from about 4:15 to 6:00 pm. Four volunteers are needed each month to serve. Please let the office know if you'd like to be a part of this project.

ELCA Good Gifts

Through the ELCA's Good Gifts, you can find all kinds of alternative Christmas giving ideas. In short, someone who needs something, such as livestock, receives the actual animal, and your loved one knows that his or her gift is helping someone in need.

<https://goodgifts.elca.org/page/72439/shop/1>

Volunteer Opportunities

Are you looking for individual volunteer opportunities, to earn community service hours, find ways to give back or lend a hand? The Service/Outreach Committee is creating a list of ideas for individual service projects. Watch the bulletin board in the narthex and the newsletter for details. For starters, here are a few suggestions. If you know of other opportunities, please share.

****ShareFest, 21715 Moni Drive, New Lenox, needs volunteers to help out in its food pantry and warehouse during the day, Tuesday-Saturday. Sign up at**

<https://www.sharefestwillcounty.org/>

****Sunny Hill Nursing Home, 421 Doris Avenue, Joliet, you can scoop ice cream in the Sweet Shop, help with Bingo, and more. All volunteers must complete a form for a background check. Contact Kristen at 815-727-8710.**



Community Resources



Will-Grundy Medical Clinic
free healthcare for the uninsured and
those who qualify 815-726-3377, ext. 228.

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline
call/text 988 or online chat at
www.988lifeline.org

Joliet Area Hospice Support Groups
www.joliethospice.org or 815-740-4104

Crutches, walkers & wheelchairs available
please contact the church office

Guardian Angel Community Services
Sexual assault & rape crisis services
24-hour sexual assault hotline: 815-730-8984

LSSI's Joshua Arms
independent & supportive living units for seniors
www.LSSI.org/JoshuaArms or 815-727-6401

NAMI - National Alliance for Mental Illness
info@namiwillgrundy.org or
www.namiwillgrundy.org



General Information

Worship Details
Saturday worship 5pm, Sunday at 8:30 & 11am.
8:30am service is live streamed.

Email Contacts

Pastor Amy – amichelson@peacenewlenox.org
Deacon Shari – strotter@peacenewlenox.org
Church office: peacechurch@peacenewlenox.org.

Hearing Assistance Available

We are happy to offer wireless receivers to assist anyone with a
hearing impairment. Please ask an usher if you would like to use one.



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website: www.peacenewlenox.org



ADVENT DEVOTIONALS

December 2025

A Good Enough
ADVENT + CHRISTMASTIDE

THE SEASON OF WAITING

BIBLE PROJECT WEEKLY ADVENT

BLESS THE ADVENT WE ACTUALLY HAVE

PREPARE YOUR HEART FOR ADVENT
WITH LUTHER SEMINARY'S FREE
DAILY EMAIL DEVOTIONAL

Or go here to download the same
devotional as regular or large print