

1971
2021



Peace Offering

BI-ANNUAL REPORT
FALL 2021



PRINCE of PEACE
LUTHERAN CHURCH



“Come with me by yourselves
to a quiet place and get some rest.”

MARK 6:31

Early this summer, I walked nearly the whole island of Manhattan over seven days. I saw world class works of art, breathtaking city skyline sunset views, reconnected with family members and a former classmate, visited vibrant urban churches, played chess with a complete stranger in Washington Square Park (and lost!), and took a bazillion pictures all along the way.

On my final day in New York, I was moved to STOP and SIT and PROCESS and PRAY. I walked to Central Park with my notebook in hand and found a quiet trail and a log and a birdbath and a pond. A dense enclosure of leaves all around save for a skyscraper or two peeking through the top. Not a person around in a city of millions. I found blissful solitude with God in the bustling city where I sat for half a day and journaled and prayed in a dedicated way.

Sabbatical was a life changing experience. How can I begin to describe how it transformed me? I feel like a new man. I feel five years younger. It recharged my resilience. It is fundamentally refreshing to step back and rest from labor, but there is particular value to this kind of rest. This wasn't simply a temporary escape from crazy life and ministry. This sabbatical was designed so that I could get fresh perspective and fresh energy and focus to navigate the crazy to which I would inevitably return. I feel reconnected to God in a profound way. I also feel more at home in my own skin, and intimately connected to my wife and kids, and amazed at this wild, wonderful world that God made, which is also wounded and in need of peace and healing.

As I sat in Central Park, I thought and prayed about you and me and Prince of Peace as a whole and where we've been over the past eight years in which I served, where we've been over the past fifty years of our existence as a church, where we are now, and to where God might be leading us as we enter the next fifty.

A couple of prayers rose to the top:

"Renew group discipleship for all ages."

We must get reconnected as we come out of this pandemic. We can't stay on our own islands. We need each other. We know "iron sharpens iron" (Prov. 27:17). We're stronger together!

"Make POP a landmark in Palatine."

Lord, help us be a shining light, a city on a hill in this place where You've planted us (Matthew 5:14-16). What if our campus is a blank canvas and could communicate through art and indoor/outdoor spaces and messaging to our community "We're here for you!"

"Love your neighbors... your nearest ones first."

What if we continued to intentionally get to know and grow relationships here? What would Prince of Peace look like if we adopted the needs of Lincoln Elementary School staff, students, and families as our own?

"Launch Crosspoint into financial and organizational independence."

Having begun a good work in the Dei Campaign, we will bring it to completion by supporting and cheering on Crosspoint as they form a congregational charter and establish a permanent facility in the Lakewood area.

"Plant another church or non-profit."

I believe that God may be leading Prince of Peace to plant again in the Chicagoland area, but we need to launch Crosspoint before we start groundwork for this.

In sharing this with you, I'm inviting you to pray and dream with me about the next fifty years of Prince of Peace. I'm inviting you to share what fresh perspective God is giving you in your quiet moments of prayer and solitude. I'm inviting you to walk with me into the future God has mapped out for us (Jeremiah 29:11) and the good works He's prepared in advance for us to do (Ephesians 2:10).



REV. KARL FAY

Senior Pastor
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A breathtaking skyline sunset view from the Empire State Building, NYC



New Life Fellowship Church, Queens, NY; a Bible-believing, multiethnic church



A quiet spot in Central Park, NYC; solitude with God in the bustling city



WORSHIP

as a community



Action Packed Worship Summer

The Bluegrass Service

Having a fondness for Bluegrass music, the idea for a bluegrass service had been percolating for several years. This year I finally decided to put those ideas into action, which made for a very fun weekend of worship!

I started off by arranging a bunch of old gospel hymns, writing four-part SATB [soprano, alto, tenor, bass] harmonies and lead sheets, taking heavy inspiration from the soundtrack of the film *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* I recruited five singers (Kris Reiner, Kendra Fay, Alan Haak, Rick Green, and Sean Hoyer), and hired frequent-guest jazz bassist Richard Armandi, and classical violinist Kristen Oyler. I played acoustic guitar. For our classical violinist, I transcribed and arranged mandolin lines for the various charts as the mandolin shares the same tuning as the violin. With the group together, I

found a few more songs that had the right arrangements to round out the list and we were off to the Hoedown!

Despite some bad weather dashing our chance for an outdoor service, we still had a great time playing the bluegrass music. I had folks from the congregation, both young and old, tell me they loved the service. I am so glad you all enjoyed it!

The Praise Band Concert

Speaking of ideas long in the making, I considered presenting a stand-alone Praise Band concert for years, including brainstorming different venues where it may happen. Booking the Palatine Bandshell was attempted, but despite contacting them in the early spring, they were already well booked-up. Things all fell into place when it was suggested tying

the concert to POP Summer Nights. The concert followed an opening act of delicious fried chicken.

For the concert, many members of our Praise Band were recruited, including Diana Brahm and Kendra Fay on vocals, Ben Daniel on guitar, Jason Faltinek on bass, and Miles Schuett on drums. Each of these musicians was asked to provide a list of songs they would like to play and I picked two from each list. I then spent the summer gathering and transcribing charts for each of these songs. Unfortunately, three weeks before the concert (and one week before the first rehearsal) Miles broke his pinky, leaving us scrambling for a drummer. Luckily, Miles' understudy who had just played his first public performance at a church service a few weeks before, Hudson Giromini was available. But was Hudson up to learning nineteen songs with just a few weeks before the concert? Only time would tell. Miles scheduled Hudson's lessons right before the



band rehearsals and invited me to play piano and sing to help Hudson learn the songs. Miles then stuck around through the rehearsals coaching Hudson on the kind of grooves to play and when. On a whim, I bought Miles a stand for a cowbell and tambourine which he could play one handed to help keep time.

On the night of the concert, we all left the chicken dinner early for a short soundcheck before the show. An air of suspense hung over the band as the audience filed into the room. Could our young, intrepid drummer pull this off? YES! Hudson absolutely nailed it and the concert went off without a hitch. Children danced between the pews, the audience clapped and cheered. Everyone was blown away by the talent of the band members. The concert was a huge success, and it may just have to return next year...

The 50th Anniversary Service

This summer POP celebrated its fiftieth anniversary. For the celebration service, Pastor Matt and I collaborated on choosing music that would speak to the mission of the church, bringing together both traditional and contemporary styles of worship. I specifically picked out some of the church's beloved favorites throughout the years including "In This Very Room," "This Is the Feast," and "Blessed Be Your Name," along with some new pieces. Also included was a "dueling" musical ensemble take on "The Church's One Foundation," with the choir and the Praise Band taking turns singing verses, only coming together on the last verse. The symbolism of that was very meaningful to me and others.

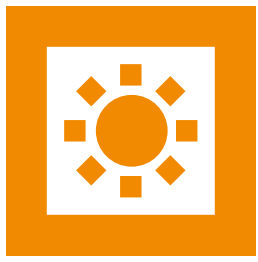
A curveball was thrown early in the preparations for this service by the return of a mask mandate, but I immediately ordered

thirty masks made specially for vocalists by Broadway singers. The shipping lead time was long, and was delayed at least once, but miraculously the masks appeared at our door days before the dress rehearsal. God is good! Despite making the choir look like a particular waterfowl, these masks allowed their voices to resonate, and really improved the clarity and volume of the choir.

It was very exciting to see the choir grow from fourteen singers at the first rehearsal to twenty-four singers at the last rehearsal. I am hoping that everyone who sang in the choir this month had a great time and will keep coming back!



ALEX FALLS
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LOVE one another



Doing Life Together

Where is your mind today?

Where are your emotions today?

With whom are you connecting?

How are you doing?

One day I asked a friend, "How are you doing? How are you connecting with others?" This started a conversation about who he was and was not connecting with. The person talked about how in 2019, he went shopping, out to eat, and regularly connected with other people. That was gone. Then we talked about what he needed. As we talked, it became very clear that community is what he desired. To be with other people is being **STRONGER TOGETHER**. That is the theme for the year!

We hope each person at Prince of Peace as well as those not at POP will connect with others this year. We are called to be in community as it says in Acts:

*"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved. **Acts 2:42-47***

This is nothing new for Prince of Peace. Connection has been part of our DNA for 50 years. Prince of Peace has been POPing 😊 with groups and connections since it started in a basement many years ago.

With whom are you connecting? Are you taking time to check on friends and neighbors? Are you getting together with others and "doing life together" – eating together, watching the games together, celebrating together, supporting together, or serving together. Are you **STRONGER TOGETHER** with others?

Do you need help to connect with others at Prince of Peace? We have many types of groups from which to choose. See the next page for some examples.

Missional Community Groups

A large gathering focused on fellowship and developing relationships with others. Many times, this is a great first step to connecting with other Christians.



Coaching Groups

These groups are a gathering of leaders who assist and help PEACE Group leaders as they navigate the messiness of life in their group.



PEACE Groups

These small groups share life together, meet regularly, and practice Prayer, Evangelism, Apprenticing, Christ-Study, and Encouragement.



Bible Study Groups

These gatherings of people conduct a formal academic class which learns from scripture and Biblical teachings to increase knowledge.



Huddle Groups

These are intentional discipleship groups that meet weekly to dive deeper into what it means to be a disciple of Jesus.



Interest Groups

These groups are centered around like interests and doing life together to grow closer to each other and in turn closer to God. They gather similarly as a Missional Community, but the groups are not as large. Interest Groups can contain serving groups, biking groups, crafting groups, and wine tasting groups amongst others.

Do you have a group of people with whom you can serve? Are there people in your life who want to dive deeper into scripture? What interest do you have that you would like to share with others? What about simply throwing a party, getting people together, and celebrating just being together?

I want to challenge you to join a group and find out what it means to be **STRONGER TOGETHER**. To find out more about what a group is and how you can connect with others, go online to www.pop.church/groups or contact me and we'll discuss what is available for you.



REV. MATT KOENIG

Discipleship Pastor/
Director of Adult Ministry
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POP Celebrates 50 Years

September 25-26, 2021, we told the story of Prince of Peace through sermon and song in worship. On Sunday, we celebrated outside with an Oktoberfest-themed picnic. Many thanks to the planning team and volunteers, led by Jennifer Edwards, for their work to make the event happen. Visit our [Facebook page](#) to relive more memories.





“...all the people here raise their voices, their hands, their love to the Lord. They let the glory they have for God rise to the heavens and praise Him all the time.” - Pastor Matt Koenig





POPTeens



Have you ever heard the saying, "You don't know what you have until it's gone?" The youth greatly felt that and over the last few months we have focused on taking time to be together! This summer we enjoyed game nights that involved, food, laughter, and interesting games!!



FUEL enjoyed an afternoon at TopGolf, which is a combination of golf and darts, on a HUGE scale! Later we enjoyed another unique game of Slip 'n Slide kickball, which is exactly as it sounds – kickball and slip 'n slide combined with lots of soap! For a group of competitive kids who like to laugh together, this was a great evening!

IGNITE spent time together doing different water sports as well, just

a little less structured! What was meant to be a water gun/water balloon fight became everyone attacking Jennifer! We enjoyed lots of laughs, cooled off with some water, and had a great evening!!

FUEL and IGNITE had much fun at this summer's game nights and now the youth are enjoying being back for a regular schedule of time together in community and growing in our faith!

FUEL has had great conversation around living a life of worship and learning healthy habits of rest, as well as having lots of fun, returning to the Corn Maze, a tradition that was sorely missed last year, and enjoying a new tradition of a pumpkin carving contest!

IGNITE's schedule and look changed a little this year. They meet twice a month for time shared around a meal, studying God's





POPKids



word, and playing lots of games! It is a great opportunity for the youth to invite friends who don't attend Prince of Peace!

POPKids has returned to meeting regularly on Sunday mornings. What a breath of fresh air! Is there a better sound than the laughter of a child? POPKids are enjoying a new curriculum that really focuses on helping the church partner with parents as they raise their children in

the faith. The parent connection is an incredibly valuable tool, and the children enjoy the activities!

It has been great returning to a more normal routine with POPKids, Confirmation, IGNITE, and FUEL! We continue to share lots of laughs and good stories, while having these great conversations and lessons about Jesus and the Bible and what faith means to us!

The groups may be smaller than in years past, but **we are MIGHTY and so thankful to be together**, laughing and growing in our friendships with each other and Jesus! Join us!



JENNIFER EDWARDS

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PUT OTHERS FIRST

Serving Makes Us STRONGER

A recent sermon series encouraged us to be a church that puts others first. Here are many wonderful examples of people serving individually and through teams, making our local community and the world around us stronger!



In May, you donated flood bucket supplies that the Immanuel/Prince of Peace LERT (Lutheran Early Response Team) assembled for action.



In June, we were excited to resume packing meals at Feed My Starving Children (FMSC) in Schaumburg. By combining efforts with volunteers across the country, POP is helping FMSC reach the goal of distributing 390 million meals around the world.



In July, you donated school supplies which were distributed in August to Palatine Township, at the Better Together community event at Falcon Park, and at neighbor Lincoln School.

In August and September, POP responded to national and international crises. Emergency financial assistance was sent to mission partners FMSC and Lutheran Church Charities (LCC) to help those impacted by earthquakes, hurricanes, and famines. You also donated items to create two Welcome to America packs for incoming refugees from Afghanistan and other countries with mission partner Exodus World Service. POP also established a new relationship with Academy North alternative high school in Palatine.



In August, we provided hospitality to those near and far. We welcomed Lincoln students and parents back to school with coffee, conversation, and comfort dogs. The Baker missionary family was also welcomed to Prince of Peace.

In October, in-person mentoring and weekend food bag assembly resumed at Lincoln school. You donated winter outerwear and kids' clothes for the Community Clothing Closet run by mission partner Palatine Assisting Through Hope (PATH). POP also provided pizza for a community event to improve police/community relations in northeast Palatine.

In November, you donated Thanksgiving food baskets that were distributed through Palatine Township. You purchased Christmas gifts for students at Grace Christian Academy and families from Palatine Township, and you donated gift cards to help high school students in need.

Also, you shared your personal stories about how you used your passions and gifts to *put others first*:

- training and handling comfort dogs,
- helping others during weather disasters,
- mentoring inner city youth,
- volunteering at a hospital,
- hosting events for the Palatine Historical Society,
- creating and sending cards,

- serving at an animal shelter,
- crocheting baby hats,
- maintaining a forest preserve,
- hosting a lemonade stand to benefit one of our mission partners,
- serving at a food pantry,
- and designing a water solution for your neighborhood.

One of my favorite quotes is "little by little, a little becomes a lot." I hope these stories give you encouragement for how all our collective "littles" make a big impact on those around us. If you need help finding a place to use your passions and gifts, I'd love to brainstorm ideas with you!



SUSAN KLEMSTEIN

Director of Outreach/Financial Controller
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POP Cares for Families in Crisis

Friends of Prince of Peace, in the last 18 months, you made it possible to provide material assistance to:

- **A Veteran of armed services with long-term disabilities, unable to work and living in his car;**
- **An elderly lady who lost her home when her mother passed away and is living in a motel;**
- **A young mom with two school-age children unable to work full time due to disabilities;**
- **A woman who lost housing due to domestic conflicts;**
- **A family who was deserted by husband/father and suddenly had no income;**
- **A woman who could not work for five months due to delays in receiving a needed medical procedure during the peak of COVID;**
- **A man who was out of work during the COVID lockdowns because his business was servicing restaurant equipment;**
- **A family who lost income due to an injury and simultaneously incurred**

numerous medical expenses;

- **A woman with life challenges due to long-term mental illness who was destabilized by a breakup with a friend;**
- **An elderly man who was in search of new permanent housing after completing a transitional living residential program for chronic mental health patients;**
- **An elderly lady with multiple disabilities and no family needing in-home assistance after a medical procedure;**
- **And several other households/individuals who came to Prince of Peace with spiritual, emotional, and physical needs.**

The direct assistance provided to individuals and families is possible through the Prince of Peace Home Missions Fund. Home Missions benefits those in our community (members and/or neighbors) who have had a major life setback.

Each year POP members approve an annual budget which commits \$10,000 to the fund. In March 2020, an additional appeal was made for donations specific to this fund in anticipation of extra need due to COVID crisis hardships. The response was fantastic with an additional \$15,000 donated.

Your financial contributions help others. From January 2020

through September 2021, we provided \$42,061 in assistance.

Assistance is provided to individuals/households making a specific request to ministry staff and split 50/50 between POP members and community members based on requests. Determining awards is driven by a desire to provide capacity building or restoring aid to the greatest extent possible.

The number of people in crisis in our community was significant and is rising due to impact of the COVID pandemic. Multiple factors work against the stability of families and individuals in our community. Help is needed. Our response is both a congregational and personal commitment to bring God's kingdom and hope to all our neighbors.

Assisting those in need is a biblical imperative. Jesus left no doubt about the importance of living out the commandment to love one another. In His sermon about loving "the least of these," He was clear that serving those in need of hospitality, food, drink, clothes, and visitation in sickness and prison is serving Him. (Matthew 25:31-46)

Assisting those in need opens the opportunity to live out other POP Values, in addition to loving one another. All discussions with recipients involve emotional and spiritual caregiving that invites them to experience Jesus in their

struggle. Every person has three larger needs that wrap around the core need for the assistance they seek:

- **Belonging**
- **Support and acceptance**
- **Hope**

By inviting others into our Journey with Jesus, they can sense an opportunity to belong to something good through our care. They receive a measure of support and acceptance through a non-judgmental approach of listening and discernment regarding their story and needs. They receive a measure of Hope through the reminder that God is with them in their struggle, and that He promises to provide for all that call upon His name.

Assisting individuals and families builds relationships and a reputation that Prince of Peace cares about people. This spills over into our relationships with other support organizations in the community. Prince of Peace works together in a coalition of community organizations to improve response to community needs. The group, coordinated through United Palatine Coalition, operates a Community Hub charity tracker that allows for coordinated and holistic care response through tracking and referrals. This network and tracking tool promises to bring more focus to aiding those who have needs that are in POP's specific sweet spot and to bring awareness for opportunities for emotional and spiritual support in addition to direct aid. This new network holds great promise for POP to become even more directed and impactful in our assistance outreach.

Direct assistance also dovetails with our outreach support of local mission partners through direct mission grants and volunteering. Northwest Compass, JOURNEYS the Road Home, Palatine Assisting Through Hope (PATH), and Partners for Our Communities (POC) are major partners in our community who assist those needing resources of all types. We have given both regular mission grants and 3x50 campaign grants totaling \$42,300 since January 2020 to these organizations. Providing direct volunteers in these mission partner operations is an additional way to *Put Others First* by entering into their world and bringing compassionate help through our mission partner's service.

You might believe that the opportunity to extend care outreach seems like a "congregational" responsibility or for "someone else." That is farthest from the truth. There is a four-pronged approach to caring for our community and you are a part of all of them: financial

contributions drive (1) Home Missions Fund assistance and (2) mission grants to community partners, and (3) personal time and talents can go into volunteering at mission partners (4) prayer. Anyone seeking a hands-on role in working more with local partners should talk with Susan Klemstein, Director of Outreach. I invite you to *Imagine the Possibilities* in this respect. Volunteering may fit directly into a role our partners have defined in current programs or into a new role that, through discussion, you are ideally suited for based on your unique gifts and passions. As a personal example, I recently talked with Stacey Hartman, Outreach Coordinator for mission partner Feed My Starving Children. She expressed a need for photographers and videographers to support storytelling to communicate their mission, which happens to be one of my passions.

Prayerfully consider how and where you can connect with and provide one-on-one support for an individual in crisis. This might require a decision of personally *Investing with Courage* in the lives of others. There are five steps in this journey that could lead you into great connection and compassion:

- **Prayer:** Ask God to open your eyes to those around you in need and generate a compassionate, courageous heart to make connections.
- **Awareness:** Learn what's going on in your neighborhood and community and find how others are making a difference, connect with them, or imitate them.
- **Attitude/Heart:** Caring starts with a heart of humility and seeing others as worthy of your time, and being gracious to hear their story with acceptance and support.
- **Training:** Seek opportunities to improve care skills like listening, spiritual conversations, and praying with others.
- **Engagement:** Connect either through structured programs or informal networking. (e.g. useful neighborhood Facebook groups).

You are uniquely wired and provisioned by God with gifts that you can provide to someone who is in need.

Are you ready for this challenge? Please connect with me and learn more.



**DAVE
PENNER**
Director of Care
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2021 POP Staff Updates

Change is inevitable, and through it all let's give thanks for the blessing of our ever-faithful POP staff members! Here are some staff changes you'll want to know about:



Julie Wettermann

Julie plans to move on from her position as Prince of Peace's Parish Administer early in 2022. We are so thankful for Julie's nearly three and a half years of dedicated service to God at Prince of Peace. During that time, Julie served with selflessness, faithfulness, detail-orientation, and excellence. She was project manager for the new sanctuary walls and screens, helped POP navigate the pandemic with an emphasis on public health, and found and secured additional financial assistance for POP's COVID recovery! Her wisdom, discernment, and thoughtfulness is greatly appreciated and will be missed! God's blessings to you, Julie, as you discover what God has in store for you next!



Jennifer Edwards

Jennifer was called to Prince of Peace in 2019 to lead POPTeens and Confirmation after graduating as a Director of Christian Education (DCE) from Concordia University Texas. She recently stepped into the position of Director of Family Ministry at Prince of Peace. In this new position Jennifer will oversee POPKids and POPTeens and encourage the growth and discipleship of our Prince of Peace families.

Jennifer is excited to expand into family ministry and use even more of her DCE training and skills!



Jeni Walker

Jeni will be available to support Jennifer in her new role, but primarily serve as Director of Communications and Hospitality at Prince of Peace. She manages all communication at Prince of Peace, including POPNews – POP's electronic newsletter, PEACE Offering – bi-annual ministry update, church website, Church Center app, and POP social media accounts. Jeni will also oversee all hospitality ministries such as coffee service and the Connection Center to name a few.

Please pray for and encourage these ladies as they serve the Lord here at POP in new and exciting ways!

POP STAFF

See page 17 for a full list of POP staff contact information.



POPEvents

- Nov 24** **Thanksgiving Eve**
 - Worship @ 7pm
 - Pie Fellowship
- Dec 4 Big Band Christmas Concert
- Dec 5 Voters Informational Meeting
- Dec 12 Voters Meeting
- Dec 24** **Christmas Eve**
 - Worship Services
 - 1pm ▪ Jazz
 - 3pm ▪ Jazz
 - 5pm ▪ Traditional
 - 11pm ▪ Kithara Harp Trio
- Dec 24 – Jan 2 Church Office Closed
- Dec 25** **Christmas Day**
 - No Worship Services
- Dec 26 Regular Worship Services
9am and 10:30am
- Mar 2** **Ash Wednesday**
- Apr 10** **Palm Sunday**
- Apr 14** **Maundy Thursday**
- Apr 15** **Good Friday**
- Apr 17** **Easter Sunday**
- Apr 23/24 Confirmation Weekend

Event dates are subject to change.
Check www.pop.church, POPNews, or Facebook for the most current information.



POPLC



POPPalatine



Prince of Peace LIVE!



Get in the Holiday Mood!

BIG BAND CHRISTMAS CONCERT

SAVE THE DATE! December 4, 2021

Enjoy dinner with friends and a **free** big band jazz concert with *The Vintage Swing Band*, featuring our very own Alex Falls! They'll share Christmas classics and big band jazz standards. Sign up at www.pop.church, on the Church Center app, or call the church office, so we may plan dinner accordingly.



PRINCE of PEACE
LUTHERAN CHURCH

discover peace. together.

Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod

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