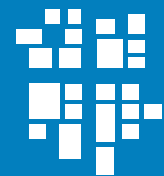


# Peace Offering

BI-ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2025



PRINCE of PEACE  
LUTHERAN CHURCH

Palatine, Illinois

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## MEET THE STAFF

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Shadrach LCC K-9 Comfort Dog



discover peace. together.

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# Food, Friendship, and Faith

We know that being a Christian is not just an idea or something we say we believe. It's not just being a member of a church, having our names on the books. Faith in Jesus is a way of life, and a really beautiful way of life at that!

The apostle Paul said, *"The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love."*

Jesus says the greatest commandment is LOVE! *"Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. And love your neighbor as yourself."*

Simply stated: **LOVE J.O.Y. (JESUS, OTHERS, YOURSELF!)**

Jesus says, "all the Law and Prophets hang on this" and "there's no commandment greater than these." He says "do this and you will live!"

In this issue of the PEACE Offering, you'll read stories of how people like you are expressing their faith through acts of love...

...feeding the hungry through PADS and *Blessings in a Backpack*.

...offering hospitality to the hurting through funeral lunches.

...offering comfort all over our community

with our newest staff member, Shadrach LCC K-9 Comfort Dog.

...making and sending quilts to people who lost everything in floods.

...crocheting and knitting items to wrap sick and hurting people in prayer

...sharing Christ's peace through disaster relief near and far (with chainsaws!)

...offering Spiritual First Aid to people who are experiencing trauma.

...building bigger tables and making new friends through food, fun,  
and deepening conversation at Tables for Eight.

...taking next steps of faith together as families, growing in their knowledge  
of God's word and getting more involved with worship.

...sharing creative gifts like poetry, music, and visual art to connect people  
to Jesus

...preaching the Gospel story without using any words!

My prayer is that these stories encourage you to live your faith.

Perhaps they help you to think about new ways to share your time, talent,  
and treasures to your neighbor's benefit and to God's glory!

May others who don't (yet) believe in Jesus and who aren't (yet) connected to  
a church community see how beautiful a life of following Jesus really is and  
want to live this way too!

We are a family of everyday missionaries! We are a leading church! Keep  
up the great work, Prince of Peace! God is on the move and the world is  
watching!



**PASTOR KARL FAY**

Senior Pastor

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## FEATURED EVENTS

# 5/16

### Fifth Annual Community Art Show Art Walk/Award Night

This unique visual arts display showcases works of art created by artists spanning eight decades and hailing from all over the northwest suburbs.

**This year's theme: Building Bigger Tables.**

Award Night is free and open to everyone! Experience community with appetizers and live music, and cast your vote for the People's Choice award!



# 7/29-31

### Vacation Bible School

Explore God's creation and how we are all made uniquely in His image through various art-focused activities. Overall, our summer Art Camp promises to be an enriching and memorable experience, offering participants a multifaceted exploration of God's creation through the lens of art and creativity.

Learn how you can help this mission succeed on the Church Center app or [pop.church/vbs](http://pop.church/vbs). We need volunteers to teach or help with an activity, lead kids throughout the week, coordinate snacks, donating funds, organizing supplies, and more.



## POPEvents

New events are added regularly. Here are a few to note. Look for "Things to Do at POP" on the Church Center mobile app or at [www.pop.church](http://www.pop.church) for the latest information and a full list of events and serving opportunities.

May 2	Prime Timers BINGO Night
May 3	Feed My Starving Children (FMSC) Meal Packing Session ■ 2:30-4pm
May 4	<b>Voters Informational Meeting</b>
May 10	Spring Clean-Up and Planting Day
May 18	<b>Voters Meeting</b>
May 16	Building Bigger Tables Art Walk/Award Night ■ 6:30pm
May 17-18	Building Bigger Tables Art Show Gallery in Gym Sat 1-6pm, Sun 8am-noon Virtual gallery available at <a href="http://pop.church/artshow">pop.church/artshow</a> .
May 24	Outdoor Worship Begins <i>Saturdays at 5pm "under the pines" through Labor Day weekend</i>
May 26	<b>Memorial Day</b> Church Office Closed
June 1	Discover (Membership) Class 11:45am-1:30pm Sign up at <a href="http://pop.church/membership">pop.church/membership</a> .
July 4	<b>Independence Day</b> Church Office Closed
July 10-21	Slovakia Mission Trip
July 25	Schaumburg Boomers Star Wars Night
July 29-31	Vacation Bible School (VBS)
August 2	VBS Celebration Picnic  DCE Intern Installation
August 24	Neighborhood Block Party

 **BLESSINGS IN A  
BACKPACK**

 **PRINCE of PEACE**  
LUTHERAN CHURCH

Spread your  
wings and  
soar!!



# SHARING FOOD



**BLESSINGS IN A  
BACKPACK**

through Meals,  
Backpacks, and  
Funeral Hospitality

Shine bright like  
a star!!



**PRINCE of PEACE**  
LUTHERAN CHURCH



**BLESSINGS IN A  
BACKPACK**

CHOOSE  
KINDNESS



**BLESSINGS IN A  
BACKPACK**

Have



# Fueled by Faith

## to Share Food and Friendship in our Community

“If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.” 1 John 3:17-18



### SUSAN KLEMSTEIN

Director of Outreach/  
Financial Controller  
[susank@pop.church](mailto:susank@pop.church)

**PADS stands for Public Action to Deliver Shelter.** Here, PADS ministry co-leader Kim Green and her husband Rick share their long history with the ministry:

“We have been blessed to participate in the PADS ministry which began at Christ Lutheran Church in Palatine, the initial site in the Northwest suburbs, in the late 1980s. Prince of Peace has been serving meals for more than two decades!

Today, our wonderful volunteers provide and serve a delicious and nutritious dinner for guests at mission partner Journeys the Road Home on the first Wednesday of every month. Our guests, in many cases, work very hard at low-paid

jobs that do not allow them to afford full-time housing. PADS and Journeys provide our brothers and sisters with a safe and supportive environment for food, shelter, and a path to additional services.

Clearly Jesus believes in the PADS ministry and has instilled a dedicated sense of caring in the site leaders, shift volunteers, meal providers, and so many others who donate time, materials, and talent to this critical offering in our communities. Our PADS guests are eternally grateful for your love and support!”

Co-leader Tanya Bergman also shared her passions for the ministry:

“My parents, the ultimate volunteers, taught me to be the hands and feet of Jesus. I am personally guided by

Ephesians 2:10, ‘For you are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God Himself prepared in advance for you to do.’

“It is an uplifting experience to serve the clients at Journeys; they have so little, yet are so grateful! The effort we extend to provide meals is not proportionate to the difference we are making in the lives of those less fortunate.

**Thank you, POP members who generously cook and provide food each month! It’s like the loaves and fishes: You are so loyal!”**

*Pictured above: Rick Green, Kim Green, Eva Valentine, and Tanya Bergman getting ready to serve our PADS meal at Journeys.*



# Blessings in a Backpack

Eight years ago, more than 50% of the students at neighbor Lincoln school were receiving free or reduced lunch. Then-Principal MaryBeth Knoeppel sought a way to help meet hunger needs on the weekend for her students. Lincoln became a partner school in the national Blessings in a Backpack network, and Prince of Peace has been volunteering there on Thursdays since the start. Volunteers pack fresh fruit and easy meals to help bridge the weekend hunger gap. Prince of Peace also contributed financial mission grants toward the cost of the food.

In fall 2024, Prince of Peace took full responsibility of the funding and volunteering for the program. Co-leaders Krista Spaletto and Susan Klemstein also stepped out in faith and increased the number of students being served from 50 to 65 each week. School social workers select the most critical students to receive the food, and our team of fourteen volunteers take turns serving on Thursdays to pack the meals.

Our team also gathers a few times of year for friendship and conversation as we create encouragement cards to add to the meals.

RoniSue Alber volunteers her time with both PADS and Blessings in a Backpack. “Blessings in a Backpack and PADS are two ministries that I have a passion for. Food is something that many of us take for granted, yet many people cannot afford three meals a day. It is a privilege to be able to help provide weekend snacks for young children and a monthly hot meal for adults that are struggling in life. Jesus asks us to care for people in need and these ministries allow me to do that.”

If you want to learn more about either of these ministries, reach out to me or a Blessings in a Backpack leader. There’s room for you at these serving tables!



*Pictured above:*

*Top, The Blessings in a Backpack team creates encouragement cards to include in the food packs.*

*Bottom, RoniSue Alber and Arlene Harwood are among those who volunteer their time packing meals at Lincoln Elementary School.*



**SUSAN KLEMSTEIN**  
Director of Outreach/  
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# Funeral Hospitality



**JENI WALKER**

Director of Communications  
and Hospitality

[jeni@pop.church](mailto:jeni@pop.church)

At Prince of Peace, we believe hospitality is more than just a warm welcome. It is a tangible expression of Christ's love.

Nowhere is this more evident than in the care and dedication of our Funeral Luncheon Team. In one of life's hardest moments, this team serves grief-stricken families with food, comfort, a sense of community, and a powerful ministry of presence and love.

Leah Peszek, Funeral Luncheon Team Leader, shares, "Every single luncheon, many people stop by the kitchen to say thank you and express how much the meal meant to them. That is the number one reason I serve on this team. While gathering enough helpers to prepare food and serve can be stressful, seeing the impact it has on the families makes it all worthwhile. I am filled with joy knowing that we have provided comfort in their time of need."

Among other reasons, families appreciate the luncheons for the home-cooked meal. "We've heard people say it's the best funeral luncheon they've ever had. The number one reason is that everything is homemade. We could go out and purchase food, but that would take away the special touch that makes the meal so meaningful. Plus, it gives others the opportunity to serve by cooking."

Beyond hospitality, the ministry represents an act of outreach. "A funeral is one of the hardest moments a family will ever experience. This is a time when we can offer hospitality to those who are hurting. Many people who attend funerals may not have a church home. This is our opportunity to share the love of Jesus in a way that might encourage them to return or seek a church near their home."

For Patty Bryant, the funeral luncheon ministry was life-changing. In 2022, she lost her husband, Terry, unexpectedly. Without a church home, she sought a place to hold his funeral and found open arms at Prince of Peace. "Pastor Karl was compassionate and receptive to our specific needs for the service. He allowed me to honor Terry in a way that truly reflected his life and his passion for music," Patty said.

Along with the service, Patty and her family were offered a funeral luncheon, for which she is deeply grateful. "It was one less thing to think about

during such a difficult time." But it was more than just a meal—it was a moment of care that helped Patty and her family feel surrounded by love.

"We could feel a sense of community and compassion. Even though I wasn't part of the Prince of Peace family then, I am now! Through this experience, I feel closer to God than ever before, and I am so thankful for how POP supported me in my grief."

The Funeral Luncheon Team embodies the essence of hospitality. By preparing meals with care and serving with compassion, they offer comfort and support that extends beyond the church's walls. Their dedication ensures that every grieving family who enters our doors feels the peace of Christ in a profoundly personal way. If you're seeking a meaningful way to serve, consider joining this remarkable ministry—because a simple meal can be a powerful expression of love.





# SHARING FRIENDSHIP

"A friend loves at all times,  
and a brother is born  
for a time of adversity."

PROVERBS 17:17



# Meet Liz

## Our First Director of Christian Education (DCE) Intern

Hello, my name is Liz Rossow! I am excited to get to join the team at Price of Peace this summer! I am just a few weeks away from graduating from Concordia University in St. Paul Minnesota (CSP).

I am from Ann Arbor, Michigan. My dad (Justin) is a Pastor and recently took a call to Trinity Arcadia, Michigan and my mom (Miriam) is a Lutheran school teacher, so I grew up in a very Lutheran household. My older sister (Naomi) is a pediatric ICU nurse in downtown Detroit. My younger sister (Kate) is graduating high school and my younger brother (Caleb) is graduating eighth grade this year.

Throughout my time with you, you'll see my boyfriend, Adam and his dog, Dutch! Adam has one more year at CSP where he is studying music and theology.

I am excited to start my internship and learn how to apply what I have been learning in the classroom to a church setting.

I love the theatre! I have been participating in productions on- and off-stage since high school. I have a passion for storytelling and how it fits into theatre and teaching the Gospel. I look forward to getting to know the wonderful staff and members at Prince of Peace and getting to walk with you as we follow Jesus together!



# Telling Tails

with **Shadrach Comfort Dog**

Shadrach's my name. Comfort's my game and I'm the newest staff member at Prince of Peace.

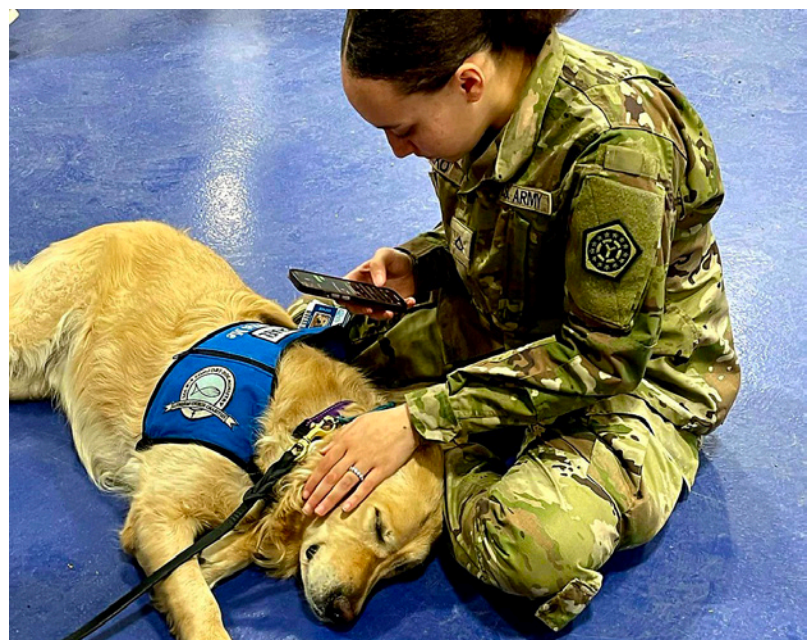
I've only been working here a few months, but boy, have I been busy!! My official installation on January 18 and 19 was really exciting! We had special treats (not for me – just humans,) I had my picture taken with lots of people and everyone seemed to be happy. Best of all, LOTS of my brother and sister Comfort Dogs came just to help me celebrate! I was a star!

So, what have I been doing since my installation? I've been to many happy places that are called schools. They all have children in them and they love me! I get tons of pets and all I have to do is look good and let them pet me. I can even do that laying down. You might think I'm not really working, but I am making sure that each child knows that they are loved. Sometimes they read to me and I have to make sure I'm paying



**KRIS SHAFER**

LCC K-9 Comfort Dog Ministry  
Top Dog  
[shadrach@pop.church](mailto:shadrach@pop.church)





attention. One teacher said that her students do better when they are reading to me, because I take away all their stress!

As much as I like meeting people when they are happy, I know that my job means I am often called to bring comfort to people when they are suffering. I have already been to two wakes for people. One was for a 14-year-old boy who was much loved. That was a hard morning for me, but I didn't have to go alone. Abednego Comfort Dog and Eunice Comfort Dog were also there and they showed me how important my job is. Another time, I worked with Michael Comfort Dog and Nigel K-9 Military Ministry Dog when we went to ease the pain some Illinois Army National Guardsmen felt when they were told that a fellow Guardsman had died. It was quite an honor to serve the people who serve our country. I hope we showed them how important they are to us and how much we all care about them.

I have a GREAT team!! I live with nice people and they take great care of me. I even have a second home I can go to when they are out of town. Eight handlers take me to all my "jobs" and eleven more Ministry Partners go with us to provide spiritual support. There are also team members who pray for us, send cards, write grants, sew bandanas, and keep us organized. Phew! I get tired just thinking about it! You may not know it, but not everyone on my team is a member of Prince of Peace. I didn't get to meet her, but I've heard stories about JoJo Comfort Dog from Living Christ Lutheran Church in Arlington Heights. After she passed away, two members of her team who missed the ministry joined my team. One of them is a member of POP, but the other still goes to Living Christ. I have another handler who met my Top Dog at a Community Wellness Fair. She was working at another table and saw Myra



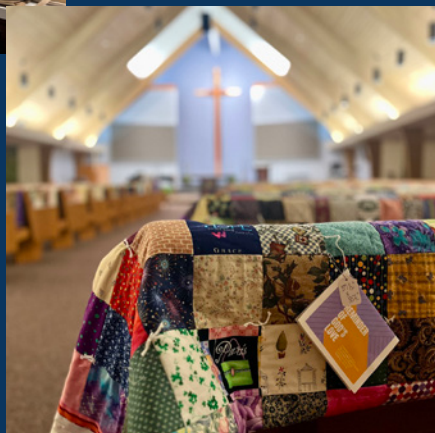
Comfort Dog who was serving with POP that day. (I hadn't been "hired" yet!) She liked what she saw and joined my team even before I did!

I'm so glad God called every member of my team to this ministry! I know He has a plan for each of us and that He is going to lead us wherever He needs us to go. Maybe God is calling you to join us in our ministry. I could use 2 more handlers. Just think — you could receive training to hold my leash and help me bring comfort to people who need the mercy, compassion, presence and proclamation of Jesus Christ!

I've heard that people wonder what I do when I'm not working. At home, I'm just a normal dog and I have toys to play with. But when I have been working, I get paid! After each visit, I get a paycheck from my Handler. Sometimes that means we play fetch with my favorite ball...it squeaks!!! Other times I might play a little bit and then get a massage. OH MY DOG that feels good! I think the best part of my massage time is that I get to snuggle with my Handlers and I can show them how much I love them and how thankful I am that they love me too!

I hope you learned a little about me. I don't make it to church for every service because sometimes I'm working, but I hope you come to see me when I'm there. You can find me by the Connection Center in front of that pretty blue couch. My vest says Please Pet Me, so you'll know what to do when you see me! If I'm not there, you can see a digital me in the picture frame on the little table next to the couch.

When my Handlers take my leash to go somewhere, they always say "With me." I never know where we're going, but I know it is where I am needed and I'll be ok because it's really God who is saying "With Me." If you listen with your heart, you can hear Him saying the same to you too as you go about your day!



In early October 2024, Reverend Chris Singer, President of Lutheran Church Charities, visited POP as a guest preacher and hosted a presentation on Spiritual First Aid. When he shared about using our talents to help people, POP member and Quilting Team Leader Margo Brewer felt a nudge from the Holy Spirit that she needed to do something for the victims of the recent flooding in North Carolina from Hurricane Helene. “When you get that inkling, just do it! It’s God planting the seeds,” she said.

Tending the seeds that God had planted, Margo contacted POP staff seeking guidance for how to implement her idea of making quilts for the hurricane victims. She spoke with the quilt team members and posted on the POP Share Facebook group seeking other interested volunteers. From there, the seeds grew!

1. Margo located a quilt shop in Pinconning, Michigan that was collecting quilts for the 5 Little Monkeys quilt shop in Weaverville, North Carolina to distribute.
2. Eunice Mattes, who had already donated sewing and quilting materials, donated 50 lap-sized quilt tops.
3. When they discovered they needed twin-size quilts, the team used fabric scraps to make Eunice’s quilts bigger.
4. The quilters created an Amazon wish list for additional supplies, which was generously fulfilled by POP members.
5. Members who had previously completed quilts donated them, including Becky Reeve, who sent the first quilt she had ever made.
6. A Quilt-A-Thon occurred November 2-3 to complete the quilts.

Throughout the week leading up to the Quilt-A-Thon, volunteers came to POP to help finish the quilts, and the weekend brought more than 64 volunteers of all ages! Those with little or no experience tied knots, cut squares, and ironed fabric. During that time, they got to know each other, building community and sharing lessons. Some POP Kids even shared *their* talents by making cards to send with the quilts. Then, on November 9-10, 45 gorgeous handmade quilts adorned the pews as we blessed them before Margo loaded them in her car for the trek to Michigan.

The story doesn’t end there. A few weeks after the quilts were delivered we received thank you cards from quilt recipients including pictures of one laid out on a bed used by a young child in their temporary housing after their home was lost. Additionally, one local North Carolina business, Cakes by Jane, sent us two homemade cakes as a thank you!

The POP Quilters jumped into making quilts for our Confirmands this spring, and hope to take on more projects in the future. We are anxious to see where God will lead them and ready to help them water those seeds as well!



# Quilts for North Carolina



**KERRI STALLARD**  
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## MATT KOENIG

Discipleship Pastor/  
Director of Adult Ministry  
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“To build bigger tables implies that we begin with a table, and Tables for Eight is a great way to begin. Community is vital, and Tables for Eight connects people within the church, develops gifts of hospitality, and encourages folks to open their tables to others in the church and beyond.”

*Judy Allen, new Prince of Peace member  
who participated in a Tables for Eight event*

The theme for the 2024-2025 ministry year is *Building Bigger Tables* and that is exactly what people are doing at Prince of Peace by participating in Tables for Eight events.

Tables for Eight gathers together people from church who may or may not know each other. The host home provides the main course and invites others to bring a dish to share with the group. Throughout the evening, food is shared at the table and new friends are made. It is a true gathering around our unified faith in Jesus. Judy continued, “We are relatively new to the church, so Tables for Eight is a wonderful way for us to get to know others. Our hosts were friendly and gracious, dinner was delicious, conversation

was comfortable, and we enjoyed interacting with everyone there.”

Paul Herzog, long-time member of POP remarked, “We had such an interesting group at our first Tables for Eight. We met a new couple to our church and were also with others that we have known for some time. It was the perfect opportunity for the new couple to make connections with some members. We also enjoyed getting to know everyone on a deeper level. Overall, it was such a fun evening!”

When you bring different people from different walks of life together, it can be scary. Will you have anything to talk about? Will the food be good? Will there be awkward silences? The answer to all of this is YES. This is an event in which anyone can participate whether single, dating, or married. Paul continued, “We really enjoyed the time with the other participants, and eight people is the perfect number. The gathering was small enough that everyone had a chance to speak and contribute, and yet not so small that someone might feel pressured to talk. Our group also included singles, so it wasn’t just a couple’s group.” Keep an eye out for this event next January and join a Table for Eight. Groups will meet on the third Saturday of the month January through April.



# SHARING FAITH

Celebrating faith  
stepping stones, living  
the Gospel, and sharing  
Christ's peace creatively





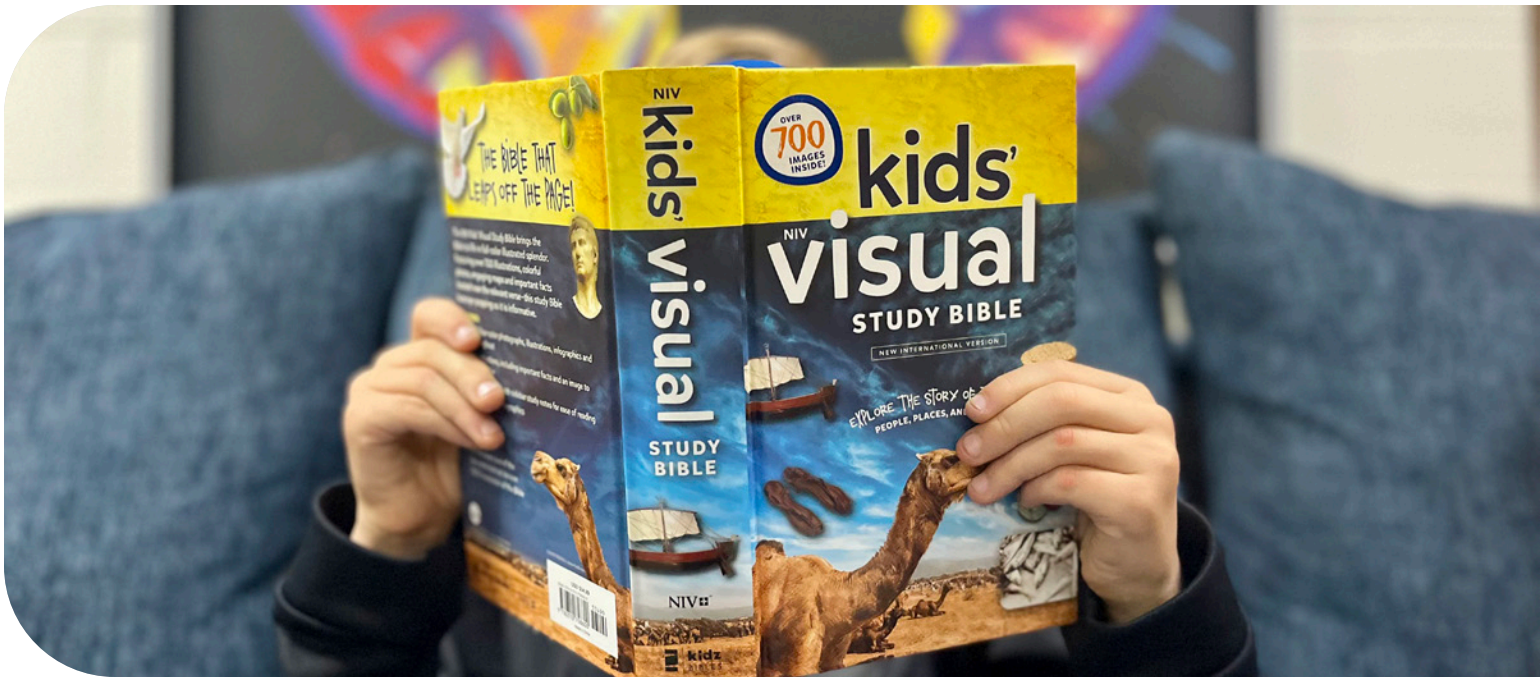
# First Bible Workshop



**JENNIFER EDWARDS**

Director of Family Ministry

[jennifer@pop.church](mailto:jennifer@pop.church)



The First Bible Workshop allows a time for students to begin their journey studying the Bible. Students and their parents learn the big story of the Bible, how the books of the Bible are categorized, and receive resources to help them begin studying the Bible as a family. At a designated time, students and parents separate to focus on different things. Students spend time playing games that help them remember different stories we hear in the Bible while the parents spend time highlighting important verses in the students' new Bibles and writing a special note of prayer and blessing inside the front cover. The students then receive their brand-new study Bibles from their parents during a special portion of Sunday worship.

Nick and Stacy Haddad attended the class with their sons and shared their perspective upon the experience.

## Why do you think the First Bible Workshop is a vital faith stepping stone?

"It supports children's transition from hearing Bible stories to engaging with Scripture on their own. The workshop provided

an opportunity to explore God's Word together as a family in a structured and meaningful way. Ike, for example, now sees that the Bible is not just a book, but a personal guide for his faith journey. For Ike, the workshop came at the perfect time. He began to see the importance of specific passages — like our comfort dog's verse, Proverbs 17:17. It helped him understand how Scripture can provide guidance, comfort, and strength. We also feel that receiving his very own Bible made his faith feel more personal and real, giving him a foundation to grow in his relationship with God."

## What stood out to you most during the workshop?

"A highlight for us was Ike's excitement when we shared the inscription we had written for him. He clearly cherished the fact that we had chosen specific verses that were meaningful for him and that we had taken the time to highlight them in his new Bible. Seeing how much that personal touch meant to him was a powerful reminder of why this workshop matters. It was more than just a class — it was a moment of connection, faith, and encouragement that we know will continue to shape Ike's spiritual journey in the years ahead."



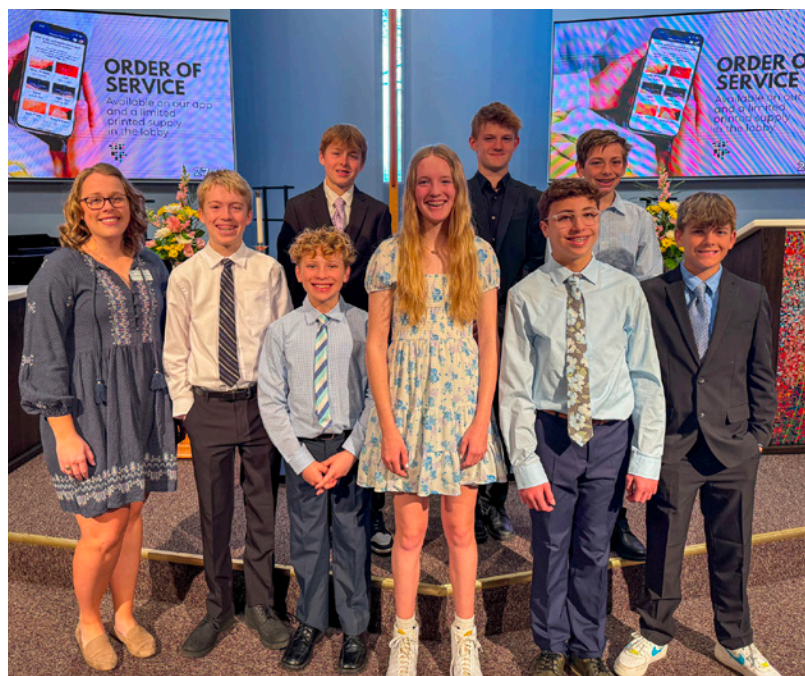
# Confirmation

On April 13, Palm Sunday, we celebrated Confirmation as fourteen youth took a step in their faith journey and confirmed their faith. These students spent two years learning about the foundational beliefs in the Christian faith as we understand them from our Lutheran perspective.

In the class, students learned key lessons through activities, such as Mason Wallin's favorite when they worked together to cross the lava river, each with a different limitation. They learned how valuable it is to work with a team and to share our different gifts.

Simon Thomas and Levi Hooker thoroughly enjoyed activities at the confirmation retreat at Walcamp Outdoor Ministries, including canoeing and a relay race.

One lesson in particular stuck with Levi. As we discussed the Ten Commandments, we reviewed the seventh commandment — you shall not steal. Group leader Gayle Neururer pointed out that this commandment is not only about stealing objects. For example, disrupting class by talking steals time or cheating by looking at someone else's test steals work and knowledge.





# Messianic Seder

## A Night of Food, Friendship, and Faith



**JENI WALKER**  
Director of Communications  
and Hospitality  
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**JENNIFER EDWARDS**  
Director of  
Family Ministry  
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Our recent Messianic Seder was more than just a special evening—it was a powerful, hands-on journey into the story of Jesus' final meal with his disciples. Led by Jennifer Edwards, Director of Family Ministry, and Jeni Walker, Director of Communications and Hospitality, this multi-generational event brought together people of all ages to experience the richness of the Last Supper through the traditions of the Jewish Passover.

Participants were guided through the fifteen traditional steps of the Seder meal, with hands-on elements, storytelling, and reflections that helped connect the dots between the Old Testament story of God's deliverance and the New Testament story of redemption through Jesus. From tasting bitter herbs to hiding the afikomen, every part of the evening was designed to make the experience memorable and meaningful.

"There's a reason Jesus chose food to tell this story," said Jeni Walker. "It's something we all share. When we taste these elements again, we'll remember this meal and the story that comes with it."

The room was filled with laughter,

questions, meaningful conversations, and even a few tears as families and individuals of all ages explored the roots of Holy Communion in a new way. One guest shared, "Thank you for connecting the dots for us—we learned so much!" Another added, "I will never look at Holy Communion or Maundy Thursday the same way again."

Jennifer Edwards emphasized the importance of experiences like this in faith formation: "God's design is that the parents have the responsibility to share their faith, this story, with their children, and that the faith community will come around and support them. This is a beautiful picture of that in action."

"This was a wonderful evening!" said another participant. "I've been looking for a multi-generational Seder I could bring my kids to—and this was perfect."

As we walked through the meal Jesus shared with his disciples, we were reminded again how food, friendship, and faith draw us closer to one another and to the heart of God. Through this experience, we didn't just learn about Jesus' final days—we lived a piece of the story together.





# THE GOSPEL UNSPOKEN



Scott Treptow is a senior at Concordia University Chicago studying to be a Director of Christian Education (DCE.) As part of his studies, he has been serving at Prince of Peace since September 2022 where he has gotten hands-on experience in his field. He will finish the academic side of his training this May and head off on a one-year internship to Redeemer Lutheran Church in Peoria, Illinois.

POP Teens shared some of their favorite memories and lessons they learned from Scott over the last three years, including the fun, unique, and new games and the lock-ins he led. When asked about the lessons they learned from Scott over the years, students cited that they gained a greater understanding of the Lutheran view of communion, learned to always ask questions and challenge yourself in faith and life, and learned the importance of not drinking too much caffeine.

It has been a joy working alongside Scott and watching him learn and grow in his skills and confidence as a leader. I know the youth and I will miss him a lot.

Some of our middle and high school students have been able to make core memories with Scott as they prepared his senior project, *The Gospel Unspoken*, presented at Prayer on Wednesdays (POW) on April 2.

Here, Scott describes his project, helping us understand the heart behind it:

### **What is *The Gospel Unspoken*?**

*The Gospel Unspoken* is a powerful dramatic portrayal of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection set to contemporary Christian

music—conveying the message of salvation without a single spoken word. Through expressive movement and music, this performance invites audiences to witness Christ's love in a way that transcends language and speaks directly to the heart.

### **What do you hope people took away from the evening?**

I hope that all who attended *The Gospel Unspoken* left with a personal connection to the Passion story of Jesus Christ. Many of us who have heard the Gospel story many times often forget that we are a part of that story. That Jesus died on the cross for us personally. I hope that people are reminded that during Christ's death and resurrection, He was thinking about all of us.

### **What was your favorite part of putting this together?**

My favorite part was working with the youth of Prince of Peace and seeing how excited they are about this presentation. I planned much of the presentation, but many youth have also contributed to the presentation. This project is as much theirs as it is mine.

### **What is the biggest thing you learned from this event?**

I learned how important it is to build a team around you. With large events like this one, there are many moving parts, and one person cannot realistically do it all. I have been blessed with the support from parents and the staff of Prince of Peace.



### **JENNIFER EDWARDS**

Director of Family Ministry  
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From Creation to the Gathering of the Disciples, Crucifixion, and Resurrection, POP junior high and high school students brought the Gospel story alive at the April 2 production of *The Gospel Unspoken*.



Vertical Worship's "Lamb of God" created a dramatic scene for the crucifixion. Jesus Christ (played by Josh Daniel) paid the ultimate price for our salvation. He willingly gave up His life, so that we may have everlasting life with Him.

At the end of the story, Our Gal (played by Tessa Faltinek,) shared her love of Christ with all the people in her life as "I Can Only Imagine" by MercyMe played. When our time on Earth is complete, we are triumphantly reunited with Jesus.

Set to "When I Fall" by Katy Nichole, Our Gal struggled with many sins and temptations today. She eventually gave in. Jesus saved her with His sacrifice on the cross.

After many requests for an encore, the students will share this incredible presentation in person one more time.

Experience *The Gospel Unspoken* again or for the first time on Saturday, April 26, 2025 at 6:30pm!





# Hear Our Prayer Everyone



**KERRI STALLARD**

Parish Administrator

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Established in 2006 by member Carol Baker, POP's Hope Shawl Ministry group began meeting at POP to crochet and knit together, creating hope shawls for those experiencing illness or loss. It has since grown to provide other items benefiting several groups and non-profits in addition to our POP community:

- **Hope Shawls and Lap Blankets:** Available upon request or for pick up in the Prayer Room, distributed to GriefShare members and Veterans groups. Member Pat Bienik routinely checks church prayer requests to determine who might need a shawl.
- **Scarves:** Provided to Foster2Success, a non-profit that helps foster youth to pursue higher education and transition to adulthood.
- **Prayer Squares:** Available at the Connection Center and in the Prayer Room.
- **Baby Hats & Baby Blankets:** Provided to several non-profits including Project Baby Blankets who distribute them to babies in the NICU in Illinois, and Project Linus who shares them with seriously ill children. Additionally, they will soon be gifting these items to Palatine-based non-profit Hopeful Beginnings of St. Mary, an adoption agency who also provides mental health services and case management to new families. Hats and Blankets will be given during regular visits from our LCC K-9 Comfort Dog Shadrach and team.
- **Larger Blankets and Chemo Caps:** Given to Phil's Friends, a Wheaton-based non-profit who provide Christ-centered support to those going through cancer.

The impact of these items is not lost on the team. Every handmade item is prayed over and a note with a blessing is attached. One POP member shared that she carried her blue shawl everywhere while in the hospital after back surgery, and

*Hear my prayer, O Lord; Listen to my cry for mercy. In the day of my trouble I will call to you, for you will answer me.* PSALM 86:6-7



the doctors and nurses affectionately referred to her as the "Blue Shawl Lady." Hope Shawl member Sheryl Grandt shared that witnessing the impact the shawl had on her brother during his battle with brain cancer prompted her to join the group and help to give back.

The team welcomes new members or anyone curious about knitting or crocheting. No experience is necessary. The members will gladly teach you! In fact, POP mother/daughter duo Sarah and Jamie McBride recently sought out Hope Shawl leader Elizabeth Schuett for lessons and have now started attending meetings. You can even create items on your own and bring them in to distribute. Member Barb Wiwat regularly sends in prayer squares she makes in Arizona.

**Did you know?** Knitting and crocheting involves both sides of the brain (logical and creative,) promotes healthy brain activity, and prevents dementia?

Hope Shawl Ministry leader Elizabeth Schuett says: "I have a passion for knitting and crocheting. This ministry is a fit because I'm not a real upfront person, I'm more of an introvert. Making something and passing it on is a better fit for me than other ministries and it is a good community of people."

Hope Shawl Ministry, currently at about twelve members, meets three times per month in the Maker Space at POP: the first and third Fridays of every month from 1-3pm and the fourth Thursdays from 7-8:30pm. You are welcome to simply show up or contact Elizabeth Schuett for more information.



# Faith in Action

## How Jim Beckley Found Purpose in Disaster Relief



**KERRI STALLARD**

Parish Administrator  
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“Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.”

1 Peter 4:10

As POP Member Jim Beckley was preparing to retire several years ago, he focused on planning his retirement lifestyle and volunteering was at the top of his list. Before researching different types of volunteer service, he wisely created a list of things he wanted to achieve through volunteering:

- Learning a new skill
- Physical Activity
- Faith-Based Environment
- Network to Meet New Friends

Turns out that that the Lutheran Early Response Team (LERT), at the direction of mission partner Lutheran Church Charities (LCC), checked all of those boxes!

The Palatine LERT team, comprised of members from both POP and neighbor Immanuel Lutheran Church, have three pillars of support.

- 1. Deployment:** Managed by LCC for assignments in assisting with disasters.
- 2. Community Engagement:** Ways to support a local charitable organization. They currently support a local WINGS domestic violence shelter by trimming trees, painting, and building and maintaining a garden. They also help complete projects around POP including tree trimming and removal.
- 3. Personal Support:** Typically a one-time event referred to LERT by the Care Ministry of POP or Immanuel to help members (yard clean up, moving, painting, etc.)

Members do not have to commit to participating in all three of these pillar activities. All LERT team members attend a minimum of half-day basic

training. Specialized skills such as chainsaw work require additional training and financial commitment (i.e. purchase of chain saw, maintenance, etc.)

LERT team members do not deploy until LCC is invited to the disaster area, usually coordinated through a church or district office. LCC assesses the site to determine needs as well as housing, food, and shelter for the team members. Often, a local church provides the housing on site, sleeping in classrooms or pews. They also provide daily meals and assess the needs and skills of the LERT team to make daily assignments. According to Jim, “They never put someone in a situation that is over their head. They know their talent level very well and members always work with a team.”

Jim’s recent deployment took him to Mt. Pisgah Lutheran Church in Hendersonville, NC after the devastation left by Hurricane Helene. During his two-week deployment, he helped to clear debris and downed trees from properties — a job that is not covered by property insurance. This is a valuable service to those affected by the disaster, especially those who are not physically able to do it themselves or who cannot afford to pay for the work to be done. LERT members also distribute gift cards, kerosene heaters, and quilts, among other items.

According to LCC statistics, 97 families were helped and 2,756 volunteer hours were given for the work in North Carolina and more work is necessary as future deployments are being planned for the area. Jim is considering going back to help stating, “I get inspired by the people that go through this and still stay so positive.”



**Are you interested in learning more about LERT and possibly joining the team?** Jim would love to speak to you! They are always looking for new team members.



# An Evening of Poetry and Music



## PASTOR KARL FAY

Senior Pastor

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Last summer, in the span of a couple weeks, two different people I admire — one a POP member and another a pastor friend, completely unconnected from each other — approached me about Tanner Olson and Blake Flattley. Do you know how God sometimes sends you the same message in multiple ways to get your attention on one thing long enough and at an opportune time to actually do something about it? This was that kind of situation.

I had heard about each of these guys. I had even heard Tanner share his poetry several years ago at the Best Practices Heartland Conference. The thought had not occurred to me to ask them to come to Prince of Peace. Why not? I dunno...

At the time, Prince of Peace had just finished hosting our 4th annual Community Art Show. We were getting

a reputation for celebrating art and artists! We had been looking for ways to “build bigger tables” and extend invitations through various networks and across various media to bring people together around food, friendship, and faith.

Summer was budget season, so it was a time for putting dreams into planning mode.

Additionally, the Northern Illinois District (NID) of the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod (LCMS) offered mission grants to churches who were doing things to reach their community. We could share the cost between the POP budget and an NID grant.

And so we planned *An Evening of Music & Poetry with Blake Flattley & Tanner Olson* for Saturday, February 1 to bring some hope in the dead of winter. We knew only a fraction of people would be able to attend a Saturday night

event, so we inquired, and Tanner and Blake said, “Yes” to also leading worship that weekend. Beautiful! We sent invitations to our church, neighboring LCMS churches, our Community Leader Network, art show participants, and through other food, friendship, and faith events we hosted, and we put the word out on social media and through personal relationships.

Among the 75 who came out Saturday night for the potluck, music, and poetry event itself, I met people who heard about it through each one of those channels, not to mention other Tanner and Blake fans who live in the area.

It was a glorious and soul-filling weekend. A musician who attended the event and experienced worship that weekend remarked that it was “a real treat, a lovely service and concert. I love how you highlight the arts at your church! My ears perked up when Tanner spoke about distinguishing wishes and hopes.”

Another member expressed their appreciation for

Saturday’s service, saying, “It was such a pleasant surprise to experience the music, poetry and preaching of the special guests. The message of hope especially resonated with me as January [was] a tough month, with both family drama and the political climate weighing me down. Like Peter, we start to sink when we lose our focus.”

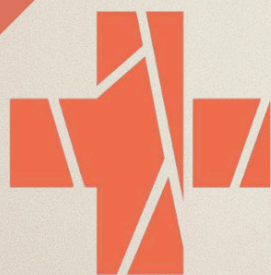
A poet who attends our church regularly found fresh inspiration for pursuing her craft and sharing it with others!

Hope is a team sport! Thank you, Jesus, for leading us and giving us timely encouragement. Thank you, Creator God, for creative gifts to share. Thank you for Spirit-led connections, and how we are stronger together in Jesus’ name!

Should we invite Tanner and Blake back to Prince of Peace?

**Do you have other comments or stories to share about this event? Talk to me or email me. I’d love to hear from you!**





# SPIRITUAL FIRST AID TRAINING



## MATT KOENIG

Discipleship Pastor/  
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In October 2024, Prince of Peace invited Pastor Chris Singer, president and CEO of Lutheran Church Charities (LCC) to preach and lead a Sunday afternoon training session on “Spiritual First Aid (SFA).”

After some conversations Prince of Peace decided to host official Spiritual First Aid training and start a Spiritual Response Team for Prince of Peace members and others in the community.

Community member Chris Morkert commented, “Spiritual First Aid has taken the science of trauma and its impact on the brain, our emotions, and our reactions to our emotions and created

a first aid kit to begin to repair that trauma. It allows for space for ‘spiritual’ without being evangelistic. This non-judgmental approach can change lives and heal communities. Thanks to LCC, the creators of SFA, and Prince of Peace church.”

Nineteen attendees came for the two-day training including Gary and Sue Pikora who have taken on the responsibility of leading our Spiritual Response team. Sue said the most meaningful part of training for her is, “having the knowledge to be able to help someone in trauma. Being there...listening...praying. Letting people know they’re not alone and serving God with humility.”

The ministry of presence and humility to serve are two of the foundational principals of SFA. When someone needs spiritual first aid they are likely suffering from one of these areas: Biological, Livelihood, Emotional, Social or Spiritual (BLESS.) SFA is then administered using CPR, but not the CPR you learned in a first aid class. CPR stands for:

Care with Practical Presence

Provide Coping Practices

Refer and Resource

The use of BLESS CPR is a great way to help others find peace in their situation and re-center themselves to continue.

Gary summed up his reason for serving and using Spiritual First Aid both for the church and in his personal life, “Sometimes I wonder if I did any good for the world. While small, unflashy acts of service may go unnoticed during my lifetime, God keeps track.”

In other words, we don’t need to serve in the big ways where everyone can see what we do. We only need to serve and love people because God knows the situation and *He* is who we are serving. When we step out in humility with the love of Jesus, we can then see *other’s* needs and love others just like we love ourselves.



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Prince of Peace LIVE!



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SAVE THE DATE!

# August 24, 2025

## Neighborhood Block Party

Get ready for an afternoon packed with delicious food, family fun, and fantastic live music. It's the perfect way to wrap up the summer and connect with friends, neighbors, and our community. Stay tuned for all the exciting details! Who will you bring with you?

