

# Prince of Peace

## THE BELLS

APRIL 2026

### Give Joyfully Like God

There's a line Paul writes to the Corinthians that is so simple, so clear, and yet so challenging: "God loves a cheerful giver." It sounds beautiful. It sounds inspiring. But if we're honest, it also sounds a little intimidating. Cheerful giving? Always? With joy? Without reluctance? Without that little internal wince when we think about time, or money, or energy, or forgiveness, or patience?

Paul isn't just talking about dropping something in the offering plate. He's talking about the whole Christian life—our time, our abilities, our resources, our compassion, our service, our love. Everything we have is a gift from God, and everything we give is meant to flow from a heart shaped by His grace. But that's

exactly where the struggle begins.

Paul says, "Each one must give as he has decided in his heart." That's a heart issue. And Scripture is painfully honest about the human heart. Jesus says, "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Mt 6:21). Jeremiah says, "The heart is deceitful above all things" (Jer 17:9). And Paul himself says, "I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh" (Rm 7:18).

The problem isn't that we don't have enough to give. The problem is that our hearts cling to what we have. We fear losing control. We fear not having enough. We fear being taken advantage of. We fear that if we give too much—of our time, our money, our forgiveness—there won't be anything left for ourselves. And so, giving becomes reluctant. Calculated. Conditional. Sometimes even resentful. We give, but we don't always give cheerfully. We serve, but sometimes with a sigh. We help, but sometimes with a quiet grumble. We forgive, but sometimes with a lingering bitterness.

And then we hear Paul say, "God loves a cheerful giver," and we feel the sting. Because we know how often our giving is anything but cheerful. That's the Law doing its work—exposing the truth that we can't manufacture cheerful generosity on our own.

We can force ourselves to give, but we can't force ourselves to be joyful about it. Only God can change the heart.

And that's exactly what He does.

Before God ever asks us to give anything, He gives everything. Paul says earlier in this same letter, "For you

know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you by His poverty might become rich" (2 Cor 8:9). Think about that. Jesus didn't give reluctantly. He didn't give under compulsion. He didn't give because He had to. He gave because He wanted to. He gave cheerfully. He gave Himself—fully, freely, joyfully—for you. Hebrews says, "For the joy set before Him, He endured the cross" (Heb 12:2).

The joy. Not the obligation. Not the reluctance. The joy.

What was that joy? You. Your salvation. Your forgiveness. Your eternal life. Your restored relationship with the Father. God is the original cheerful giver. He gives grace without limit.

He gives mercy without hesitation. He gives forgiveness without keeping score. He gives daily bread, breath, life, salvation, and every good thing. And He gives it all with joy.

When Paul says, "God loves a cheerful giver," he's not giving us a burden. He's describing God's own heart. He's inviting us into the joy that God Himself has in giving. Cheerful giving isn't something

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#### WORSHIP WITH US

Sunday:  
10:15AM

Contact us:  
[princeofpeacefreedom.com](http://princeofpeacefreedom.com)

Office 724.728.3881

Preschool 724.728.2405

Fax 724.728.6708

Email  
Pr. Sean Walters  
[pastorseangw@gmail.com](mailto:pastorseangw@gmail.com)

Twila DeThomas  
[popluthsecy@comcast.net](mailto:popluthsecy@comcast.net)

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God demands from us. It's something He produces in us. It's the fruit of the Gospel.

So, how does God turn reluctant hearts into cheerful ones? Paul tells us: "God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work" (2 Cor 9:8). In other words: God doesn't ask you to give what He hasn't already supplied. He doesn't ask you to pour out what He hasn't already poured in. He doesn't ask you to be cheerful by your own strength. He fills you with His grace so that His joy overflows through you. Cheerful giving is not a human achievement. It is a Spirit-created response to the generosity of God.

When you remember how much God has forgiven you, you become more forgiving. When you remember how patiently God deals with you, you become more patient. When you remember how richly God provides for you, you become more generous. When you remember how Christ gave Himself for you, you become more willing to give yourself for others. The Gospel doesn't just save you. It reshapes you. It frees you. It transforms you into someone who gives—not reluctantly, not under compulsion, but cheerfully.

Cheerful giving isn't measured by the size of the gift but by the joy of the heart. Jesus praised the widow who gave two small coins (Mk 12:41–44). Paul praised the

Macedonians who gave out of poverty (2 Cor 8:1–5). God praised the early church who shared everything they had (Acts 2:44–47). Cheerful giving looks like:

- *A parent giving time to a child after a long day*
- *A member visiting someone who's lonely*
- *A volunteer serving without needing recognition*
- *A family giving generously because they trust God's provision*
- *A Christian forgiving someone who hurt them*
- *A congregation supporting mission work with joy*
- *A believer offering their gifts, abilities, and resources for the good of others*

Cheerful giving isn't about the size of the gift. It's about the size of the Savior who inspires it.

Paul ends this section with a promise: "You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way" (2 Cor 9:11). God doesn't just receive our gifts—He multiplies them. He multiplies your time. He multiplies your service. He multiplies your generosity. He multiplies your forgiveness. He multiplies

your love. And He uses it to bless others in ways you may never see in this life. Your giving—your cheerful, Gospel-shaped giving—is never wasted. It's never unnoticed. It's never in vain. Because it's God who works through it.

So when Paul says, "God loves a cheerful giver," he's not laying a burden on your shoulders. He's pointing you to the heart of God Himself. A God who gives joyfully. A Savior who gives Himself freely. A Spirit who fills you abundantly. You're not a cheerful giver because you try harder. You're a cheerful giver because Christ lives in you. And the more you see His generosity, the more your heart becomes like His. So, may God make His grace abound in you, so that you may abound in every good work, and give with the joy that comes from knowing that everything you have—and everything you are—is a gift from Him. Amen.

Pastor Sean Walters

# April Servants in Ministry

## ACOLYTES

4/05 Shelby Schweikert  
 4/12 Lilly Rachuba  
 4/19 Mark Shibata  
 4/26 Leah Rachuba

## READERS

4/05 Tammy Eckstrom  
 4/12 Paul Cwynar  
 4/19 open  
 4/26 Bob Licht

## ALTAR GUILD

**Linda Weimer**



4/05 Mary Lehocky / open  
 4/12 Judy McCreedy & Marsha Bishoff  
 4/19 Jaclyn & Grace Shibata  
 4/26 Roger & Mary Nuerge



Lois Roush 7  
 Leah Rabhuba 15  
 Angela Walters 21  
 Jakob Lehman 22  
 Sandy Kostelnik 30  
 Ruthann Weedon 30

Jennifer Weedon 1  
 Allen Lee 10  
 Matthew Muto 10  
 Lois Roush 10  
 Larry Weimer 11  
 Paul Cwynar 14  
 Jacob Schroeder 16  
 Sandra Parker 20  
 Charles Szabo 24  
 Karen McCracken 25





- *Jack Hogue* ● *Edward Cramer* ●
- *Karol* ● *Bob Steigerwald* ● *Pepper, brain tumor* ● *Pat, leukemia* ●
- *Beth Lehman's sister, Jill, cancer* ●
- *Vicki Pawlak* ● *Alice Dietrich*
- *Craig, Tammy's nephew* ● *Shane, brain cancer* ● *Maile, suffering from rare condition* ●
- *Marsha, heart issues* ● *The Volkov family, loss of George*

### James Tomoo Shibata Jr,



James Shibata Jr. (aka JJ, son of James and Jaelyn Shibata, is a senior from Seneca Valley Senior High School in Harmony, PA

James began his scouting career as a Tiger Scout at Pack 85 in Gibsonia. James continued into Cub Scouts with Middlesex Pack 58, and then into Boy Scouts with Troop 58. During James' Boy Scout career, he has held leadership roles of Patrol Leader, Chaplain's Aid, Assistant Senior Patrol Leader, and Senior Patrol Leader. Some of James' favorite memories include sailing in the Bahamas, going to Belltown, going skiing, and the Kondike Derby.

For his Eagle Scout Service Project, James designed and lead a team of scouts, family, and church members to build a firepit and patio for Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Freedom, PA. The firepit and patio will give the church a place for gatherings and fellowship.

James enjoys playing soccer and is a member of his JROTC Marksmanship team. He is a member of the National Honor Society and ski club.

James has applied AND BEEN ACCEPTED to the Air Force Academy and plans to major in Astronautical Engineering.



**We are so proud of you JJ!!!**



Save the Date  
LWML Spring Rally  
May 2, 2026  
St. Luke- Butler Campus

Bible Study with Concordia Lutheran  
Ministries Deaconess Heather Wathall

Joyshop Service Project for Forged by Fire Ministries

Registration information coming in April!



## Lutheran Women's Missionary League Eastern District

**41st Biennial Convention  
June 12-14, 2026**

**DoubleTree by Hilton  
2400 Willow Street Pike  
Lancaster, PA 17602**

**FOR LODGING RESERVATIONS**

**717-464-2711**



March has been tricky so far with the weather and teasing us with Spring like temperatures, occasionally. The groundhog predicted six more weeks of winter and March sure started out that way. We shall see what April brings. March 2<sup>nd</sup> was Dr. Seuss' birthday.

We told the parents to read Dr. Seuss books to the kids at home.

The three-year-old class favorite Dr. Seuss book was What Pet Should I Get?

The four-year-old class's favorite Dr. Seuss book was Green Eggs and Ham.

The four-year-old class enjoyed a snack of green eggs and ham made on our griddle. The majority of the class LOVED the breakfast treat! We decorated the classroom with rainbows and shamrocks. The four-year-olds enjoyed some gold glittered shamrocks hanging with the student's names hanging around the room.

During the month of March, we learned five new letters during writing skills. Letters, Mm, Gg, Uu, Kk, and Rr were our focus. Letter M week stood for the month of March.

Letter Gg is always fun to shape during our writing skills lessons.

The students talk about a fish hook is in the lowercase G. The week of letter Kk the students learned a short song "Let's Go Fly a Kite".

Spring is a great time to go outside and learn to fly a kite. Next month we will finish up our writing skills books. All year long we composed the writing skills books and will gift them to the student's families at graduation.

At the end of the month, we really jazzed up our language! We focused on Spanish words. The four-year-old class learned to count from 1-20 and also added some color words. We showed the boys and girls how to say "hello" in Spanish too. The students were excited to go home and show their parents how they could talk in a different language. Well.....a little!!

A few extra lessons our four-year-olds practiced were, counting to 30 and gluing gum balls in a paper gumball machine. They also practiced rhyming to prepare for that skill in kindergarten. Speaking of kindergarten, all of the Freedom incoming kindergarten students were invited to the elementary school for the formal registration day. The students were nervous but excited to go see their new "big kid" school with their parents. The pre-k students will also take a fieldtrip to the Freedom Elementary in May to see the school and meet the kindergarten teachers. We will be taking them by bus and returning to preschool after. We still have 5 seats available for the 3 year old preschool and 2 seats available for the four year old pre-k classes or the 2026-2027 school year. We are almost full!

Blessings to you and yours,  
Mrs. Smith, Miss Twila, & Miss Michelle



<u>Station</u>	<u>City, State</u>	<u>Freq</u>	<u>Band</u>	<u>Day</u>	<u>Time</u>
WWCH	Clarion, PA	1300	AM	Sun	7:30 AM
WWNL	Pittsburgh, PA	103.9	FM	Sun	3:30 PM
WWNL	Pittsburgh, PA	103.9	FM	Tue	12:30 PM
WWNL	Pittsburgh, PA	1080	AM	Sat	3:30 PM
WWNL	Pittsburgh, PA	1080	AM	Tue	12:30 PM

- April 5, 2026  
**"You Don't Know What You Have Till It's Gone"**  
 Lutheran Hour Speaker: [Rev. Dr. Michael Zeigler](#)  
 Death is the enemy of life, but in Jesus, God made death become life's servant.  
 1 Corinthians 15:26
- April 12, 2026  
**"Early Adopters"**  
 Lutheran Hour Speaker: [Rev. Dr. Michael Zeigler](#)  
 The risen Jesus is the "display model" of what we will be, through faith in Him.  
 1 Corinthians 15:20
- April 19, 2026  
**"Not in Vain"**  
 Guest Speaker: Pastor Ryan Tinetti  
 Because Jesus lives, your future is certain. You can also be confident that your present life has meaning and worth. In the Lord, your labor is not in vain.
- April 26, 2026  
**"Second Chances and First Impressions"**  
 Lutheran Hour Speaker: [Rev. Dr. Michael Zeigler](#)  
 God is the God of second chances, not for Himself but for others.  
 1 Corinthians 15:47-49  
 1 Corinthians 15:50-58

## Buddy “Up-date”

Buddy-Up is here to support and encourage members of the Prince of Peace family as we strive to be intentional about sharing the Gospel with the church and community.

We have been discussing the importance of inviting people to church. One of our members told her own personal story about how being invited to church as a child made a huge impact on her spiritual journey:

*When I was eight years old, our next-door neighbors invited me to attend Sunday School and church with them and their children. This began my new life of learning about God as my family was not a “church family.”*

*I continued attending with my neighbors and, over the years, their kindness and encouragement drastically changed what my life would have been otherwise. Now I’m 84 years old and I’m still thankful for the loving kindness of that family.*

--Marcia Bischoff

Our next meeting will be in the fellowship hall after church on Sunday, April 19<sup>th</sup>. All are welcome and we pray that you will join us.

*Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always to the very end of the age. Matthew 28:19-20*

## Operation Christmas Child Update

Thanks to those who have donated toothbrushes and washcloths for our Shoebox ministry. We have collected all those items so our efforts have shifted to Matchbox cars and water bottles.

You can find the water bottles at Dollar Tree for \$1.25. Of course, we take monetary donations from those who prefer not to shop. Please continue to keep this important ministry in your prayers.

Jesus said,  
“Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.”

Matthew 19:14

## Save the Date

The Third Annual Pamela Beglin Licht Memorial Horse Show will be held on Saturday, September 12<sup>th</sup> at Brady’s Run Horse Arena. Proceeds will benefit Hidden Hills Horse Farm in Rochester, PA.

*The mission of Hidden Hill Horse Farm is to promote safety and aid in individuals overcoming their physical, cognitive, behavioral, mental, and emotional challenges. We strive to help everyone find strength and independence through equine assisted services. In addition to therapeutic riding, our center offers therapeutic equine-related activities including groundwork, stable management, and human growth and development. We strongly believe in our educational purpose to develop leadership, team building, and other human capacity enhancement skills that may be displayed in various areas of daily routine.*

**Please plan to attend our organizational meeting after church on Sunday, May 3<sup>rd</sup>.**

**Please see Tammy if you have any questions.**



**PRINCE OF PEACE VBS 2026**  
**Tuesday June 23- Friday June 26**  
**6-8:15 PM**



**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!!!**  
Please sign up in the narthex or see  
Twila with any questions

## Cemetery Maintenance Update

This update is to inform all who are interested that **the five Saturdays of May from 10 a.m. - 12 p.m.** a group of volunteers will gather for our cleaning and restoring. After that we will take a break to determine what is next.

If you are interested, bring yourself and as many others as you can on as many Saturdays as you can. You can bring also old toothbrushes and some old towels and rags. It is really good to bring your own rubber gloves as well.

**Please join us for our meeting on April 12<sup>th</sup> immediately following service.**





	Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.
			1	2 <b>Holy Thursday</b> 7PM 	3 <b>Good Friday</b> 7pm 	4
5 <b>Easter Breakfast</b> 9AM  Resurrection Sunday Service 10:15	6 	7	8  11:00 Midwzæk Bible Study	9  Choir Rehearsal 7PM 	10	11 <b>ADULT BIBLE STUDY</b>   <b>5:30-7PM</b>
12  9AM Sunday School 10:15 Holy Communion  Cemetery meeting	13  <b>Council Meeting</b> 6:30	14  	15  11:00 Midwzæk Bible Study	16  Choir Rehearsal 7PM 	17	18  
19  9AM Sunday School 10:15 Holy Communion  Mite Sunday Buddy Up Meeting	20	21	22  <b>NO Midwzæk Bible Study</b>	23  Choir Rehearsal 7PM 	24  	25
26  9AM Sunday School 10:15 Holy Communion No confirmation class	27	28  	29	30		