

Peace United Church of Christ
1503 2nd Ave NE
Rochester, MN 55906

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Peace United
Church of Christ
1503 2nd Ave NE
Rochester, MN
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www.peacechurchucc.org
www.facebook.com/
peaceuccrochester

An Open and
Affirming (ONA)
Congregation

**Vision: A safe and
inclusive church
living God's radical
message**

Communion the first
Sunday of the month

8:30am Traditional
Worship

9:45am Faith Formation

I am Contemporary
Worship

Nursery care available
during the 8:30 & I am wor-
ship services

Inside this issue:

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Olive Branch

April 2017

See the insert for Pastor Beth's Ponderings.....

The month of April we will wrap up our Lenten services on
Celebrating World Religions with:

Christianity & Islam April 2

GUEST SPEAKER: Regina Mustafa
(Regina will also be available for Q&A
between services.)

Then continue our journey into Holy Week:



HOLY WEEK

SUNDAY, APRIL 9 @ 8:30 & 11:00am

PALM SUNDAY CELEBRATION

THURSDAY, APRIL 13 @ 6:00pm

MAUNDY THURSDAY DINNER & DRAMA

FRIDAY, APRIL 14 @ 7:00pm

GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE

Celebrate on Easter Sunday:

SUNDAY, APRIL 16 @ 7:30 – 10:30am
10:00 - 10:30am

EASTER BREAKFAST (Provided by youth)
CHILDREN'S EASTER EGG HUNT

SUNDAY, APRIL 16 @ 8:30 & 11:00am

EASTER SUNDAY WORSHIP

We welcome the following into our
church family!

David & Ellen Rebstock
Anne Scherer
Madysen McKinney
Lisa Morris-Helmstetler
Yanna Savkova
Joleen Sherden



Paul Bauch, Senior Pastor
pastor@peacechurchucc.org
http://www.facebook.com/paul.bauch

Beth Rogers, Associate Pastor
ypastor@peacechurchucc.org
http://www.facebook.com/rev.rog

Just so you know...

Please submit all articles for the next issue of the Olive Branch by
the **15th of the month** to the Church Office or email to
aoffice@peacechurchucc.org.

The deadline for the bulletin is
Wed at **9am** every week.

The deadline for PowerPoint announcements
are **Thursdays at Noon.**

OLIVE BRANCH IS GOING PAPERLESS

In an effort to maximize the resources we have available, the
monthly Olive Branch newsletter will be going paperless
starting with the **June/July edition.**

If you would like to continue receiving a paper version of the
OB, please call the Church Office or send an email to
aoffice@peacechurchucc.org.

Sunday, April 16 Annual Easter Breakfast 7:30-10:30am

Come celebrate Easter with your Peace family
during our Easter breakfast! Every year, we have a
breakfast in our Fellowship Hall to celebrate Christ's res-
urrection. Join us for pancakes, coffee, juice and more
before our Easter services. All proceeds fund our sum-
mer youth mission trips.

Easter Egg Hunt 10:00 - 10:30am

All youth (up to 5th grade) are invited to join us for an
Easter Egg Hunt from 10:00 - 10:30am out on the
front lawn (if inclement weather, this will be held in
the Dwelling). Bring a basket if you have one.

WORSHIP SERVICES 8:30 & 11:00am

April Happenings



FAMILY Movie Night Pete's Dragon

April 7th @ 6pm
\$5/family for pop and pizza
Please RSVP here
(<https://goo.gl/c56TxJ>)
by Noon on April 7

LISTOS / BARNES & NOBLE BOOKFAIR & CHEESECAKE FUNDRAISER

April 9th from 10am—2pm

Orders taken in Narthex between services. A percentage of online book sale proceeds will continue for 5 days following event.



SAMARITAN BETHANY NEWS

SUNDAY ASSISTANCE Month of April

Each Sunday in April we are being asked to assist the residents at Samaritan Bethany to/from their Sunday Morning Chapel Services (8:30am & 9:30am). See the Office with your questions. Sign up on Bulletin Board or use the following link:
<https://goo.gl/UVEZDx>

REQUEST: SMB is in need of Bingo Cards for their Senior Bingo players. If you have any used cards, in good shape, and are ready to discard, please drop off at Church Office for donation to SMB.

~ Spring is in the air – and with it brings the return of Drag Queen Bingo!

Saturday April 22 at 7 pm
Peace Church Fellowship Hall.
\$10 admission at the door

People of all ages are welcome to come and be part of the newest, biggest, and funniest Peace Church event in recent years. Bring your family and friends. To donate items (bottled water or baked goods) or volunteer contact rjwerner@charter.net.

Drag Queen Bingo



2017 Minnesota Open and Affirming Celebration.

Saturday, April 29th
Hazel Park Congregational
1831 Minnehaha Ave. E., St. Paul
Workshops @ 11:00 AM
Lunch @ 12:15 PM
Worship @ 1:30 PM

Lunch will be provided free of charge. RSVPs are appreciated to help with meal planning. Childcare will be provided at no cost during workshops and worship. Advanced notice required for childcare. Any questions, RSVPs can be sent via email to [Marc Blakesley at marcblakesley@gmail.com](mailto:Marc Blakesley@marcblakesley@gmail.com)



Easter Basket Giving Event

Supporting homeless youth, women and families in Rochester

- Pick out eggs from basket in narthex - open to see what needs to be donated.
- All donations **must** be returned by Easter Sunday, April 16th.
- Donations will support: Family Promise - Rochester; Hawthorne Helps; Rochester LINK Program; Women's Shelter.



Ongoing Peace Groups

Tuesday Morning Men of Peace Group @ 7am - Peace Room

(All men are invited to join us for fellowship and discussion which generally focuses on the upcoming worship scriptures.)



Tuesday Morning Women's Group @ 10am - Peace Room

(All women are invited to join us for fellowship and discussion.)

Tuesday Beverage & Bible @ 5pm - Glynner's Pub

(Tuesdays, from 5-6pm at Glynner's Pub [1643 Broadway Ave NJ] & we'll gather for fellowship and discussion.)

Thursday Morning Women's Group @ 7am - Peace Room

(Reading and discussing "Hillbilly Elegy: A Memoir of a Family and a Culture in Crisis by J.D. Vance.")

Twice Monthly Race Forward - The Dwelling

(Everyone is welcome to attend this group as we explore our blind spots and open up the uncomfortable discussion of race and privilege. Currently reading and discussing "Underground Railroad".)

Miriam Ministry @ 9:30am - Peace Room

(ALL WOMEN are welcome to attend on Wednesday, April 26, for fellowship, food, and a special presentation)

Infant / Toddler & Caregivers Lunch Bunch @ 11:30am - 1:30pm, Every Monday & Wednesday

Peace Church offers a weekly lunch bunch group for young kids (3 and under) and their caregivers. So if you are a Parent, grandparent nanny, babysitter, care giver of any type, you are invited to drop in Mondays and Wednesdays from 11:30am - 1:30pm. We eat in Room 105 and then go to the Nursery to play. Come when you can, leave when you need to. Bring a lunch and meet someone new! Questions can be directed to Pastor Beth (ypastor@peacechurchucc.org).



YOUTH FUN

April 2nd @ 9:45am Community Interfaith Discussion on Islam with Regina Mustafa

April 9th @ 12:30pm Help out the church preparing for Easter and sanitizing toys in the nursery. Game time and Snacks included.

April 16th—Easter Breakfast Fundraiser
(Contact Teresa Diekvoss for times)

May 7th @ 1:30pm—MS & HS Youth Group outside activity day!

The Teen Years: The Best Years of Their Lives?

An awesome event for parents and their teens to attend together! Clergy and faith formation leaders are also encouraged to attend.

When: Saturday, April 8 from 9am-3pm
Where: Edina Morningside Community Church UCC ([directions](#))

Cost: \$40/adult; \$10/teen (lunch and program included)

Coming in June!

Graduation Recognition Sunday
June 4
Both Services



We'd like to recognize all those in our church family who will be graduating this year, whether it be from high-school, college, vocational school, or a master's program. It's our way to say CONGRATULATIONS for a job well done!

Please fill out the [form](#) on our web site and return by May 28. We look forward to celebrating with you!!



Vacation Bible School
June 12 - 15
9:00am - 1:00pm
@ Peace UCC

Calling all Super Heroes! Vacation Bible School returns in June! June 12th to 15th from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm. This year we will

celebrate how heroes find strength in God, and how we can too. Through science, crafts, games, music and stories, we will learn, play and explore the world as we seek to "Do good, seek peace, and go after it!" Psalm 34:14b.

Snacks and supplies are provided, cost \$30 per child. Scholarships are available. Volunteers are needed! Contact Associate Pastor Beth Rogers for questions, ypastor@peacechurchucc.org

Refer to our on-line [sign up](#) to register your child/ children.



Upcoming May Events

JOIN US FOR **ONE** SERVICE

May 21st @ 10:30am

Music Celebration,



Teacher Recognition and Pastor Paul's Sabbatical send off!



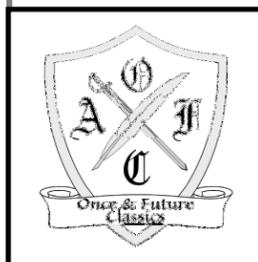
May 28th @ 10:30am

(Memorial Weekend)

RAGS TO RICHES

Month of May

Drop off your old, ripped, worn or unwanted clothing, sheets, towels or other textiles and turn them into money for homelessness outreach. Collection Bin will be in the Narthex.



Once & Future Classics present . . .

A Midnight Summer's Dream - A Musical
(Under the direction of Aaron Rocklyn)

May 5 & 6, 12 & 13, 19, 20 at 7pm

& May 21 matinee at 2pm

Peace UCC - Fellowship Hall

The cast includes our own: Missy Kloempken, Ione Kloempken, Kirby & Ruth Bakken, Semini McLaurin

Call the church office for tickets (282-6117)

SHARED MINISTRIES OPPORTUNITIES

Wherever you see the following symbols, your time, talents and treasures are requested.



Love. Grow. Serve.

.... thanks, Laurie DeYoung

SUNDAY SERVICES

SUNDAY	SERVICE	COUNCIL IN CHARGE	MUSIC	FELLOWSHIP LUNCH
2	with	Laurie Klein	Bells of Peace	
	Communion	Laurie Klein	Joy ONEVOICE	Quintin Dykes' Team
9	Palm	Laurie Klein	Peace Place Kids	
	Sunday	Laurie Klein	Peace Place Kids & Peace ONEVOICE	Wendy Nevala's Team
16	Easter	Mark Wieland	Bells / Choir / Joy ONEVOICE	
	Sunday	Mark Wieland	Bells / Choir / Joy ONEVOICE	NO LUNCH
23		Mark Wieland	Special Music	
		Mark Wieland	Peace ONEVOICE	Amber Carlson's Team
30		Mark Wieland	Choir of Peace	
		Mark Wieland	Joy ONEVOICE	Theresa Diekvoss' Team



Council Challenge

Fellowship and visiting with friends is so important in church. 5 minutes before the service starts, and 5 minutes after it ends, meet someone you don't know.



Birthdays

- 1 Neil Clemens, Donna Groth, Scarlett Wozniak
- 2 Carol Timmers
- 4 Sara Franks, Hannah Wilder
- 5 John Franks, Nicholas Molitor, Linus Winters
- 6 Marie Wilson, Laura Thompson
- 7 Mildred Lilleskov
- 8 Gregory Trachsel, Hannah Potts
- 9 Jane Batterson, Molly Berg, Sela Rist
- 10 Diane Johnson, Kathy Timmers
- 11 Benjamin Winters
- 12 Liz Dahlen
- 15 Ashley Beilby
- 16 Karl Rist, Judy Rich, Barb Karau
- 17 Matt Buda, Richard Peters
- 18 Daniel Kronemann, Chris Alden, Allen Vrieze
- 19 Carol Harper, Dale Ely
- 20 Josh Barrows, Doris Underdahl
- 21 Emily Wussow
- 22 Vivian Christie, Landon Robertson
- 23 Mary Ely, Bridget Davis-Fritz, Allie Splitstoesser
- 24 Jean Boese, Joshua Welke, Al Barker, Madison Sipe
- 25 Emma Potts
- 27 Maxwell Oetliker
- 28 Bradley Pollock
- 29 Teagan Bennett
- 30 Dominic Osowski, Cooper Osowski, Alissa Giere



February Financial Update

The giving of time, talent, and treasure is imperative to the success of our church. Thank you for all you are able to contribute in so many different ways. Please continue to honor the pledges made for the year. [eGive](#) is the preferred method of payment, [information here](#), or contact the office for assistance.

2017 Budget Update

At the annual meeting we asked the church family to help balance the budget for 2017. Thank you to those that pledged or increased their pledge. The council had set a goal of increasing our income by \$20,000 in order to maintain the proposed salary increases for staff and to meet the needs of the church. We were able to significantly improve the deficit we were facing in 2017. The council has approved the budget adjustments as follows:

2017	Original Budget	Updated Budget	difference
Income			
Pledges	\$390,000	\$410,000	+\$20,000
Expenses			
Office Assistant (revised role, deficit)	\$28,974	\$24,999	-\$3,975
Overall Budget Balance	-\$36,325	-\$12,350	+\$23,975

	February	YTD
Pledges Budgeted	\$32,500	\$65,000
Actual Pledges received	\$32,159	\$62,109
Difference	-\$341	-\$2,891

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
Every Sunday • 8:30am & 11am) Worship (8:30am & 11am) • 9:45 am Faith Formation • 9:45 am (Peace Rm) Dakota Book Study • 9:45 am (Rm 215) What We Talk About Book Study • 12:15 pm (F-all): Fellowship Lunch (EXCEPT 4/16) • 6:30 pm (Sanc): ONEVOICE Rehearsal (EXCEPT 4/16)	3 • 11:00 am (Rm 105): Toddler Caregiver Lunch/Bunch Activity (Peace Room); Social Action Mtg.	4 • 6:30 pm (Sanc): Maundy Thursday Drama Actor Rehearsal	5 • 11:00 am (Rm 105): Toddler Caregiver Lunch/Bunch Activity • 5:30 pm (Sanc): Taize Lenten Service • 6:00 pm (Rm 115): Adult Bell Rehearsal • 6:15 pm (F-Hall): Bible 101 Book Study • 7:15 pm (Sanc): Adult Choir Rehearsal	6 • 7:00 am (Peace Room): Women's Fellowship  13 • 7:00 am (Peace Room): Women's Fellowship • 5:00 pm (Sanc): Maundy Thursday Drama Actor Dress Rehearsal • 6:00 pm (F-Hall) Maundy Thursday Meal • 6:45 pm (Sanc) Maundy Thursday Drama w/ Communion	7 • 6:00 pm: (F-Hall) Family Movie Night	8	1 • 10:00 am (Rm 104): Quilters Group
9 • 9:45 am Faith Formation • 9:45 am (Peace Rm) Dakota Book Study • 9:45 am (Rm 215) What We Talk About Book Study • 12:15 pm (Nursery) HS & MS Youth Mission Project • 12:30 pm (Sanc): Maundy Thursday Drama Actor Rehearsal	10 • 11:00 am (Rm 105): Toddler Caregiver Lunch/Bunch Activity (F-Hall); Stephen Ministry	11 • 7:00 pm (Dwelling): Race Forward	12 • 11:00 am (Rm 105): Toddler Caregiver Lunch/Bunch Activity • 6:00 pm (115): Adult Bell Rehearsal • 7:15 pm (Sanc): Adult Choir Rehearsal	14 • 7 pm (Sanc) Good Friday Service 	15	22 • Family Promise Buddy Week • 7:00 pm (F-Hall) Easter Breakfast • 10:00 pm (Front Lawn): Easter Egg Hunt	
16 • Family Promise Buddy Week • 7:30 am (F-Hall) Easter Breakfast • 10:00 pm (Front Lawn): Easter Egg Hunt 	17 • Family Promise Buddy Week • 11:00 am (Rm 105): Toddler Caregiver Lunch/Bunch Activity • 7:00 pm (Dwelling): Council Meeting	18 • Family Promise Buddy Week • 12:30 pm (Peace Room): Sr Card Players	19 • Family Promise Buddy Week • 11:00 am (Rm 105): Toddler Caregiver Lunch/Bunch Activity • 6:00 pm (Rm 115): Adult Bell Rehearsal	20 • Family Promise Buddy Week • 7:00 am (Peace Room): Women's Fellowship • 6:00 pm (F-Hall) Large Group Gathering	21 • Family Promise Buddy Week	29	
23 • 9:45 am (F-Hall): Sanctuary Discussion 30 • 9:45 am (F-Hall): Sanctuary Discussion	24	25 • 7:00 pm (Dwelling): Race Forward	26 • 9:30 am (Peace Room): Miriam Ministry • 11:00 am (Rm 105): Toddler Caregiver Lunch/Bunch Activity • 6:00 pm (Rm 115): Adult Bell Rehearsal • 7:15 pm (Sanc): Adult Choir Rehearsal	27 • 7:00 am (Peace Room): Women's Fellowship • 9:00 am (Channel One HQ): Channel One Volunteer Team • 6:00 pm (Pastor Paul's Office): Worship Planning	28		



Easter Flower Dedications

A special thanks to those who donated Easter Flowers to help beautify our Sanctuary on Easter and which supported our youth.



Name of Giver	In Honor of...	In Memory of...
Theresa Scott-Diekvoss	Carol Scott	
Bauch Family	The Joy of Ministry	
Doug & Gayle Rock		My mother, Ann Rock
Jeff Hanson		Hilmer & Kathryn Stiller
Alcock Family		Grandma Whiteman
Sheila Boss		Flora Boss
Steve & Cindy Huyber	Our Parents	Our grandchildren
Julie Timmerman		Earl & Doreen Stender
Bentz Family		The loved ones we lost
Steve & Ione Kloempken		Eunys Kloempken and our parents
Deb & Ken		Father and grandparents
Julie Timmerman	Ellen Reick	
Greg & Cindy Strauss	Our children & their families: Shawna, Amy, Teddi, Sarah, JD, and Lacey	Our parents: Bud, Diane, Sally and Edith; our grandchildren: Trenton, Lindsey, Aidan and Lyla
John Miller	Church musicians	
Gale & Tamara Berven		Our friends and loved ones who passed away
Barb & Gary Karau	Peace UCC Staff	
Dave & LuAnn Rueb & David Arns		Bob & Arlene Arns & Wilbert & Grace Rueb
Mark & Carrie Wieland		
Margo & Peter Oetliker		Terese Kienholz

Name of Giver	In Honor of...	In Memory of...
Susan Crawley	Bev Morton	Bill Morton, Hubert Crawley, & JoAnn Jeglum
Laura Thompson and family		Loves ones...human & Furry
Ann Scherer		My mom, Margaret Scherer
Jenny Bradt		My mom, Dorothy Bradt
Brad & Jo McLagan		Nettie & Donald Kruger
Betty & LouAnne Meyer		Al Meyer
Yanna Savkova	Kathy & Ryan Gaughan	Anita Gaughan
Mary Bennett		Gene & Phyllis
Joe & Judi Hensel		Loved ones
Clint & Marie Wilson		Ila Mae Crawford
Eric, Amanda, Anya & Emma Theuer		George Theuer & Eunys Kloempken
Stevi Hallisy		Vickie Hallisy
Virginia Wright-Peterson		Loved ones
Adam, Ella & Elise Holmvig		Sharon Teske & Pauline
Tonia & Annie Ely		Terry Jackson
Laurie & Steve Gilseth		Our parents
Buck & Bonnie Lenz		Loved ones
Ernie & Joanne Roeber		Our parents
Glenn & Mildred Lilleskov		Friends and family
The DeYoungs		Our fathers

Name of Giver	In Honor of...	In Memory of...
Russ & Dolores Koelsch		Baby granddaughter, Naomi
John Miller		Mom & Dad
Leslie Sunnock		Betty Sommer
Bill & Cathy Meinhardt		Loved ones
Dave Arns & Linda Knowlton		Ronald Yennie
David & Anna Froehling		Loved ones
The Bluhm Family		Loretta & Richard Bluhm
Debby Adams	My children: Garrett (Sara) & Grant (Ali)	Grandma Shirley, Grandma Toots, & Pops
Debby Adams		Special friends: Kerm Zimmerman, Richard Bluhm, Nancy Lubahn, & Bob Lahey
Brian & Cheryl Winters		Ben & Donis Winters & James Johnston
Dave, Lori, Megan & Hannah Paul		George Paul
Mary & Erland Karlstad		Loved ones
Gerald & Sondra Bentz	Our children and grandchildren	
Ruth & Rae		Ben Hlasney
David & Ellen Rebstock		Milton William & Ethen Alfrieda Rebstock & Wayne Alison Long
Dana Molitor & Carol Moore	Our granddaughter/ Great-granddaughter coming in June	Loved ones who have passed

Ponderings from Pastor Beth

This month, we will celebrate Holy Week, and the last of our Lenten journey to Easter. In the story of Palm Sunday, we remember the triumphant entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, and then throughout the week, we experience the moments of fellowship and friendship at the Last Supper, the servanthood of Maundy Thursday and the end of the journey on Good Friday, followed by the celebration of the unexpected resurrection on Easter. In each of these services, we remember and imagine the journey of Jesus anew, in our time and place. This year, the events of this season also remind us of the journey of humanity along the road to a better future that is being played out across our country and the world. To all the present day immigrants and refugees who are in need of God's radical and inclusive love and compassion, the story of Holy Week takes on an additional level of significance as they fight for their voices and stories to be heard.

The gospel truth of Easter provides us with an opportunity to remember all that Jesus strove to create, the hope for salvation for all people, including the poor, the widowed, the orphaned, the stranger. The early followers of Jesus believed he could bring peace, salvation and an end to oppression. And we remember that Jesus walked this journey, made difficult by the powerful, and overcame it, showering God's power of equality and compassion upon *all* people. We take this time to remind ourselves of the history of overcoming fear and hatred that fills our tradition, and reassess what it means to be companions on that journey for those in our communities. Who is our neighbor? Who must we seek to protect, and advocate for, to bring God's Easter resurrection into today? These are the questions that the good news of God asks us to discern. As we discern that path, we do so alongside other communities across the state and nation who are finding ways to create safe space for immigrants and refugees.

What do we know about our immigrant neighbors? Rochester and Olmsted County do have a significant immigrant community. Rochester's Hispanic, Latino and African American population reached 11% according to the 2010 census. Nearly all of Olmsted County's migration growth between 2000-2012 is a result of international migration.

The number of undocumented people is actually decreasing: most of our country's undocumented neighbors have been here for 10 or more years (65%). The majority are working –primarily in farming, construction, manufacturing food processing, and service jobs. And they pay taxes, paying roughly \$12 billion in taxes every year. And, deporting this large work force would reduce US economic growth by about \$250 billion annually.

This community is already being impacted by changes in U.S. immigration policies. Anti-immigrant rhetoric and the new White House and Department of Homeland Security immigration enforcement guidelines have many families living in fear of being deported without the opportunity to even mount a case. There are families in our community who are afraid to leave home or send their children to school in fear they will be detained and deported due to the expansion of deportation priorities, and the tactics of ICE agents.

Concern for aliens is found throughout the Bible, particularly in the Hebrew scripture. In Exodus, we hear, “*You shall not oppress a resident alien; you know the heart of an alien for you were aliens in the land of Egypt*” (Ex 23:9) And we also remember Jesus's vision for the “least of these” in the Gospel of Matthew. “I was hungry and you fed me, I was thirsty and you gave me a drink, I was homeless and you gave me a room, I was in prison and you came to me. ... Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.” (Matthew 25:31-46)

The United Church of Christ has demonstrated a similar ongoing concern with immigration in the United States and with the wellbeing of immigrants as early as 1981. This tradition of understanding and supporting immigrants is part of what our vision for a radical and inclusive community at Peace UCC is based on, supporting our neighbors.

One path that we are being called to discern is the path to becoming a sanctuary or a sanctuary-supporting church for immigrants who are at risk of deportation. In Minnesota, approximately 30 congregations are currently sanctuary or sanctuary-supporting communities, and none of these are in Rochester. To be a sanctuary church, means that we would declare ourselves as a safe place and be willing to house a person or family, immediately vulnerable to deportation, to allow them to have time to have their case heard. A sanctuary-supporting congregation is one that partners with a sanctuary congregation or network of congregations to provide assistance to the community that is housing a family.

The Social Action and Outreach committee has been discussing the possibility of sanctuary for a few months now, and has met with representatives from ISAI AH, a group that seeks to help congregations to do faith-based advocacy work for racial and economic equality. On March 15th, committee co-chair Gayle Rock brought it before the church council to see if the discernment process should continue. On March 16th, clergy and lay representatives from 16 Rochester and surrounding Southeast Minnesota congregations gathered with Rev. Grant Stevenson, the clergy coordinator at ISAI AH, to hear more about sanctuary and talk about the sanctuary movement specifically here in Rochester. Some of these neighboring congregations may declare themselves sanctuary churches this spring. We have an opportunity to stand alongside our brothers and sisters of other Christian denominations and those of other faiths to support and be present with those in Rochester who are most at risk.

Your Social Action Ministry, Church Council, and Pastoral Staff feel that we, as a congregation, need to be better informed about the sanctuary church movement and options that we as a congregation can decide to take. To assist us in learning more about what becoming a sanctuary church or a sanctuary-supporting church means, and to potentially lead us to make a decision as a congregation to become a sanctuary church, we are holding two informational/ discussion sessions for the congregation. These informational/ discussion sessions are scheduled for the last two Sundays of April - **April 23rd** and **April 30th** between services. If those discussions make it clear we are ready to make a declaration of our vision, we will gather for a congregational meeting on Sunday, **May 7th** to make that decision. We feel it is vitally important that we all truly understand what becoming part of the sanctuary church movement means for our congregation and for those in our community who are struggling.

The church has an important role in the immigration discussion. Our faith tradition and sacred texts are saturated with stories about immigrants. We have a special ability and calling to reach out and love the neighbor---all of our neighbors. As a faith community, we are called to accompany our community members, congregants and neighbors facing deportation. In these last days of Lent, as the resurrection of Easter comes on, we ask you to pray about how your heart is reaching out and how your faith is working to assist the stranger, the alien, the immigrant in our midst. What is the radical welcome we have to offer to those most in need? And what are we willing to do to bring our message of peace and compassion into fruition here in Rochester through the ministry and outreach of Peace United Church of Christ?

Peace,



SANCTUARY CHURCH
INFORMATION SESSIONS
April 23rd & 30th
In Fellowship Hall

March at Peace United Church of Christ

