

The Messenger

I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go to the house of the LORD!"
 – Psalm 122:1

It is now July. Chances are, you have not remained in your home exclusively since the news of the COVID-19 pandemic hit in mid-March. Chances are that you have ventured out, at least on occasion, for necessities, visits to family, or other activities. Or, you may now be living your life nearly in a normal fashion—trips to work, out to dinner with the family, baseball games, Walmart trips, etc. (albeit with the use of a mask as ordered by our governor).

If, since mid-March, not a single one of your trips out has been a trip to church, it is now time to ask the question—are you truly avoiding church due to concern over the virus or have the circumstances become a convenient excuse? If you have left your house at all in the last four months, I would hope that church would have been at least one of those priority trips.

On the Sixth Sunday after Pentecost, the Gospel lesson was the parable of the sower from Matthew 13. In that parable, the life-giving Word of God is likened to seed that is sown by a sower. The word of the Kingdom goes out, inviting all into the grace of God through His Son Jesus Christ. Yet the parable of the sower reminds us not only of the life and salvation worked by the Word, but also the tragedy of the seed not bearing fruit. The warning of this parable is strong—*most* of the seed comes to naught. It either falls on deaf ears, or Christians turn away from the faith because of persecution on account of that Word, or they are choked out and killed by cares for this life and the deceitfulness of riches.

We have seen an unprecedented emptying of our churches. The cares of this age are posing a serious, fatal risk to Christians right now. As we grasp at smoke and vapor, looking to policy and vaccines to save us, is our fascination with things temporal and fleeting choking us out of the life that does not end?

The seed that gave us life in Jesus Christ crucified for our sins and risen for our justification, namely the Word of God, is also the water that nurtures and sustains our new life in Christ. For many Christians right now, they have experienced serious drought conditions. Your parched faith will not survive by your own strength—it will only survive by the ongoing work of the Spirit through the Word and Sacraments.

And you'd better believe the Word of God has the power to keep us in the faith. It will not return void but will accomplish the purpose for which it was sent. So bring yourself to the living waters of the Spirit—the rushing channels of Word and Sacrament. God will lift you up from the cares of this age and set your minds on things above—where Christ, as our head, is already seated. With our eyes continually fixed on Jesus, the extremes and disasters of this world are put in proper perspective and the cares of this age are denied the ability to choke and kill us and to drag us down with the world that is passing away. Instead, we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us and gave Himself for us.

We continue to do many basic things to ensure the safety of all gathered at church. The offering plate is not passed. Masks are available at the back, or you may bring your own. We are spacing every other row and sitting in households. When attendance increases to the point where this becomes difficult, we have a plan in place to temporarily add an additional service. See you in the house of the Lord.

-Pastor Bayer



FEAR vs. POWER

Last week as we as a school staff set about making our plans for the new school year, one of our first discussions was, "What do we want for a theme for the year." One of the first passages that was thought of was I Timothy 1:7, "God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control." What a great thought as we deal with the effect of the pandemic on our school plans and our personal lives. We can enter this year not with a sense of fear but with the assurance of the power that God alone can provide. God has given His promise to be with us and He has given us our ability to think to plan and to do His will in our daily lives and in our school. He has also given us our government and has taught us that we are to obey that government unless it is asking us to do things that are against His word. So, we made our plans with this perspective.

I am not going to give you all of the details of the plans; if you are interested that will be posted on our website and parents will receive a copy. With this perspective we are looking forward to another great year. Yes, it will be a "new normal" but with God's blessing it will be a great year.

Our teachers this year are Mrs. Ann Stout in our Kindergarten through second grade room, and Mrs. Betsy Rowe will be teaching our third through sixth grade classes. Yes, we have added sixth grade and continue to plan for added growth. At this time anticipate over 20 students and the potential for some more to join us. Pastor Bayer will be teaching the religion classes on most days with the help and support of our teachers. What a blessing to have a pastor who is willing and excited about bringing God's word to our children and giving our teachers a break from their hectic schedules. Our preschool will again be taught by Mrs. Lisa Smith and Mrs. Corrine Fletcher. There too we are growing and have added Friday to our schedule making our school a five day per week program. Yes, I will continue to serve as your principal trusting that God will continue to give me His strength and wisdom and will in His time give you a new and younger principal.

What can you do for us? Pray. Yes, we need your prayers for the growth and success of your school. We may from time to time ask for your help in supplying snacks or other items. With the restrictions that we are under, we will not be able to have our Friday lunches hosted by parents and congregation members, but trust that as the restrictions are lifted, we will once again be able to enjoy this great service.

We ask you to join us in trusting His word, "God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control."

His Servant,
Paul Weismantel
Principal/Administrator



CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) AND THE CHURCH

St. Peter Family

To further support and elaborate on Pastor Bayer's message, I thought I would use this opportunity to share the procedures the elders have implemented during worship services, to help everyone feel more comfortable in the sanctuary.

Current actions, as of Sunday, July 19th:

Seating is limited to every other pew to allow for recommended social distancing.

Offerings are not collected during the service. A plate is placed in the back of the church for contributions and attendance cards.

Antibacterial disinfectant is available in the back of the church. There is also a bottle on the altar that Pastor uses before serving communion. A third bottle is in the sacristy, and is used by the elder prior to setting the communion table, and again prior to assisting Pastor with serving.

The center section of the communion railing is not used, allowing each family to be separated from another. After each table setting, an usher disinfects the step railings and the communion railing with antibacterial wipes.

For those who desire to wear a mask, please do so. You can bring your own, or there are some available in the back of the church.


Following the service and announcements, an usher will release the congregation one family at a time, beginning with the front pew. Pastor will greet congregants outside, weather permitting.

Potential future actions:

While social distancing recommendations are still in place, a second Divine Service will be added when church attendance results in the sanctuary being at one-third capacity (80 attendees) for two consecutive weeks. As a guide, recent attendance has typically been in the 60s.

PLEASE feel free to call me or another elder if you have any questions.

Thank you, and God Bless!
Dave



ELDER CONTACT INFORMATION

Dave Bengel	517-281-5812	me@davidbengel.com
Tom Gorby	989-292-1715	tomgorby@gmail.com
Ryan West	517-977-5078	westpropertyservices@live.com
Ken Bond	989-640-2380	kbbenji88@yahoo.com

Pastor Timothy Bayer email: pastorbayer@gmail.com



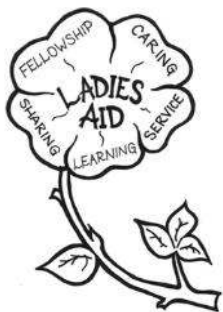
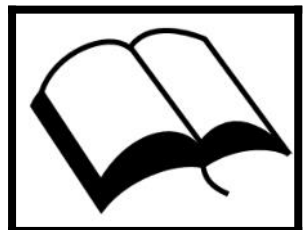
Prayer Chain

If you have a prayer request, please call Liz in the church office (989) 224-3178 during office hours. If in the evening or weekend, please call Pam Mohr (989) 292-1686.



REMINDER:
MITES SUNDAY IS AUGUST 30TH

ST. PETER 150TH ANNIVERSARY MEMORY BOOKS FOR SALE
\$7.00 a book. Make checks payable to St. Peter Lutheran Church.
Contact the church office if you would like to purchase a book at
989-224-3178 or church@stpeterriley.org



LADIES AID QUILTING...we are not ready to come back to tie quilts just yet, more information to come. If you want to work on some quilts, there is a lot of material in the ladies aid room in a box that needs to be cut into squares or grab a bunch of squares and sew quilt tops together; they are about 60 x 80.

Confirmation

What a joy Sunday, July 5th was. On this day, Lydia Bloom, Gabe Schneider, Savana Watson, and Skylar Watson were confirmed in the faith and received their First Communion. We give thanks to God for the gift of faith that He bestowed on them in Baptism and for their continued instruction in the Word of God that led them to this special day.

Now we can begin thinking about the next round of catechumens. I want each of you to help me reach out to young people you know to invite them to participate in Confirmation instruction. Think broadly; these do not need to be only young people from our congregation. They just need to be young people whose parents would be supportive of them doing this. In fact, inviting people outside of the congregation to participate has the potential of bringing entire families into our communion, as parents will learn alongside their children throughout this process.

My beginning target age for catechesis leading to Confirmation and First Communion is children going into 5th grade. And there is no top age! Anyone who would like to be confirmed and begin receiving their Savior's body and blood are welcome to this time of instruction. And why stop ourselves there?—if you are already confirmed, but would like a refresher, come to as many or as few of the classes as you would like. They are open to all and are another weekly opportunity for instruction in the Word of God.

An informational meeting will be held in the school gym / fellowship hall Sunday, August 16th, at 3:30 pm. At that time, students will be registered, we will discuss the process, and schedules will be distributed. This will be a year-long process, with the incoming students being confirmed next summer. The year will include a Confirmation Retreat in February that is a great opportunity for youth to go on a trip together and strengthen not only their understanding of the faith but their ties to their peers in the body of Christ.

Think of young (or old) people you know and invite them to the informational meeting on August 16th.

In Christ,
-Pastor Bayer

We would like to thank everyone for your thoughts, prayers and words of comfort at the loss of our mom. Thank you Pastor Bayer for coming to pray with us. It meant so much. We truly have a wonderful family here at St Peter and love you all. May God Bless each of you.

The Family of Margaret Howe,
Dick, Kim, Sally, Paul and Jeff





*“Laying the Foundation to Build on the Rock of Christ.
Study the Word, Seek the Lost, and to Serve our Neighbors”*

ST. PETER LUTHERAN CHURCH SERVICES

Wednesday: Matins Service 9:00am
Bible Study:6:00pm (Library)

Sunday: Worship Services 10:00am
Bible Study 8:45am
Sunday School 8:45am
(Sunday School is suspended until further notice)



Shut-In Visit List Weekly Visits

Shirley Edwards
Ethel Flegler
Bill Horman
Tom & Julie Johnson

Charlie Silm
John Sillman
Lois Sillman

Albert Smith



Check out our website!
www.stpeterriley.org

Be sure to check our website for event or service updates and cancellations. Also on our website you are able to download the monthly newsletter, bulletin and calendar. We are continuously updating and making changes to the website so if you have not logged on the website lately check it out see what's new.



- 8/1/20 Liz waxing floors (8/1/20-8/9/20)
8/2/20 Installation of Officers @10:00am Church Service
8/3/20 Pastor on vacation (8/3/20-8/8/20)
8/3/20 School Board Meeting 6:30pm (Library)
8/4/20 Elders Meeting 6:00pm (Library)
8/5/20 Matins & Bible Study Cancelled - Pastor on vacation
8/7/20 Over 50's Group 6:30pm (Gym)
8/11/20 Council Meeting 6:30pm (Gym)
8/12/20 Matins 9:00am
Bible Study 6:00pm
8/16/20 Confirmation Informational Meeting @3:30pm (Gym)
8/17/20 Newsletter deadline
8/19/20 Matins 9:00am
Bible Study 6:00pm
8/26/20 Matins 9:00am
Bible Study 6:00pm
8/27/20 Parent Informational Night 7:00pm-8:00pm (Gym)
8/31/20 St. Peter first day of school

(Pastor on vacation 8/3/20-8/8/20. If you need anything please contact church office 989-224-3178 or Dave Bengel 517-281-5812)



MEMORIALS

In Loving Memory of

*Delores Sperry \$10.00
Ron Dilts \$20.00
Bill VanBeelen \$65.00
Lee Chant \$795.00
Howard Kimball \$10.00
Ken Scott \$20.00*



Honorariums

*Larry Mohr \$250.00
Carl Jastram \$30.00*

St. Peter Lutheran Church

Rev. Timothy Bayer
8990 Church Rd.
St. Johns, MI 48879

Phone: 989-224-3178
Fax: 989-224-8962
E-mail: church@stpeterriley.org

We are on the web!
www.stpeterriley.org

