

## A LETTER FROM THE PASTOR

### *Advent Hope, Rooted in Penitence*

The traditional color of Advent was violet—the same color used for Lent. In recent times, blue has given violet a run for its money for the season of Advent. Why the shift? Maybe it was for variety, but then again, we don't mind both Christmas and Easter sharing white. I wonder if it was not in some way to avoid the color connection to Lent—the penitential season par excellence. Advent, the season of hope, became blue, leaving repentance for another time. Yet the Baptist's voice continues crying in our ears—repent!

We cannot during Advent, or any other time, avoid repentance. It is, in fact, the entire life of the Christian. And in a season devoted to the coming of Christ, repentance is certainly needed. For we live in a time when we are not waiting for Christ to come in blessing by being born to redress our sins, but rather we wait for him to come as judge. For us to hope for his coming means we expect good things from him when he comes, and this requires repentance. In other words, it requires being a Christian. The two parts of repentance are contrition (sorrow over our sin) and faith in the forgiveness of our sins for Christ's sake.

This Advent, let us examine ourselves, confess our sins, cling to Christ and bear fruit worthy of repentance. This fruit looks like a group of forgiven sinners thankfully receiving the gifts that God gives, forgiving one another as God in Christ has forgiven them. Think about any discord and strife in our congregation or between you and another member of the body of Christ this past year. How many of those problems have anything to do with the Gospel of Jesus Christ? Likely very few. We fight about peripheral things—we fight not for the Gospel of Jesus, but for ourselves. When we act in this way, we can hear the words of the Baptist convict us—“You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?”

Here we are, the baptized of God, those who have been called out of the mass of unbelievers and placed into the ark of the holy Christian Church, where God daily and abundantly forgives our sins in Jesus, and yet we are so worried about ourselves and our interests and things that have nothing to do with the Gospel that we might miss his gifts, fall asleep, and be unprepared for his return.

God pours his grace out to this congregation without ceasing, and do we receive his grace with thanksgiving, or do we grumble like the Israelites in the wilderness? Christ comes to us in Word and in Sacrament. He remains with us, continually offering the forgiveness of sins to repentant sinners. Therefore, repent. Repent to receive Christ aright as he comes now for your forgiveness. Repent to prepare yourself for his coming in glory. With penitent hearts, our hope is sure. With penitent hearts, his coming will be our salvation, for we will be judged based on Christ's merits, not ours. That is what church is all about. Not about the peripheral things that we usually waste our time getting upset about. It's not about our desires and wants, it's not about politics and power, it's about God's grace and his forgiveness in Christ our Lord, who surely is coming soon.

-Pastor Bayer



# A LETTER FROM THE PRINCIPAL

## *Glory to the Newborn King!*

November went by in a whirlwind at the school. The month started with a week of remote learning due to Covid-19. We were able to get back to school and back into a routine just in time to wrap up the 1st trimester. The teachers had the opportunity to attend a conference in Fort Wayne with Lutheran educators from the Michigan, Ohio, and Indiana districts. Best of all, we added a new member to the St. Peter family. Betsy Rowe brought home baby Emma at the beginning of the month and she is beautiful and healthy. It has truly been a month of blessings.

Now December is here and together we celebrate the greatest blessing of all, the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ. I love how the celebration of Christmas begins right away in December. I'm writing this on the last day of November and already I have seen Christmas lights, we had a beautiful snowfall, the kids have been sledding and building snowmen, the students have begun practicing for the Christmas program, and of course, Christmas music is already playing. I realize that many of these things are not done with the intent of pointing us to the Cross, however, as Christians, isn't this the reason we are excited?

We are in a season of preparing for the birth of Jesus. A time to share this excitement with students and help them see the amazing gift that they have been given. I am looking forward to the children sharing this message with parents and the congregation at our Christmas program.

Blessings in Christ,  
Erika Brown  
Principal/Teacher

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## *Hot Lunch!*

**Hot Lunch sign-up for the next quarter is posted in the front lobby on our new volunteer board!!**

If you are interested in signing up to help with a Hot Lunch Day please contact the church office, sign up in the back of the church, or send me an email. You would be providing lunch for about 40 people.

Erika Brown  
principal@stpeteririley.org



6th grade team work!

# A LETTER FROM THE PRESCHOOL

## *A Season to Celebrate!*

The school year has been off to a great start. We can't believe we are heading into December. The children have grown and developed some amazing friendships. It is wonderful to see the bonds that are forming in such a short time. We will begin enrollment for preschool after the first of the year. We will again be offering a five day option. We are very happy with the response we have had to our five day program this year. We are excited to be able to do our Christmas Program this year. The Christmas Program will be on December 16th at 6:30pm in the school gym. We hope to see you all there. We are very excited for our Polar Express Day on December 14th . We will be watching the Polar Express movie. This is a school wide event sponsored by the PTL. The staff and students love spending this time together sharing in the magic of Christmas. Thank you to the PTL for providing popcorn, milk, and cookies for us to enjoy during the movie. A special thank you to Mrs. Fletcher for starting this wonderful event and for all the work she puts into it to make it a special day for all of us.

Blessings to all of you during this Christmas Season,

Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Fletcher



Preschool learning  
about “The Very  
First  
Thanksgiving” by  
Rhonda Gowler  
Greene

# CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS , NEWS & EVENTS

## Are You Looking for a Way to Support St. Peter Christian Day School?

The day school is collecting caps from Pepsi bottles which are worth 19 cents. There is a 10 number/letter in the cap.

Coke products will give the school 5 cents per cap, 15 cents from the 12 can pack and 30 cents for the 24 can pack. The codes are on the cardboard part of the box and is perforated so it can be ripped off easily to get the cans out. It is a 12 or 14 number/letter code.

If you are interested in helping the school in this way, I will bring out a small box to collect the caps. Thank you for supporting St. Peter Christian Day School.

## Ladies Aid & LWML News

We still gather every Thursday mornings to tie quilts, there's 3 to 5 ladies; we will welcome many newbies. In our October Ladies Aid meeting we discussed our upcoming Taco Lunch after the Voters Meeting. We provided the cake for Norma Fitzpatrick's retirement party from playing the organ for many beautiful years. We discussed our upcoming Advent Brunch on Tuesday, December 7th, we will invite area Lutheran church ladies to join us. We are continuing supporting our Seminary student Adam Nettling with \$500 recently.

## LADIES AID SALE

We welcome donated homemade items for Ladies Aid Sale. We have a display case in the hallway outside of the Fellowship Hall. Drop off your donated items at the church office or at church on Sundays. Proceeds go towards the Ladies Aid to support the needs of the congregation, charities we give to and the seminary student we support. There will be a payment box on the Ladies Aid display. Makes checks payable to St. Peter Ladies Aid.

## Christmas Gift for the Erbers

As we do every year, we will be collecting gifts of money for our Together in Mission family, the Erbers, who are missionaries in Nigeria. Please make your checks payable to St. Peter Lutheran Church and earmark it for the "Erbers". We will collect through December. Any questions, please call Diane Thurston at 989-593-2480.

*MITES SUNDAY IS DECEMBER 26TH*

## Walking with St. Peter A Community Exercise Opportunity

Beginning Monday, June 28<sup>th</sup>, St. Peter Lutheran School will be open for those wishing to walk for exercise from 8:30am-2:00pm Monday through Wednesday.

General policies and procedures:

- ◆ Open to all members of the community over the age of 18
- ◆ Sign a waiver of responsibility on first day of participation
- ◆ Sign in on the sheet provided on each day of participation located in the church office
- ◆ Change to walking shoes – please no boots or street shoes
- ◆ A route map will be available – 10 circuits = 1 mile or 24 laps of the gym = 1 mile
- ◆ There is no cost for participation – donations will be accepted and will be used towards our maintenance fund

We encourage you to participate – get some exercise and enjoy the excellent facility that the Lord has provided to St. Peter Lutheran School.

# CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS , NEWS & EVENTS

## Prayer Chain

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

## Shut-In Visit List Monthly Visits

Virginia Davis  
Charlie Silm  
Shirley Edwards  
Albert Smith  
Lyle Huguelet  
Tom & Julie Johnson

## MEMORIALS

Bill Caruss \$315.00  
Gerald Price \$20.00  
Terry Boettger \$220.00  
Evelyn Speers \$20.00  
Ann Moore \$100.00  
Dan Rue \$30.00  
Donna Witt \$145.00  
Mary Bremer \$20.00

## Notes of Thanks

We want to thank everyone for the kind words, cards, and memorials in memory of my mother, Donna Witt. We are truly blessed with our wonderful church family.  
- Pam and Larry

## Lutheran Witness Time!

It's time to re-subscribe to The Lutheran Witness at a discounted rate. The Lutheran Witness is the official periodical of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and is published 11 times a year. It provides Missouri Synod laypeople with stories and information that complement congregational life, foster personal growth in faith, and help interpret the contemporary world from a Lutheran Christian perspective. Subscriptions ordered through your church will include the Michigan In Touch supplement. The new subscription year doesn't begin until March 2022, but orders need to be to the District office by December 15, 2021 to **take advantage of a discounted District rate of \$11.60/year.** (Individual subscriptions ordered directly from CPH are \$19.99/year.) Late orders will be charged an additional \$2. If you have any questions about subscriptions, contact the church office. **All orders must be placed by December 8<sup>th</sup>. Make your check payable to St. Peter Lutheran Church.**

## Did you know that St. Peter Lutheran Church has an Endowment Fund?

Building a local church endowment fund today is one of the best stewardship decisions your church can make. Endowment Funds benefit churches by offering members opportunities to provide a future legacy for the church and their families.

An endowment fund is a permanent fund. It is like a savings account where only the interest and/or earnings can be spent. A permanent Endowment Fund serves churches into perpetuity. While the original gifts grow through prudent investments, the church can use the earnings each year to enhance church ministries, outreach and care facilities.

For more details about the St Peter Endowment fund and how you can contribute please

Contact and Endowment Board member, Paul Weismantel, Jeanette Mehney, Sara Thurston or Sandy Lenneman.

## CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS , NEWS & EVENTS

### Secret Prayer Sisters

There was a lot of laughter and fellowship going on at the Secret Prayer Sister Reveal on Saturday, November 6<sup>th</sup> at the Fellowship Center! What fun it was to join together as "Sisters in Christ" and reveal who we have been praying for the past year and whether or not we had an idea who our "sister" was. I think most of us were quite surprised to find out who had been praying for us, sending cards and leaving little gifts in back of church. Names were drawn for 2021 – 2022 and the praying begins all over again with a new sister (although you may continue praying for your previous name also).

Thank you to **Pam Mohr** for helping to make the little favor boxes and also serving our desserts and drinks, **Pastor and Dave Bengel** for setting up tables and **Jeanette Mehney** for making the yummy apple pies.

Diane Thurston

### THE GIVING TREE

**Sunday, December 5<sup>th</sup>** is the last day to contribute to our Toys for Tots toy drive. All toys will be given to children in foster families and families less fortunate in Clinton County. You may place your UNWRAPPED TOYS in the box in back of church or the Fellowship Center. Thank you to all who have contributed to make someone's Christmas a little brighter.

You also have the opportunity to make a donation to our TIM (Together in Mission) missionaries, the Erber's in Nigeria. You may make out a check to St. Peter Lutheran earmarked for the Erber's, put in an envelope and place in the offering plate for the whole month of December. It will then be deposited into their account.

Thank you to all and may God bless you richly with a joyous and Merry Christmas with your family and friends.

Diane Thurston

### Coming in December!

In early December you will receive a letter from the Stewardship Committee inviting you to join in the annual "Birthday Gift for Jesus" offering with an extra financial contribution over and above your regular offering. Please use the provided envelope marked "Birthday Gift for Jesus" or on an envelope, label or write "Birthday Gift for Jesus", and place your gift in the offering plate or mail it to the church office. If you would like to remember a friend or loved one in "Honor" or in "Memory" please indicate that on the envelope. Your gift will be put in the Heritage Preservation Fund to help improve and maintain the St Peter Lutheran Church grounds and buildings.

What is the Heritage Preservation Fund? It is fund that was established several years ago to provide the money to maintain the St Peter Lutheran Church campus. The Heritage Preservation Fund will allow us the dollars to do special maintenance or improvement projects such as roof replacement, new septic system, etc. without having to secure a loan to accomplish the task. Did you know that the St Peter Lutheran Church campus is 9+ acres? It has 5 buildings (church, fellowship hall, school, teacherage, parsonage), a cemetery, 2 parking lots, a playground and sports fields. That means there are also 10 restrooms, 9 air conditioners, 12 furnaces and 3 kitchens that have to be maintained. The Lord has been generous to the St Peter congregation. He has provided us with a beautiful campus. Now, we must continue to be good and faithful stewards of what God has entrusted us. The Heritage Preservation Fund will help us to preserve what the Lord has provided.

# CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS , NEWS & EVENTS

## Birthdays

01 Rev. Tim Bayer  
Meagan Wohltjen  
Sally Pontius  
Cooper Luce  
02 Sarah Gregory  
06 Tina Bashore  
07 Renee Terpening  
08 Rachelle Witt  
09 Robert Grounds  
Todd Savage  
10 Ralph Matteson  
Chandler Terpening  
Tom Hollis

11 Virginia Davis  
Kimberly Close  
12 Pamela Mohr  
14 Susan Blackmer  
Quinn Bond  
18 Michael Schrader  
21 Kathy Bond  
22 Peter Sperry  
23 Eric VanVleet  
26 Lyndsey Fandel  
Dan Besemer  
Braden Billips(Pouch)  
28 Barry Boettger  
Danielle Stewart (Jones)  
29 Rex Mohnke

Sameul Buscemi  
30 Daniel Gorby

## Anniversaries

01 David & Diane Thurston  
03 Gerald & Sally Pontius  
07 Lyle & Shirley Huguelet  
20 Earl & Laurie Flegler  
26 Hank & Holly Mowery

### *DECEMBER SCHEDULE*

#### ***GREETERS:***

Suspended until further notice

#### ***ELDERS:***

8, 12, 24 (11pm) Ken Bond  
15,19,24(7pm) Ryan West  
22, 26 John Burgess  
1, 5, 25 Dave Bengel

#### ***ALTAR FLOWERS***

05 Shirley Schrader  
12 Sally Pontius  
19 Open  
26 Open

#### ***ALTAR GUILD:***

Geri & Jastram

(If you are interested in helping as Altar Guild please contact Judy Boettger 989-224-7006)

#### ***COOKIE MAKERS:***

#### ***COFFEE MAKER:***

#### ***USHERS: TBD***

*Merry Christmas  
&  
Happy New Year  
from the entire  
St. Peter Lutheran  
Staff!!*

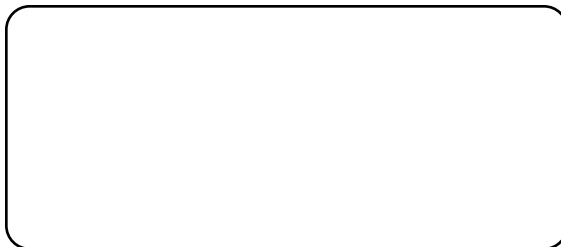


# St. Peter Lutheran Church & School

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St. Johns, MI 48879

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E-mail: church@stpeterriley.org  
school@stpeterriley.org

**We are on the web!**  
**[www.stpeterriley.org](http://www.stpeterriley.org)**



## Church Services

Divine Service – Sundays at 9 am  
Office of Matins – Wednesdays at 9 am

Midweek Advent Services – Wednesdays (Dec. 1, 8, 15, and 22) at 7 pm

Christmas Services:  
Christmas Eve – 7 pm  
Christmas Midnight – 11 pm  
Christmas Day – 9 am

Upcoming Feast Days:

Jan. 1 – The Circumcision and Name of Jesus – Divine Service at 9 am  
Jan. 6 – The Epiphany of Our Lord – Divine Service at 7 pm

