

# The Messenger

## A Savior—Christ the Lord

Churches were barren at Easter in 2020. For many, there was no celebration of Christmas either. The most holy of all observances took a back seat in 2020.

We are now in 2021. Let's evaluate for a moment what happened last year. Many people have not been in church since March 2020. And you are correct—I am not counting virtual “church,” for this is not a replacement for the gathering of the body of Christ and the reception of the Sacrament according to Christ's institution. The lie took root that we were staying home of our own prerogative, out of love for our neighbor, to slow the spread. I call it a lie because there is no denying the devil had a heyday in 2020, and he is the father of lies. As we worked so diligently to slow the spread, the devil's lies were ripping through our world faster than any virus. For the notion that not worshipping God is the right thing to do is always the lie of the devil.

Now the devil has no problem with worship, if it is not worship of the one, true God. So while the devil connived and convinced many Christians that giving up worship of Christ was good, he also slyly gave us a pantheon of replacement gods to bow down before. These gods included fear and health. These gods promise safety and security here and now, but they are impotent to provide anything in the life hereafter. Satan shifted our focus from things eternal to things passing away, knowing that to worship these things is a win for him, as our souls would be eternally lost.

And if you don't believe that this pandemic has such a strong spiritual element, listen to the way people speak of the Holy Vaccine. Advent was celebrated with the greatest of fervor this year, but sadly, it was not a looking forward to the coming of Christ—it was a looking forward to the release of the vaccine. The vaccine will deliver us from all our troubles—the vaccine will bring us peace—the vaccine will save us. The devil not only gave us false gods in 2020, but he gave us a false Christ as well, and the whole world has gone after him.

Don't get me wrong—looking out for our neighbors' health and our health are good and noble things that are to be commended, but health and safety become idols when we assert them before our Savior and His Divine Service. When we seek our ultimate good from these (vaccines, etc.) rather than God our Savior, then we have established and are worshipping a new god.

Christians—wake up. For unto you is born a Savior who is CHRIST THE LORD. This Savior is your God, the one who really will save you, the one who truly does bring you peace. By his death, God and sinners were reconciled and heaven was opened to us. Christ has already risen from the dead, so why has practical caution given way to extreme paranoia and fear even among Christians? We believe in the resurrection of the dead! This is the time for a bold and unfearing witness in the face of all evil. As the world shrinks in fear, the Christian ought to stand strong as a light to the world. If we would begin to act like we had a living Savior, those gripped in fear might ask, “why are those Christians unafraid?” And our answer is simple—we know Jesus. And this Savior, who saves us from every evil and delivers us from death itself, is readily available now. We don't need to wait for the scientists to finish their studies and or for our turn in line. Jesus comes *now* in Word and Sacrament, bringing life and salvation to all who believe.

Come back to active life in the church and invite others to do the same. We'll keep taking precautions. I'll keep offering to serve you at your home or privately at the church if you are high risk. But for the sake of your soul and your witness to the world, don't forget your true Savior. Take reasonable precautions? Sure. Give up receiving the gifts of forgiveness, life, and salvation in Jesus' Divine Service? Never.

In Christ,  
Pastor Bayer



## LOOKING FORWARD TO 2021

Many years we have entered January with a deep coating of snow on the ground and we look forward to a January thaw. As we approach the end of December we still don't have any snow to thaw, the ground may be frozen, but it won't thaw until Spring. Perhaps this year we can look forward to a thaw in our staying at home and our concern over the COVID virus. The vaccines are on their way, and we can look forward to the end of the COVID virus.

At the end of January we will have the opportunity to celebrate with all of the other Lutheran Schools the great gift that we have in our Lutheran Schools. Although we won't have our usual kick-off breakfast and the January Jubilee to celebrate our school, we still have the support of our parents, grandparents, and the congregations to celebrate in our hearts and prayers. Too often we forget the great heritage that we have in our Lutheran Schools and in St. Peter Lutheran School in particular. St. Peter School has been a great influence on the lives of hundreds of students over the past 79 years. The graduates have gone on to live lives that are forever influenced by the education and the values that they received in our classrooms from dedicated teachers. We not only remember St. Peter Lutheran School but all of the Lutheran Schools throughout our country and in other countries around the world. Many of our Lutheran Schools have closed because of the changes in the communities and the increasing cost of operating a school. St. Peter has a proud heritage in their school and we are again seeing a growth in our enrollment. We hope to add a third teacher next year and add 7<sup>th</sup> grade back to our curriculum. Keep the school, the teachers, and the students in your prayers and continue to support our congregation and our school.

Our theme this year is, "God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control." 2 Timothy 1:7. We have had many opportunities this year to allow Satan to fill our hearts and minds with fear and confusion as we dealt with COVID and the many changes in the public schools, the community and the world around us. We have remained faithful in our calling and the assurance of His love and care for us and our mission. We pray for strength from our Lord to continue carrying out this mission.

His Servant,  
Paul Weismantel

---

Many thanks to all who helped decorate the church on Saturday, November 28th. Thank you to Rita Hollis for the beautiful outdoor wreath she made for above the church doors. A special thank you to Kim Sperry, Sally Pontius and Howe's Greenhouse for the beautiful church window arrangements.

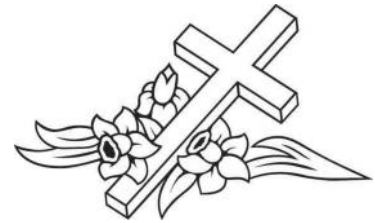
Charlene Kennedy, DVM



---

Marilyn Barz, wife of our former Pastor Marvin Barz passed away recently. Expressions of sympathy can be sent to:

Rev. Marvin Barz  
116 Lincoln Street  
Cheney, KS 67025



---

***New Year's Day Service 10:00am  
Circumcision and Name of Jesus***



---

## ELDER CONTACT INFORMATION

Dave Bengel 517-281-5812      [me@davidbengel.com](mailto:me@davidbengel.com)  
Tom Gorby 989-292-1715      [tomgorby@gmail.com](mailto:tomgorby@gmail.com)  
Ryan West 517-977-5078      [westpropertyservices@live.com](mailto:westpropertyservices@live.com)  
Ken Bond 989-640-2380      [bondken88@yahoo.com](mailto:bondken88@yahoo.com)  
John Burgess 616-295-3903      [johnburgess6606@gmail.com](mailto:johnburgess6606@gmail.com)  
Pastor Bayer (Emergency ph#585-402-2807) [pastorbayer@gmail.com](mailto: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.



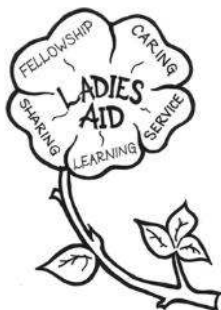
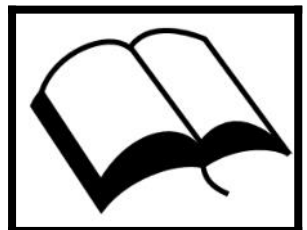
---

**REMINDER:**  
**MITES SUNDAY IS JANUARY 31st**

---

## **ST. PETER 150<sup>TH</sup> 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](mailto:church@stpeterriley.org)**



---

## **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.

THANK YOU TO ALL who donated to Toys for Tots. Many families will be touched by your generous donations.

Diane Thurston

HEART SISTERS Much fun was had by the Heart Sisters as we phoned one another on the day that was to be our Heart Sister Christmas Party. It was good to connect with many of you and I pray this brought much joy and laughter to each and every one of you as you lifted your sisters in Christ up. Diane Thurston

**FREE TICKETS...**We have eight free tickets to the Ark Encounter located in Williamstown, Kentucky. You have to pay for parking. These tickets must be used by the end of this year. Contact Chris & Lois Weber at 989-534-6819 if you are interested in the tickets.

*Duplain Church of Christ, 5565 E Colony Road, St. Johns is having a blood drive on Tuesday, December 29 from 12-5:45 pm. For an appointment time go to [www.redcrossblood.org](http://www.redcrossblood.org) (sponsor code DUPLAINCOC) or call 1-800-733-2767.*



## Stewardship News – January 2021

It's a new year. It's a time when we take stock of the year past in order to improve the year to come. It's a time when we sit down to plan and implement what we want to accomplish and even change. Part of that is planning our stewardship for the coming year.

Often, we find this difficult and daunting and even joyless, but it doesn't have to be. In fact, it is really quite simple and full of joy. So, here are some tips to make that planning less stressful. You begin by answering these three questions:

Who are you?  
To whom do I give?  
And how much?

So, who are you? The Table of Duties in the *Luther's Small Catechism* informs us. Are you a hearer of God's Word? Are you a citizen of society? Are you a member of a family? Stewardship covers these three estates: church, society, and family. We don't particularly struggle to give to society or family. Our struggles, our difficulties, and our questions arise in giving to the Church.

So, what is our duty as members of the Church with regard to giving? Again, the Table of Duties, gives us a guide. If you are a hearer – a member of the Church who receives instruction – St. Paul taught: "Let the one who is taught the word share all good things with the one who teaches" (Gal. 6:6). This means the local congregation is primary.

Your pastor is the one called to preach the Gospel to you and administer the Lord's blessed sacraments to you. Your congregation is the place where those things happen. Thus, when God calls us to give to the Church, He has the local congregation in mind. For "the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel" (1 Cor. 9:14).

How much do we give to the local congregation? Our only instructions are to give:

- Regularly (1 Cor. 6:1–2);
- Proportionally (1 Cor. 16:1–2; 2 Cor. 8:12);
- Generously (2 Cor. 8:20);
- Of our first fruits (Gen. 4:4; Prov. 3:9; Lev. 27:30); and
- With a spirit of eagerness (2 Cor. 9:2), earnestness (2 Cor. 8:7), cheerfulness (2 Cor. 9:7), and love (2 Cor. 8:23).

In other words, giving to the Church is not to be an afterthought, given after everything else is spent. In this way, it is deliberate. We give regularly – weekly, biweekly, monthly, quarterly, or yearly – keeping in mind our own strengths, weaknesses, and limitations. We set it aside beforehand – before anything else is spent.

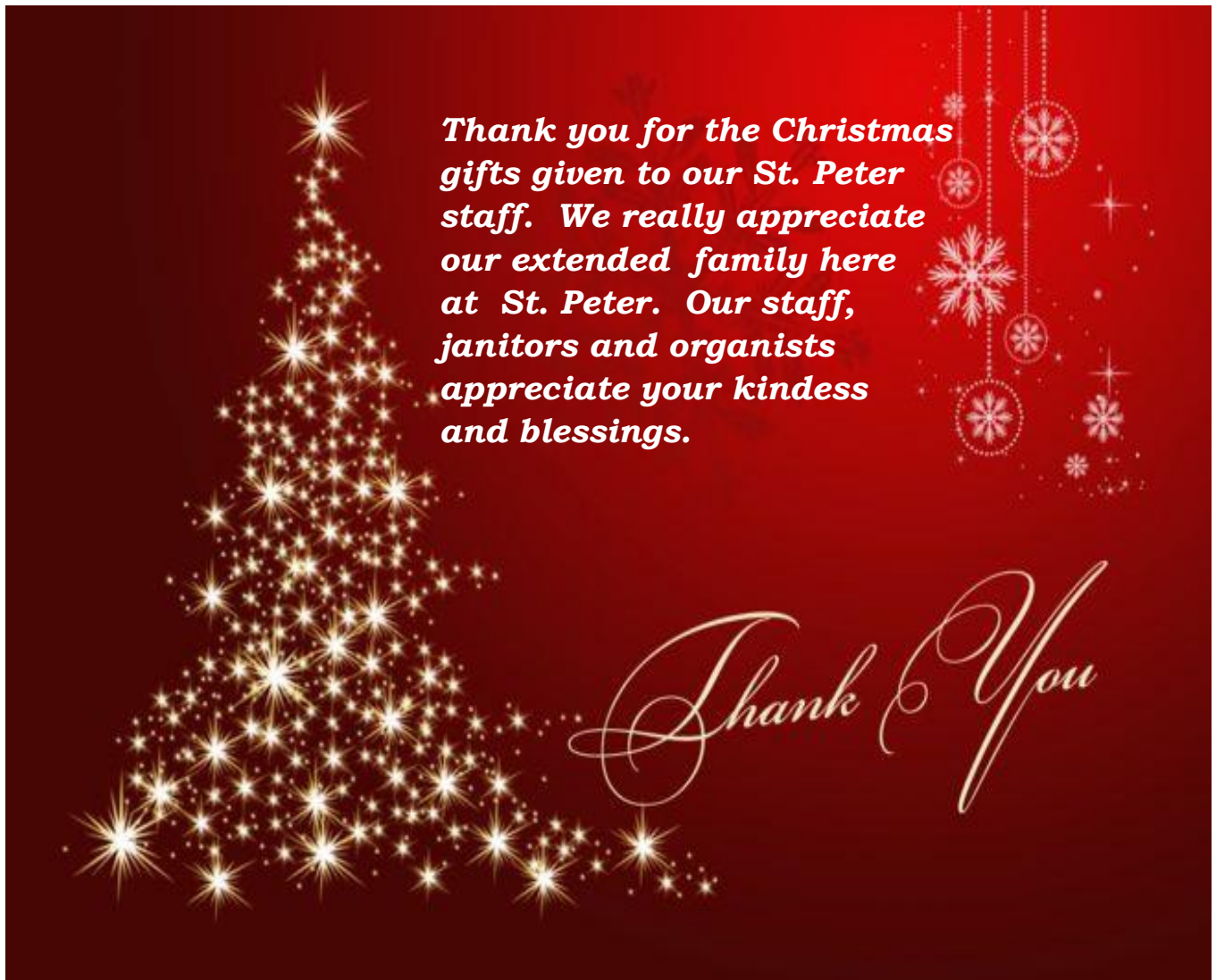
From those first fruits, we set aside a proportionate and generous amount. Ten percent was the standard for the Israelites. This was a command for the ancient Israelites. We can give as much as we want, but ask yourself: Do we really want to be less generous than was commanded of the Israelites? Is the job of the New Testament Church bigger or smaller than the job given to Israel?



And how are we to give it? We give it with eagerness and earnestness. We give it cheerfully and with love, not out of compulsion. For through the preaching of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments, God has made us His children, forgiven us all our sins, given us grace upon grace, promised us life everlasting with Him in His kingdom, and filled us with His own Spirit, the Holy Spirit. This makes giving a joy, as Jesus said, "it is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35).

It's that easy. And it is joyful. For in stewardship, our gracious and giving Lord invites us to take part in the work that He accomplishes here on earth, providing for the ongoing preaching of the Gospel as well as those who are in need. Taking part in that makes all our work holy – work that is done in service to the Lord as priestly members of His kingdom.

Source: [www.lcms.org/stewardshipnewsletterjanuary2021](http://www.lcms.org/stewardshipnewsletterjanuary2021)



---

Welcome to Scrip. My name is Traci Brisboe-Cole and I am the "NEW" Scrip Coordinator for St. Peter. St. Peter participates in Scrip as a way to give families a chance to support their students, church, and school! There are over 3 pages of retailers who participate in Scrip who offer rebates for their users from 1.5%- 18% on purchases. If you are interested in learning more about Scrip I would love to help you get started. I can be reached via email: [Tracieggleston20@gmail.com](mailto:Tracieggleston20@gmail.com) or phone: 269-908-6165 (text is preferred). If you want to get started to view their website you can join St. Peter with the St. Peter Enrollment code: 6L1A6F8L559. Download the shopwithscrip app! Please, do not hesitate to reach out for more information!!!!

Thank you,

Traci Brisboe-Cole



---

*Heartfelt Thank You for all the prayers, cards, calls and well wishes extended to our mother, Ethel Flegler on her 99<sup>th</sup> birthday. You are, indeed, by your love the church of our Lord.*

*Family of Ethel Flegler*



---

**ST. PETER 150<sup>TH</sup> 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 additional books at 989-224-3178 or [church@stpeterliley.org](mailto:church@stpeterliley.org)**

---

*Happy New Year!*

**2021**

---



## PRESCHOOL NEWS

We have had an amazing first half of the school year. The children are growing, developing, and forming wonderful friendships. We are very thankful to have the opportunity to work with such amazing children and families. We will begin looking at enrollment for next school year when we return from Christmas break. We are excited to continue growing our wonderful preschool program.

Unfortunately, we were not able to have our Christmas Program this year but hope to continue the tradition next year. We hope you are all staying safe and healthy.

The school was able to enjoy their first Whoville Day Celebration. The school and gym looked amazing, and the children loved spending the day watching The Grinch Movie and enjoying goodies. Thank you to everyone that helped set up, provided food, and cleaned up afterwards. These wonderful events would not be possible without the support of the families, staff, and church. Thank you to Mrs. Fletcher for starting this wonderful tradition!

We ended our month with our class Christmas party. We weren't able to have parents join us this year, but we still had a wonderful day celebrating the birth of Jesus. We want to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and we look forward to seeing everyone in January.

Blessings,  
Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Fletcher



---

### **2021 GIVING ENVELOPES**

Do you still need to pick up your 2021 giving envelopes? They are located in the hallway outside of the fellowship hall. If you would like curb side assistance please contact the office at 989-224-3178 to make arrangements.



*“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 10:30am  
Bible Study:6:00pm (Lutheran Confessions study in the Library )

Sunday: 8:00 am - *temporary* Divine Service  
9:15-9:45 am - Family Bible Class in the Fellowship Hall  
10:00 am - Divine Service



## Shut-In Visit List Monthly Visits

Shirley Edwards  
Ethel Flegler  
Lyle Huguélet  
Tom & Julie Johnson

Ellen Martens  
Charlie Silm  
Lois Sillman  
Albert Smith



**Check out our website!**  
[www.stpeterriley.org](http://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.](#)



- 1/1/21 10:00am Service - Circumcision and Name of Jesus  
New Year's Day (Office Closed)
- 1/3/21 Confirmation 3:30pm (Library)
- 1/4/21 School Board Meeting 6:30pm (Library)
- 1/5/21 Elders Meeting 6:00pm (Library)
- 1/6/21 Matins Service 10:30am & Bible Study 6:00pm (Library)
- 1/7/21 Quilting 9:00am (Ladies Aid Room)  
Ladies Aid 12:00pm (Library)
- 1/10/21 Confirmation 3:30pm (Library)
- 1/12/21 Council Meeting 6:30pm (Library)
- 1/13/21 Matins Service 10:30am & Bible Study 6:00pm (Library)
- 1/14/21 Quilting 9:00am (Ladies Aid Room)
- 1/15/21 Newsletter deadline
- 1/17/21 Confirmation 3:30pm (Library)
- 1/18/21 No School - Office is open
- 1/20/21 Matins Service 10:30am & Bible Study 6:00pm (Library)
- 1/21/21 Quilting 9:00am (Ladies Aid Room)
- 1/24/21 Voters Meeting (Immediately after church in the gym)  
Kick off for Lutheran School Week  
Confirmation 3:30pm (Library)
- 1/27/21 Matins Service 10:30am & Bible Study 6:00pm (Library)
- 1/28/21 Quilting 9:00am (Ladies Aid Room)
- 1/31/21 Confirmation 3:30pm (Library)  
Mites Sunday

(Private confession available by appointment only on Saturdays at 6:30pm)



## **MEMORIALS**

### ***In Loving Memory of***

*Bill Horman \$410.00*

*Winifred Maniez \$40.00*

*Marilyn Barz \$25.00*



### ***In Honor of***

*Ethel Flegler \$500.00*

**St. Peter Lutheran  
Church & School**

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

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



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

Begin  
the  
Year  
with

