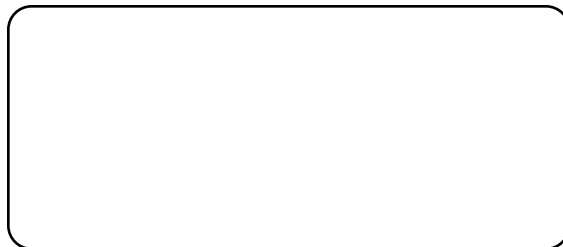


St. Peter Lutheran Church & School

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

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

We are on the web!
www.stpeterriley.org



THE MESSENGER *November 2023*



Church Services

Divine Service – Sundays at 9:30 am
Office of Matins – Wednesdays at 9 am (when school is in session)
Advent and Lent – Wednesday services at 7 pm
Feasts and Festivals – Services as announced in calendar and bulletin

A LETTER FROM THE PASTOR

Augsburg Confession: Article V – The Ministry

AC V

That we may obtain this faith, the Ministry of Teaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments was instituted. For through the Word and Sacraments, as through instruments, the Holy Ghost is given, who works faith; where and when it pleases God, in them that hear the Gospel, to wit, that God, not for our own merits, but for Christ's sake, justifies those who believe that they are received into grace for Christ's sake.

They condemn the Anabaptists and other who think that the Holy Ghost comes to men without the external Word, through their own preparations and works.

Article IV of the Augsburg Confession was the article on Justification, the fact that we are counted righteous before God through faith in Christ, believing that for His sake, our sins are forgiven, and God is favorably disposed toward us. This is the heart and center of our faith.

Article V then goes on to say how this faith is obtained. It does not drop into our hearts from thin air, and it certainly does not come from within. This faith is obtained by the power of the Holy Spirit. And the Holy Spirit deals with men through outward means—namely, through the Word and Sacraments. Therefore, God instituted the Ministry of teaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments, for through these means the Holy Spirit brings sinners to saving faith.

So, the article deals primarily with the means of grace, the external Word through which the Holy Spirit comes to man. But the article also clearly defines the Office of the Ministry (referred to in the German version of the Augsburg Confession as the “Preaching Office”). Christ instituted an office for the purpose of preaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments. We commonly refer to those placed into this office as “pastor.” The means of grace are not to be handled as the church sees fit, but through the office established by God.

Condemned in this article are those who think that the Holy Ghost comes to men without the external Word. Today, this condemned belief is commonly held within the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements of Christianity. In the Smalcald Articles, Luther had this to say about the Holy Spirit's use of means: “Therefore we ought and must constantly maintain this point, that God does not wish to deal with us otherwise than through the spoken Word and the Sacraments. It is the devil himself whatsoever is extolled as Spirit without the Word and Sacraments” (SA III VIII).

Where these truths about God's means of grace are believed, church attendance is not lacking.

In Christ, Pastor Bayer

A LETTER FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Don't Dwell on the Hardships, Dwell on the Blessings

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He resources my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever. — Psalm 23:1-6

I have heard this Psalm of David many times. I would guess that most people, even those who are not Christian, have heard these verses many times. It seems to be used most often at funerals, to comfort someone going through hardship, even in TV shows and movies when someone is in a grave situation. *The valley of the shadow of death paints such a dark picture. It can be easy to focus on that and not the rest of it. Isn't that a part of our sinful human nature, to focus on the bad all around us and forget about the blessings poured out on us daily?*

As I read the rest of the verses, I can't help but think about the Lord's Prayer and the 1st Article of the Apostles Creed that the students are learning just this week at school. God is telling us that He will always provide for us all that we need. He will be there next to us to guide and protect us. He will never leave us. God is beside us each day as we encounter struggles and obstacles in our lives.

As you pray for the school and the church, pray that the students find comfort in Christ and not worry in their lives each day. Pray that families feel peace knowing God didn't throw us into this sinful world and walk away, but is with us always, showing us mercy and blessing our lives. Pray for our church, that as a congregation, we too focus on the many blessings and not the struggles we face. God tells us right in these verses that He is with us. He did not create us and then leave us. He not only stayed with us but sent His son Jesus to die in our place.

Blessings in Christ,

Erika Brown
Principal/Teacher

A LETTER FROM THE PRESCHOOL

Wow, we can't believe we have been in preschool for a month already! The children have settled into our class routine and are making new friends. We have had a very busy start to the school year. We enjoyed a wonderful field trip to Country Mill. The weather was beautiful, and we enjoyed all the activities the staff had planned for us. Thank you to all the parents and grandparents who joined us!

Trunk or Treat was on Friday, October 27th. It was great to see so many people with trunks and enjoying the community fellowship. We enjoyed our class Halloween party on Tuesday, October 31st. The children loved wearing their costumes to school and enjoyed a special Halloween lunch. We hope everyone enjoyed trick-or-treating with their families.

We are excited to attend the All-Church Workers Conference at the end of November as staff. The staff is looking forward to continuing our learning and spending time together. This is also a great opportunity to network with fellow church workers. We hope everyone has a happy and blessed Thanksgiving!

Blessings,

Mrs. Smith, Mrs. Fletcher, and Mrs. Curtin



A LETTER FROM OUR CANTOR

Why We Do What We Do

What does the Divine Service on Sunday have to do with Christian Stewardship? Part II

Last time we walked through Sunday morning up through the Scripture Lessons, looking at how the liturgy speaks to the issue of Christian Stewardship. But that was just the beginning. Literally!

Don't even get me started on the Hymn of the Day! The hymnal has a complete section on stewardship (LSB 781-789), including the one presented in the bulletin recently, "We Give Thee But Thine Own." But the ones that speak about God's gifts to us and our response to him in our worship and life would fill the rest of this page!

Luther wrote, "I believe that God has made me and all creatures, that he has given me my body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my members, my reason and all my senses, and still preserves them... that he richly and daily provides me with all that I need to support this body and life... for all which is it my duty to thank and praise, to serve and obey him. This is most certainly true" (Small Catechism, Art. I). If we remember that the Creed is a response to what we have received, then it fits perfectly in this topic. Here we make a public profession of everything God has done and continues daily to do as Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier. All we are and have and hope to be are his gifts!

Sometimes it's easy to think we're giving our Offering to keep the lights on and the bills paid. How tragically shortsighted! When you were a child and someone gave you a gift, what did your parents teach you; "Say 'Thank you.'" Sometimes they had you write out a thank you card. What do you say to the Person who has given you EVERYTHING? How do you place a value on that? Perhaps we forget that our offerings enable our school to reach out to children and families to learn of Jesus for the first time. We support mission work in this country and around the world; as stewards of the Good News of Jesus Christ, what could be a higher honor?

The Offertories we sing with the Offering are interesting. The traditional one we know (LSB p.192) is taken from Psalm 51. In these verses, we ask God for things like a clean heart, a right spirit, and to "renew in me the JOY of your salvation" (emphasis added). In the newer one (LSB p. 159 & 176), from Psalm 116, we ask, "What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits to me?" Good question! A fascinating answer is worship, "I will offer the sacrifice of thanksgiving and will call on the name of the Lord." The psalmist provides an example for us; as a member of the congregation, he pledges his offering to God, and then fulfills that pledge.

In the Preface, our stewardship theme continues as we prepare to receive the Sacrament of the Altar. Again, what is the first thing you do when you receive a gift? Say, "Thank you." "Lift up your hearts." "We lift them to the Lord." "Let us give thanks to the Lord our God." "It is right to give Him thanks and praise." "It is good, right and salutary that we give you thanks...." Salutary – that's an odd word. It simply means "healthy"; it's HEALTHY for us to give God thanks and praise.

We conclude the Sacrament by either singing "Lord, now you let your servant go in peace" because he's kept his promise to us (Nunc Dimittis), or "Thank the Lord and sing His praise, tell everyone what he has done...", based on Psalm 105. An essential part of giving thanks is telling others what we have right to give Him thanks and praise." "It is good, right and salutary that we give you thanks...." Salutary – that's an odd word. It simply means "healthy"; it's HEALTHY for us to give God thanks and praise.

CANTOR/SCHOOL NEWS

After the Sacrament, the high point in the service, the Liturgy wraps up quickly. The Benedicamus and Post Communion Collect continue the theme of giving thanks for what our God has so graciously given us.

Yet he has one more gift for us as we receive his Benediction, knowing he looks upon us with favor because of Jesus Christ.

Some parishes dismiss the congregation with the admonition, “Go in peace. Serve the Lord.” Martin Luther has some interesting thoughts about that:

I know that everything I do in the name of Christ must please God, even though it vexes the devil. Therefore I will go my way and perform all the tasks I can and must in my calling, no matter how lowly this calling may be. I know that God places his stamp of approval on them and that they please Him just as much as do the most beautiful, most arduous, and most precious works performed in the highest vocation. (Luther’s Works 24:240)

This is the life of a Christian Steward.

I hope to share more of why we do what we do. Perhaps if you have a particular question or concern, you might pass that along to me through the church office.

Your brother in Christ, Dick Davenport

Is Public School The ONLY Option? NO!!!

Consider attending an informational meeting to learn about Wittenberg Academy, a fully online school that provides Classical Lutheran Education. wittenbergacademy.org

- WHO:** Anyone may attend, especially prospective students and their families.
- WHAT:** Discussion on classical education, Wittenberg Academy, and info about **St. Peter as a host site for High School Scholars** attending WA beginning Fall 2024
- WHEN:** Wednesday, November 8, 2023 at 6:30pm
- WHERE:** St. Peter Lutheran Fellowship Center Gym

In attendance will be Wittenberg’s headmaster, Mrs. Jocelyn Benson (via zoom) and a family who has several children enrolled in the school.

Come with questions!

CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS, NEWS, EVENTS

There are several ways dollars can be earned to support our church and school. All it takes is just a little effort or planning on our part and the rest just falls into place. Also it doesn't matter if you only buy a gallon of milk or spend a lot. So If you are a Kroger shopper you can sign up for their Rewards Program. We buy groceries and Kroger does the rest.

KROGER COMMUNITY REWARDS

How to: Kroger Community Rewards Type: www.krogercommunityrewards.com into your browser.

Follow the directions: State. Enroll. Sign up today. Under new customer section on the right, enter your zip code and then click search.

Click on the arrow to display the list of stores in your zip code area and highlight your preferred store. Enter your email and password . Select any email communications you would like to receive from them. Click on "NEXT".

Key in your Kroger Plus Shopper's Card Number. {If it says that this card has already been used, please call the number on the back of your card.} ENTER YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION. Verify that your account information is correct. Check the box for agreement to terms and conditions and click on "Complete Information"

Kroger will send an email to your personal account that you entered earlier in the process. This could take up to 10 minutes.

Open the email that Kroger sent. Read the email and either click on the link within the email or copy and paste it into your browser.

Sign in: click on the blue button and then type in your email and password. Under Kroger Community Rewards Section at your right , click "Edit Kroger Community Rewards Information" Find our organization by typing in our organizations number "87265"

Click on the organization that you want. Please make sure that you click on the circle to the left of our organization so that it becomes highlighted.

Click on "Save Changes" Scroll over the page to make sure all information is correct. CONGRATULATIONS, You are now registered!!!!!!

At your next shopping trip Kroger will acknowledge your registration at the bottom of your receipt. IF IT IS NOT resubmit your application or contact Pam Mohr to assist you.

Cut out and save or pass on to someone!!

CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS, NEWS AND EVENTS

St. Peter Lutheran Church

2024 Women's Retreat

"Jesus Calms the Chaos"

"Be still and know that I am God." – Psalm 46:10

Grab your friends and join us for a peaceful time together as we devote ourselves to fellowship with our sisters in Christ. The down payment has been made!! You may sign up through March of next year!! It all happens April 26-27, beginning at 4pm check in on Friday—check out on Saturday at 5pm. It will be held at St. Francis Retreat Center, 703 E. Main Street, DeWitt, MI. Our speaker for the weekend is Pat Maier, Visual Faith Ministry—Co-founder. Pat is a former Lutheran educator and pastor's wife who enjoys writing, drawing and speaking to inspire God's people in their walk with Jesus. She lives in northern MI with her husband, Rev. David Maier and they have 4 children and 7 grand blessings.

Meals, snacks and refreshments will be provided. Please bring your bible. Friday evening will be relaxed with dinner, fellowship and a campfire. Saturday we will join together as Pat will guide us with scripture and tools and how we might keep our hearts focused on how "Jesus Calms the Chaos" in our lives.

Please pick up a registration form in the narthex if you haven't already!

Women's Retreat Committee

Geri Jastram 517 290-7609, Judy Bengel 517 281-5813 or 989 834-5322, or Rita Hollis 989 534-1955

=====

Welcome to our new secretary! We are delighted to have our new secretary, Eris Simmons, on-board. When you have the chance, introduce yourself and tell her thanks!

=====

Help Wanted! Are you looking for some way to serve? We are looking for someone to clean the church. You can sign up for every month, once a month, twice a month, etc. The restroom are already being cleaned by Judy Martens (thank you, Judy!) Call the church office to sign up. 989 224-3178

The Giving Tree



The Giving Tree will be located in front of church on **Sunday, November 19th** and the following weekends until tags are all removed. We are getting an early start on this mission so you can take advantage of the Thanksgiving sales. Please take a tag off the tree as you leave the church, so you may provide a gift for a needy person/family in our community.

Each tag colored shape represents a person/family in need this year. The tag itself identifies an item on that family's "wish list". Pray for the family daily throughout the holiday season. Pray for their health, safety and faith; pray that their daily struggles draw them closer to Jesus.

Wrap the item that you purchased and attach the colored tag carefully with one piece of tape (as it will be removed to attach a permanent tag) on the outside of the gift. Return the gift to the Giving Tree by **Sunday, December 17th** so the gifts can be distributed in a timely manner.

The pink tags are for the "Erber's" our TIM (Together in Mission) family that we support on a regular basis. The monetary gifts for the "Erber's" can be placed in an envelope in the offering plate with the pink tag attached. We have also added Kroger gift cards as an option for the 3 families we serve. We will deliver the gifts the **week of December 17th**. If you have any questions regarding a gift tag, please contact Judy Marten. (517) 574-8104. Thank you for caring!!



CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS & NEWS

Memorials

A memorial was made in memory of Howard Lyon



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.

The Church will only send out emails if we have permission from the person or family of whom the email is concerning to respect peoples privacy.



Shut-In Visit List Monthly Visits

Virginia Davis
Charlie Silm
Shirley Edwards
Albert Smith
Linda Davis
Glenn Bennett
Mary Ann Grennell
Linda Chant
Rhonda Dedyne
Jan Maynard
Ilene Gibson
Ellie Camburn



Please review our list of Sick and Shut In and show them some love by calling and visiting. Continue to remember them in your daily prayers.

CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS, NEWS & EVENTS

Ladies Aid and LWML

The quilters are still working on quilts every Thursday morning at 9am to noon. All are welcome to join us! We continue to collect sheets and pillowcases. We will be having an Old Fashion Bake Sale and Jars for Baked Goods on **Sunday, December 10th** following Worship. More information will be available very soon!

Mite Sunday is November 26th!!

The Advent Brunch will be held Tuesday, December 5th at 9:30am.



WE'RE LOOKING FOR THRIVENT MEMBERS!!!

If you are a Thrivent member would you please call Charlene Kennedy at 989 224-7106, our current Event Coordinator? Your membership may qualify to sponsor a fund raising or service program we hold here at St. Peter.

Because of the "Privacy Act" Thrivent is unable to release a list of membership. A \$250 gift card is available to us from each membership twice a year. This is a service Thrivent provides and it is free, it does not cost YOU anything. If you have an insurance, health insurance or an annuity policy with them, please call her. We appreciate your help!

CHRISTMAS DECORATING OF ST. PETER LUTHERAN CHURCH

If you would be interested in helping to beautify our church for Christmas, please join us on **Saturday, December 2nd at 1:00pm.** We will "deck the halls" on the inside AND the outside of church. What a great time of fellowship and fun with our brothers and sisters at St. Peter. Please let me know if you can help.



Charlene Kennedy, DVM

LCMS FOUNDATION

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

LCMS Stewardship Ministry

Give Thanks with a Grateful Heart!

Our Father in heaven has claimed us as His own. By the shedding of His Son's blood, by His death for our sins and His resurrection for our justification, God the Father has received us back into His family. By water combined with His Word, promise and name, the Holy Spirit has taken up residence in us. We belong to Father, Son and Holy Spirit. He is in us, and we are in Him. And being in Him, all things are ours. In Him, we are richly and abundantly blessed.

Our true treasure and wealth is that we belong to the most holy Trinity and everything that is His belongs also to us: righteousness, peace, eternal life. Even our temporal treasures are gifts from His fatherly, divine goodness and mercy.

We receive our treasures from Him, and thus, as good stewards of His varied grace, we manage them in such a way that they may be returned to Him. We bring them to Him, hallowed through prayers of thanksgiving and God's Holy Word, as a sacrifice. Thus all our possessions, as gifts from God, are also sacrifices to Him, from which we eat to nourish our bodies and share with our family, neighbors and fellow Christians, with the poor and even our enemies, as holy things given by our holy God. His temporal gifts are blessings to and for us, and bring blessing upon us even as they are pressed into His service for His kingdom and the souls that receive them.

Thus we place all that we have into God's hands. He never fails to remember us and pours out the fullness of His promises upon us. We give thanks for all that He has done, is doing and will continue to do. We give thanks by not taking for ourselves, but giving to all even as our heavenly Father has given to us.

As we prepare for Thanksgiving celebrations, may we all give thanks continually for all that we are and all that we have because of God's providential care. And may we be all the more diligent in bringing everything that we have received from God to Him, so that He may bless it and employ it for the good of all — even for us. For to the one who has, more will be given, and he will have an abundance.

– LCMS Stewardship Ministry: lcms.org/stewardship

THANK YOU'S



CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS, NEWS AND EVENTS

Secret Prayer Sister Reveal

Saturday, November 11th, 2:30pm
Fellowship Center Gym

It's that time of the year....time to find out who has been lifting you up in prayer this past year. Please put this date on your calendar. It is customary to bring a little gift for your SPS that day. To make the afternoon fun, I ask that each of you attach a note to your gift with who it goes to but **NOT** your name. Then list 3 things on that note that your SPS might not know about you. Then they have to figure out who you are by the hints they are given. Put your wrapped gift in a bag or whatever and place on the table as you come into the Fellowship Center.

If you'd like to be a part of this special ministry, please let me know!! We would love to see some new faces!!

Diane Thurston (989) 388-2069

=====

MOST 2024 TEAMS ARE NOW POSTED!

<https://www.mostministries.org>

Here are three of our open teams:

Team # 2401 to Tanzania will travel for eyeglass clinics. Jan 12-21.

Team # 2402 to Amatitlán, Guatemala, needs team members experienced in plumbing, electrical and general construction to update dorm rooms for mission teams. Grant funds will pay for tools and materials needed by this team. Jan 13-20.

Team # 2403 to Kolkata, India. We will conduct eyeglass clinics in Kolkata with our new host there. Feb 1-12.

Scholarship News: 1. "Teachers to the World" makes funds available to those teachers joining a VBS or children's ministry team. 2. "Send Me, Send Me" provides funds for LWML young women representatives to serve on a MOST team. For more about these and other scholarships, email our Team Administrator at kaleighb@mostministries.org.

CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS, NEWS, AND EVENTS

Michigan March for LIFE

Wednesday, November 8, 2023
at 11am in Lansing

Right to Life of MI is partnering with the National March for Life in hosting a **MI March for LIFE!**

Date: Wednesday, November 8 (the first anniversary of Prop 3 passing in MI)

Where: We'll gather on the lawn outside our state Capitol building

Time: An Exciting rally is planned for 11am; our peaceful march around the Capitol is at noon.

Why are we having this March for Life? As we see thousands and thousands of pro-lifers gather that day, we will be:

- Letting everyone know that while Proposal 3 was terribly disappointing BUT we are Not done working to protect every life from conception to natural death.
- Assuring all our prolife legislators know that we still have their backs.
- Reminding any pro-abortion legislators that we are still watching what's going on.
- Encouraging and motivating every prolife person at the march to stay engaged.

This march will be life-changing for those of your church family who will attend. If you would like to attend, please talk to any of our LFL team here at St. Peter and we will carpool to make that happen!

There will a follow-up Lutheran gathering at Hope Lutheran in DeWitt following the Rally and March at the Capitol. Light refreshments will be served (which LFL of MI will provide). Pastor Salemink, the Executive Director of National Lutherans for Life, will be a speaker at this event.

St. Peter Lutheran for Life Team

Kristin Bayer, Vickie Pline, Sarah Sills, Sara Thurston, Diane Thurston

LCMS INTERNATIONAL MISSIONARIES

About the Erbers

Pastor David and Joyce Erber serve as missionaries with LCMS International Mission. We live in Ghana West Africa. David teaches at the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Accra, Ghana and coordinates the Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Online Master of Arts in Theology degree for pastors in Africa. Joyce is the Regional Business Manager for Africa and is responsible for accounting and financial dynamics for LCMS missionaries and projects across Africa.

How To Connect with David and Joyce

David.Erber@LCMS.org Joyce.Erber@LCMS.org or via: 3809 Westchester, Jackson, MI 49203

How To Send Financial Support For Our Mission Work In Africa:

1. Write check to: The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod
 2. On Memo Line, write: "Support for Erbers - Ghana"
 3. Send to: LCMS, P.O. Box 66861, St. Louis, MO 63166-6861
- Or go to: www.lcms.org/givenow/erber Or go to: Mission Central

If you would prefer not to receive these letters, please send us a note.

Please note: These letters are not intended to serve as solicitations for donations. Some recipients uphold us in prayer. Some recipients send a donation once a month, once a year or once every couple of years. Some recipients simply like to hear about what is going on with us from time to time. These letters are intended to be a word of thanks for prayers and support as well as an attempt to stay in touch.

If you have a moment, we would love to hear from you! *David and Joyce*