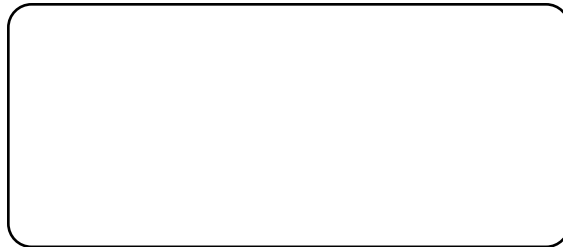


St. Peter Lutheran Church & School

Rev. Timothy Bayer
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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



THE MESSENGER *January 2024*



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 VII – Of the Church

Also they teach that one holy Church is to continue forever. The Church is the congregation of saints, in which the Gospel is rightly taught and the Sacraments are rightly administered.

And to the true unity of the Church it is enough to agree concerning the doctrine of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments. Nor is it necessary that human traditions, that is, rites or ceremonies, instituted by men, should be everywhere alike. As Paul says: One faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all, etc. Eph. 4, 5, 6.

One holy Church is to continue forever. Christ promised to build the Church despite every opposition (Matt. 16:18). The definition for Church given here is the congregation of saints, in which the Gospel is rightly taught and the Sacraments are rightly administered. We will learn in the next article that in this life, hypocrites and evil persons are mingled with the saints, but here we are focusing on the true Church—which is composed only of believers. This Church of saints (ones made holy through faith in Jesus Christ) necessarily has the teaching of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments. For the Church does not exist where the Gospel and Sacraments are not found. We learned already in Article V that it is through these means that the Holy Spirit is given.

So, concerning the unity of the Church, agreement must exist concerning the doctrine of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments. These must be agreed upon because they come from God, not man. Where these are not in agreement, there is discord. Where these are in common, there is unity. This qualification for unity in the Church is no small thing—there exists much disagreement on the Gospel and Sacraments within Christianity. Unity cannot be reached by merely acknowledging certain “fundamentals” and allowing all the other differences to be swept under the rug. For example, the difference between affirming or denying baptismal regeneration is a big deal. The difference between affirming or denying that the bread and wine in the Lord’s Supper are the true body and blood of Christ is a big deal. Disagreements on these or any other aspect of the Gospel and Sacraments breaks unity in the Church.

On the other hand, where the Gospel and Sacraments are agreed upon, this is enough for unity in the Church. Human traditions, rites or ceremonies, or anything else instituted by men, do not need to be identical everywhere. The Service of the Word and Sacrament is God-given and must be agreed upon in the Church, but the exact rite used for the Service of Word and Sacrament may vary. We have variation in the rite for the Divine Service even within our own hymnal, where we have five settings of the Divine Service of Word and Sacrament. In addition to rites instituted by men, ceremonies instituted by men also may vary. Manmade ceremonies include lectionaries, vestments, processions, music, crossing oneself, etc. The list can go on. While these ceremonies need not be the same everywhere for unity in the Church, this also does not mean that anything goes and is appropriate. Decency and good order remain necessary in the Church. And all must be in service to the Gospel. Good order includes consistency with fellow believers in practice. No Christian exists in isolation from the body of Christ, and no individual congregation does either.

In Christ, Pastor Bayer

A LETTER FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Running with Purpose

Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.
1 Corinthians 9: 24-27

I shared these words written by the apostle Paul with the school board during our December meeting as a part of our devotion. Paul found a way to speak to the people in Corinth about living as a follower of Christ by comparing it to something in their daily lives they would understand. I like these verses because they do the same for me. They resonate with me as an athlete, as a parent, as a part of ministry, and most importantly as a Christian.

In December, the school was a busy place. The students prepared for the Christmas program and did an awesome job. I hope you were able to see it. They sang for the ladies at the advent brunch at St. Peter. They prepared for their first program with their music teacher to show parents the work they have been doing in music class. There were Christmas parties and a fun movie day. The students were also busy making Christmas gifts and wrapping up assignments and projects in their classes. As a teacher, I felt like I was running a race. I imagine the students felt that way too. And yet, the work we are all doing is not aimless. It is not without purpose.

We are celebrating together. The church, the school, and our school families are celebrating as we prepare for the birth of Christ. Waiting for His return isn't always easy. We are preparing our students for the hard work of following Christ. Sharing the gospel so they can see that they are not working for an earthly prize, but for the imperishable prize that will come with His return.

Blessings in Christ,
Erika Brown
Principal/Teacher

A LETTER FROM THE PRESCHOOL

Merry Christmas from Preschool

The preschool class enjoyed learning about the meaning of Christmas and the birth of Jesus throughout December. Our classroom was set up with several different Christmas-focused areas for the children to enjoy. We love watching the children play together and enjoy the toys and activities that are available to them.

December was very busy with practicing for the Christmas Program that took place on December 13th and 14th. We are thankful for all the time and commitment Mrs. Stout put into making it a wonderful program. Thank you to all those who attended one of the showings and we hope you enjoyed it.

The all-school movie day was on December 19th. We watched Christmas Classics: Frosty the Snowman and Rudolph the Red Nose Reindeer. Thank you to PTL for providing popcorn, cookies, and milk. This was a wonderful day for students and staff!

Our last day of preschool for 2023 was on December 21st. The preschool class celebrated with a class Christmas party.

Thank you for all your prayers and support throughout the year. We hope you had a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Preschool enrollment will begin in January. Current families will have the first opportunity to enroll their preschoolers. We will then open enrollment up to alumni families. Please let us know if you or someone you know would like enrollment information. Please keep us in your prayers as we continue to teach our young people.

Blessings,

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



A LETTER FROM OUR CANTOR

Why We Do What We Do

The other day someone asked me about candles. Now there's an interesting topic!

First, let's recognize that candles are not required for a worship service. Yet they have been a part of Christian worship for millennia and much custom and tradition has developed around them.

Let's start with the two main candles at the back of the altar, known as the Communion candles. The one on the left, as you're looking at the altar, is the Gospel candle, the one on the right, the Epistle. The Gospel candle is never burning by itself, so the Epistle candle is always lit first, then the Gospel; and the Gospel is extinguished first, then the Epistle. If you notice, Pastor will read the Old Testament and Epistle lessons from the Epistle side of the altar, then move to the Gospel side (unless he processes to the congregation) for the Gospel lesson. The other thing to notice, if the liturgy is a "minor" service (Matins, Vespers, etc.), the Communion candles are not lit.

Now the candles to the side of the altar. These are even more optional, as some congregations will have some, others will not; some will have one candle, some three candles, some seven, or whatever number they choose. All kinds of explanations are attached to the number, the three for the Trinity, the seven for gifts of the Spirit or the seven churches in Revelation, but there really is no special meaning to whatever number are used. What is interesting, though, is that, while the Communion candles are not used during a minor service, the side candles are. And they are lit and extinguished in the same order, the Epistle side lit first, progressing outward from the altar. After a service, the Gospel side is extinguished first, starting from the outside and in toward the altar.

Hanging in the center of the chancel is the Chancel candle, with its red glass. It traces its origin back to Exodus 27:20-21, where God commands Moses to have a lamp continuously burning in the tabernacle as a sign of the Lord's presence. Likewise, the Chancel candle is always lit.

During Advent we have the Advent wreath with a candle for each of the Sundays in the season. Three of them are either purple for repentance or royal blue, the color of hope for the coming of the King. The candle for the third Sunday is often pink as a symbol of joy. In the old lectionary readings for Sunday, the third Sunday in Advent was a pause in the penitential theme and known as "Gaudete Sunday", for the first word of the Introit, "Rejoice." In the center is a large white candle known as the Christ candle, which is first lit on Christmas morning and then throughout the Christmas season until Epiphany, January 6.

Next to the Baptismal font stands a large white candle, the Paschal candle. "Paschal" refers to the Old Testament feast of Passover. The pegs represent the wounds of Christ on the cross, the crown of thorns, the nails in the hands and feet, and the pierced side. The candle is first lit during the Easter Vigil Saturday night/Easter morning at the door of the church to lead worshipers in to the celebration of our Lord's victorious resurrection. During the rest of the year, the Paschal candle is lit at special times of "resurrection" and "rebirth", specifically at Baptism and during funerals.

The candles of Christian worship should use the finest materials, either wax or oil. Our main candles on Sunday, as well as our Advent wreath, use oil as their fuel. The Paschal candle is wax. A part of the worship is actually lighting and extinguishing the candles, rather than simply flipping a light switch. Our one concession to modern technology is the Chancel candle, which is actually battery powered!

Your brother in Christ, Dick Davenport

CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS, NEWS AND EVENTS

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

There are many ways to serve at St. Peter Lutheran Church. Right now, there are several positions that need to be filled to best meet the needs of the church and school. We are looking to fill the following positions:

Chairman of the Congregation

Sexton

Elders

Christian Education

School Board members

If you are interested in any of these positions or simply want more information about serving at St. Peter, please contact the church office

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!

THANK YOU'S

Thank you for your prayers and support for our work and lives in Africa. Also thank you for your donations in July and October!

David and Joyce Erber

CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS & NEWS

Ladies Aid

My article for this month is full of thank you's. First of all, thank you to the many ladies that helped on Monday before the brunch. I know I don't need to ever do this alone. Special thank you to Judy Bengel and Pat and Amy Martens that took care of the kitchen and all others who also helped. Thank you for all that baked goodies provided by the ladies.

The brunch went off without a hitch because of the wonderful help from many, including the school upper grade girls who helped as our servers. Thanks to Diane Thurston and Charlene Kennedy who prepared the dining room along with their helping ladies. Thank you to Laurie Flegler for taking care of the Ladies Aid sales and many other things that she and her helpers did. Cleanup was accomplished very slick and thank you to all who did that job. In conclusion, there were 73 ladies in attendance. Thanks to Kelly Schafer from the Voice of Clinton County Children, we were given much information with discussion to follow. Thank you to all that I may have missed as everyone was appreciated.

Also, thank you to all the ladies that took care of the Ladies Aid Bake Sale in my absence. I understand Laurie and Earlene made it very Christmas and very Festive. Thank you to all the bakers, the ladies who priced, the helpers and all who purchased bake goods. We couldn't have done it without you.

Last but not least, thanks to our Lord Jesus Christ, as without Him, none of this could be possible.

In Christ,
Kathy Bond

TAKING DOWN THE CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS AT ST. PETER

We are looking for volunteers to help us take down the Christmas decorations at St. Peter on Saturday, January 13th at 9:00 am. If you are interested in helping out, please come to the church on January 13th. This is a great time of fellowship with our brothers and sisters at St. Peter.

Charlene Kennedy, DVM

JANUARY 2024 JUBILEE FOR LUTHERAN SCHOOLS WEEK

On January 26th we will be hosting the Jubilee which marks the end of Lutheran Schools Week. Part of this event includes a Book Walk for children. I am asking for donations of books for our Book Walk. These books can be new or gently used for ages from preschool through the eighth grade. You can drop off the books at the church office indicating they are for the Jubilee. If you have any questions, please contact me at 989-224-7106.

Charlene Kennedy, DVM

CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS & NEWS

Memorials

Chad Keck



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

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



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.

Poinsettias

In Memory of Julius & Marie Bengel and Edward & Frieda
Felzke

Given by Dave & Judy Bengel

In Honor of our children and grandchildren

Given by Bruce & Kathy Bond

In Memory of Mr & Mrs Earl Flegler, Mr & Mrs Herman
Flegler and Mr & Mrs William Horman

Given by The Flegler children and grandchildren

In Memory of Glendon & Helen Fitzpatrick and Carl & Al-
vina Rossow

Given by Bruce & Norma Fitzpatrick

In Memory of Gordon & Anna Grennell, Herman & Rosina
Mohnke, Jo Ann Robin & Jon Grennell, and Herman L. &
Ronald Mohnke

Given by Larry & Mary Grennell

LCMS FOUNDATION

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

The Chief Stewards of Humanity: Mom and Dad

St. Paul tells the Ephesians that the first commandment with a specific promise attached to it is, “Honor your father and mother so that it may go well with you, and you may live long in the land” (Eph. 6:2). This promise is one indication of the importance of this commandment. The other thing that highlights the special nature of this commandment is its placement within the Ten Commandments.

The Ten Commandments are clearly organized in two big categories. The first three commandments deal with our relationship with God. This category is called the First Table of the Law. The last seven commandments, the Second Table of the Law, tell us how we should relate to other people. These two tables correspond to what Jesus calls the two greatest commandments: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind,” and “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Matt. 22:37–39).

The order of the Second Table of the Law is also important. Murder is a greater sin than adultery, which is a greater sin than stealing, or lying, or coveting. But why is the Fourth Commandment first in the Second Table, ahead of “you shall not murder”? Is disobeying your parents really worse than murder? Or maybe we should give up on thinking these commandments are ordered?

The overall effect of this order is to get us to see our parents as a connection point between our neighbors and our God. Throughout our upbringing our father and mother stand between us and God and deliver His gifts to us: God clothes us, feeds us, protects us and teaches His Word to us through our parents.

So, parents have a very high calling from God. They are called to be stewards of the greatest gift: the gift of life.

Parenting thus gives us a keen insight into all our stewardship. Parents know that they have been given a great treasure in their children, a treasure that does not belong to them, yet for which they feel a great deal of responsibility. Truth be told, every gift we have been given is like this, because everything we have — whether our own personal skills and powers or our wealth and time — is all from God. He entrusts it all to us so that we can use it all and take care of it all for His great purposes.

CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS, NEWS, AND EVENTS

Poinsettias

In Memory of Fred & Minnie Hopp and Harry & Dorothy
Heathman

Given by Roger & Jean Heathman

To the glory of God, In Memory of Derek, Marie, & Harry
Hollis and Neva & Albert Flak, In Honor of children,
grandchildren, & great grandchildren

Given by Tom & Rita Hollis

In Memory of Harry Schaub
Given by Earlene Schaub & Family

To the glory of God and In Memory of Tina Marie Klein
Given By The Thurston Family

To the glory of God
Given By Anonymous

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*