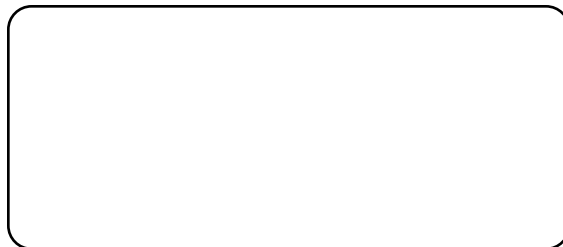


St. Peter Lutheran Church & School

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 *February 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 VIII – What the Church Is

Although the Church properly is the congregation of saints and true believers, nevertheless, since in this life many hypocrites and evil persons are mingled therewith, it is lawful to use Sacraments administered by evil men, according to the saying of Christ: The Scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat, etc. Matt. 23, 2. Both the Sacraments and Word are effectual by reason of the institution and commandment of Christ, notwithstanding they be administered by evil men.

They condemn the Donatists, and such like, who denied it to be lawful to use the ministry of evil men in the Church, and who thought the ministry of evil men to be unprofitable and of none effect.

The Church is made up only of those with Spirit-wrought faith in Jesus Christ, who know God to be gracious to them for Christ's sake. However, hearts cannot be seen by men, but only by God. Though we can recognize good and bad fruit, the fact remains that the Church in this life is hidden. God knows. At the end of the age, the sons of God will be revealed (Romans 8:19). Until then, your life is hidden with Christ in God (Colossians 3:3). And yet, we can say with certainty where the Church exists—it is in the gathering of people around the means of God's grace—the Word and Sacraments. Through these means, the Spirit builds and preserves a people of God. Where these means are present, the Church is.

In this life, there are in this assembly hypocrites as well—those without faith in Christ—who pose as believers. Sometimes their bad fruit exposes them, and sometimes they blend in. This will be sorted out in the end.

Because the Church on earth is hidden and hearts cannot be seen by men, both hearers of the Word and preachers can be hypocrites. This raises the question of what one is to think if it turns out that their pastor is a hypocrite, an evil person posing as a believer. The ministry of the Word and Sacrament is efficacious not on account of the person in the Office, but on account of the Word of God, the very institution and command of Christ. So long as the Word is being faithfully preached and the sacraments rightly administered, even if the person doing it is faithless, the gifts of God are present for His people. His gifts are not dependent on the holiness of the minister.

This is a great comfort. For if this were not true, we would be deprived of the certainty of our baptisms, the presence of Christ's body and blood for us in the Eucharist, and the power of the Gospel in our midst.

Condemned are the Donatists. These are folks who witnessed Christians caving under Roman persecution and renouncing Christ, some of whom had been priests. The Donatists concluded that for the priests who defected, their ministries had been useless. But this is not true—the people under their care heard the voice of Jesus and received his gifts of forgiveness, life, and salvation. Notwithstanding the man in the Office, the ministry is effective for us because it is Christ's ministry. When the Word and Sacraments are present, we have the certain promises of God.

In Christ, Pastor Bayer

A LETTER FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Connected in Christ

“You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. These things I command you, so that you will love one another.”

John 15:16-17

The end of January was a celebration at St. Peter. We celebrated Lutheran Schools Week. It was a week of fun dress up days and field trips, but more importantly a time to thank God for the amazing opportunity to share His love for us through Christ with the students in our school.

While we had a lot of great things planned for the week, the weather did get in the way of some of it. We were able to visit Hope Lutheran Church in DeWitt. A new tradition was started a few years ago of visiting a Lutheran church in the area to see the artwork they have and learn about what is in the church and what its purpose is. We had a fun STEM activity where the students competed to build the best catapult using popsicle sticks, rubber bands, straws, and tape. Students worked on the scientific method, their engineering skills, and their collaboration skills as they built and tested their catapults. The week closed out with a celebration at the annual Jubilee put on by the Fellowship Files at our church. It was a great connection between members of our congregation and the families of our school.

Throughout the week, and continuing into January, the students began a service project as a part of Lutheran Schools Week. They collected books to go toward the Voice for Clinton County’s Children. You are welcome to participate as well if you would like to bring in **new** books for children of any age to drop off outside the school office. We will be collecting through February 9th. Our goal is to provide the organization with 75 brand new childrens books.

We have a few fun things planned for February as well. February 8th is Kindergarten Round-up. We want to continue to grow our school, if you have the opportunity, share information about our great school with families in our community. On February 16th, all of the students, preschool through 8th grade, will be attending the student program at the MSU rodeo. This is a lot of fun for students and their families. The students will be singing in church on February 25th. It is always a blessing for students and their families to join us for worship.

Blessings in Christ,
Erika Brown
Principal/Teacher

A LETTER FROM THE PRESCHOOL

Happy New Year

We hope you all had a wonderful Christmas and a happy new year! We are very happy to have welcomed four new students in January. The class has been very welcoming, and our new students have transitioned very well into our classroom. We are very excited to have 28 students in our class and feel very blessed to have our program growing.

January was spent transitioning back into our classroom routine and getting to know new friends. We look forward to the second half of our school year.

Preschool enrollment is now open for the 2024-2025 school year. Please contact us if you or anyone you know, would like enrollment information.

We will enjoy a school wide field trip to the MSU rodeo in February. This is a free event for families that we always enjoy participating in.

Our *St. Peter Gala is on Saturday, April 20th.* Tickets will be on sale for \$50 each in the school office. This ticket includes a catered dinner, 2 drink tickets and entry into the grand prize drawing. This event is our biggest school fundraiser. All money raised goes towards making school improvements. We hope to see you there!

Blessings,

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

A LETTER FROM OUR CANTOR

Why We Do What We Do

“I as a called and ordained servant of the Word....”

The recent voters’ meeting compels me to return to an earlier topic. In debating the proposed Constitution and By-laws, it was pointed out several times that the current Bylaws mandate for the Board of Elders states:

The basic objectives of this Board are the spiritual welfare of the Pastor and congregation members, individually and corporately, and the supervision of the Pastor, supporting him in everything pertaining to congregational worship. (Bylaws, Art. VI, D).

As elder, as well as unofficial cantor, I can assure you I am in no way Pastor’s “supervisor”! He is theologically trained and qualified by our Synod to serve in the Office of the Ministry. He is the “called and ordained servant of the Word.” I am a layman. Some of you may know that I am seminary trained with a Masters of Divinity and a Masters of Sacred Theology from Concordia, St. Louis. Nevertheless, I am still a layman. Pastor and I can and do have serious and in-depth theological discussions, as do the other members of the Board of Elders. Yet Pastor is the one called by God to serve in this congregation as its shepherd. If you want to look for his “supervisor”, that would be the District President of the Michigan District of the LC-MS.

The only point at which the Board of Elders, or any member of this congregation, have the right to interfere in his ministry would be if he demonstrated:

1. Persistent adherence to false doctrine;
2. Scandalous life;
3. Willful neglect of official duties;
4. Evident and protracted incapacity to perform the functions and duties of the office to which that person has been called. (Bylaws, Art. VII, F. {*not, by the way, Art V as stated in the current Constitution*})

Even then, the congregation would have to work in collaboration with the District President.

That leads me to this item listed in the duties of the Board of Elders:

“Approve and disapprove new forms of worship, liturgies, hymns for use in public worship” (Bylaws, Art. VI, D, 27).

That is totally out of line! I as a layman have no authority or expertise to determine what is theologically sound and appropriate for our worship. Who am I to decide what liturgies or hymns to use? If Pastor chose to do something he picked up from a Baptist service or introduce a song by Amy Grant, what elder would have the insight to know that’s not a good idea for Lutheran worship? In the Bylaws which were voted down, this item was revised to say, “Ensure the use of synodically-approved worship resources.” That is a reasonable duty and expectation of the Board of Elders. As a member of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, our congregation committed itself to such worship practice. And our Synod has adopted for use the Lutheran Service Book (Concordia Publishing House, 2006).

If you’re expecting a congregation that supervises the pastor, you need to look to the Baptists or the Presbyterians or the Congregationalists or the local Bible churches, who have the authority to hire and fire the pastor as they please, who tell him exactly how they want the church to be run. That is not Lutheran theology of the Office of the Holy Ministry. The proposed Constitution and Bylaws were considered unacceptable, and that’s fine. But it must be understood that there are serious flaws in the current Constitution and Bylaws, especially as it views the relationship between the pastor and the congregation, and these need to be corrected.

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.

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 our current Event Coordinator, Charlene Kennedy, at 989 224-7106? 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 Charlene. We appreciate your help!

CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS & NEWS

LFL Annual Life Summit

“Life Triumphant Hurled”

Please put on your calendars the Annual “Life Summit” presented by Lutherans for Life at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Fowler. It will be held on **Sunday, April 28th, from 2:00-5:00pm**. This is a great event for Life Teams, Life Advocates, pastors, lay leaders, as well as anyone who would like to become more prepared to share the “FOR LIFE” message!

Keynote Speakers are Dr. Roni Grad who will give two presentations...Intricately Woven and Organ Donation and Determination of Death. Pastor Paul Clark, the Lutherans for Life President and Life Coordinator for the MI District, will speak on “The Splendor of Life in a Broken World”.

This event is free. Light refreshments will be served. Please RSVP (if possible by April 14) to Pastor Paul Clark at revpmclark@gmail.com or call or text to 517 420-4826.

Chili Cook Off is Sunday, February 18th, following Bible Study!

Come One...Come All to the 7th Annual St. Peter Chili and Corn Bread Cook-Off. Drinks, desserts and table service will be provided. There will be an award for the best chili and corn bread. So get those secret recipes out and put them to the test. Let's see who has the best!

St. Peter Elders

CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS & NEWS

Memorials

In Memory of Wilma Jastram
\$5,000 to St. Peter Christian
Day School



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
Evert & Bernita Sillman
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.

CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS, NEWS & EVENTS

Serpents in the Classroom: A conference for clergy and laity. Saturday, February 24th, at Hope Lutheran Church in DeWitt. Guest speaker: Mr. John Brandt. Cost: \$20 per person, \$10 per student. Lunch provided. 8 a.m. registration and continental breakfast. 8:30 a.m. Matins. 9 a.m. conference begins. Conclude by 2 p.m. RSVP to Hope Lutheran Church 571-669-3930.

Do You Volunteer at the church or school? We would love to know what you do. Please email me at pamelam1212@aol.com Thank you! Pam Mohr

Ladies Quilting Bee Rescheduled for Saturday, February 10th, 9am to 1pm. Come and join in the fellowship and fun as we work on quilts. You don't have to be a "seamstress" to join in the making of a quilt. There are many stations where your talents are needed. Bring a snack to share!

Secret Prayer Sisters

Please remember to keep your SPS in your daily prayers. "Pray that God would make your friend strong, fruitful and flourishing for His glory. Pray that the Lord bless your friend and keep her; that He would make His face to shine upon her and be gracious to her; that the Lord would lift up His countenance upon her and give her peace."

Women's Retreat April 26-27, 2024

Jesus Calms the Chaos

All St. Peter ladies and their friends are welcomed to spend a fun and special time together as we learn of God's plan for us in Psalm 46:10. "Be still, and know that I am God".

There is room for 10-12 more ladies to get in on this memorable retreat. We hope you will join us for a Friday evening and Saturday to refuel with God's Word.

The cost of \$100.00 covers your private room stay, meals, materials, speaker and more.

Please feel free to contact us with any questions, sign up sheet, etc.

We would love to welcome you! Geri Jastram 517-290-7609 Rita Hollis 989-534-1955

Judy Bengel 517-281-5813

LCMS FOUNDATION

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

Caring for My Neighbor

If any of the Ten Commandments might tempt us to think that keeping the Law is easy, it would be the Fifth Commandment. After all, how hard is it to get through life without murdering somebody? The vast majority of people can handle that!

But Jesus famously blows up this notion by pointing out that the command, “you shall not murder,” goes much deeper — down to the heart.

You have heard that it was said to those of old, “You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.” But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, “You fool!” will be liable to the hell of fire. (Matt. 5:21–22)

Hatred and disdain come from the same sort of crookedness of heart as murder. With both murder and hatred, you look down on another person and think them of little worth.

In the Small Catechism, Luther also points out that every “do not” in the commandments also includes a “do this:” “We should fear and love God so that we do not hurt or harm our neighbor in his body but help and support him in every physical need” (SC, Fifth Commandment, emphasis added).

We are not called merely to avoid evil; we must also do positive good.

So when Jesus drew near to us and became our neighbor by taking up our humanity, He came not only to avoid harming us, but He came to positively help us, bless us and serve us.

We are now called to show the love to our neighbors that Christ showed to us. Your neighbor is yet another gift that God has given you that requires your stewardship. We are called to show mercy, to be kind, to love and serve our neighbor. One aspect of this stewardship is financial: our neighbors need us to support the church’s work so that they can hear the Gospel and come to faith. Our neighbors need the church’s alms and mercy work. Our neighbors need our faithful service in all we do in the name of Christ.

CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS, NEWS, AND EVENTS

A vertical border on the left side of the poster features a variety of tropical elements. At the top are yellow and pink hibiscus flowers. Below them are large green monstera leaves. Further down is a vibrant bird of paradise flower with orange and blue petals. The bottom of the border shows a pink hibiscus flower and a halved coconut with its white interior and brown shell.

Aloha!

SAVE THE DATE

ST. PETER
LUTHERAN
SCHOOL GALA

SATURDAY, APRIL 20TH

TICKETS GOING ON SALE
SOON!

ST. PETER LUTHERAN
CHURCH & SCHOOL
FELLOWSHIP HALL
8990 CHURCH RD.
ST. JOHNS, MI

COME SUPPORT OUR
AMAZING SCHOOL!

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*