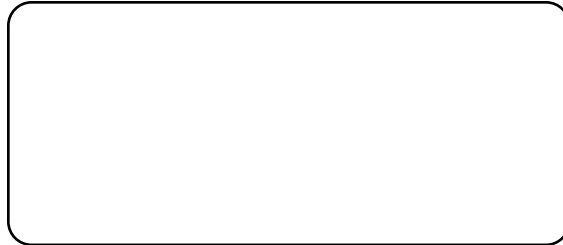


**St. Peter Lutheran
Church & School**

Rev. Timothy Bayer
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St. Johns, MI 48879

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school@stpeterliley.org

We are on the web!
www.stpeterliley.org



THE MESSENGER
June/JULY 2024



Church Services

Divine Service – Sundays at 9:30 am

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 XII – Repentance

Of Repentance they teach that for those who have fallen after Baptism there is remission of sins whenever they are converted and that the Church ought to impart absolution to those thus returning to repentance. Now, repentance consists properly of these two parts: One is contrition, that is, terrors smiting the conscience through the knowledge of sin; the other is faith, which is born of the Gospel, or of absolution, and believes that for Christ's sake, sins are forgiven, comforts the conscience, and delivers it from terrors. Then good works are bound to follow, which are the fruits of repentance.

They condemn the Anabaptists, who deny that those once justified can lose the Holy Ghost. Also those who contend that some may attain to such perfection in this life that they cannot sin.

The Novatians also are condemned, who would not absolve such as had fallen after Baptism, though they returned to repentance.

They also are rejected who do not teach that remission of sins comes through faith but command us to merit grace through satisfactions of our own.

Our life as Christians is one of continual repentance, putting to death the old Adam and rising to new life in Christ. We daily sin much, even as we live in repentance. But then there are severe falls where the Holy Ghost is lost, like David falling into a life of manifold sin. In these cases, we teach that there is forgiveness for the baptized who have fallen away whenever they are converted and return to a life of repentance. The Church is bound to impart absolution to such a sinner (and to any sinner!) whenever they repent. Even if one has been excommunicated for a life of manifold sins or for neglect of God's Word and the Sacrament, when they repent, they are absolved and restored to fellowship in the Church.

Repentance has two parts—contrition (sorrow over our sins), and faith (believing that for Christ's sake, our sins are forgiven). The Law of God works contrition, and faith is born of the Gospel. Both the Law and the Gospel are continually to be preached that we may live a life of repentance by the Word of God.

The “once-saved-always-saved” doctrine of the Baptists is condemned in this article since it is possible for a person once justified to lose the Holy Ghost. Also condemned are churches who say that we can reach a point in this life where we no longer sin. Today, versions of this false teaching are held by churches whose roots are in the “holiness movement” of the 19th century. Examples are Church of the Nazarene and the Church of God.

Also condemned are folks who will not accept back into the Church people who have fallen away. Forgiveness is always granted to a repentant sinner.

The last condemnation is of Roman Catholicism and others, who introduce merits into the equation to contribute to the remission of our sins. Faith alone in Christ alone receives the forgiveness of sins apart from works. Our salvation is entirely God's work in His Son Jesus, who was crucified for our sins and raised for our justification.

A LETTER FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Overflowing Grace

...But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost.

1 Timothy 1:13b-15

It is hard to believe that July is already here and another school year has once again come to an end. The school year is always full of fun events, morning devotions, Wednesdays at Matins, learning opportunities in and out of the classroom, assessments of that learning, recess spent in the sun and the snow, and many other things. In the business of the year, I am thankful our main mission throughout the year is to teach our students they daily receive the grace of our Lord because Jesus our Savior came into the world to forgive their sins and give them eternal life through Him. As our students are studying God's Creation, they are always hearing and studying God's Word.

Thank you to all of you for supporting our school. I know the members of St. Peter support the mission of the school in so many different ways. Whether it is through volunteering, prayer, financial support, or in some other way, I am grateful for your support, and the students are blessed through our school. As you continue to support the school I want to fill you in on some of the end-of-year activities that took place and some of the plans for the summer.

In May our students went on their outdoor education trip to Camp Roger. The 5th-8th grade class was able to have two days of activities and stay overnight while the Kindergarten-4th grade students were there for a day trip. The students learned about nature, succeeded in team-building activities, played games, climbed a rock wall, and had a lot of fun. The students wrapped up the mileage club and celebrated with a group run and popsicle treats. We celebrated student achievements with our families at awards night. And of course, ended the year with field day and a picnic with students and their families.

The work is not over, there is much to be done over the summer. We will be running cables and installing cameras to continue to improve security for student safety. There are other smaller safety projects that we will be working on as well. The staff will be evaluating our curriculum and considering what purchases need to be made to have the best materials to support it. We will be replacing the school hallway bathroom toilets thanks to the generous donations at our Gala. The school will be deep cleaned and re-decorated for another amazing year.

Blessings in Christ,
Erika Brown
Principal/Teacher

HIGH SCHOOL AT ST. PETER

The Church passes on the faith to the next generation, raising up children in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is to the benefit of the children by the salvation of their souls in Christ, and to the benefit of our world, as we raise Christians who will serve their neighbors in love.

St. Peter Lutheran Church has long recognized this sacred responsibility in a tangible way—we have a school. For decades, a large part of our mission here in Riley has been to provide Lutheran education for youth, both our own youth and the youth of our neighbors. The school has benefited existing members by assisting in the raising of their children, and the school has been a mission and outreach, bringing other families into our fold and into the fellowship of the Church. In the not-too-distant past, our school had grown small and had closed grades 6 through 8, but God still had plans. Our school is now restored through the 8th grade, full of students, and always looking to expand as God provides.

As the public schools increase in hostility toward Christianity, our youth need us now more than ever. Our children need to be educated in the Truth, who is Jesus Christ. All learning is rooted in Him. Education that is not rooted in Christ is like a boat without an anchor, floating along with the whims of the age and the folly of man. Christian education has an immovable bedrock—Jesus Christ.

Beginning this fall, we are opening the possibility for our children to continue in their Lutheran education through high school graduation. This will be possible by means of Wittenberg Academy, an online Lutheran school and a Recognized Service Organization (RSO) of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. St. Peter is serving as a host site for students to attend Wittenberg Academy together. This will allow students to work with classmates in person, enjoy fellowship with one another, and participate in daily prayer and weekly Matins together with the entire school.

The desire for this program is clear. We have 100% of this year's *and* last year's graduating 8th graders making plans to stay *or return* to St. Peter for high school by attending Wittenberg Academy. We are glad to respond to this need and support our families.

Providing a high school option also supports our current day school. Previously, families with multiple children were faced with a dilemma when the oldest child aged out of our school—send their children to separate schools or pull them all out of St. Peter. With the high school in place, the entire family can stay at St. Peter. The high school makes us more enticing to prospective students/families because when they begin their time at St. Peter, there is no longer a hard cut-off where the child will have to make a significant transition to public school or elsewhere.

Introducing Wittenberg Academy as an option for high school here at St. Peter is good for our students, good for our school, good for our church, and good for the world whom our students will serve. We thank God for the ability to continue raising up our children in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, helping them to flourish for this life and the next through education anchored in Jesus, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Colossians 2:3).

-Pastor Bayer

A LETTER FROM THE CANTOR

Why We Do What We Do

Let's talk about posture. When you were young, your parents probably told you, "Stand up straight." Good posture is important for good health. And standing up straight communicates a sense of self esteem.

But we also communicate other messages by posture, and this is especially true in our worship. The most common postures are standing and sitting. Standing in the presence of God has been ancient practice dating back at least to the Old Testament worship in the temple, as well as the Jewish synagogue in Jesus' day. The Church associated standing for prayer as a sign of the resurrection. Until the time of the Reformation, the congregation stood throughout the service; there were no pews.

But this gives me the opportunity to come back to the issue of the "doxological stanza", the ones with the little Δ in front. You may recall, our hymnal defines a doxology as a hymn of praise addressed to the Triune God. As such, it's appropriate to stand while singing a doxological stanza. Sometimes if the stanza is just before the sermon, you'll notice pastor motioning us to stand. But it's fitting to stand whenever you come to the Δ as a sign of reverence and respect for the God whose name we praise.

The Lutheran practice of alternately standing and sitting is a puzzle to most other Christians. But for us, there's a rhythm and a logic to it all. Standing is not only respect, but it's giving, whether singing the liturgy or offering prayers. Sitting is a time of receiving. We're reminded of the many times people sat at Jesus' feet as he taught (Luke 10:39ff), or as he had the crowd sit for the feeding of the five thousand (Mark 6:39). Sitting enables us to focus our attention on God's word. It gives us a hint of the rest and peace for which every Christian waits at the end days. The exception is during the reading of the Gospel, for then we stand in honor of the words of our Lord.

There are also other postures which are a part of our worship, namely, bowing and kneeling. Bowing, whether bowing the head or bowing at the waist, is another sign of respect, an acknowledgment that we are in the presence of Someone greater than ourselves. It is a confession that we are not self-sufficient, but are dependent upon our God who graciously gifts gifts. So it's appropriate to bow at the waist as we approach the altar, the place where God meets us, and as we leave. It's also fitting to bow the head as we proclaim the name of our Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, as we do while singing the Gloria Patri at the end of a Psalm, the Nunc Dimittis, or one of those doxological stanzas I mentioned.

Kneeling is a sign of submission, of contrition, of supplication. You'll notice that Pastor kneels on the first step during the Confession and Absolution. Many churches have kneelers at the pews so the congregation kneels during the Confession. Sometimes, even without kneelers, people kneel on the floor. All of this to go along with our confession that we have sinned "in thought, word, and deed," and humbly seek God's grace and mercy, which he gives us in Jesus Christ. It's in that same humility that we kneel (those of us who are able) as we receive the Sacrament, accepting the gift our Lord gives.

There's another, slightly different form of kneeling. In this case a person kneels briefly on one knee before standing again. This is known as "genuflection". As we confess the Second Article of the Nicene Creed, we speak of Christ's "humiliation", when he laid aside his divine status during his incarnation, and his "exaltation", when he took it up again with the resurrection. While it's fitting for the congregation to bow the head during the "humiliation" (from "was incarnate" to "was crucified"), you'll note that Pastor genuflects at that point. He will also kneel this way after reciting our Lord's words of consecration and after raising the elements of the Sacrament. You'll sometimes see a person genuflecting toward the altar as they enter church and before going into their pew. Genuflection is a sign of deep respect and reverence.

As always, none of these postures are commanded in Scripture. But all of them have a long and ancient tradition with the Church. Our posture is a reflection of our faith, it is living the truth we confess about our God and Savior. Being aware of and practicing these enhances and strengthens our worship and piety. I encourage you to try them.

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

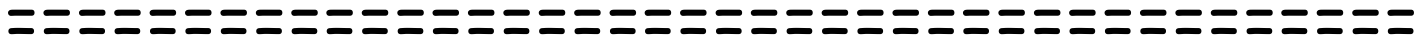
CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

2024 MINT FESTIVAL SATURDAY, AUGUST 10TH

Plans are underway for the St. Johns Mint Festival Parade on Saturday, August 10th. St. Peter Lutheran Church and School invites everyone to walk as a group in the parade. We will be passing out hard wrapped candy.

Let's take advantage of this great opportunity to share our church and school with others who may not know we exist! Hard wrapped candy can be dropped off at the church office or put in a bin in the back of the church. We need walkers to join us in the parade. Sign up will be in the back of the church or office. Please contact me with any questions at 517-927-5089.

Charlene Kennedy



Come join in the fun and fellowship at St. Peter Lutheran Church and School for our Annual Hog Roast on Sunday, July 14th From Noon to 2:30pm

Please bring a dish to pass...meat, potatoes, beans, rolls/buns, table service and drinks will be provided. Food will be served from **noon until 2:00pm.**

Get ready to win some pretty awesome prizes playing bingo which will be for adults and older children. There will be some outdoor activities for the younger children and prizes for all ages.

So reach out and grab those people who you haven't seen for a while and ask them to join us. We are looking forward to spending time in Christian fellowship once again with several of our sister congregations

Charlene Kennedy

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 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

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Ladies Aid and LWML News

The ladies have been busy making quilts for Lutheran World Relief and the Safe Center. We have over 70 quilts made to send to LWR in October, so we have plenty of time yet.

We also made 99 pillowcase dresses which have been taken to Our Savior, Lansing. A group of people from Our Savior went on a mission trip and gave them out to many happy and appreciative little girls. We are now beginning to start all over again to make more dresses. I ask you all for more pillowcases if you have some that you aren't using or see them at garage sales. Without all of you, this would not be possible.

Another project we are working on, is making feminine protection for women in Africa. A lady from Living Word/Trinity, Lansing will be passing them out on her next mission trip.

We are still in need of used fitted and flat sheets and pillow cases, cotton material, etc. Please look at garage sales for these items also.

Laurie Flegler, will be the delegate for St. Peter at the LWML MI District Convention in Grand Rapids at the Amway Center on June 28-30. She will have many things to share when she returns.

In conclusion, if anyone would like to participate with the ladies in accomplishing our goals, please join us any Thursday from 9-noon and on the 2nd Saturday of the month from 9—noon. If there are any changes I will put it in the bulletin. Also we are looking for cutters to cut squares that can be done at home. If you have any questions, please see me at church, call or text me @ 989 640-0630

In Christ's love, Kathy Bond

CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS & NEWS

Lutherans for Life Thank You!!!!

Thank you to all who attended the “Sanctity of Life Presentation” by Pastor Paul Clark of St. Paul, Fowler, on May 19th. He presented a very informative hour of what is going on in our state/country regarding abortion, assisted suicide, etc. A total of \$185 was collection in donations which will be given to LFL of MI.

Thank you also to our LFL team for preparing the goodies for this event!

Collection for Shared Pregnancy

A shout out to all who donated to the collection for Shared Pregnancy in Lansing. Many, many items were collected and will be delivered soon. This is a small but significant way to help mothers keep their babies instead of aborting. Thank you to all of you for your generosity!! We also thank Thrivent for the grant we received to help with this event.

Your St. Peter Lutherans for Life Team
Vicki Pline, Sara Thurston, Sarah Bloom, Kristin Bayer and Diane Thurston

For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.
— Psalm 139:13-14

Thank You!

Thank you to Pastor Bayer for the visits and calls while Keith was in the hospital and for the lovely Funeral Service, to the ladies who worked and helped in the kitchen and all who brought food. Thank you for the memorials, cards and for your love and support. God bless!
Lorna Kirschenbauer and Family

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

Memorials

\$100 memorial from family of Virginia Davis to Ladies Aid

\$20 memorial from family of Virginia Davis to St. Peter

\$20 memorial from family of Glenn Bennett



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

Ellie Camburn
Linda Chant
Linda Davis
Rhonda Dedyne
Ilene Gibson
Mary Ann Grennell
Jan Maynard
Jeanette Mehney
Charlie Silm
Bernita Sillman
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.

LCMS FOUNDATION

The Rewards of Godliness

It's no secret that you can't bribe your way into heaven. No amount of good works will impress God enough to open heaven's door for their sake. "For the wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23) and the person who "keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it" (James 2:10). Rather, salvation is "the free gift of God ... in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 6:23).

So, your good works won't earn you the reward of heaven. But does that mean that there are no rewards at all? Consider what the Small Catechism says in the "Close of the Commandments":

What does God say about all these commandments?

He says, "I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate Me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love Me and keep My commandments." (Ex. 20:5–6)

What does this mean?

God threatens to punish all who break these commandments. Therefore, we should fear His wrath and not do anything against them. But He promises grace and every blessing to all who keep these commandments. Therefore, we should also love and trust in Him and gladly do what He commands. (SC II)

God promises to bless you in keeping His commandments. What might these blessings be? Well, consider what Paul says about keeping the Fourth Commandment: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 'Honor your father and mother' (this is the first commandment with a promise), 'that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land'" (Eph. 6:1–3).

And think about what your life would be like if you went around stealing (breaking the Seventh Commandment), telling lies about people (breaking the Eighth Commandment), and generally being cruel to those around you (breaking all the commandments!). That is obviously not a blessed way to live. In fact, you'd be miserable living that way.

And Jesus says more about what is in store for those who make sacrifices for His sake: "Jesus said to them, 'Truly, I say to you, in the new world, when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands, for My name's sake, will receive a hundredfold and will inherit eternal life'" (Matt. 19:28–29)

So don't grow impatient in doing good. Follow the Lord who has freely given you everlasting

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*

OPPORTUNITY FOR GIVING

Unique Giving Opportunity

St. Peter Lutheran Church and School has discovered a way to keep our Junior High graduates grounded in a scriptural based, classical education through their High School years: Wittenberg Academy.

From their website:

“Wittenberg Academy is a completely online Lutheran school dedicated to forming scholars for life in this world and the next. We are unabashedly Lutheran in our delivery of quality, classical education: scholars receive instruction from teachers who believe, teach, and confess the Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions.”

We currently have 4 students interested in enrolling this fall. The approximate cost per year is \$5,000 per student. St. Peter will be providing a classroom, but no financial support will be included. (We currently cover approximately 55% of the total educational cost for our Dayschool students.)

To assist with the financial burden of this wonderful educational opportunity, a Wittenberg Scholarship Fund is being established. Anyone wanting to contribute can contact Dave Bengel or Sally Pontius. Contributions for the 2024-25 school year should be submitted by August 15th. Those wanting more information about the program can reach out to Kristin Bayer. Wittenberg's website is www.wittenbergacademy.org.