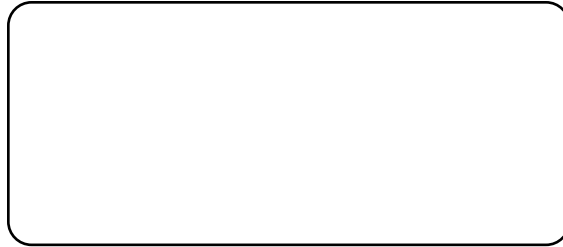


**St. Peter Lutheran
Church & School**

Rev. Timothy Bayer
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St. Johns, MI 48879

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We are on the web!
www.stpeterriley.org



THE MESSENGER
November 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 XVI – Of Civil Affairs

Of Civil Affairs they teach that lawful civil ordinances are good works of God, and that it is right for Christians to bear civil office, to sit as judges, to judge matters by the Imperial and other existing laws, to award just punishments, to engage in just wars, to serve as soldiers, to make legal contracts, to hold property, to make oath when required by the magistrates, to marry a wife, to be given in marriage.

They condemn the Anabaptists who forbid these civil offices to Christians.

They condemn also those who do not place evangelical perfection in the fear of God and in faith, but in forsaking civil offices, for the Gospel teaches an eternal righteousness of the heart. Meanwhile, it does not destroy the State or the family, but very much requires that they be preserved as ordinances of God, and that charity be practiced in such ordinances. Therefore, Christians are necessarily bound to obey their own magistrates and laws save only when commanded to sin; for then they ought to obey God rather than men. Acts 5, 29.

Christians are not to separate themselves from public life in order to live a godly life. Rather, we live godly lives in society, where God has placed us, even in positions of civil office, even as judges, soldiers, president of the U.S., or public school board members.

Included in civil life is marriage and family, often thought of as entirely a separate entity on the basis of private versus public, but marriage and family are in fact the building block of public life together—of society itself—of civil affairs.

God's Law requires us not to forsake society and civil affairs. We are not to hide ourselves away from the world, but we are to love the neighbors God gives us. If we have the will and opportunity to serve in civil office, we do so for the benefit not only of ourselves, but for our neighbor. When we serve our country as a soldier, we please God. The soldier's service clearly illustrates God-pleasing service in that it requires putting others' needs before your own, even being willing to lay down one's life for another.

Regardless of our own service in civil offices, we all are to exercise our love in our families and to obey the governing authorities God has given us. The governing authorities are servants of God, even as ministers of the Gospel are servants of God. As Lutherans, we understand a distinction between the kingdom of the left (civil matters) and the kingdom of the right (the Church). The left-hand kingdom is governed by Law and sword, the right-hand kingdom is governed by the Word of God and the Gospel of Jesus Christ. But they both belong to God, and he uses the earthly authorities to preserve order on earth for the sake of the Church, that the Gospel may continue to go forth until our King returns.

In Christ, Pastor Bayer

A LETTER FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Be Glad and Rejoice

Do all things without grumbling or disputing, that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain. Even if I am to be poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. Likewise you also should be glad and rejoice with me.
Philippians 2:14-18

It is hard to believe November is already here. This month marks the end of the first trimester and teachers have the opportunity to meet with parents and share the great work their students are doing. At the end of the month the staff will be traveling to Fort Wayne to learn alongside principals and teachers from Lutheran schools in Michigan, Ohio, and Indiana. It is not only a great opportunity for professional development but also a great time of fellowship with our brothers and sisters in Christ.

In the end of October our students were able to shop in our school accelerated reader store that is a new addition this year. As they read throughout the year, they can take comprehension assessments about the books they are reading, and earn points to use in the store. We also celebrated Reformation Day with students by making a craft that highlights sola scriptura, sola gratia, sola fide, and solus Christus. By scripture alone, by grace alone, by faith alone, and through Christ alone. This allowed us to talk with the students about these very foundational principles.

There are many great things happening in our school. I ask your continued support, especially through prayer for the staff at our school and the families we are serving.

Blessings in Christ,
Erika Brown
Principal/Teacher

PRESCHOOL NEWS

Autumn Adventures in Learning

We enjoyed another month in preschool. The children are enjoying our different classroom themes and materials. They have enjoyed making new friends and seeing old friends. We are very thankful for a great group of students and families.

We are looking forward to the remainder of the school year. Thank you for your continued prayers and support, it is truly appreciated.

We enjoyed our first field trip of the year in October. We went to Country Mill in Charlotte. The children got a pumpkin, apple, cider, and donut. We also enjoyed a wagon ride through the orchard and a tour of the cider press. This was a great time spent with students and families. Thank you to all the parents and grandparents who joined us.

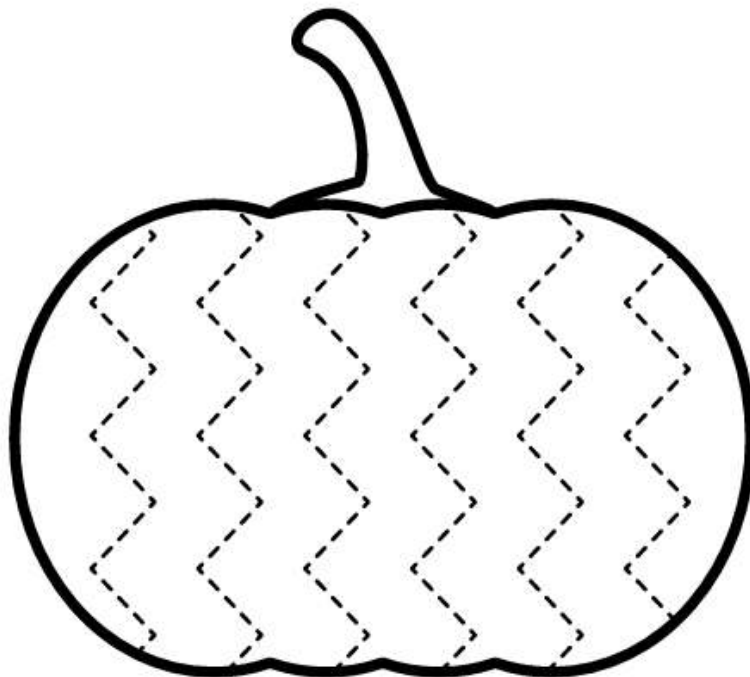
Our month ended with a classroom Halloween party. The children enjoyed wearing their costumes to school, and the teachers provided lunch and treats for the students. We loved seeing all the children excited in their costumes!

Trunk or Treat is on Friday, November 1st from 6:00 pm-7:30 pm. All are welcome to join us. We hope to see you there!

Blessings,

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

***ENJOY A FUN LITTLE FALL TRACING ACTIVITY ***



A LETTER FROM THE CANTOR

Why We Do What We Do

Last time I wrote a bit about the origin, background and relationship of elders to a congregation and its pastor.

As you travel around the country and visit other Lutheran churches, you find that elders may have different duties in different congregations. Sometimes that's evident even on a Sunday morning; in some places the elders serve as the ushers, in others they assist with the liturgy such as reading one or more of the lessons of the day. At St. Peter, the elder of the day assists with the distribution of the Lord's Supper. Although these tasks are significant and add to the worship life of the congregation, they're secondary to the elders' main role. The title of Timothy Mech's book describes it well – *Pastors and Elders: Caring for the Church and One Another*.

Many times a congregation's constitution or bylaws will stipulate who can serve as an elder, e.g., age, number of years as a member, etc. What's often overlooked are the character qualifications for who can serve well as an elder. Victor Constien focuses on those qualities, such as “a willingness to learn and grow in God's grace,” “faithfully participate in services of worship, the Lord's Supper and small group Bible studies on Sunday and throughout the week,” “pray regularly for the congregation, for its pastor and members, for their community, for all people, and for themselves,” “live personal lives which are above reproach,” “exhibit mental and emotional stability” (*The Caring Elder: A Training Manual for Serving*, CPH, 1986, p. 24-25).

The specific responsibilities of elders are spelled out by the congregation in its description of the position. But they generally fall into two realms; the care of the pastor, and the care of the congregation. Elders are basically looking in both directions at the same time. Schuetze and Habeck help focus on the care of the pastor:

Serve as special assistants to the pastor(s), supporting them with prayer, helping them with special problems in his ministry; and concerning itself with the spiritual, emotional and physical health and welfare of the pastor(s) and their families. It shall ensure that they are provided with adequate compensation, housing and assistance with their work to guarantee them sufficient free time for personal responsibilities, study and relaxation.

Support the pastor in supervising the doctrine and practice of the congregation based on the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions.

Take time to listen to the pastor's concerns in order to understand and assist him with problems or difficulties within the congregation. (*The Shepherd Under Christ*, Northwestern, 1974, p. 90)

When it comes to the spiritual care of the congregation, things become more vague. That's because the roles a congregation needs from its elders (how many, how they're organized, etc.) varies from congregation to congregation. Interestingly, the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod doesn't offer any recommendations for elders' duties in a sample constitution and bylaws. Rev. Mech has some general suggestions like encouraging all members to be faithful in attending Divine Service and weekly Bible class; involving members in Christian service; writing, calling and visiting members; and making recommendations about the release or transfer of members and reception of new members (*Pastor and Elders*, pp. 29-39).

This inevitably leads to a discussion about “Christian discipline”. Mech makes a point which is oft repeated in many other texts about pastoral care, “Discipline in the Church is done for the good of all. Far from being unloving, it is, in fact, the loving act of pastors and elders in their care for the Church and one another.... Pastors and elders are those whom God has authorized to practice discipline within the Church. If they don't practice disciplining those who sin, the people sinning will falsely believe there are no consequences to sin and that God simply overlooks it” (p. 79).

John H. C. Fritz wrote, “Being not only a teacher who dispenses the means of grace, but also a watchman, a bishop, a shepherd, and one who is to rule well, a pastor is in duty bound to see to it that the members of his congregation obey the divine Word and that therefore, if necessary, Christian church discipline be exercised.... Church discipline is commanded by God and demanded by the spiritual welfare of the Church” (*Pastoral Theology*, CPH, 1945, p. 227-228). Remember I said last time that elders “assist” the pastor in carrying out his office. Following our Lord's directive in Matthew 18, together with the pastor in private and confidentially, the elders strive to call the wayward back to repentance and a life of faith. It doesn't always work; but sometimes, by the grace of God working through Word and Sacrament, a Christian is restored to the life of the Church.

I hope this provides some insight into the “who” and the “why” of elders in the church.

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

WHAT IS THE MITE BOX ALL ABOUT?

Your spare change once a month becomes more powerful than you can imagine!!

Through LWML (Lutheran Women in Mission), hundreds of thousands of dollars are distributed to many missions all over the world!

For example:

\$100,000 to A Healing Plan for At Risk Children
\$100,000 is given to Serve LCMS Office for Pastoral Education
\$100,000 A Legacy of Love for Special Needs Children in US
\$106,000 Healthy together, Healthy Workers, Healthy Church. (Lutheran Family Services in US)
\$100,000 fortifying Faith for Those With Vision Impairment (Lutheran Braille Workers)

Just to name a few! Your spare change & bills can work miracles all over the world
in the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

That's what MITES can do. THANK YOU!! REMEMBER every last Sunday of each month is MITE SUNDAY!!

St. Peter Ladies Aid & LWML News

I know that all the ladies of St. Peter are busy. But we would love to have you join us on Thursday mornings at 9 a.m. to tie quilts and other jobs.

On the first Thursday of the month is our monthly Ladies Aid meeting which begins around noon.

We meet in the Ladies Aid Room.

The second Saturday of every month we meet in the morning from 9 a.m. - noon in the Fellowship Hall Gym for our Quilting Bee.

Our Annual Ladies Advent Brunch is Tuesday, December 3rd at 9:30 a.m., in the gym.

We serve a marvelous Brunch, have a informative speaker and have many other great things, that you will enjoy!

We hope you will join us!

We delivered 125 quilts and several sewing kits to Lutheran World Relief drop of center. They will be sent to many locations in the U.S.A. and foreign countries.

We have hanging in the Fellowship Hall, a quilt made by Linley Bayer. She arranged and sewed the quilt together herself!

We have also, had Aubrey Brown come and quilt with us!

We have even had the very young come and quilt with us!

Praise God!

If you have any questions just text me @ 989-640-0630.

Love in Jesus, Kathy Bond

THANK YOU' S

Thank You's

Thank you for lifting up the bright light of Jesus for others to see. I am so deeply thankful to God that He chose you to supply what the work of the LCMS requires. Although giving may seem a simple act, it speaks so forcefully about the kind of Christ-following disciples God has made each of you to be. "Love one another," was Jesus' commandment to his disciples. You are doing just that through this gift, and all other acts of selfless sacrifice you make for the sake of the Gospel message. Even in financially challenging times like these, you are confessing your trust and faith in Christ alone. And I appreciate you. Thank you.

Pastor Matthew C. Harrison, President LCMS

Thank you to Richard and Christopher Gallo for trimming all the trees around the Church property.

Also, thank you to Top Notch Tree Care, for letting them use the equipment to do this.

Dear St. Peter Congregation,

Thank you for the scholarship to help me go to Wittenberg Academy. I am so privileged to stay at St. Peter for High School and to get such a good education from Wittenberg.

Sincerely, Andrew

Thank you for your support of missionaries and mission work throughout the world! Your contribution is very much appreciated. God is blessing our ministry through YOU, as together we partner to bring the Good News of Salvation to the world!

Global Lutheran Outreach

Dear Pastor Bayer and people of God at St. Peter Lutheran,

Thank you for your donation of \$2,000 in April. Thank you for your prayers for my work with seminary students and the church in Ghana and for Joyce's work with missionaries and missionary programs throughout Africa. We are thankful for your partnership in proclaiming Christ in Africa! P.S. We have a new granddaughter!!

David and Joyce Erber, Together in Mission

CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS & NEWS

St. Peter Secret Prayer Sister Reveal

The time has come to reveal at last...

Who she is, you may have guessed.

She has really had a blast keeping secrets from her prayer sister.

Do you know who she is or did you miss her?

Join us on Sunday, November 10th at 3:00pm in the St. Peter Fellowship Center to find out who that special sister is that has been lifting you up in prayer and remembering you throughout the year with prayers, cards and gifts. Please bring one last gift for your SPS and join the fun! Just put their name on the outside of the envelope and your name on the inside of the card!

Desserts, mulled cider and coffee will be served. Please bring the sheet with your information on it with you that day. If you forget, I will have extras.

If you aren't a part of this fun group, and would like to be, please give me a call or text me at 989 388-2069. What better way is there, than to pray for your sister in Christ and her family daily. We would LOVE to see some new faces!!

Any questions, please call Diane Thurston. 989 388-206

2024 – 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, November 30th at 9:00 am. We will “deck the halls” on the inside AND the outside of the church. What a grand time of fellowship and fun with our brothers and sisters at St. Peter. Please let me know if you can help at 517-927-5089.

Charlene Kennedy, DVM

CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS & NEWS

Memorials

In memory of, Marilyn Sampson, Clemens and Marcella Kloeckner, Sherry Stearns, Henry and Doretta Witt, Robert and Shirley Sampson. \$500 to St Peter Lutheran Church, \$250 to St Peter Lutheran School and \$250 to St Peter Ladies Aid.

In memory of Rob Lyon to St Peter Lutheran Church , \$185.00



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 consequences of shallow thankfulness

Can you imagine a Thanksgiving dinner without turkey, mashed potatoes, gravy and pumpkin pie? I know I can't! To not have these on the menu, or worse, to run out of them with the family around the table, would be a culinary sin of epic proportions. An attempt to serve bratwurst and hamburgers in place of the standard fare would ring hollow and seem totally inappropriate and out of place. It isn't that the food would be bad; brats and burgers are pretty tasty. But not for Thanksgiving — they just don't go together!

This month, as we continue to walk through the stewardship hymn, "Forgive Us, Lord, for Shallow Thankfulness" (LSB 788), we turn our attention to verse three. Here, William Watkins Reid, Sr., the man who penned this text, draws attention to some things that do not go along with faithful, thankful stewardship.

Forgive us, Lord, for selfish thanks and praise ...

We see this often with small children. They greedily snatch the candy out of a grandparent's hand, savagely destroy the wrapper, and attempt to stuff the entire delicacy in their mouth in one bite, only to have a parent say, "Tell grandma thank you." This is followed by the pro forma thanks that is uttered between chocolate chews. It isn't really thankfulness; it is simply checking a box to keep mom or dad off their backs.

We never really outgrow this either. Our shallow thankfulness takes the form of feigned humility when praise is being offered. We are thankful that our admirers noticed and called us out: "Look at me! Aren't I special?" No thought at all is given to the fact that the Lord was the One who gave us the ability and opportunity for accomplishment. Our false blush is really only masking our selfish, credit-seeking gain. Once again, we find ourselves idolatrously thanking ourselves.

For words that speak at variance with deeds ...

What carries more weight: words or action? The steward who gives voice to the Gospel in the Divine Service but then lives like a pagan in the world does great damage, not only to others but to the Gospel itself! This is the consequence of failed stewardship. It is idolatry that separates the steward from the Lord.

Worse yet, it also impacts others negatively. When the failed steward is the reference point outside the Christian community, there are those who want no part of being Christian or following the Christ they claim. We see this play out in the impact of overt political activity

among Christians based on governing policy as opposed to fidelity to the Word of God. When our lips and our lives are out of sync, like what used to happen with old movie projectors, the impact isn't funny — it obscures the Gospel!

Forgive our thanks for walking pleasant ways

unmindful of a broken brother's need ...

Our creature comforts often become an obstacle to faithful stewardship. This is true of both individual and corporate stewardship. Financial stewardship is often limited by our desire to be comfortable and have the latest toys and gadgets. Congregational stewardship is often limited by the desire to focus on what is best for the congregation as opposed to how resources might be best stewarded to reach the community with the Gospel.

When we see someone in need, or broken by the world, we often look at them as freeloaders. We admonish them to get a job. We insist that they learn our language, learn our customs, and make them their own. But this gets in the way of seeing every human being the way that Jesus sees them. Remember, that broken person is one for whom Jesus went to the cross to die and rise. When we are unmindful of these needs, our shallow thankfulness also stands in the way of the Gospel.

This stanza reminds us of the challenge we face. Our hearts are master idol-makers. Our shallow thankfulness threatens our souls and hinders others from seeing Jesus as their Lord and Savior. Stewardship is serious business. It is a task for which we were created. In our sinful failings, we are never relieved of these duties. In our Baptism, we are restored to be stewards of the Gospel. Our faithful stewardship is all about that Gospel.

Forgive us when our thanks are shallow, O Lord! In this month of Thanksgiving, grant us the grace to offer heaping helpings of this stewardship so that others may see Jesus

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*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

St. Peter School...

Trunk or Treat, November 1st, 6:00-7:30p.m. Fun Family Night.

Trunk or Treat We are collecting candy for the Trunk & Treat event. You may drop it off at the Church Office any time between now and the event.

St Peter School is selling Kymora Kandles for a fundraiser from November 4-18. Check out the winter scents in the office. There is a form to purchase items. Orders will be here before Christmas!

Christmas Wreaths available to be picked up, November 30, 2024. Outside the front entrance.