

## St. Peter Lutheran Church & School

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We are on the web!  
[www.stpeterliley.org](http://www.stpeterliley.org)



# THE MESSENGER

## August *2025*



### 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 XXIV: Of the Mass

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*Falsely are our churches accused of abolishing the Mass; for the Mass is retained among us, and celebrated with the highest reverence. Nearly all the usual ceremonies are also preserved, save that the parts sung in Latin are interspersed here and there with German hymns, which have been added to teach the people. For ceremonies are needed to this end alone that the unlearned be taught [what they need to know of Christ]. And not only has Paul commanded to use in the church a language understood by the people 1 Cor. 14, 2.9, but it has also been so ordained by man's law. The people are accustomed to partake of the Sacrament together, if any be fit for it, and this also increases the reverence and devotion of public worship. For none are admitted except they be first examined. The people are also advised concerning the dignity and use of the Sacrament, how great consolation it brings anxious consciences, that they may learn to believe God, and to expect and ask of Him all that is good. [In this connection they are also instructed regarding other and false teachings on the Sacrament.] This worship pleases God; such use of the Sacrament nourishes true devotion toward God. It does not, therefore, appear that the Mass is more devoutly celebrated among our adversaries than among us.*

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This is only the first paragraph of Article XXIV, but it's enough for this month. This Article will go on to speak about the corrections that our churches made to the abuses of the Mass (abuses such as using it for filthy gain and offering it as a sacrifice for the living and the dead), but before all the abuses are dealt with, this paragraph, like the rest of the Augsburg Confession, starts with what the Lutheran churches *receive and retain*. The Mass—or as we call it, Divine Service—was not made up at the time of the Reformation. It developed into the full form that we have received over the history of the church, with many elements taking hold very early, but the main form was always there—Word and Sacrament. These means of grace are instituted by God and have always been the form of Christian worship. The exact “order of service” to include elements such as the Gloria, the Sanctus, and such, did see development over time to bring glory to the gifts of God and put them in a setting.

We begin this article by clearing ourselves of the false accusation that we have abolished the Mass. We have not! If you have ever been with a family member to a Roman Catholic Church, you will find this to be true. The Mass is nearly identical in its parts. The major differences surround the prayers associated with the Sacrament of the Altar. We (thanks be to God) have removed the abomination of turning God's free gift of salvation into a service we offer to Him. Therefore, all the language about *our* sacrifice is removed from that point in the service, for the gifts of forgiveness, life, and salvation flow from *Christ's* once and for all sacrifice on the cross and come to us in His Body and Blood.

So we have received the Mass, retain it, and use it to this day, but in an Evangelical way (in the way of the Gospel). Because the Mass was abused in Luther's day (and continues to be abused in other fellowships) does not mean the Mass is bad. It can't be, because it delivers the Word of God and the Body and Blood of Christ to the faithful. Therefore, the Mass is the most excellent service on earth—so long as we remember it is first and foremost God's service to us (Divine Service).

It is conceivable that a Church could strip away the Gloria, the Sanctus, the Kyrie, etc., and leave the Service of the Word and the Service of the Sacrament (the gifts of God), but why and for what benefit? We belong to the Church, and the Church belongs to us—there is one, holy, catholic church. Plus the ceremonies are aids in teaching, and bring glory and explanation to what God is giving us in His service.

Pastor Bayer

# A LETTER FROM THE PRINCIPAL

## Summer Planning

*Oh sing to LORD a new song, for he has done marvelous things! His right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him*

*The LORD has made known his salvation; he has revealed his righteousness in the sight of the nations*

*He has remembered his steadfast love and faithfulness to the house of Israel.*

*All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.*

*Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth; break forth into joyous song and sing praises!*

*Psalms 98:1-4*

It is August already. That means school starts at the end of the month. A new school year with a new theme. This year, our theme is based on Psalm 94 verse 4, "Let's Make a Joyful Noise". As we progress through the year, students will learn more about what it means to make a joyful noise to the LORD. They will understand, as we do, that we have great reason to rejoice knowing that God loves us so much that he sent His only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to die for us upon the cross so that we have His forgiveness and life everlasting.

Teaching this to the students is no simple task. It isn't done by putting up a few posters on a wall or by discussions during Lutheran Schools Week. It is a year-long endeavor, successful when our church members, our school board, our staff, and our school families are working together in their planning and the work done each day. While the teachers are still home for the summer, they will be return soon to start planning for the year.

Before the students return to the building, there is much work to be done. I pray that by the time you read this, construction will have already begun in the building. This will mean moving everything out of the offices for new carpet to go down, finishing work in all of the bathrooms, laying new carpet in the hallway, and much more. Once construction is done, the hallways have to be waxed, and the building has to be put back together. There are many small tasks to be done, such as running cables through the ceiling, cleaning up the recess and PE equipment areas, cleaning up the playground, and cleaning out storage areas to prepare for the year ahead. Contact me if you would like to help out with any of these tasks.

More importantly, join us in welcoming Melissa Harnden, our new deaconess, on August 10<sup>th</sup> at her installation during the divine service. She is one of several new staff members that you will meet as the new school year begins. We have a new school secretary who will be working with me and managing the office in the afternoons. Tammy Rozel will be starting this year as a classroom aid. I continue to pray that we will also find a new preschool director/lead teacher so that we might continue our ministry to preschool families and continue to grow our school.

Blessings in Christ,

Erika Brown

Principal/Teacher

# Save the Date!

St. Peter Oktoberfest  
Saturday, September 27



2:00pm-5:00pm

Food, beer, live music, dancing, kid fun, and  
more!

*Free admission! Donations welcome.*

June 27, 2025

St. Peter Lutheran Church  
8990 Church Road  
Saint Johns, MI 48879

Dear congregation of St. Peter Lutheran Church,

Thank you for extending a call to me and offering me the opportunity to serve as your deaconess. I am honored and delighted to accept this call. I very much look forward to meeting all of you and working together with you in the service of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Even now, you have already begun to make me feel like a part of your family. You have blessed me with your warm welcome and the enthusiasm with which you have extended the love of Christ to me. I hope that my service among you will serve to uplift and strengthen the bonds of Christian love that already exist among you. I look forward to teaching, visiting, participating in all of your activities, and helping to further the good work that Christ is already doing in and through you. I know that I will learn so much from you and I can't wait to see how the Lord intends to work through this call to grow and strengthen the skills He has given to me and the faith of His Bride in Saint Johns. I know whatever He does will be for good and He will bless all of us richly through the faith that He has given us in His Word.

As I prepare to begin this new vocation the Lord has given me, I pray that He would bless and keep you all, both the people of St. Peter Lutheran Church and my future students in St. Peter Lutheran School. I am very excited to begin getting to know you in the coming months.

In the love of Christ,

Melissa Harnden  
125 E 14 Mile Road  
Apt. 6  
Birmingham, MI 48009

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# A LETTER FROM THE CANTOR

## Who We Are

Lucas Cranach is probably not a name well known. Yet he was important in who we are as Lutherans. Cranach was a contemporary of Martin Luther, and from 1504 until his death in 1553 he lived in Wittenberg as court painter to the Electors of Saxony. In his day he was widely known for his realistic paintings and murals that decorated castles. We would recognize him more for his portrait paintings; any portrait you might see of Martin or Katie Luther or Philipp Melanchthon was almost certainly done by Lucas Cranach. In fact, Cranach was a witness to Luther's betrothal to Katie von Bora and godfather to their first child Johannes Luther.

Most significant for our discussion, though, are Cranach's religious artworks. When Luther's completed Bible translation was printed in 1534, it included woodcut illustrations created by Cranach. The altar piece in Weimar was commissioned by Elector John Frederick I. On the outer panels are portraits of John Frederick and his family seated in worship. In the center panel, the victorious Christ is seen trampling Death and driving a lance through Satan. In the middle is Christ on the cross. To the right John the Baptist pointing to Christ and the Lamb of God, Martin Luther pointing to the Bible, between them Lucas Cranach with the blood of Christ streaming from His side landing on Cranach's head. Behind the cross you see Adam being driven out of the Garden, Moses with the Ten Commandments as well as the Bronze Serpent, and in the back the Annunciation to the shepherds. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Weimar\\_Altarpiece](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Weimar_Altarpiece)

In painting the altar piece for the city church of Wittenberg, St. Mary's, Cranach emphasized the Sacraments. On the left panel Philipp Melanchthon is seen baptizing a baby with Cranach as one of the godparents. On the right panel, Johannes Bugenhagen, pastor of St. Mary's, exercises the Office of the Keys, forgiving the sins of the man to his right while excluding the unrepentant man to his left. In the center panel, he portrayed the Last Supper in a contemporary German setting, with Luther as one of the apostles. Below the center panel, Luther is in the pulpit preaching Christ crucified to the congregation. You can see a full-sized representation of this altar piece in the entrance to Hope Lutheran Church, Dewitt.

Why should we be interested in Cranach? Because people to this day model after him in proclaiming their Lutheran faith in art. A prime example in our own area is Ed Riojas. Ed lives in Grand Rapids and is a member of Our Savior Lutheran there. Like Cranach, Ed produces secular art. But we know him for his sacred work which beautifies Lutheran churches across the state and beyond. If you've been in the fellowship hall at St. Paul Lutheran, Fowler, you've seen his work. The illustrations on our bulletins are by him. When you look closely, often you'll see an image which adds meaning, such as a Nativity scene with a ram caught in a thicket in the background (Genesis 22:13), or Jesus stepping on the serpent's head as He's baptized in the Jordan. Ed will often incorporate people he knows; in our library is a print of his illustration of "God's Own Child I Gladly Say It" (LSB 594) in which he portrayed his aged father and the son of one of Our Savior's pastors. Every year Grand Rapids holds an art competition open to the public, ArtPrize. Every year, even though he knows he won't get the popular vote, Ed enters a work which proclaims his Lutheran faith. (<https://edriojasartist.com/>)

Art has always been and continues to be a means by which Lutherans add beauty to our worship and profess our faith in Jesus Christ, our crucified and risen Savior. That's who we are as Lutherans.

I'll share more about the people who have shaped our church over time and made us who we are.

Your brother in Christ,  
Dick Davenport

# CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

## **St. Peter Lutheran School—Open Positions**

We are currently looking to fill the following position for the 2025/2026 school year.  
Preschool Director/Lead Teacher (Part-time)

Please share this with anyone you think might be interested in learning more about working at St. Peter. They can contact the church office or contact me directly.

church@stpeterlutheran.org  
principal@stpeterlutheran.org

Erika brown

## **Crucifers for August**

Aug 3 Gabe Schneider  
Aug 10 Leo Faivor  
Aug 17 Cameron West  
Aug 24 Deegan Bearup-West  
Aug 31 Matthew Wohltjen

## **St Peter Ladies Aid & LWM**

We continue quilting every Thurs. mornings 9 am-noon, join us you will like it. For our quilting I would like to include thread to help us with our costs; it takes a lot of thread to make all the quilts

## **St. Peter School Scholarships**

If you're looking for a worthy cause to contribute to at St. Peter beyond your regular tithing, please consider our school scholarships. These funds assist school families with tuition costs.

For grades Kindergarten through 8th, there is a tuition assistance fund that students attending St. Peter Lutheran School are able to apply for. This allows families to send their children to St. Peter who wouldn't otherwise be able to do so.

We also have a scholarship fund for our on-site 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade students who attend Wittenberg Academy, an online classical Lutheran school. This fund helps support families who want to continue Lutheran education for their children beyond 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

If you choose to contribute to these funds, this can be designated on an offering envelope or given directly to the church office. Please see Erika our principal or Dave Bengel if you would like more information.

# LUTHERAN WOMEN IN MISSION (LWML)

Submitted by Laurie Flegler

I was blessed in June to attend the 41<sup>st</sup> National Biennial Convention of Lutheran Women in Mission, in Omaha Nebraska. I traveled with Judy Nobis (St. Andrew, Portland) and Rebecca Baughan (Ascension, Haslett), experienced LWML convention attendees! Just imagine 3700+ women dressed in purple, gathered together to praise God, while seeking His will in their lives. The theme for the convention was Growing in God's Grace (2 Peter 3:18) and that we did and will continue to do!

The convention started Thursday June 26 with 9 different servant events that ladies could explore and participate in the activities.

Assemble meal packs for Mercy Meals for Orphan Grain Train

Tie quilts for Orphan Grain Train

Create onesies for Lutheran Family Service

Make witness bracelets for MOST Ministries

Assemble first responders tool kits for First Responders in Nebraska

Color and write cards of hope for Phil's friends (a cancer support group)

Create encouragement/thank you cards for our military (distributed to Offutt Air Force base in Omaha)

Make feminine hygiene products and infant layette kits (Messiah Lutheran Church, Lincoln-Common Threads)

Assemble Braille books and calendars for Lutheran Braille Workers

I chose the Witness bracelets for MOST Ministries. While working at the table we were joined by four sisters that came from Arkansas, and a mother and daughter that lived near Omaha. It was fun learning about other women's experience in LWML activities. In the afternoon Judy attended a delegates meeting and Rebecca had choir practice, I explored the exhibit hall. Rows and rows of different Lutheran missions groups, colleges, schools, Lutheran ministries, Concordia publishing, and LWML merchandise; so much to see and learn. People freely witnessing how God has worked in their lives.

At 7pm was the official start of the convention with a celebration service with Holy Communion. So many women with voices raised in praise to God—the music was AWESOME! The choir had 272 members and when the rest of us joined in—OH MY, what a taste of HEAVEN!

## HIGHLIGHTS OF THE LWML CONVENTION 2025 for me!

**\*33 Mission grants** were approved for funding. A total \$2,622,270.00 will be raised through mite offerings to cover these grants. The funding starts as of July 1, 2025 and runs until June 30, 2027. All the grants from 2023-2025 biennial have been fully paid and there was money left over that will be used to help fund the new grants.

\*Each morning as we arrived, we were greeted by smiling volunteers. One who many of you may know was Dave Bremmer, our former principal! It was great catching up with Dave and Marcia.

**\*Wake Up in the Word** – 6:45 am on Friday and Saturday, each day three different Bible studies sessions to choose from

**\*Miles for Mites** – More than 1,627 men, women and children walked the Bob Kerry Pedestrian Bridge late Saturday afternoon. This bridge connects Nebraska to Iowa making the walk the first to be in 2 different states! It was close to 90 degrees so some of us just crossed into the water portion of Iowa not making it to land. Many groups had organized walks for mites in their states, these events raised \$75,000.

**\*Keynote Speaker Rev. Kris Whitby**—In his presentation Rev Whitby said, “Sisters and brothers, Jesus doesn't need you and me to accomplish His mission, but the world needs us because Jesus has chosen to give us His grace and, through us, to bring His grace to our neighbor. He also wants us to know that your Lord invites you to His table and wants you to experience the joy of being filled with all of God's good gifts. (Taken from the LWML convention newspaper, Heartland Herald—Saturday's edition)

## Speakers for Mites in Action

Deaconess Kelly Bristow from Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch; mission grant from 2021-23

Chelsea Ervin, Light of Christ in Eastern Europe – Mission Central mission grant 2021-23

Rachel Potts, Lutheran Braille Workers Fortifying faith in those with vision impairment mission grant 2023-25

Rev. Dr. John Reinke, Lutheran Deaf Outreach Helping hands for Lutheran Deaf Outreach mission grant 2021-23

Rev. Paul Ernewein, Forged by Fire Services, Gulf Coast Region Mobile kitchen mission grant 2023-25



## **Bible Studies**

Christina Hergenrader—Growing in God's Grace – Waiting on the Lord in His Timing—Stay focused on doing His work – In times of purification trust in His word and His work (just some of my notes from her presentation to the entire convention gathering.

There were other Bible studies on Friday morning, night and Saturday morning that we attended.

## **LCMS Missionary Speakers**

Rev. Kevin Robson, LCMS Chief Mission Officer  
Missionary in Hong Kong and China  
nator in Eurasia Region

Carol Halter, LCMS  
Chelsea Irwin, LCMS missionary coordi-

**Saturday Night entertainment** was a concert/sing along with Jennie Williamson.

We also took a couple of day tours before and after the convention. We traveled to Mission Central and saw the work of Gary Thies; supporting LCMS missionaries all over the world.

We also went to the headquarters for Orphan Grain Train – This organization feeds and clothes people all over the world. The operation only has eight people on its payroll, all the other work is done by volunteers. In Sebawaing, Michigan there is also a warehouse for the Orphan Grain Train which probably has wonderful opportunities for volunteers. Please watch for more information regarding the work of LWML mites or you can go to LWML website: lwml.org to learn more and even watch some of the events that took place in Omaha.

## **UPCOMING LWML EVENTS:**

**An all Michigan District Servant Event** is being planned. Saturday, September 20, 9am to 12:30 Location will be announced. Ladies from all over the state will be putting together school kits for the Orphan Grain Train to distribute. A light breakfast and short Bible study are also being planned for the morning. See the flyer that lists items that needed for the kits. A Thrivent Action grant will be used to purchase the backpacks. Back to school sales are happening now.

**The Capitol Zone Fall Rally** will be Saturday, October 18 at Trinity Lutheran Church, Lansing with our sisters of Living Word Lutheran Church hosting. Mark your calendars for a morning of fellowship!

## **MICHIGAN DISTRICT BIENNIAL CONVENTION JUNE 26-28, 2026 EAST LANSING MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY KELLOGG CENTER**

*"But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen."*

*2 Peter 3:18*

# THANK YOU NOTES

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

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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

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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

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# CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS & NEWS

## Memorials



## 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  
Bill Flegler  
Bruce Fitzpatrick  
Norma Fitzpatrick  
Ilene Gibson  
Jan Maynard  
Jeanette Mehney  
Charlie Silm  
Evert Sillman  
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.***

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

"As summer in Michigan is upon us and the holiday season rapidly approaches this fall, many of us will find ourselves travelling and away from our home church here at St. Peter. During these times of travel, there are two resources that I invite you all to take advantage of to continue to stay close to Christ and continue to support the missions of St. Peter.

The first resource is the LCMS church locator tool. Simply visit [locator.lcms.org/church](https://locator.lcms.org/church) and use the search tools provided (including search by distance from address) to find a sister LCMS congregation nearby to wherever your travels take you. You can view address information, service times, and contact/website information directly from this easy to use tool.

The second resource is the online giving option offered here at St. Peter. We have a new and improved online giving platform hosted through Vanco that allows anyone to give anytime from anywhere. Simply scan the QR code below or go to [www.StPeterRiley.org](https://www.StPeterRiley.org) and click on "Give Now" to be directed to the online giving platform.

There is no cost for electronic giving as 100% of your contributions go to the church, and your giving will be included in your annual contribution statement for tax purposes identical to the tithing envelopes. You can set up one-time or recurring payments and manage future payments all from your smartphone or computer.

As you travel this season, next season, or any season, remember these resources to keep yourself nourished in Christ, surrounded by Brothers and Sisters in Christ, and supportive of the mission here at St. Peter.

-Evan VanBeelen, Assistant Treasurer"

