

The Voice



From the Desk of Pastor Mark:

Happy New Year! Welcome to the year 2024! It's going to be a good year. Why? Well, words from the Psalms are always a good place to turn when we are looking for a place to put words to our situations, understandings, and feelings. Words such as, "Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever." (Psalm 107:1) Knowing that God's love endures forever is a pretty good reason to believe 2024 is going to be a good year. No matter what hardships, struggles, and challenges we may face, we know that God's love will endure forever. Nothing can take that love away. As Jill always says to the confirmation students at the end of every class, "Remember,

there is nothing you can do to make God love you more, and there is nothing you can do to make God love you less." God's love is constant. God's love is steadfast. God's love endures forever. On Christmas we remembered again just how big God's love is. God entered this world in human form. God didn't remain distant, but God came to us to be with us. Jesus, Emanuel, means God is with us. That indeed is reason for us to "Give thanks to the Lord."

Another word from the Psalms says, "This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it." (Psalm 118:24) These words remind us that not only the year 2024 is in the Lord's hands, but indeed each and every day.

IN THIS ISSUE:

- ◇ New Member Class
- ◇ MKL Jr. Day of Service
 - ◇ Blanket Sunday
- ◇ Grimes Giving Tree
- ◇ Upcoming Children's Choir Sessions

IN EVERY ISSUE:

- ◇ Grimes Storehouse Donation Ideas
- ◇ Stewardship Update
 - ◇ Church Council & WELCA Minutes
- ◇ Monthly Birthdays & Anniversaries
- ◇ Monthly Calendar

Worship Schedule

*Thank you for joining us
for worship!*

Sunday worship is at 8:00 a.m.
and 10:30 a.m.

Sunday school is at 9:15 a.m.

Wednesday worship occurs at
6:30 p.m.

Each day is a gift from God. Each day we can find something for which to rejoice, even if it is simply rejoicing for the ability to breathe air in a new day. Seeing the wars, famines, natural disasters, and violence happening throughout the world can easily bring one to despair, not to mention challenges that we may be facing in our own lives. We are not a people of despair though. We are a people of hope. We believe in the resurrection and the life. We believe that God is in the midst of making all things new. That's why I love these words from the Psalmist, "This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it." Yesterday is over and gone. Today is a new day. If 2023 was a rough year for you, there is good news. The good news is that 2024 is upon us. It is a new year to give thanks to the Lord. A new day to focus ahead on what the Lord may have in store for you.

At St. Peter, I'd say the year 2023 was a good one. I don't have enough space to list all the ways the Lord was working in and through St. Peter last year. I'll save that for another article. From babies, children, youth, adults to seniors, the Good News of God's love for us in Jesus Christ was shared through both word and deed. St. Peter is poised to continue sharing that Good News in the year 2024 and beyond. So, as we look forward to the new year, we rejoice for all God has done and will continue to do for us. We look forward with hope for another great year. Thanks be to God.

Gathered to Grow. Sent to Serve.

Pastor Mark

Happy New Year!

*The church office will be
closed on Monday, January 1.*

St. Peter Lutheran Church
Office Hours

The Church Office is open
Mon.-Fri. 8:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

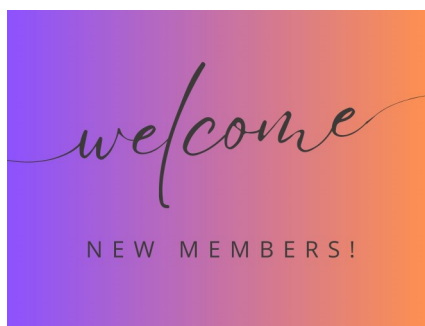
Jill Capps – Director of
Faith Formation
Jill's day off is Friday.

Pastor Mark Schlenker
Pastor's day off is Friday.

Coming Up at St. Peter

New Member Class

There will be a new member class Sunday, January 21, at 9:15 a.m. If you are interested in joining St. Peter, we invite you to attend! New Member Sunday will be the following week, January 28, where we will welcome new members during worship and fellowship. Contact the church office with questions or to let us know you plan to attend!



Gathered to Grow Sent to Serve

The 15th of each month is the deadline date for newsletter items to be submitted to the church office.
Thanks!



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StPeterGrimes

MLK Jr. Day of Service

In January, we will hold our 4th Annual MLK Jr. Day of Service. We will prepare breakfast casseroles for the Salvation Army's Mobile Breakfast canteen. The mobile breakfast canteen provides breakfast to the Des Moines area homeless and near homeless populations. Each breakfast casserole feeds 10 people; the mobile canteen serves 150 casseroles each week, feeding 1,500 people.

How can you help? Sign up at: <https://signup.com/go/yGQheaG>

Sign up to prepare casseroles with your family or friends. Time slots are available on Saturday, January 13th; Sunday, January 14th; and Monday, January 15th. *Please sign up for 1 slot for your group - in the comments let us know how many are coming.



Sign up to donate ingredients or make a monetary donation to buy supplies for the casseroles. All supplies can be dropped off anytime prior to 1:00pm on Thursday, January 11th. *For youth in need of silver cord or NHS volunteer hours, this would be a great opportunity to get a few hours.*

Contact Jill with questions: faithformation@stpeterofgrimes.org



Grimes Giving Tree

Thank you for sharing Christmas joy through the Grimes Giving Tree! This year, St. Peter contributed over 80 gifts to be shared with children in our community! Gathered to grow—sent to serve!

Children's Choir Winter and Spring Sessions

The winter session of Children's Choir will run January 3-February 7, and the spring session will run April 3-May 8. Sign up for winter session here: <https://signup.com/go/UtkGkmd>

Men's Group

Join us for our monthly Men's Group Gathering this month! Men's Group usually meets the first Sunday of the month. Contact Bradley Fasse with any questions, and join the Men's Group Facebook page for the latest updates and news. @Facebook: St. Peter Lutheran Men's Group @bradleyfasse@gmail.com @515-971-2397

Bible Study Meets 2nd and 4th Thursdays at 1:00 p.m.

Looking for a way to grow in your Faith? Join us for a Bible Study on the Book of Romans.

We meet twice a month on the 2nd and 4th Thursday from 1:00pm-2:30pm. ALL are welcome! Questions? Contact Jill at faithformation@stpeterofgrimes.org

Save the Date—Blanket Sunday is February 18

February 18th is St. Peter's 11th Annual Fleece Blanket Sunday. We will once again be making fleece blankets for the patients of MercyOne Hospitals in Des Moines. We've had great success with this project in past years and are looking forward to seeing how many blankets we can make this year!

What is the Fleece Blanket Project? These donated blankets to Mercy One Hospitals are given to patients from newborns to people at the end of their lives. They serve as comfort and are enjoyed by all ages.

How Can I Help?

1. Donate fabric – 2 pieces of fleece (each 1 1/2 yards in size) makes one blanket.
2. Donate a completed blanket! Create a blanket with your family, friends, Bible Study, Mom's Group, sports team, neighborhood group etc..
3. Sponsor a blanket by donating \$20.00.
4. Help prepare the Fellowship Hall for the blanket tying event. (This will be done on Saturday, Feb. 17.)
5. Help on Sunday, February 18, during the tying event. Never made a blanket before? That's ok – if you can tie your shoe you can tie a blanket.

Who do I contact with questions?

Jill Capps at faithformation@stpeterofgrimes.org or Allison Newman at allisonknewman@yahoo.com.



Online Giving Opportunities

St. Peter has online giving options through Thrivent's Simply Giving Program to include one-time giving and to enable members to set up their own recurring donations through the following secure methods:

1. **Phone App:** Find and download the Vanco Mobile Faith Engagement app in the App Store or on Google Play for Android smartphones by searching "Vanco mobile". Type in "St. Peter Lutheran" and choose our address in Grimes, and follow the steps.
2. **Website:** Go to St. Peter's website www.stpeterofgrimes.org and click on the yellow Online Giving link or scan the QR code printed here.
3. **Bill Pay:** Set up bill pay through your bank to St. Peter Lutheran.

Please contact the church office with any questions.



Volunteers Needed – Can You Help?

If you can help as a communion **preparer** and/or **communion assistant**, please contact Kaarin Fasse or Summer Heeren.

If you would like to help as **Assisting Minister**, please contact Emily Wells.

If you would like to be a **reader**, please contact Sue Dooley.

If you can help **host** by greeting worshippers and helping them find their worship materials, contact Meghan Reingardt.

If you can learn our **livestream audio/visual production**, contact Jill. You would be trained in the production process for our live-stream service.

If you can help with **Creation Station** during worship, contact Jill or go to this link: <https://signup.com/go/CwrXJph>.

The church office can put you in contact with these volunteer coordinators. Thanks for sharing your time and talents with St. Peter!



Grimes Storehouse Donation

In December, St. Peter donated the contents of the quarter tube in the sanctuary to the Grimes Storehouse food pantry in the amount of \$119.05. Thank you for supporting families in our community who are fighting food insecurity by giving through the quarter tube and by food donations given in the basket in Fellowship Hall!

We support the Grimes Storehouse Food Pantry!

Our December focus will be:

Paper Goods



Bring in donations of paper towels, toilet paper, napkins, paper plates, small bathroom cups, personal wipes, and hand wipes.



Donations can be dropped off in the basket next to the Service Counter.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING DECEMBER 18, 2023

Pastor's Report:

- We kicked off the Advent season with the Hanging of the Greens worship service. There are a few adjustments we will make next time, but overall, a nice way to start the season.
- Gingerbread house building was also the first Sunday in Advent. It was a well-attended and fun multi-generational event.
- I joined the Thursday Bible study group for a potluck this month. Delicious food and good fellowship time.
- There was a good turnout for Christmas caroling. Always a fun event for those that sing, and for those we sing for.
- It was great to have our friends from MOSAIC back with us on Wednesday, December 13th. The confirmation students enjoyed Christmas activities with them before worship. During worship the Confirmation students led a Christmas message. Loved seeing some of our MOSAIC friends come up front to join them.

From the Stewardship Committee—Andrew Newman & Blake Franzeen

November 2023

Income: \$24,103.09

Expense: \$28,434.97

Net Loss: (\$4,331.88)

2023

Income: \$295,687.82

Expense: \$314,735.19

Net Loss: (\$19,047.37)

- General Fund—November 2023, expenses were greater than income, thus it finished with a loss of (\$4,331.88).
- General Fund YTD—November 2023, expenses were greater than income, thus it finished with a loss of (\$19,047.37).

- Sunday school kids did a wonderful job telling the Christmas story on Sunday and singing some Christmas songs. Thanks to all who helped make that happen.
- Christmas Eve worship is at 4, 6 and 9 pm again this year. No Sunday morning worship. A few years ago, when Christmas Eve fell on a Sunday there were only a handful of people, so we'll skip the morning this year and focus our energy and volunteers on our afternoon and evening worships. There are still volunteer spots open, so if you can volunteer for a service that would be great.
- New member classes on Jan. 21st and 28th.

Faith Formation Report—Jill Capps

- **Gingerbread House Event:** We held our 3rd Annual Gingerbread House decorating event on Sunday, December 3rd following the 10:30am service. We had a great turnout with 27 different families in attendance. Families had fun decorating a gingerbread house and sharing fellowship. We served pizza and snacks. Families also had the opportunity to make a Christmas card for a soldier named Andrew, who is in the Air Force and is currently stationed overseas. Thank you to Sarah, Destiny, and Emily for their assistance setting up for the event.
- **Confirmation:** We spent November focusing on Lutheran Life with an introduction to Confessing our Faith, which we will dive into in January with our study on the Apostles Creed. On December 13th the youth will host a Mosaic Fellowship event with pizza, crafts, and games. During the 6:30pm worship service the youth will present the Christmas story – we will invite the clients of Mosaic to join us in the program by playing the parts of angels & shepherds. The worship service is open to all, and we hope to see many of our St. Peter members there. (A Thrivent grant provided by one of our members will help to cover a portion of the costs for this event.) Confirmation will not meet on December 20th or December 27th due to Christmas break.
- **Thursday Afternoon Bible Study:** We will meet only once in December due to the holidays. On December 14th we will begin at noon with a potluck followed by our Bible study. All are welcome to attend this study – whether you are new to Bible studies or have been attending for years.
- **Misc.:** Pastor Mark and I have had the opportunity to sub for Matt for a couple of the Middle School youth group nights in November & December. It is nice to spend the time with the kids in a less formal atmosphere than confirmation. Middle school youth group continues to be very well attended – with primarily members and even a few non-members who attend

regularly.

- **Communication:** We have created a “Celebrate With Us” card inviting people to join us for Christmas Eve services. The cards can be found at the usher table and the information table in the entryway. We encourage you to pick up a few and pass them out to people who may be looking for a home church or place to worship on Christmas Eve.
- **Education:** Sunday school continues to flow smoothly this fall. We have a great group of volunteers in place and the curriculum is engaging and easy to follow. Destiny & Sarah have coordinated well to make sure rooms are set up and cleaned up each week. If you haven't taken the opportunity to volunteer with Sunday school, I encourage you to do so - it's a great way to meet our youngest members.

Youth Report

- Middle school Youth Group met twice during November. I led one gathering; Jill and Pastor Mark covered for me while I was on vacation. I am grateful for Jill's leadership in helping me on Wednesday nights with our middle school Youth Group.
- High school Youth Group met three times during the month of November. We had a devotion night, game night and Friendsgiving.
- December will include traditional Youth Group gatherings, participating in caroling and hold our Christmas parties for each group. We will take a holiday break beginning December 21st, and will resume with high school Youth Group on January 7th.

Treasurer's Report:

- November Financials approved
- 2024 Budget discussed and approved

Stewardship :

- Updated Pledge Drive numbers: 33 pledges, 38 households that did not pledge but have recurring online donations, and 1 household that did not pledge but sends in automatic mail donations for a total of 72.
- Total Pledged (Including unpledged recurring donations): General Fund: \$210,995.08, Building Fund \$9520, Youth: \$360
- We received 50 time and talent sheets.
- Andrew recorded a thank you video for the pledge drive that was emailed out in the weekly newsletter. Andrew also spoke in church thanking everyone for their pledges on December 3rd.
- The November Financials show a net loss for the month of \$4331.88 and YTD net loss of \$19,047.37. Looking for a strong holiday offering and year end donations to end in the black.
- The 2023 year-end report will need end of year financial numbers before being finalized.

Building & Grounds

- Set up new Nativity display.
- New parking lot light has arrived, scheduled to be installed Dec. 18
- The Christmas Eve banner is up.
- Finer Cuts has been hired to perform snow removal
- Checking on other mowing companies to provide bids

Education:

- Christmas program held Dec 17th. Huge thank you to Kim, Sue, and Carol for putting it on!
- VBS planning is starting. Position is still open. Looking for volunteer.
- Sarah Capps will take the Curriculum Coordinator role again next year! We are so grateful to her for doing this role for three years!
- Matt Pries to join back into music at the start of January.

Evangelism:

- We continue to grow our fellowship volunteers and appreciate the support.
- I've asked for no change in the evangelism budget.
- Doesn't appear to be any frequency change of event needing additional funding.
- New member Sunday, Jan 28th – cake will be offered.

Worship & Music :

- New Piano was purchased and delivered. Total cost of \$8,922.99
- Discussed changing order of service for Hanging of the Greens
- Christmas Eve services at 4:00, 6:00, & 9:00 p.m.
- Coordinated Christmas decorating on December 20 and taking down decorations before January 3.
- Children's choir will begin winter session January 3-February 7, with hopes to perform sometime in February.
- Summer will switch Communion server sign up-to Signup.com like other volunteer sign-ups.

Old Business:

- Council structure review with plans for further discussion
- Piano purchase complete
- Annual reports due Jan. 9
- Audit committee approved: Max Boderman, Matt Morris, & Bradley Fasse

New Business:

- Proposed VBS and Curriculum future position to be discussed at a future Council Meeting

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE WELCA BOARD MEETING DECEMBER 11, 2023

- There was follow up from last month's discussion concerning the cost of paper products for the kitchen. The decision was unanimous to begin to have the full amount come from WELCA funds. Year to date it is \$876.23. Michelle will arrange payment. Lauri Rouse will help coordinate with WELCA as additional funds are needed.
- End of the year donations were discussed. The Children's Cancer Connection in Johnston and Grimes Volunteer Support Services will receive donations from WELCA. Michelle will arrange payment.
- A possible craft and vendor show this spring was discussed. It would be a good way to bring in the community to St Peter and would also benefit entrepreneurs in our church family. Becca Maass and Beth Hansen are willing to help coordinate the event.
- Amy reported there was one baptism last month. She is going to write up a brief summary of what WELCA does regarding baptisms and pass this information on to the new members of the WELCA board.
- The meeting adjourned at 7:05 pm with the Lord's prayer. After dinner, members shopped at Wal-Mart for items on the wish lists of the eight Mosaic residents. The plan is to wrap these items between church services on December 17. Ellie Weiss will deliver the wrapped gifts to the residents at the two homes sometime the following week. There was not a wish list for the two Mosaic homes themselves. Last year, items included things such as new towels, sheets, baking pans, and hot pads. Ellie will reach out to see if there are items needed and perhaps these can be donated in January.
- Results of the successful silent auction, including the bake sale and freezer meals, were discussed. Approximately \$5,400 was raised this year. The free will donation for bake sale items was a good thing again this year. It helps the sale run more easily and allows church family members to donate what they are able. Next year, we will have a display that highlights how WELCA dollars are used throughout the year. This would be especially helpful for newer church members to be more familiar with WELCA.
- Treasurer's report:

Kitchen	\$2,437.76
General	\$7,714.71
Total	\$10,152.47