

The Voice



From the Desk of Pastor Mark:

"Have you seen the girl's basketball team play? They are so fun to watch. Do you want to go?"

"Have you watched Ted Lasso? It's really good. I recommend you check it out."

"Have you been to the Mexican restaurant in town? It's my favorite. We should go sometime."

"Did you hear that the musical *Mama Mia* is coming to town? It's so good. Let's get tickets."

"I'm looking forward to Ash Wednesday worship coming up February 14th. It has such rich depth and meaning for me. Do you want to join me at St. Peter?"

Which of these invitations would be the most difficult for you? I'm guessing most people would say the last one. Unless of course you hate basketball or Mexican food. Then perhaps those would be more difficult. :) Most Christians I've been around over the years though, have a hard time inviting people to worship. Why is that? Faith is very personal. I get that. There is always the fear of rejection when extending an invitation. I get that too. Religion and politics are taboo subjects for polite conversations we hear. I understand that and can see the wisdom in that at certain times for sure. Many say that they assume everyone is already Christian and has a church. This would be a wrong assumption though. Numerous studies and statistical analysis would show that this is not the case. So what makes it so difficult? When we experience things that are meaningful,

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IN EVERY ISSUE:

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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.

bring us joy and are important to us, we often want to invite others to share the experience. When it comes to sports, food, music, theater, etc., it seems to come more naturally to invite others to experience it as well. What is it that holds people back from sharing their faith, and inviting others to experience the Good News too? What is it that holds you back?

For me, this isn't about church numbers. It's not about increasing membership to save the church from decline, or to be the biggest church on the block. Nor is it about increasing numbers to prove that we are indeed sharing the Gospel, or as proof that the Spirit really is at work in the church. For me, it is about sharing the Good News with others. For me, it is about sharing something that is important and meaningful to me. That's what made me switch from being a teacher and coach to a pastor. My faith was something extremely important to me. I wanted others to experience the Good News as I have. I want others to find the "Peace which surpasses all understanding...which we receive from Christ Jesus." I want others to have the hope in a new tomorrow that we receive through Christ Jesus. I want others to experience the love and joy I've received through the Gospel. I didn't have to become a pastor to do this though. It is something that I felt strongly called to do. You don't have to become a pastor to share something that is important to you, like your faith, with others. Simply share what is important to you about your faith. And ... invite them to hear and experience the Good News with you at worship.

Maybe Ash Wednesday isn't your favorite, or when you first want to invite a friend. Perhaps a Wednesday soup supper with dramas and Holden Evening prayer during Lent would be better. Maybe Sunday morning worship would be better. Do what's more natural and makes sense to you. The important thing is extending an invitation. Extend an invitation for others to hear and experience the Good News too. We are only called to share the Good News. We let the Holy Spirit work from there. Sharing one's faith and extending an invitation requires vulnerability. Be strong, be bold, for Christ is with you.

Gathered to Grow. Sent to Serve.

Pastor Mark

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

Budget Forum February 4

Annual reports are available. If you have any questions on the projected 2024 budget, please join us at the budget forum February 4 during the Sunday School hour at 9:15 a.m. This is an open house style event, so there is no need to stay the full hour once your questions are answered.

Semi-Annual Congregational Meeting February 11

Join us on February 11 after 10:30 a.m. worship for our semi-annual meeting. We will vote on the 2024 budget and get updates on other congregational matters. We hope to see you there!

Gathered
to
Grow

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Serve

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



1001 S James Street
Grimes, Iowa 50111
Pastor Mark Schlenker
515-986-3077

stpeter@stpeterofgrimes.org
www.stpeterofgrimes.org
www.facebook.com/
StPeterGrimes

Lenten Worship Schedule

Ash Wednesday begins the church season of Lent. Ashes are placed on the forehead reminding us of our mortality; yet, they are placed in the sign of the cross, reminding us that we are claimed and redeemed through Christ Jesus' death and resurrection. **Join us for Ash Wednesday worship, including the Imposition of Ashes and Holy Communion, on February 14 at 6:30 p.m.**



Soup Suppers: 5:30 p.m. Feb. 14-Mar. 20 Supper will be served from 5:30-6:15 p.m. each Wednesday of Lent beginning on Ash Wednesday. Soup and other dinner items will be shared for a free-will donation, which raises funds for the 2024 Youth Gathering and Youth Mission Trips.

Lenten Devotionals will be available inside the church entrance. You are welcome to take one for reading and reflection during this season of Lent.

Worship: 6:30 p.m. Wednesday Lenten worship will occur each Wednesday Feb. 14 - Mar. 20.



Choir Rehearsal will follow Lenten services at 7:15 p.m. All are welcome to join the choir!

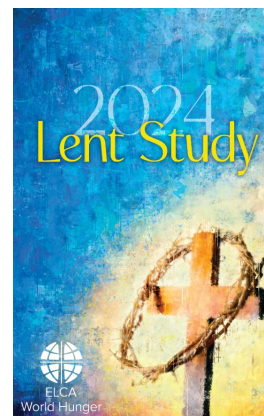
Holy Week & Easter Schedule:

March 24 : Palm Sunday Worship 8:00 & 10:30 a.m.

March 28: Maundy Thursday Worship 6:30 p.m.

March 29: Good Friday Worship 6:30 p.m.

March 31: Easter Sunday Worship 6:30, 9:00, & 10:30 a.m.



Lenten Study

Join us during Lent for a study created by ELCA World Hunger that encourages us to explore how we encounter God in experiences of reconciliation, transfiguration, crucifixion, restoration, and resurrection. Devotionals will be available inside the church entrance; all are welcome to take a devotional during this Lenten time of waiting and reflection. Adult Ed will also discuss these devotions weekly during the Sunday School hour.

February & March Bible Study

Looking for a way to grow in your Faith? Join us for a Bible Study on Thursday afternoons.

In February, we will begin a short, 4-session study. Readings will be the following:

Feb. 8 — 1 John 1: 1-27

Feb 22 — 1 John 2:28-3:24

March 14 — 1 John 4:1-21

March 28 — 1 John 5:1-21

We meet twice a month on the 2nd and 4th Thursday from 1:00 p.m.—2:30 p.m. Come check it out!

Questions? Contact Jill at faithformation@stpeterofgrimes.org

Wednesday Children's Choir Sings February 11

Join us at 10:30 worship February 11, when the Wednesday night children's choir participants will share the music they've been practicing!

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!



We support the Grimes Storehouse Food Pantry!

This month's focus will be:

Canned Fruits



Bring in donations of canned mandarin oranges, pineapple, applesauce, peaches, pears, fruit cocktail, etc.

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

MLK Jr. Day Casserole Update

Thank you to everyone who participated in our MLK Jr. Days of Service! Whether you donated funds, ingredients, or your time making casseroles, we couldn't have done it without your support. Together we were able to make 86 casseroles, with an additional 12 casseroles made by our confirmation students, for a total of 98 casseroles! These casseroles will feed 980 people through the Salvation Army's mobile breakfast canteen, which serves the Des Moines area homeless and near homeless populations. Gathered to Grow. Sent to Serve.



From the Stewardship Committee—Andrew Newman & Blake Franzeen

December 2023

Income: \$57,109.21

Expense: \$31,860.47

Net Gain: \$25,248.74

2023

Income: \$352,797.03

Expense: \$346,595.66

Net Gain: \$6,201.37

- General Fund—December 2023, expenses were less than income, thus it finished with a gain of \$25,248.74.
- General Fund YTD—December 2023, expenses were less than income, thus it finished with a gain of \$6,201.37.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING

JANUARY 11, 2023

Pastor's Report:

- It was a wonderful Advent and Christmas season. Hanging of the Greens service, kids and confirmation Christmas programs, Gingerbread house building event, Christmas caroling and of course the candle-light Christmas Eve worship. Thanks to everyone involved in these events to make it a special season at St. Peter.
- Great to have Mosaic back with us in December. Now that they are out and about again we will hopefully have more events for them to join us. It's been a wonderful ministry connection over the years.
- I've been leading the adult education on Sunday mornings. We used the ELCA World Hunger Bible study during Advent. Now we've begun studying the Gospel text that is read in worship on Sunday.
- Planning for Epiphany, season of Creation and Lent for worship has been of particular focus. Searching for a good drama for our Wednesdays in Lent worship.
- Been looking over the church council restructuring. Will have some things to share at the meeting. To change the church constitution, we need two congregational meetings. Voting this February and July at the semi-annual meetings would be ideal.
- Help the Grimes Storehouse. Only reaching out to one-third of the people in Grimes that need support. Advertise their services. Recruit new volunteers. Transport donations. Attend community events. Facilitate events at local businesses. Proposal to see if people are willing to donate money – church challenge sponsorship. Church council approved: \$1000 – 4 weeks to promote.

Youth Report

- Middle school Youth Group met twice during the month of December. We had a gathering night on the 6th and held our Christmas party on the 20th.
- High school Youth Group met three times during the month of December. We had two devotion nights and our annual Christmas gift exchange.

- In January we will hold traditional Youth Group activities for both middle and high school Youth Groups. We will have a participant meeting for the National Youth Gathering on Sunday, January 21st. We will also hold a follow-up meeting for families interested in a Mission Trip on Sunday, January 14th.

Treasurer's Report:

- December Financials approved
- December Net Gain: \$25,249
- YTD Net Gain: \$6,701

Stewardship :

- Several one-time donations received end of year

Building & Grounds

- Inside Christmas decorations are down.
- Need to tear down new nativity scene.
- Need more light bulbs.
- Schedule garage cleanup in spring.

Education:

- Kids will sing Palm Sunday
- Kids will sing last day of Sunday School
- Carnival planning underway
- Meeting with Jill to plan VBS
- June 23 – 27 from 6-8 PM
- Looking for St. Peter banner for parade

Evangelism:

- December continued with a focus on coffee and fellowship.
- We had multiple families sign up and host.
- I continue to be pleased with the growth of gaining new hosts using the sign-up link.
- As a reminder, each of you are welcome to sign up as well.

Worship & Music :

- Upcoming services
- Season of Creation services Jan. 28-Feb. 11
- Ash Wednesday Feb. 14.
- -Lined up volunteer for imposition of ashes
- -Lauri will order and prepare ashes

- -Service will be livestreamed
- -Special Music: Choir will sing
- Wednesday Lenten services
- -Use Holden all of Lent
- -Pastor will look into Drama to perform. Need to find co-directors
- -Services will be livestreamed
- Palm Sunday—March 24
- Maundy Thursday—March 28 at 6:30 p.m.
- Good Friday—March 29 at 6:30 p.m.
- Easter Sunday—March 31
- -6:30 a.m. Sunrise service outdoors
- -9:00 a.m. Indoor and livestream
- -10:30 a.m. Indoor
- -Summer will contact Justin Wells re: lining up brass ensemble again this year
- Children's Choir Update: All kids from fall returned along with 2 new children, 22 kids in all. Winter session runs Jan. 3– Feb. 7. Planning to sing in church Feb. 4 at 10:30 a.m. Spring session runs April 3–May 8

Old Business:

- Proposed VBS and Curriculum future position.
- Annual Reports get to Lauri ASAP
- Council Structure – Eric come with proposals to Feb Council Mtg

New Business:

- Changing Council members for 2024 – start marketing again. Tim, Destiny, Andrew, Summer, and Amy will end their terms this summer.
- Butterfly Garden: City is asking about the signage on this. Looking at options to do something this spring.
- Boy Scouts overnight → Confirm with Rob on this: done in past and works out well.
- Lutheran College Nordic Choir – Feb. 2 @ 7PM. Looking for host families for one or two nights.
- Christmas tree lights – some not working.

Local Mission Donation: Ahmir Jolliff: Perry, IA school shooting victim

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE WELCA BOARD MEETING

JANUARY 16, 2023

- New Positions for 2024
- President—Nikki Jespersen
- Vice president—Stephanie Picken
- Treasurer—Michelle Jaeger
- Mission Action—Nicky Cooney
- Mission Community—Ellie Weiss
- Constitution and Bylaws—Stephanie Picken
- Discussed new roles and duties
- Potential Craft Fair: Craft tables at church at \$50.00. We could have 12 tables or vendors. We will reach out to Becca and Beth.
- Rethink our community services, regional and national
- Brainstormed ideas for the next year
- Another meeting is scheduled for 1/30/24 at 7pm to prepare for February pieces of WELCA