

The Voice



From the Desk of Pastor Mark:

"To strive for justice and peace in all the earth." These are words stated in our baptismal liturgy. We encourage parents and sponsors of those being baptized to "live with them among God's faithful people, bring them to the word of God and the holy supper, teach them the Lord's prayer, the Creed, and the Ten Commandments, place in their hands the holy scriptures, and nurture them in faith and prayer, so that your children may learn to trust God, proclaim Christ through word and deed, care for others and the world God made, and work for justice and peace in all the earth."

Last month during worship we focused on caring for the world God made during the Season of Creation. This month, at least for this article, I'm going to talk about the next aspect of

the baptismal liturgy stating that we will "work for justice and peace in all the earth." I must admit that in my own faith journey this has not been one of my strongest areas. But ... I believe it's always good to keep learning and keep growing. It's hard to say the words "Gathered to Grow. Sent to Serve" every week at worship and not take them to heart.

Monday, February 20th, I attended Lutheran Day on the Hill. I've marked it on my calendar to attend for the last several years, but it's never quite worked out. Or, to be honest, I never made it a priority. This year I put it on my calendar again, but actually made it a point to attend. It began with everyone meeting downtown at Capitol Hill Lutheran Church. The event was organized by Lutheran Services of Iowa (LSI). We were given packets of information about the

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- ◇ *Blanket Sunday*
- ◇ *February/March Bible Study*
- ◇ *Semi-Annual Meeting Minutes*

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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.
There will be no Sunday School on
March 10 or March 17 due to
Spring Break.

Wednesday worship occurs at
6:30 p.m. There will be no
Wednesday worship March 28
due to Holy Week.

Pastoral Acts

Larry Paulson was born on October 16, 1951, in Des Moines, Iowa. He passed away on January 15, 2024 in Madrid, Iowa. A graveside service was held on January 24, 2024, with Rev. Mark Schlenker officiating the service.

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.

event, which I was able to go through and learn. We then gathered in the sanctuary where we heard an opening devotion and prayer, practical tips on advocacy, and had a guest speaker well informed on the topic. After this opening large group session, there were three breakout sessions to choose from: Investing in a strong human services work force, support for Iowa's mental health system, and support for services that empower refugees and immigrants. I chose to go the session on "Support for services that empower refugees and immigrants." In this session, I learned some important information on current services and what more is needed. We also heard from one of the Iowa State Representatives. He shared practical tips for advocacy when reaching out to our legislatures. Here's a few good tips I learned:

1. Keep it brief. They don't have time for a long conversation or to read a long message.
2. Make it memorable by sharing a personal story. The Representative said these stories are what give him ulcers. These stories stick in his mind as he must cast his votes.
3. Advocate with the legislatures that are for your region. They listen to their own constituents the most.

There are certainly numerous ways to work for justice and peace in all the earth. Advocacy for just policies within our government is only one way. It's a start for me though. I couldn't meet with my Representative, so I sent an email. Again, it's a start.

If you are interested in getting involved more with advocacy I'd be happy to chat about it. I'm not an expert, obviously; but could help get you to resources and point you in the right direction. Also, Lutheran Day on the Hill happens every year around this time. Maybe next year you'd like to go. The whole event was certainly informative to me, and I am glad that I went. Lord knows I'm not perfect, which is why I'm ever so grateful for the love of God in Christ Jesus. "Sealed by the Holy Spirit, and marked with the cross of Christ forever," each day is a new day to live in Christ's love, and to do my best at sharing that love.

Gathered to Grow. Sent to Serve.

Pastor Mark

Coming Up at St. Peter

Lenten Schedule

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.

Worship: 6:30 p.m. Wednesday Lenten worship will occur each Wednesday Feb. 14 - Mar. 20 featuring skits performed by members of our congregation.



Gathered
to
Grow

Sent
to
Serve

Sunday School children
will sing at worship on
Palm Sunday, March 24,
at the 10:30 a.m. service.



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Holy Week & Easter Schedule

March 24—Palm Sunday begins Holy Week, remembering Jesus' celebrated return into Jerusalem while crowds gathered and shouted "Hosana!" **Palm Sunday worship is at 8:00 and 10:30 a.m.**

March 28—Maundy Thursday is the name given to the day on which Jesus celebrated the Passover with His disciples, known as the Last Supper, also called Communion. Jesus also washed the disciples' feet as an act of humility and service, thereby setting an example that we should love and serve one another in humility. We will serve communion at the Maundy Thursday Service in remembrance of Jesus' Last Supper with his disciples. At the conclusion of the service, those present will experience the somber mood of the "stripping of the altar" as we think ahead to Good Friday and the suffering and death that Jesus endured for all of us. **Maundy Thursday worship is at 6:30 p.m.**

March 29—Good Friday is the day on which Jesus was crucified. Why is Good Friday referred to as "good?" What the Jewish authorities and Romans did to Jesus was definitely not good. However, the results of Christ's death are very good! Romans 5:8 – "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." 1 Peter 3:18 tells us – "For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit." The events of Good Friday should be ever on our minds because the death of Christ on the cross – along with His bodily resurrection – is the paramount event of the Christian faith. St. Peter Lutheran will be remembering Christ's suffering and death for the forgiveness of our sins at our **Good Friday Worship Service on March 29 at 6:30 p.m.**

March 31—Easter Sunday is the most important day of the church year. We celebrate the resurrection of Jesus and his victory over death in fulfillment of the old testament prophecies. John, chapter 1 says, "What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it." Join us for this joyous and celebratory worship on **March 31 at 6:30 a.m., 9:00 a.m., or 10:30 a.m.**



Pancake Breakfast Easter Morning

The youth will host a pancake breakfast on Easter Sunday, March 31, from 7:00 – 8:30 a.m. Free will donations support the 2024 Youth Gathering and Youth Mission trips. We invite you to join us in fellowship on Easter morning for this celebratory breakfast!

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

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

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

Thanks!

To my St. Peter Family,

As you may have heard, I will be stepping down as Youth Director at the end of this program year. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time in this role, but know it is time to pass the torch. I plan to stay active within our youth program, assisting where I can in supporting our new Youth Director. I appreciate your support over the years, and have made many friends for life while answering my calling. This isn't a goodbye, just a little change.

Peace be with you.

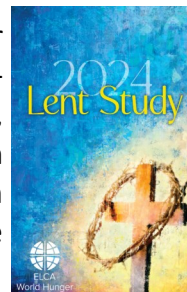
Matt Schmidt

Easter Egg Hunt March 30

We invite you to join us on Saturday, March 30, at 10:00 a.m. for an outdoor Easter Egg Hunt at St. Peter - all ages of kids are welcome! We will also be providing grab & go breakfast items for those in attendance. We will open the sign-ups for the Easter Egg hunt on March 1st. Please sign up for one spot for each child attending so we are sure to have enough eggs and prizes. If you have any questions or if you would like to help with this event, please contact Jill or Destiny.

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.



Dessert & Devotion Night with WELCA

We welcome all women of St. Peter for an evening of treats, fellowship, and small group discussion on March 19 from 6:30-7:30p.m. The theme for this first session will be Scripture and Nature: Teachers of Faith.

Blanket Project

Together we made 335 fleece blankets to be given to patients of all ages at MercyOne hospitals, bringing our 11 year total to 2,007 blankets! Thank you to everyone who supported this project financially or through prayer, fleece donations, or help tying blankets!



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!

Our March focus will be:



Soup & Crackers



Bring in donations of soup crackers and large and small cans of soup. Donations can be dropped off in the basket next to the Service Counter.

VBS Save the Date!

Vacation Bible School will be
June 23-27, 2024
from 6:00-8:00 p.m.

*Join us for a week of fun and
learning!*



Thrivent Choice Support

We're proud to be a Thrivent Choice®-enrolled organization. Through Thrivent's programs, we are eligible to receive grant dollars, fee-free donations, and support from Thrivent Action Team service projects.

We have seen firsthand how much of an impact Thrivent's clients can make on our organization. In 2023, we received \$692 in Thrivent Choice Dollars donations and several Thrivent Action Team Grants supporting things like St. Peter's Governor's Days parade presence, VBS, MLK Jr. Day of Service Casseroles, the Youth Mission Trip, and the Blanket Project. We appreciate how you have supported our organization with your Thrivent benefits!

If you are a Thrivent member and would like to learn more about Thrivent's membership benefits and generosity programs visit thrivent.com/generosity.

From the Stewardship Committee—Andrew Newman & Blake Franzeen

January 2024

Income: \$30,236.37

Expense: \$29,674.39

Net Gain: \$561.98

YtD 2024

Income: \$30,236.37

Expense: \$29,674.39

Net Gain: \$561.98

- General Fund—January 2024, Expenses were less than income, thus it finished with a gain of \$561.98.
 - General Fund YTD—January 2024, expenses were less than income, thus it finished with a gain of \$561.98.
- *** \$39,000.00 from sale of land was moved to a CD for later use, possibly for lighting and signage.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING FEBRUARY 8, 2024

Pastor's Report:

- January went through three different seasons in the church calendar year. Christmas, Epiphany and Season of Creation. Quick transition from one season to the next, but I'm pleased with how things went. Now we are about to switch to Lent next week with Ash Wednesday falling on Valentine's Day.
- ELCA World Hunger put together a Lent study that we will use this year. We used their study for Advent in 2023 as well. There are a number of them for people to pick up and use on their own, share in a group, or join the Sunday morning adult education discussions.
- The Lent drama series this year is titled "Sow What?" The five part series is based on the parable of the Sower found in Luke 8. These will be performed on the Wednesdays in Lent as usual.
- I led a graveside service for Larry Paulson. He was a member several years ago but had moved away. He was buried at the Dallas Center cemetery.
- The snow storm and deep freeze that came through on Sunday, January 14th caused us to adjust our Sunday morning ministries. Discussions with Executive led to cancelling the 8 am worship and Sunday school to be safe. We kept 10:30 worship and live streamed that service. We also cancelled the breakfast casserole preparations on Saturday, but kept them on Sunday following the 10:30 worship. HS youth was cancelled, as we didn't want youth to drive under those conditions.
- Continuing to study and explore possible changes to the council and committee structures. I believe that will be part of our council discussion this month as well.
- Matt Schmidt has decided that it is time to pass the torch for youth ministry. He will continue as youth director through the mission trip at the end of July. He has done an amazing job for more than 8 years. We will find a Sunday after the mission trip to celebrate and give thanks for his ministry.
- Any time a ministry position comes open it allows

for a time to review the job description along with current congregational needs. Any questions, concerns or feedback in regards to youth ministry please let me know.

Faith Formation Report—Jill Capps

- **Faith Formation:** In January we held our Annual MLK Breakfast casserole event. The winter weather forced us to cancel our Saturday portion of the event, but we still managed to make 86 breakfast casseroles. (Confirmation students made an additional 12 bringing our total to 98.) These casseroles will provide breakfast to the Des Moines area homeless and near homeless populations. On February 18th, between worship services, we will hold our Annual Fleece Blanket for MercyOne hospitals. Our committee members (Allison Newman, Sarah Capps, Brenda Johnston, Amanda Rooke, Mallory Herbsleb, and I) have been busy purchasing and prepping fleece for the big day. We encourage all members of our congregation to participate in this project. It is a great way to make a huge impact in the lives of hospital patients and it only takes an hour to do so.
- **SE Synod ELCA Hunger Grant:** In December, I applied for a \$900 hunger grant from the SE Iowa Synod; and I am excited to announce that we have received the grant. The grant will allow us to host another Breakfast Casserole Event in June/July. This grant will cover all the expenses and will allow us to make another 90 breakfast casseroles this summer. Be sure to watch the Voice, ENews, and Facebook for more information.
- **Confirmation:** In January, we began our studies with the Apostles Creed and we will continue with that until we begin on our study on Jesus' last days during Lent. Students also prepared 12 breakfast casseroles for the Salvation Army's Mobile Breakfast canteen. The small groups have also been tying fleece blankets for our MercyOne Fleece Blanket Project. Fleece blanket kits were purchased with a Thrivent grant for the youth to tie during confirmation. To date, the youth have already completed 46 blankets. During Lent the youth will share a meal with their small groups and then attend worship together. The

youth will serve as hosts and will also write some of the Prayers of Intercession that will be used for the last 3 Wednesdays in Lent.

- **Thursday Afternoon Bible Study:** We finished our study on Romans in January, and we will begin our study on 1 John. The study continues to be well attended - we invite anyone who is interested in a relaxed Bible study to join us on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays of the month at 1:00pm.
- **Misc.:** I have enjoyed spending Wednesday evenings helping Matt with the Middle School Youth Group. It's great to have the kids all together & to be able to break out into 2 smaller groups for more activities & discussion. We have a great group of Middle School students at St. Peter. It has also been great to see these youth step up and help at Sunday School, the younger students enjoy having them help in their classes. It is great to see our youth model volunteering for our youngest members.
- **Communication:** I have made some updates to the Service board in Fellowship Hall to allow WELCA space to advertise their upcoming events. I have also made some updates to the website postings as well. Please continue to reach out with information about upcoming events & happenings so I can include those on both Facebook & the website.
- **VBS:** Destiny and I have begun working on VBS, making sure we have leaders, curriculum, and other materials in place until we find a VBS Director. We have already found several lead teachers and secured a truck & driver for the Governor's Day parade. If you have not volunteered with VBS before, we encourage you to do so; it is a fun week and a great way to get to know our youngest members.

Youth Report

- Middle school Youth Group met once during January. We had a conversation night where we talked about the incident at the Perry school and Martin Luther King Jr.
- High school Youth Group met three times during the month of January. We held two devotion nights and a meal night. We did not meet on January 14th due to the extreme cold temperatures.

- In January we also held our first ELCA National Youth gathering participant meeting. We worked through the provided devotion and talked about logistics around our trip to New Orleans.
- On January 21st we also held our follow-up Mission Trip interest meeting. Based on the interest shown, we will be doing a Mission Trip the last full week of July.
- Looking forward into the month of February, we will hold traditional Youth Group meetings for the middle and high school groups. Our annual spaghetti dinner will be postponed to a later date due to Lent season beginning earlier this year. We will also have a scheduled ELCA National Youth Gathering and Mission Trip meetings in February.

Treasurer's Report:

- Preliminary financials for January discussed
- Discussion of sharing corporate matching programs through Principal or other programs.
- Budget Q & A from Feb. 4 was discussed, with feedback regarding paid part-time positions. Discussed reasoning for payment of Youth Choir Director position.

Stewardship :

- There was a need for a new worship teller for the last Sunday of the month. Blake Franzen will take this spot.
- Check for the land sale was received for \$39,936.80 and placed in an 11 month CD

Building & Grounds

- The old nativity was taken out of the garage, which opened up space for the new nativity

Education:

- Looking for a VBS coordinator
- VBS planning is underway led by Destiny and Jill
- Need to order St. Peter banner to use for parade and other things
- Easter Egg Hunt at Church will be March 30

Evangelism:

- Continued fellowship with coffee and snacks
- Will keep a carafe of two out after Sunday School. Someone has been putting this away, which is appreciated.
- Thanks for your continued support and hospitality.

Worship & Music :

- Season of Creation services going well
- Wednesday Lenten services at 6:30 p.m. Nate Fredericks is Lenten drama director
- Palm Sunday is Mar. 24. Discussed ordering palms, Minnie the Donkey, and times to decorate
- Maundy Thursday is Mar. 28. Need volunteers for stripping of the altar.
- Good Friday is Mar. 29. Will prepare for this service after Maundy Thursday service.
- Easter Sunday is Mar. 31. 6:30 worship will be outdoor, 9:00 will inside and livestreamed, and 10:30 will be indoors. Several people are working on a brass ensemble. Will decorate after Good Friday service.
- Children's choir sings in church on Feb. 11 at 10:30 a.m. Spring session is April 3-May 8.

Old Business:

- Five Council members are outgoing in July of 2024. Need to look for new Council members. Eric has reached out to the nominating committee. Tim, Destiny, Andrew, Summer, and Amy will end their terms in July.
- Butterfly garden: City is asking about the signage on this. Looking at options to do something this spring. Looking at dates to move the garden due to construction easement.

New Business: none

Local Mission Donation: Blanket Project Materials

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE SEMI-ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING FEBRUARY 11, 2024

- Call to order & opening prayer
- Unanimous approval of Agenda
- Unanimous approval of July Semi-Annual Meeting Minutes
- Unanimous approval of 2023 Annual Report
- Presentation of 2023 Annual financial audit: Amy Short read the audit. Thanks to Max Bodermann and Bradley Fasse for serving on the Audit Committee. Thanks to Chad Wyllie for his work on our financials. Financial Audit approved unanimously.
- Old Business
 - Funds from the land sale have been placed in a CD with plans to use for new lighting and signage
 - The Butterfly Garden project will need to move due to the construction easement. Discussion: Will request support of the congregation to assist with moving the garden. Location and deadline is to be determined. Council will work with Carol Clarke and the city and communicate when it is time to work on this.
- New Business: Approval of the Proposed 2024 Budget
 - Staff wage increase/Stipend expansion: The proposed budget included 3% increases for staff wages
 - Children's Choir Director position discussion: Council discussed need for a stipend to move forward with the Children's Choir Director position. A member began discussion around what positions we incentivize versus not, questioning the need for a Children's Choir Director stipend when Sunday School includes music instruction and budget shortfalls. Congregational discussion centered on the roles and needs for volunteers, how to reach volunteers, the desire to continue inviting church and community members to St. Peter in different ways, youth programming as a strength of the church, and stipends as a way to add structure to our programming as well as incentiv-

ize ministries we want to grow. Discussion regarding what positions receive compensation is and will continue to be an important consideration for the church.

- Discussion explaining Building and Grounds line items projecting the need for a new furnace and potential asphalt repairs
- 2024 Budget approved by majority
- Next Semi-Annual congregational meeting will be July 14.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE WELCA BOARD MEETING JANUARY 30, 2023

- Stephanie introduced the WELCA Constitution and Bylaws. Revisions were discussed and the document was approved and sent to Board members. Board positions and amended committee titles as follows:
- President—Stephanie Picken
- Treasurer – Michelle Jaeger
- Secretary – Kerry Schiller
- Mission: Discipleship – Nicky Cooney
- Mission: Justice - Ellie Weiss
- The WELCA handbook was reviewed and discussed. Lauri will start revisions and send out to Board members for review. Print copies of the handbook will be available at church and only mailed out as needed. Lauri provided access to the Google Drive for the Board to store meeting and committee documents. Lauri also reminded the group of the fundraising calendar to use when planning events.
- Michelle provided the Treasurer's report:

- Kitchen Fund – End of month total = \$1561.53
- General Fund – reimbursement for blanket fleece and Mosaic gifts was dispersed; End of month total = \$6320.84
- Historic standard expenses include: devotional subscriptions, kitchen supplies, Mosaic gifts, and church décor. Initiating Gather subscriptions was discussed and 3 were approved with potential for additional as needed.
- Updates to the calendar of events:
- February – Month long Toy Drive for the Not New Shop; Lauri will add announcement to bulletin and newsletter; Nicky & Steph to deliver items
- March – 3/19 Dessert & Devotion @ 6:30pm; dessert and fellowship followed by devotion/study time from Gather magazine; Stephanie will lead this session
- April – Date TBD What is WELCA? Puzzles and Fellowship
- May – 5/4 Craft Show, headed up by Bekka Maas and Beth Hansen

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.

