

The Voice



From the Desk of Pastor Mark:

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice.

Philippians 4:4

Happy New year! Welcome to the year 2026. As we say goodbye to the year 2025, I rejoice with the way God has been at work at and through St. Peter Lutheran Church. There are many and various ways that we can see how God has been at work. Perhaps it is best to share it through some of the quotes I've heard about St. Peter throughout the year.

1. "My daughter was up early, dressed and itching to get here. She just loves church."
2. "Thanks for your message yesterday. I tuned in online." (A visitor I ran into at the gym shared this. I often hear comments from people tuning in online.)
3. "You don't know how much this means to us." (Member shared when the Christmas carolers sang to them at their home.)
4. "St. Peter has been an important place for my family for many years."
5. "I love the many opportunities St. Peter has for us to serve."
6. "Such a wonderful multigenerational experience. Baby crying, families together, youth, seniors. Rare to find such a mix of generations together these days."

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Worship Schedule

Thank you for joining us for worship!

Sunday worship is at 8:00 and 10:30 a.m. Sunday School is at 9:15 a.m. Wednesday worship is at 6:30 p.m.

Happy New Year!

The church office will be closed on Thursday, January 1 and Friday, January 2.

YOUTH GROUP CALENDAR

High School Youth group meets the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of the month.

Middle School Youth Group meets the 2nd & 4th Wednesdays of the month.

Breakfast Club for 7th-12th graders meets January 4.

The Youth Mission Trip Meeting will be January 25 for participants and parents.



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7. "I just love the joy and enthusiasm from the kids as they run up and put quarters in the tube." (I hear this often.)
8. "The ministry connection with Tanzania is amazing. Especially the large scholarship program. I love it!" (This year St. Peter will be supporting more than 100 students.)
9. "You have a wonderful choir here. Praise God!"
10. "I love seeing all the kids singing in worship. Our church doesn't have any kids." (Shared from a grandparent visiting St. Peter.)
11. "St. Peter has been there for me and my family during some really challenging times. We want to do our part to help St. Peter continue to be there for others."
12. "Your church took how many youth on a mission trip? Wow, that's wonderful!" (St. Peter took 46 youth this past summer.)
13. "Seeing the welcome of Mosaic guests participating in the Christmas program just warmed my heart."

You hopefully have heard or shared some similar quotes yourself. For this I give all thanks and praise to God. Or, as the Apostle Paul encourages, I "rejoice in the Lord." The Lord has and is doing wonderful things at and through St. Peter Lutheran Church. With the year 2025 now in the past, we press on into 2026 knowing the importance of our call to share the Good News of God's love in Christ with the world. With this call ever before us, we go forth boldly, knowing that the Lord is with us.

Gathered to Grow. Sent to serve.

Pastor Mark

Coming Up at St. Peter

Book Club January 11

All readers are welcome at the St. Peter book club! We will meet January 11 from 6:30-7:30 p.m. to discuss *Dinner with a Perfect Stranger* by David Gregory. In February, we'll discuss *Maid* by Stephanie Land. Find the reading schedule in the weekly eNews or at the Service board.



Winter/Spring Session of Children's Choir

The winter/spring session of our Wednesday Children's choir begins January 7. All children will meet from 5:45-6:15 p.m. Children will sing at worship on January 18.

2026 Flower Chart

If you would like to share an altar arrangement on a special Sunday in 2026, please sign up on the Flower Chart clipboard that is posted on the Service Board in Fellowship Hall. Arrangements cost \$45 and will be made to match the liturgical colors of the church year.

2026 Offering Envelopes

Your 2026 offering envelopes are ready by the front entrance. If you don't see your name but would like envelopes; or, if you no longer need envelopes due to online giving, contact the church office. We will be happy to meet your current needs!

CALLED as children of God, and CLAIMED by the Holy Spirit, the members of St. Peter Lutheran Church are GATHERED together to build each other up to use and GROW our gifts in the multitude of ministries we share – and are SENT out to serve the greater church, our community, and our world by using those gifts and ministries to share God's love as the united people of God.

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

MLK Days of Service January 18 & 19

In January, we will hold our 6th 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 to prepare casseroles with your family or friends. Time slots are available January 18th and January 19th. Sign up at <https://signup.com/go/JJaTOZy> or with the QR code. *Please sign up for 1 slot for your group - in the comments let us know how many are coming.



You can also sign up to donate ingredients or make a monetary donation to buy supplies for the casseroles. *For youth in need of silver cord or NHS volunteer hours, this would be a great opportunity to get a few hours.*

MLK Breakfast Casseroles



Save the Date—Blanket Sunday is February 22

February 22 is St. Peter's Annual Fleece Blanket Sunday. We will once again be making fleece blankets for the patients of MercyOne Hospitals in Des Moines. We will also be donating a portion of our blankets to the IHYC (Iowa Homeless Youth Center 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 again this year!

Memorial Funds in Use

We are enjoying a new sanctuary Christmas tree thanks to memorial funds from John Bodermann and a donation from WELCA. We have also recently purchased new handmade ceramic communion pates and chalices to replace our deteriorating metal ware using memorial funds from Evelyn Shafer. St. Peter appreciates these gifts.

Faith, Fellowship, Coffee, & Dessert

All are welcome to join our Thursday afternoon Bible study. This relaxed Bible study meets on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of the month from 1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. **In January, we will discuss the book of John.** There is no registration required, and you can come as often or as little as your schedule allows. Contact Jill with any questions

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



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.

Lunch Abroad with Pastor Mark Jan. 20

All are welcome to enjoy good food, good conversations, and good fun at Saffron Indian Cuisine (8769 Northpark Dr., Johnston) on January 20 at 11:30 a.m. Pastor Mark will share some information on the Christian church and other facts through trivia questions. Each person will be responsible for paying their own meal. We hope to see you there! Sign up by calling the church office on the sign-up sheet by the service counter.

Ministry Together

Support for Servicepeople: St. Peter prepared and mailed care packages overseas for 100 servicepeople, including members Eric Soult and Sydney Wagner. We sent almost 200 pounds of supplies in 8 boxes - 100 personal care packages, 100 snack packages, dozens of puzzles and games, handwarmers, and special packages for Eric and Sydney.

Grimes Giving Tree: Together we shared 80 gifts with Grimes community children through the Grimes Giving Tree.

Grimes Storehouse: We recently donated the change in our quarter tube, equaling \$131.56, to the Grimes Storehouse. WELCA and other church members have been putting in extra effort to keep our Little Food Pantry filled as much as possible.

Mosaic Christmas: We hosted our friends at Mosaic for a Christmas party featuring fun activities and pizza. All were then invited to worship and to participate in the Confirmation Christmas program. WELCA also purchased Christmas gifts for 5 friends at Mosaic.



SAVE THE DATE

THE 31ST ANNUAL VALENTINE'S SPAGHETTI DINNER

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 15TH 5:00-8:00PM

COME SUPPORT THE YOUTH OF ST. PETER AS THEY SERVE YOU A DELICIOUS MEAL. A FREE WILL DONATION WILL GO TOWARDS YOUTH MINISTRY AT ST. PETER. TAKE OUT IS ALSO AVAILABLE THIS YEAR. LOOK FOR THE ORDER FORM COMING SOON.

Volunteers Needed – Can You Help?

If you can help as a communion **preparer** contact Kaarin Fasse. To be a **communion assistant**, please contact Katie Scholl.

If you would like to help as **Assisting Minister**, please contact Rita Rosenberg.

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 Rita Rosenberg.

If you want to 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 January 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 16, 2025

Pastor's Report:

- Snow and cold weather the first three Sundays in Advent has been rough, but we've powered through. I've heard a number of comments from people enjoying the devotional, and we had some good discussions in Adult Ed.
- The Confirmation Christmas program on Wednesday with Mosaic was wonderful. Great turnout for worship. About a dozen friends from Mosaic joined us, and a few of them participated in the program as well. An excellent show of hospitality by St. Peter, demonstrating that all people are welcome.
- The Sunday school Christmas program on Sunday was excellent as well. Several grandparents visiting said the equivalent of, "It's so great to see so many kids in church. Our church hardly has any." God has surely blessed St. Peter with children and youth. I'm thankful St. Peter has placed an emphasis on sharing the faith with future generations.
- December 7 a number of us went Christmas Caroling to members of St. Peter. One member said, "You don't know how much this means to us." Always a joy to bring some Christmas cheer.
- December 7 was also a wonderful Gingerbread house building event. This has become a great event bringing families together, as it packed the fellowship hall.
- I was asked and agreed to be on the Bishop Election Committee for the South-eastern Iowa Synod. Next year's synod assembly in May is an election year for bishop. So far the work has included two Zoom meetings lasting one hour each.
- Financial giving has increased slightly from last year. Unfortunately, it hasn't increased to the level necessary to keep up with this year's budget. A prayer request was made at worship last Sunday for the financial health of the congregation, so I included this prayer in our prayers of intercession, "Gracious God, we pray for hearts to be open to hear your call to give generously in support of your mission here at St. Peter Lutheran, that the ministry may continue to thrive in sharing the Good News of your Love with the world." I invite you to include this or

From the Stewardship Committee— Brenda Johnston & Jake Wager

November 2025

Income: \$22,670.23
Expense: \$31,296.89
Net Loss:(\$8,626.66)

Year to Date November 2025

Income: \$282,373.79
Expense: \$340,858.31
Net Loss: (\$58,484.52)

- General Fund MTD—Nov. 2025, expenses were greater than monthly income, thus it finished with a loss of (\$8,626.66).
- General Fund YTD—Oct. 2025, expenses were greater than income, thus it finished with a loss of (\$58,209.48).

one similar in your daily prayers. I believe God has called St. Peter to some important work in sharing the Gospel, and I trust that if God is calling then God will also provide. It will take all of us working together.

Faith Formation Report—Jill Capps

- **Confirmation:** November and December have been busy months for our confirmation students & guides. We finished our lessons on Lutheran Life and moved on to our preparations for our annual Christmas with Mosaic. The youth hosted clients & care providers from Mosaic for an evening of Bingo and Pizza followed by the presentation of the Christmas story during worship on December 10th. We had several friends from Mosaic join us as angels & shepherds in the program. Thank you to the youth & guides for a memorable evening. Special thanks to the Rokke family for obtaining a Thrivent grant for the event and for helping to greet our Mosaic guests as they arrived.
- **Faith Formation:** We received a video thank you from Eric Soultz and Sydney Wagner for the care packages and cards that were sent in November. The video was shared at worship on November 30th and December 7th. Thank you to everyone who contributed to this project!
- We had 28 families participate in our annual gingerbread house building event on December 7th. This was our 5th year hosting this fellowship activity which continues to be enjoyed by all.
- **Sunday School Christmas Program:** The Sunday school Christmas program was a great success, our 5th & 6th graders did a great job telling the story of Jesus' birth, and all the Sunday school students did a great job singing! Thank you to Sue Dooley, Carol & Dave Eilers for their work with the music! A special thank you to Michelle Zeliadt & Quentin Greenough for helping me with the 5th & 6th graders practices the past several weeks, and to Mary Stocks for enhancing our lead angels' costumes! A thank you to all the teachers, shepherds, and youth volunteers for their help, and to Sarah Capps for helping to oversee the entrances/timing of the program on Sunday.
- **Communication:** I designed and ordered a new 4ft x 10ft Christmas Eve banner. We also ordered 25 Join Us at St. Peter signs to be placed in members' yards to invite people to join us for Christmas Eve (thank you to Bambi for designing the yard signs!).
- I designed and printed "Join us for Christmas Eve" cards that can be picked up at the usher table. Members are encouraged to grab a few cards to give to those who may be looking for a church to attend on Christmas Eve.
- **Technology:** We have seen a steady increase in traffic on our Facebook page. Please consider clicking "like" on our posts as this helps to increase the reach of our page.
- You will notice changes to the website over the next several weeks, I hope to launch a full new design in January. For the time being, you will see a more basic website as behind the scenes work continues that will create a site with a modern look, that is easy to navigate, with enhanced security as well. Let me know if you have any questions.

Youth Report

- No report

Treasurer's Report:

- General Fund--November 2025 mtd, expenses were greater than monthly income, thus it finished with a loss of (\$8,626.66).
- General Fund--November 2025 ytd, expenses were greater than income, thus it finished with a loss of (\$58,484.52)

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, click on the dropdown box under "About," click "Online Giving Available," and click "Set up online giving today;" 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.

- General Fund--November 2024 mtd, expenses were greater than monthly income, thus it finished with a loss of (\$8,613.13).
- General Fund--November 2024 ytd, expenses were greater than income, thus it finished with a loss (\$42,123.33).
- \$11,000 was pulled out of Contingency savings to cover November 2025 bills. We carried \$50,250. from 2024 that we have slowly used over the course of the year when we ran into a monthly deficit and this has now been exhausted which is why we had to pull from contingency in November. We have not made any deposits to contingency in 2025, 2024, or 2023 specific to having extra cash from offerings.
- \$915 was paid from Building funds related to the pad for the Garden shed
- November Financials approved

Stewardship :

- No action items this month

Building & Grounds

- Set up Nativity
- Set up new Christmas Service banner
- First several snow events occurred. Worked with Finer Cuts to clarify expectations for weekend snow storms.
- Shed Pad completed
- HVAC work complete on Unit#5
- Acton Item: Shed 10x12 - plan for Spring and Tim to plan to host a 'build' session with youth.

Education:

- We have had an eventful month with the Christmas Program led by the Sunday School students this past Sunday! Thanks to all who helped volunteer to help the kids learn their music and lines. It was a fantastic display of God's love.
- There is no Sunday School on Dec. 22nd or 29th. We are hoping to host a prep party to begin organizing the next group of lesson activities in January 25th.

Evangelism:

- Provided cake for new member Sunday. Special thanks to Dave and Carol Eilers for ordering and delivering.
- Continued fellowship Sunday with some food donations from members and cookies this past Sunday provided by Sunday School families.

Worship & Music :

- A new Christmas tree was purchased for the sanctuary, as the current tree had several non-working lights, and branches were breaking off. Special thanks to the Capps family for setting it up.
- A new star for the tree has been ordered. Should be here this week.
- Special music for the three Christmas Eve services are lined up.
- Advent readers are lined up for each service.
- Handheld candles for Christmas Eve are ready - thanks to those who helped check them.
- Choir practice will resume on Wednesday, Jan 7. Last performance for 2025 is Sunday, Dec 21 at 10:30.

New Business:

- Date for semi-annual Congregation Meeting: Sunday, February 8
- February 1 will be a Q&A session for budget topics ahead of the semi-annual meeting
- Insurance Policy Quotes Update: Steve provided a quote from a competitor that was higher than our current rates. Council approved staying with Church Mutual
- Quick review of the At-Large Option for Council Structure . Next Steps - Steve, Carol, Jason will have an updated proposal to share in January
- Budget update/discussion: discussed reducing deficit, sharing information with the congregation about how funds are used and why it's important to contribute. 2026 budget was approved with a \$1500 cushion for unexpected adjustments
- Inputs around some 'wish list' items - initial item for microphones for choir (online livestream is difficult to hear choir) - will start a wish list document for council

Local Mission Donation: The family of an Iowa National Guardsman soldier (Grimes) who was injured in Syria attack