

The Voice



From the Desk of Pastor Mark:

The season of Lent begins early this year, with Ash Wednesday being on February 18. A former pastoral colleague of mine used to call Lent “Spiritual Spring Training.” Meaning, it’s a going back to the basics. In baseball, spring training starts with all the fundamentals of throwing, fielding, batting, etc. Lent is a time of focus on the fundamentals of our faith like prayer, worship, scripture reading, giving, fellowship, serving, etc. Our theme for this year is “Unbound: Longing for Wholeness.” Here is an introduction to the theme:

“What if the opposite of being bound is being whole? Our world is filled with things that hold us captive. These things that bind us prevent us from living the whole, abundant life that God has promised us. Through the stories of regular people encountering Jesus, and being drawn to the wholeness that Jesus provides, we can learn about our own longings and be drawn into wholeness.”

Our worship on Wednesdays will use the Holden Prayer Service, along with the message being delivered through drama. “Fear Not!” is the title of our drama this year. Soup suppers will be served before Wednesday worship, offering times of Christian fellowship. The Sunday worship will follow this theme schedule:

Lent 1 (February 22) - Longing for Wholeness - Matthew 4:1-11

Lent 2 (March 1) - Longing for Mystery - John 3:1-17

Lent 3 (March 8) - Longing for Relationship - John 4:5-42

IN THIS ISSUE:

- ◇ Budget Q & A
- ◇ Semi-Annual Meeting
- ◇ Lenten Schedule
- ◇ Spaghetti Dinner
- ◇ Dementia Training
- ◇ Blanket Sunday
- ◇ Book Club
- ◇ Myamba Support

IN EVERY ISSUE:

- ◇ Youth Group Calendar
- ◇ Grimes Storehouse Donation Ideas
- ◇ Volunteer Sign-Up Info
- ◇ Stewardship Update
- ◇ Church Council Minutes
- ◇ Monthly Birthdays & Anniversaries
- ◇ Monthly Calendar

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.

YOUTH GROUP CALENDAR

High School Youth group meets the 1st Wednesday of the month.

Middle School Youth Group meets the 2nd Wednesday of the month.

Breakfast Club for 7th-12th graders meets February 1.

The Youth Mission Trip Meeting will be February 22.

Lenten Soup Suppers will be Wednesdays at 5:30 p.m. Feb. 18-Mar. 25.



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Lent 4 (March 15) - Longing for Community - John 9:1-41

Lent 5 (March 22) - Longing for Authenticity - John 11:1-45

Palm Sunday (March 29) - Longing for Courage - Matthew 21:1-11

Maundy Thursday (April 2) - Longing for Intimacy - John 13:1-17, 31b-35

Good Friday (April 3) - Longing for Solidarity - John 18:1-19:42

Easter Sunday (April 5) - Longing for New Life - John 20:1-18

Adult education will follow the story of Joseph in the book of Genesis:

Week 1: February 22 - Bound by Jealousy - Genesis 37:3-11

Week 2: March 1 - Bound by Violence - Genesis 37:12-36

Week 3: March 8 - Bound by Dishonest Systems - Genesis 39:1-20

Week 4: March 22 - Bound by Family - Genesis 41 and 42

Week 5: March 29 - Bound by Guilt - Genesis 50:15-21

The Lent devotional this year will be a little different. Each week will have a different Contemplative Prayer practice to follow. You will find these contemplative prayer practices printed at church, and they will be sent out in the E-news.

During the season of Lent this year, I pray that you find yourself becoming "unbound" from the things that hold you captive, and that you be made whole, through the healing and redeeming love of Christ Jesus our Lord.

Gathered to Grow. Sent to serve.

Pastor Mark

Coming Up at St. Peter

Budget Forum February 1

Annual reports are available. If you have any questions on the projected 2026 budget, please join us at the budget forum February 1 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 8

Join us on February 8 after 10:30 a.m. worship for our semi-annual meeting. We will vote on the 2026 budget and get updates on other congregational matters such as the proposed new Council structure.. We hope to see you there!

The Myamba secondary school year began in January, and St. Peter recently wired funds for 100 scholarships for students as they begin their school year. This includes children's Sunday School offering in 2025, which supports part of our scholarships for three students at the Mwanga school for the deaf. We also sent the remainder of our budgeted 2025 Myamba Missions support in our January wire transfer. Thank you for your support of these ministries!

Dementia Training

Dementia Friendly Iowa is coming to St. Peter on Wednesday, Feb. 25, for a one hour training. It will follow worship from 7:15-8:15 p.m. "Dementia Friendly Iowa promotes change and education in communities to create a more welcoming, safe and respectful space for people living with dementia and their caregivers."

Book Club February 1

All readers are welcome at the St. Peter book club! We will meet February 1 from 6:30-7:30 p.m. to discuss *Maid* by Stephanie Land. In March, we'll discuss *Anxious People* by Frederik Backman. Find the reading schedule in the weekly eNews or at the Service board.

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!

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 18 at 6:30 p.m.**



Soup Suppers: 5:30 p.m. Feb. 18-Mar. 25 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 St. Peter youth, including the 2026 Mission Trip to North Carolina.

Contemplative Practices for Lent will be available inside the church entrance. You are welcome take one for reading and reflection during the season of Lent.

Worship: 6:30 p.m. Wednesday Lenten worship will occur each Wednesday Feb. 18 - Mar. 24.

Holy Week & Easter Schedule:

March 29 : Palm Sunday Worship 8:00 & 10:30 a.m.

April 2: Maundy Thursday Worship 6:30 p.m.

April 3: Good Friday Worship 6:30 p.m.

April 5: Easter Sunday Worship 6:30, 9:00, & 10:30 a.m.



31st Annual Valentine's Spaghetti Dinner Sunday- February 15th from 5:00-8:00 p.m.

Come join us on Sunday, February 15, for a night of food, fun, and fellowship as the St. Peter Youth serve their 31st Annual Spaghetti Dinner. The fellowship hall is transformed into a cute Italian Restaurant; and the youth serve salad, spaghetti, and dessert to our guests. A free will donation will be taken for the meal. This night helps support the youth as they raise funds for the summer mission trip to serve in the Waynesville, North Carolina, community. Don't miss out on this fun 31-year tradition at St. Peter!

Reservation sign-ups for 5:00-8:00 p.m. time slots will be available through Google Docs. Look for the link in the weekly eNews, on Facebook, or through the QR code below. Sign-up for the 40-minute time slot that works best for you. You may also call the church office at 986-3077 or email us at stpe-ter@stpeterofgrimes.org, and we will be happy to help make your reservation.

If you don't want to dine in with us, we will have takeout available this year. Just fill out a Takeout Form found on the Service Board in Fellowship Hall and turn it in to the office before noon on Feb. 15. Choose a pickup time and your food will be waiting for you at that desired time.

Reservations can be made by scanning this QR Code.



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. There is no registration required, and you can come as often or as little as your schedule allows. Contact Jill with any questions

Sunday School children
sing February 8 at 10:30
AM worship!

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.

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 and 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!

Please purchase either Blizzard or Anti-Pill fleece as other types of fleece are not suitable for making tie blankets.

What is the Fleece Blanket Project? Mercy One Hospitals gives to patients from newborns to people at the end of their lives. They serve as comfort and are enjoyed by all ages. The blankets are also given to young adults who are assisted by the IHYC in Des Moines.

How Can I Help?

1. Donate fabric – 2 pieces of fleece (each 1 1/2 yards in size) makes one blanket, or 2 pieces of fleece (each 2 yards in size) makes one blanket for the youth served by IHYC.
2. Donate a completed blanket! Create a blanket with your family, friends, Bible Study, small group, sports team, neighborhood group etc.
3. Sponsor a blanket by donating \$30.00.
4. Help prepare the Fellowship Hall for the blanket tying event. (This will be done on Saturday, Feb. 21)
5. Help on Sunday, February 22nd 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, Allison Newman at allisonknewman@yahoo.com, Amanda Rokke

at rokke.amanda@gmail.com, Mallory Herbsleb, Sarah Capps, or Brenda Johnston.



FLEECE BLANKET SUNDAY FEBRUARY 22ND

**Join us for St. Peter's Annual Fleece Blanket Sunday.
We will make fleece blankets for the patients of
MercyOne Hospitals and the IHYC
(Iowa Homeless Youth Center in Des Moines).**

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!

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.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING JANUARY 8 , 2025

Pastor's Report:

- December is a busy month with all the various ministries associated with Advent and Christmas seasons. It was busy, but also very good in regards to our various ministries.
- Christmas Eve is one of our biggest worship times of the year. The 4:00 pm worship is still the largest with overflow seating needed in the fellowship hall. This year the 6 and 9 worship attendance increased to over 100 worshipers present at each of these two services. The candlelight services are always a joy each year.
- Sunday, December 28th, Jill and I both took off. The Bishop's office provided the message for all the churches in the synod to use, so we showed that for worship. It was a non- communion service. Thanks to Beth Hansen for leading the liturgy for worship. There was an issue with the Livestream, so it did not make it online for that Sunday. It was all set up and ready to go for Livestream, but as often happens, there were a couple of glitches. Thankfully the Christmas Eve worship was still online, and the following Sunday Livestream worked.
- We've now entered the season of Epiphany. Lent will come early this year with Ash Wednesday on February 18th, so I am busy preparing for this season with a theme, devotional, Wednesday drama and such.

Faith Formation Report—Jill Capps

- **Confirmation:** I look forward to getting back into our lessons after our Christmas break. The confirmation youth will also make breakfast casseroles & blankets during January for our Service & Fellowship Lesson.
- **Faith Formation:** We will host our Annual MLK Jr Days of Service – Breakfast Casserole Event in January. There are opportunities on Sunday, January 18th and Monday, January 19th for people to sign up to make casseroles. There are also opportunities to donate supplies for this event. Thank you to the Schlenker family for the Thrivent grant that will help support this project.

Financial Update from the Stewardship Committee — Brenda Johnston & Jake Wager

December 2025

Income: \$58,855.66
Expense: \$36,313.13
Net Gain: \$22,542.53

Year to Date December 2025

Income: \$341,229.45
Expense: \$377,171.44
Net Loss: (\$35,941.99)

- General Fund MTD—Dec. 2025, expenses were less than monthly income, thus it finished with a gain of (\$22,542.53).
- General Fund YTD—Dec. 2025, expenses were greater than income, thus it finished with a loss of (\$35,941.99).

- We will hold our annual Fleece blanket event on February 22nd, with blankets going to both MercyOne Hospitals and the IHYC (Iowa Homeless Youth Center).

Youth Report

- Middle School and High School youth groups continue to be going well. MS has 32 youth attending weekly, and HS has 30 youth attending weekly. We had fun Christmas Parties with each group with a theme of Finding Jesus. Many thanks to my amazing volunteers: Mindy Morris, Matt Morris, and Jason Hughes!
- Breakfast Club met December 7th. Thank you to the Maass Family for providing breakfast this month. We continue playing bible games and then read and discuss a Faith Lens article (a weekly article put out by the ELCA). Rob and Heidi Ridnour continue helping me lead this group and I appreciate them very much!
- We have 56 youth and 14 adults headed to Waynesville, North Carolina this summer with TEAMEffort! Waynesville is located 20 miles West of Ashville and was hit by Hurricane Helene in 2024. We will be staying at a church and helping rebuild homes in the town. I have a 56-passenger bus and two 15 passenger vans booked. Please add this Mission Trip 2026 group to your prayers as we plan and prepare for this big trip.
- St. Peter Youth Group has collected \$128.35 from the can recycling program, Droppett. Thank you to all who are donating their cans to support the youth program at St. Peter! Bag tickets and directions can be found on the Service Board in Fellowship Hall if you would like to participate.

Treasurer's Report:

- Discussion only. December financials still under review and summary report not yet available.

Stewardship :

- No action items this month

Building & Grounds

- Snow Removal Contract: adjusted expectations for clearing based on day of the week and scheduled activities, we had 3 major snow events in December that had to be navigated
- Nativity Scene & Lights: Set up and installed new hardware as needed.
- Christmas Eve Preparations: Flyer and lights arranged; assisted with candle setup at the front of the Sanctuary.
- New Christmas Tree: Purchased, set up, taken down, and stored.
- Cleanup: Remaining tables from prior events taken to the landfill.
- HVAC Documentation: Created spreadsheet and PDF of all units with locations, ages (where known), and replacement tags; uploaded to Google Drive.
- Signage: Currently gathering options and quotes for new signage.
- Acton Item: Update on Shed: this is going to a Spring project, used to train mission group students on how to use tools. Conversation around the need to create a policy for garage usage and storage. Building & Grounds will work with Lauri to create this.

Education:

- Storage shelves built and used to organize lesson totes.

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.

- Action Item: Prep Party on January 25th after 10:30 service to begin prepping next year's totes.
- Action Item: Move mini golf into the storage room until the garage work is completed.

Evangelism:

- Christmas cookies for after the Sunday school program was a big success! We froze some and continue to use.
- Action Item: decision if we want a meal for Annual Meeting. Decision is "no", we will just make sure to have plenty of snacks.
- Action Item: if we want to do the Farmers Market again this summer, how early do we need to sign up and how? Yes-Evangelism will work to set up a schedule for this.

Worship & Music :

- The wooden cross needs to be up by Ash Wednesday, Feb 18—will work with Building and Grounds
- We will go to one Sunday service on May 3 this year. Sunday School ends on April 26- all kids will sing and carnival will be held that morning.

Old Business

- Date for semi-annual Congregation Meeting: Sunday, February 8
- A reminder for 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. This is related to what the council might recommend for memorial funds if something is not designated.
- **Annual Reports due by January 9 - refer to email from Lauri**

New Business:

- Council Structure: The council structure is an outcome of the updates to our revised constitution. 2nd reading of the constitution at the Feb 8 semi-annual congregation meeting. Discussion on the structure and how it would work was constructive. Provide inputs to Steve and he will update for additional review. Agreement to council consisting of 5 members plus pastor with 2 of the members as At Large positions and 3 of the members from Exec and Pastor.
- "Year in Review" proposal: Not planning to do this for the Feb 8 semi-annual meeting. Instead discussed having the summary list of the committee 'project' areas summarized in the document that is also summarized on the At Large Option Committees. The idea for the summary list is to help others in the congregation understand how we would set up the committees with volunteers for areas of interest. Inputs being provided to Steve as several had some questions and comments. We have to keep it sustainable.
- Signage: Discussed the options Jared received for the signage. More to do for good examples and what we can have positioned for both entrances (off of James and one off of 11th). The majority of the cost of stone signs is masonry. Input to option to limit the stone and have less masonry cost. Jared also reviewed the sign with ordinances for the city. We want to include lighting for the signs too.

Local Mission Donation: Grimes Storehouse