

The Voice



From the Desk of Pastor Mark:

Driving to my daughter's track meet last week, I was listening to an interesting story on NPR. The NPR reporter was interviewing two different Iranian born American citizens. The first one was against the war in Iran. I missed most of this person's interview; but at the end when challenged on her view, she had a solid defense for her position against the war. The next woman interviewed was very happy for the war. She spoke of her hopes for the Iranian regime to be overthrown. She too, when challenged by the reporter, had well thought out and compelling reasons for her position. It was a reminder for me on how the many issues of the day facing our country and world are rarely as black and white as they are often described to be. It was also a

reminder of how we can get caught up in our own echo chambers.

I've been hearing the term echo chambers used more and more over the past couple years. Echo chambers have to do with the information loops we find ourselves in. Social media and news apps are set up with algorithms. Once we click on, read, or listen to one story, the algorithm records it and then finds more articles or videos with similar information. After a while the information we are receiving on our news apps or social media are all with the same opinion. The stories continue to feed more into our own beliefs. This eventually makes us dig our heels into our beliefs. We can't believe someone would think anything differently. We

IN THIS ISSUE:

- ◇ *Holy Week/Easter Schedules*
- ◇ *Easter Egg Hunt*
- ◇ *Pancake Breakfast*
- ◇ *Sunday School Carnival*
- ◇ *Fill the Bus*
- ◇ *Confirmation Orientation*
- ◇ *Dessert & Devotion*
- ◇ *VBS Save the Date*
- ◇ *Lunch Abroad*

IN EVERY ISSUE:

- ◇ *Youth Group Calendar*
- ◇ *Grimes Storehouse Donation Ideas*
- ◇ *Volunteer Sign-Up Info*
- ◇ *Stewardship Update*
- ◇ *Church Council Minutes*
- ◇ *WELCA 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, 3rd, & 5th Wednesdays of April.

Middle School Youth Group meets the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of April.

Breakfast Club for 7th-12th graders meets April 12.

The Youth Mission Trip Meeting will be April 26.



ST PETER
LUTHERAN CHURCH

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

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

wonder how other people can be so ignorant and naïve. No wonder our country is so polarized.

Jesus heals a man born blind in John 9. After healing him, the community can't believe it. They can't believe that it was the same man. They can't get past their own belief of the impossibility of someone being born blind later gaining sight. The community brings the man to the Pharisees. The Pharisees couldn't believe it either. The Pharisees couldn't get past the belief that miracles couldn't happen on the sabbath. Since Jesus healed the man on the sabbath he must not be from God and able to perform a miracle. The community and Pharisees had their minds closed to new possibilities. This is a good reminder for me, for us, to be open to new things. A reminder to be open to new ideas, new discoveries, new possibilities. A reminder to be open to what God can do. It doesn't mean complicated topics will suddenly become crystal clear. In fact, it may just make them more confusing, less black and white as we'd like. That's okay though, I believe. All the more reason to keep learning, praying, and trusting that God is with us, and for us, and will help us discern a path forward.

Gathered to Grow. Sent to Serve.

Pastor Mark

Coming Up at St. Peter

Holy Week

Holy Week & Easter Schedule

April 2—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. **Maundy Thursday worship is at 6:30 p.m.**

April 3—Good Friday is the day on which Jesus was crucified. 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. Romans 5:8 – “But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” St. Peter Lutheran will be remembering Christ's suffering and death for the forgiveness of our sins at our **Good Friday Worship Service on April 3 at 6:30 p.m.**

April 5—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 **April 5 at 6:30 a.m., 9:00 a.m., or 10:30 a.m.**

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.

Every Month:

Men's Group: 1st Sunday at 7PM; check Facebook for the most recent info! There will not be Men's Group on April 5 due to Easter.

Bible Study: 2nd & 4th Thursdays at 1:00PM

Book Club: 2nd Sunday at 6:30PM
Apr. 12: Education by Tara Westover

All Sunday School children sing April 26 at 10:30 a.m. Worship!

Easter Egg Hunt

We invite you to join us on Saturday, April 4, at 10:00 a.m. for an outdoor Easter Egg Hunt at St. Peter - all ages of kids are welcome! In order to plan and make sure we have enough eggs for everyone, please sign up one spot for each child who will be participating. We will also be providing grab & go breakfast items for those in attendance.

If you would like to volunteer with the egg hunt (youth can earn silver cord or NHS hours), please contact Jill at faithformation@stpeterofgrimes.org



Easter Pancake Breakfast

The youth will serve a pancake breakfast on Easter Sunday, April 5, from 7:00 – 8:30 a.m. Free will donations support St. Peter's youth ministry and the 2026 Youth Mission Trip to Waynesville, NC. We invite you to join us in fellowship on Easter morning for this celebratory breakfast!

Sunday School Carnival & Children Sing April 26

The Sunday School carnival will be April 26! The carnival will take place during the Sunday School hour of 9:15 a.m.-10:15 a.m. Parents/Guardians are encouraged to attend, and we will be serving a light breakfast for all during this time. **Children will also practice their music and then sing during the 10:30 service on that day.**

Fill the Bus Fundraiser

Help our Mission Trip youth raise money for our bus/van ride to Waynesville, North Carolina, this summer. Grab a youth picture from the board (keep the non-laminated one for yourself); put them in a seat; and donate \$25, \$50, or \$100 to help cover the cost of the bus trip. Over the next couple of months, pray for the youth you picked as they prepare to love and serve others. Donations can be made by cash, check, or Venmo (Memo- Fill the Bus).



Lunch Abroad with Pastor Mark

Who: All are welcome

What: Enjoy good food, good conversations, and good fun. Pastor Mark will share some information on the Christian church and other facts of the country through fun trivia questions. See how much you know (or what you can learn) about a different country and how you like their food.

When: 11:30 a.m. Tuesday, Apr. 21

Where: Puerto Rico Restaurant, 6611 University Ave., Unit 101, Windsor Heights

Why: Fun way to get together with other members while trying new food and learning something about our neighbors from other countries and cultures.

How Much: Each person will be responsible for paying their own meal. Check their website puertoricoiowa.com for pricing for pricing.

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

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.



Save the Date!

Join us June 21st-25th
from 6pm-8pm
for VBS at St. Peter!

VBS is open to youth who will be 4 years old by Sept 15, 2026 through those entering 5th grade in the fall of 2026.

Confirmation Orientation

We are excited to invite youth that will be entering 7th grade in the fall, along with their parents, to Confirmation Orientation on Wednesday, May 13, at 6:00 p.m. You will learn more about our Confirmation program, submit registration forms, and have your questions answered. Please email Jill at faithformation@stpeterofgrimes.org and let her know if you will be attending. *Youth older than 7th grade who have not yet started Confirmation are welcome to attend as well.



WELCA Dessert & Devotion

The women of St. Peter are welcome to join WELCA for a Dessert & Devotion on April 14 from 6:30-7:30 p.m. Snacks will be provided. Come to enjoy faith and fellowship!

Pastoral Acts

Dominic Sampson, son of Anthony and Tara Sampson, was born on Nov. 28, 2025, in Des Moines, IA. Dominic was baptized at St. Peter Lutheran Church in Grimes on Mar. 1, 2026, by Rev. Mark Schlenker. Shay Hyde is Dominic's baptism sponsor.

Doran Reed, son of Doran and Sarah Jane Reed, was born on Oct. 15, 1946, in Des Moines, Iowa. He was baptized at St. Peter Lutheran Church on Mar. 15, 2026, by Rev. Mark Schlenker. Barbara Reed is his baptism sponsor.

We support the Grimes Storehouse Food Pantry!

Our April & May focus will be:



Kids' Breakfast & Lunch



Bring in donations of peanut butter, jelly, boxed cereal, and shelf stable juices.

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

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!



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING MARCH 5 , 2025

Pastor's Report:

- Semi-annual meeting on the 8th had some really good discussion on the new council/committee structure, which passed. The task ahead now will be working on breaking the committees down into workable tasks, and then identifying people to fill the roles.
- Youth Valentine dinner was on the 15th. I heard numerous positive comments about the dinner, and it was a success financially as well for a fundraiser. Thanks to Bambi and all the youth and adult leaders who helped make it such a success, as well as everyone who came out in support.
- Blanket Sunday on the 22nd was also a success with 167 blankets being made. Thanks to Jill and her team of leaders who put the work into making this a successful ministry.
- Ash Wednesday was on the 18th, which kicked off our season of Lent. Wednesday soup suppers are off to a good start, as well as the worship services. We're using the Holden Prayer Service on Wednesday's worship.
- I will be presiding at my niece's wedding near Atlanta, GA on March 21st. My family will be driving down there over spring break. Pastor Katharine Yarnell will be leading worship on the 22nd.

Faith Formation Report—Jill Capps

- **Confirmation:** During Lent confirmation small groups meet to share a meal and work on a lesson together since fellowship hall is filled with Lenten soup suppers. Our confirmation program continues to grow with another new student joining us in February.
- I will meet with our fifteen 8th graders and their parents for a Faith Statement workshop on March 4th. The youth will prepare Faith Statements that they will share with the other 8th graders & families on April 29th. Affirmation of Baptism will take place at the 9:00am service on May 3rd.
- **Faith Formation:** Volunteers completed 167 blankets in February, bringing our 13-year total to 2,509 blankets. John and I delivered blankets to IHYC on Tuesday, March 3rd; they were very thankful for the donation. A big thank you to Dave Eilers who will deliver blankets to MercyOne over the next several weeks.
- The St. Peter Easter Egg hunt will be held on Saturday, April 4th at 10:00a.m. Registration is required since space is limited. Once St. Peter families have had the opportunity to sign up, I will open the registration to members of the community. High school volunteers will help stuff the eggs.
- **VBS:** The VBS curriculum has arrived, and I will begin recruiting volunteers over the next several weeks. Registration will open following Spring Break.
- **Technology/Social Media:** Reminder to follow/like St. Peter social media on Facebook & Instagram, it's a great way to reach new followers. We recently had someone start following us after seeing a shared post and later they attended

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

February 2026

Income: \$39,423.07

Expense: \$31,649.90

Net Gain: \$7,773.17

Year to Date February 2026

Income: \$64,538.01

Expense: \$61,017.45

Net Gain: \$3,520.56

- General Fund MTD—Feb. 2026, expenses were less than monthly income, thus it finished with a gain of \$7,773.17.
- General Fund YTD—Feb. 2026, expenses are less than income, thus it finished with a gain of \$3,520.56.

worship at St. Peter. It's the cheapest & easiest way to share about St. Peter without saying a word.

Youth Report

- Middle School and High School youth groups continue to go well, averaging 30 per group.
- Breakfast Club met February 1st. Thank you to the Wager Family for providing breakfast this month. Thank you to Rob and Heidi Ridnour for helping out each month!
- We now have 60 youth and 14 adults headed to Waynesville, North Carolina this summer!
- We held our first fundraiser, the 31st Annual Valentine's Spaghetti Dinner, on Sunday, February 15, and had a great turnout! We made \$4,956! Thank you to all the congregation who came out to support the youth. And a huge shout out to all the adult chaperones who helped make the night run smoothly!
- We held our first two Lent Soup Suppers in February and served 122 at each meal. Thank you to all the parents who help supply the food each week and to the youth who serve each week. I appreciate your help!
- St. Peter Youth Group has collected \$186.15 from recycling 3,723 cans through 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:

- Discussed and approved December 2025 financials
- Discussed and approved January 2026 financials

Stewardship :

- Working on arranging tellers for Lenten/Easter season

Building & Grounds

- Replaced the deadbolt on the garage with a new electronic keypad lock.
- Replaced over 30 light bulbs throughout the sanctuary and fellowship hall.
- Repaired the ADA toilet in the women's restroom to restore full functionality- wasn't flushing and water connection was leaking. Replaced kit in tank and water line connection
- Working on selection of our final vendor for the new monument sign. We'll be moving forward with Monument Sign or FastSign and now need to clarify the next steps for submitting the deposit and beginning production.

Education:

- Ed team has started to look ahead for Sunday School next year (class sizes, teachers etc).
- Upcoming Events include the Easter Egg Hunt on April 4th, which will transition back to Jill/youth coordinator
- Jill has started a very helpful graphic to lay out the organizational structure moving forward. When looking at the new teams, it will be important to know what items/events fall to which teams, and this would be a great, streamlined way to do that.

Evangelism:

- Approved for a \$250 Thrivent Grant for Farmers' Market supplies. I have ordered a bags game and it arrived this week. Plans to paint and apply logo by June. Next purchase is a navy tailgate tent and prizes. Submitted sign-up for Governor's Day Parade, waiting for approval of requested dates
- Jill shared a list of upcoming events for fellowship (Thanks Jill!). Most are areas we will staff serving the kitchen and food

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.



is provided (Last day of SS 4/26, Confirmation 5/3).

- May 10th is Senior Sunday, on our radar to ensure we have a celebratory cake
- Easter Egg Hunt - Jill is working with Ridnour's to obtain all needed supplies
- Special thanks to Cyndi Meggison, Mary Stocks, Mindy & Cameron Franzen, and French family for serving fellowship!

Worship & Music :

- Lenten dramas going well
- Palm Sunday decorating will be Saturday, March 28 at 9am, and decorations will be taken down after worship. No donkey due to owner being unavailable
- Maundy Thursday: 10-12 volunteers needed to strip altar; decorate for Good Friday after
- Good Friday: decorate for Easter after. Take decorations down Sunday, Apr. 19 after worship
- Discussed possibility of hymn sings and contemporary hymns during Sunday worship occasionally
- Discussion on new council structure and recruiting volunteers

Old Business

- Garden shed update: temperature of the ground has to be in the 50's to move forward with concrete. The garage shed will be a project for the Mission Trip Kids to work on as a training opportunity

New Business:

- Executive Council is still working on clarifying roles and responsibilities of the new council members. There will be three people on the nominating committee, who will help identify potential council members. We also want people who are currently on council to have an opportunity to serve in the new "at-large" roles, if they are interested. We know that we need at least one executive member, and two at-large. Current council members will work on what this can look like so everyone is on the same page and have a plan for what it will look like by May.
- Lots of conversation around how to promote changes with the congregation as a whole, and how to continue getting people more engaged with the church. How do we use this opportunity to re-energize ourselves as a group and to continue moving forward. How can Council help the church move in one direction, and to encourage families to be more consistent with attendance and giving? How can we be more intentional about recruiting people to serve based on what they have indicated on their Time and Talent sheet?
- Come in March with your committee organization chart that Jill created completed, and be ready to share how Time and Talent sheets can be used to support the needs of your group.
- Each committee can create a "Do You Know" set of informational slides

Local Mission Donation: Dementia Friendly Iowa

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE WELCA MEETING MARCH 17, 2026

Old Business

- Review subscriptions of Christ in Our Home and Gather
- Discussed graduated seniors gifts postage support
- CISS partnership update: Michelle meeting with staff for additional details. Hope to serve on regular date and time; volunteers will need training. Discussed Child Safe Policy in regards to this
- Constitution/By-Laws: remove outdated Mission Stewardship role; Heidi & Mindy will continue to review

New Business

- Adult private baptism held in March along with an infant baptism

Upcoming

- Pieces of WELCA: will include small prizes
- Easter for Mosaic: Amanda will purchase and deliver
- Craft/Vendor show cancelled due to lack of interest

Finance

- Allocated budget of \$6,500 for 2026
- Current balance of \$8,168
- Discussion: how long to keep paper records