

Wonderfully Absurd

So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom His favor rests." Luke 2:4-14

I think it's safe to say that, at this time of the year, most Americans have at least heard excerpts of the account of Christ's birth. Whether it was from Linus in the closing scene of the Charlie Brown Christmas special or from something they read or heard on social media, I'm certain that most people have some take on what Christmas is really all about...but it doesn't necessarily mean that they've heard the whole truth.

Which still makes me wonder.... For the first-time hearer, I wonder if any part of the account of Christ's birth seems...well...a little bit absurd. (Yes...your pastor just used the word "absurd" to describe what some might think when they first hear how God chose to enter into this world, but don't run me out of town just yet.)

In his book titled "God Came Near," Christian author Max Lucado shared about a time when the question of the absurdity of Christmas was first brought to his attention by someone he met while participating in a conference. In fact, after hearing of the account of Jesus' birth, life, and crucifixion, this particular gentleman boldly posed the following questions. "You mean to tell me that God became a baby, was born in a sheep's stable...was raised in a blue-collar home...never wrote any books or held any offices, yet he called Himself the Son of God...and asked to be regarded as the Creator of the Universe?"

"And this crucifixion story...he was betrayed by his own people...and was executed like a common junkyard thief?"

"And according to what's written, after three days in the grave he was resurrected and made appearances to over five hundred people?" "And all this was to show that God loves his people, forgives their sins, and provides the way to heaven?"

"Doesn't that all sound rather....absurd?"

Wow! Questions like these not only sound challenging and somewhat threatening, but they also sound a little "unholy." To fill the holiest of seasons with unholy questions seems absurd in and of itself.

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But I wonder...how many people in our family or community circles want to ask the same questions as that man who was bold enough to ask these things out loud? Because, when you stop to really look at the Biblical account of God entering into this world in the person of Jesus Christ, it might sound a bit absurd to the first time hearer. And the reason has more so to do with why God chose to do this in the first place.

I mean...think about this. Understanding what God did on that first Christmas when He sent His only Son to become one of us in order to redeem us is one thing. And the same is true when it comes to understanding the reason for Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection. For those of us who have been Christians since the time we were claimed by Christ in Holy Baptism, we can understand the purpose for His sacrifice in order to take our sins to the Cross and give His life as a ransom for ours. But why He did this is a little more difficult to comprehend. In fact, forgive me for my bluntness, but why God did what He did is something that is hard to fully grasp and, yes, for people like us it can even sound a little absurd.

It simply goes beyond human reason to be able to fully comprehend why God would enter into this world – knowing that He would be rejected, despised, and that, even some 2000 years later, we would still continue to do the same to Him in so many ways. Likewise, it's difficult to truly comprehend why He would still choose to save a man like me – people like us – when He could see each and every one of us for who we really are – sins and all.

You see...the true message of Christmas, where the Son of God entered into the world that He created – knowing that the world would reject Him – doesn't always make sense. The perfect, holy, and righteous One of heaven leaving His rightful throne in order to rescue us from death, the devil, and the self-destruction of our sins can even sound a little "absurd." And the reason? Because...who can comprehend the kind of love that would purposely and intentionally set into motion a rescue mission like this? Who can comprehend the enormity and immensity of a love for us that would have God take on flesh like ours in order to save people like us?

It simply doesn't always make sense and, yes, it can even sound a little absurd to people who have a hard time understanding the fullness of God's sacrificial and never-ending love for His people.

But, the truth remains that, whether or not it always makes sense to us, He still did it. No matter how absurd God's plan of salvation seems to our feeble ability to reason and make sense of it all, thank God that He did it... and thank God that we get to once again see the fullness of His love in the meekness of a manger in the midst of a messy stable outside of Bethlehem.

And while we're at it, let's thank God that He did this for you and for me out of a love that is abundantly and absurdly amazing.

God's love is absurd according to the ways of this world, but let's thank Him for once again turning everything upside down and INSIDE OUT by demonstrating how wonderfully absurd it is.

Have a blessed Christmas as you rejoice in the fact that the King of kings and Lord of lords has arrived for you.



Pastor Wenzelburger

***SPECIAL VOTER'S MEETING*: Sunday, December 10 at 12:30 p.m. This meeting will be regarding the Calling of a new Associate Pastor of Discipleship.**

Worship

Midweek Advent Services

Wednesday, December 6 - December 20

Traditional - 3:30 p.m., Modern - 7:00 p.m.

**December 20 - Advent Christmas Programs at 3:30 p.m. & 7:00 p.m. No Modern Service*

Sunday, December 17 - Service of Lessons & Carols at 8:00 a.m. & 9:30 a.m.

(Regular services Saturday, 6:00 p.m. & Sunday, 11:00 a.m.)

Saturday, December 23 - No Worship Service

Christmas Eve

Sunday, December 24

Modern - 11:00 a.m., 3:00 p.m. (candlelight)

Traditional - 1:00 p.m., 7:00 p.m. (candlelight),
9:00 p.m. (candlelight)

Christmas Day

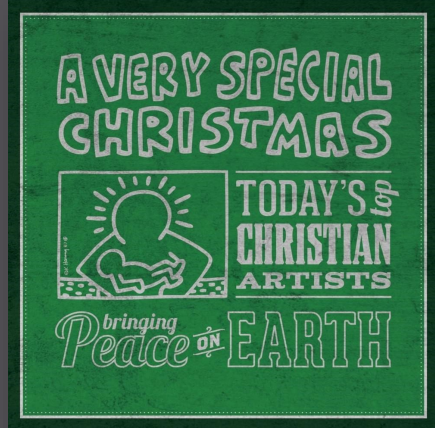
Monday, December 25 - 10:00 a.m.

New Year's Weekend

Saturday, December 30 - 6:00 p.m.

New Year's Eve, Sunday, December 31 - 8:00 a.m.,
9:30 a.m., 11:00 a.m.

New Year's Day, Monday, January 1 - No Worship Service



Robert's Music Spotlight

This month I wanted to share with you the song, "He Has Come for Us (God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen)" by Meredith Andrews. It is that wonderful time of year where we are surrounded by reminders of Jesus' birth. As believers we are honored by the deeper meaning of what this season is truly about. This time of year brings with it all the new and classic Christmas music alike. While this song may be familiar in that it uses large portions of, "God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen," it has the addition of a chorus. This chorus magnifies the truth that, Emmanuel, the hope of mankind, came so that we could have life anew. May tidings of comfort and joy find you this Christmas season as we celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior. (Luke 2:8-14) Merry Christmas!

Robert W. Costa
Director Of Modern Worship

"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"

O Emmanuel, our king and our Lord, the anointed for the nations and their Savior: Come and save us, O Lord our God.
antiphon for December 23

Greetings in Christ! It may be a little early for me to say "Happy New Year," though we are very much at the beginning of a new year! The First Sunday in Advent, which we observe this year on December 3, is the first Sunday of the church year. Fittingly, in Advent we mark the beginning of the life of Jesus Christ on earth, as we focus on themes regarding the coming of Christ. Further, at Christmas we celebrate Christ's birth, followed by His ministry in Epiphany. In Advent, we can focus on the coming of Christ in three senses: **Past** (the Old Testament prophecies), **Present** (Word and Sacrament) and **Future** (the Last Day). We want to be prepared for the coming of Christ and are eager for His coming!

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One of the great Advent hymns known to many throughout Christianity is “O, Come, O, Come, Emmanuel.” We will be singing this hymn in its entirety at our 3:30 p.m. midweek service on December 13, along with the first stanza at our Lessons & Carols services on Sunday, December 17 at 8:00 a.m. and 9:30 a.m. While the hymn that we know today was only matched with its melody, *Veni Emmanuel* (a 15th-century French Franciscan processional) in the 19th century, the hymn itself is a paraphrase of the “O” Antiphons of the eighth century.

The word *antiphon* is frequently encountered in worship: they are in essence “refrains” which are sung after and/or during a Psalm, and are usually taken from a Bible verse or other historic text.

The “O” Antiphons address Jesus Christ with seven titles from the Old Testament: Wisdom, Adonai (Lord), Root of Jesse, Key of David, Dayspring, King of the Nations, and Emmanuel. In the eighth century, it was custom to have daily services in the seven days before Christmas Eve. Before and after the *Magnificat* (Mary’s song, “My Soul Magnifies the Lord”), the assigned O Antiphon would be sung.

Centuries later, these antiphons were paraphrased into verses which became the hymn, “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel,” with the final antiphon (O Emmanuel) becoming the first stanza. The hymn was then translated from Latin to English by British hymnist John Mason Neale in 1851, and was then paired with the tune *Veni Emmanuel*. Since then, “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” has appeared in most major hymnals.

During this Advent season, we may appreciate this hymn as a wonderful expression of text and tune for Advent, expressing the joy that our Lord has come to us. As we sing these words, we recall the salvation God has prepared for us in Jesus Christ, and we pray that we may be ever watchful for His coming to enlighten and deliver us.

In His Service,

Charlie Russell, Director of Traditional Music

“TREASURES FOR TOMORROW” – BUILDING UP THE ENDOWMENT FUND!

Did you know...St. Peter Church and School has an Endowment Fund? The goal of the Endowment is to raise at least \$500,000, and then from that point on the earnings and interest can be used for many great ministry endeavors. Beginning in 2023, the Finance Board proposed that every St. Peter Church and School parishioner, from one year old to 100+, consider making-a-donation on his/her birthday towards the Endowment Fund. A suggestion was made that children and adults would donate the same amount of funds per their current age (i.e. a child 5 years old would donate \$5, an adult 50 years old would donate \$50). Proportionally, each year the birthday donations would grow \$1 per person. Of course, any monetary gift is welcome.

In the offering envelopes mailed to your home each packet will have a special “Birthday” envelope for gifts directed to the Endowment Fund. All donations in this envelope will be applied to the Endowment Fund. Of course, you do not need to have a specific envelope to donate to the Endowment Fund. Endowment Fund gifts can arrive in many forms...through Memorial and Thank Offerings, in plain envelopes and no envelope at all! Every month we receive birthday offerings that are going directly to the Endowment Fund. As of the writing of this article, the fund has received \$17,582.00. Recently, a portion of these funds (\$16,500) was transferred to Church Extension Fund and put in a 1-year fixed note to garner a higher interest yield. Won’t you consider adding your “Birthday” gift(s) too! The Finance Board is excited to share that our St. Peter Endowment Fund is growing!

2024 OFFERING ENVELOPES

The 2024 offering envelopes will be directly mailed to your home. In late December, the first of six packets should arrive through the mail. In fact, bi-monthly, you will receive a packet containing two months' worth of envelopes.

- Please contact the Church Office and ask to speak to Frieda Schluessler or email her at fschluessler@splcs.net if you have any questions about offering envelopes.
- Please contact the Finance Office and ask to speak to Maria Morelli or email her at mmorelli@splcs.net if you have any questions about electronic giving.

2024 STEWARDSHIP COMMITMENT CARDS

2024 Stewardship Commitment Cards are available in the Church Office and at the Welcome Desk in the Narthex. They are also available on the website to print or to fill out in a Google form. We encourage you to prayerfully return your cards or fill out the online form by the end of the year. Online forms are available at this web address: <https://stpetermacomb.com/church/serve-learn-grow-serve/stewardship/>

HOLIDAY OFFICE CLOSURES – DECEMBER and YEAR-END GIVING INFORMATION

The Church Office will be closed on **Christmas Day, December 25**, and **Tuesday, December 26**. The office will reopen on Wednesday, December 27 through Friday, December 29, to receive year-end charitable contributions. Contributions received or postmarked by December 31, will be applied to your 2023 financial statement. Please remember that if you give online, it takes several days for these transactions to clear and actually hit St. Peter's bank account. If a contributor wants their ACH or credit card donation posted in 2023, they must appear on St. Peter's bank statement by December 31 (not after).

IN THE KNOW!—IN 2024, OUR ONLINE GIVING PLATFORM WILL BE CHANGING! HERE ARE SOME THINGS YOU WILL WANT TO KNOW:

- The “**Giving**” tab on our website (stpetermacomb.com) will now direct you to the new giving platform.
- To access our previous giving platform, there is a button at the top of the “In The Know” page on our website.
- Please make every effort to cancel your recurring online giving through our previous platform and set it up with the new platform by **January 1, 2024**.
- To sign up for the new giving platform, please click the “Giving” tab on our website and create an account.
- If you have any questions about these steps, please contact Maria Morelli at mmorelli@splcs.net.

Advent Devotional booklets from Lutheran Hour Ministries are available at the Welcome Desk for the next few weeks. Please feel free to pick one (or more) up for your family!

Service

PRAISE REPORT

The Meijer Simply Give program resulted in \$3,470 in Meijer gift cards which will be used to supplement the donated food we receive. Praise God! The Meijer store at 23 Mile and Gratiot has supported us for almost nine years and is a true blessing to the Pantry. Thank you for your continued support of this program.

Thank you to all that participated in the Truck or Treat Food Drive. The collected items will help supplement the food boxes given to local families each month.



Thanks and praise to those who have generously shared their Thrivent Action Grants with the Pantry. These funds were used to purchase many supplies, food carts, and boxes which help us operate more efficiently. There's still time to direct your Thrivent Choice Dollars to the Pantry. If you have questions or need assistance, please contact your Thrivent representative or Karen at karenwiegand@gmail.com.

Food Drives All Year Long

Hosting a Food Drive is a great opportunity for any Boy or Girl Scout troop, sports team, or classroom to fulfill their community service obligations. We can help by providing a list of our most needed items. Please email Karen at karenwiegand@gmail.com if your group would like to host.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Gleaner Food Drive

The Gleaner sponsored Kroger Food Drive is one of the BIGGEST food drive events for community pantries. Two local Kroger stores will participate on Saturday, January 13, and Sunday, January 14, from 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Many volunteers are needed to properly work these two locations: 26 Mile & Van Dyke and 23 Mile & Hayes. Volunteers can sign up for as little as two hours or all day. Students are encouraged to participate, and community service hours can accumulate very quickly! Numerous volunteers are needed to hand out fliers inside the store, not outside in the cold! Past programs have received 70+ shopping carts of food. Volunteers are also needed to pick up food, sort, and shelf food. A SignUpGenius will be available for volunteers soon. If you have questions or want to discuss a group activity, please email Karen at karenwiegand@gmail.com.



Please visit our [SignUpGenius](https://www.signupgenius.com) for other upcoming volunteer opportunities.

- **Truck Unloading:** December 6 and December 20 from 9:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. Volunteers may be asked to help empty a pick-up truck or SUV, date boxes, and put items on shelves.
- **Food Distribution:** December 7 from 4:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. and December 21 from 11:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. Volunteers may be asked to prepare produce boxes, bag frozen items, help load cars, and clean areas.
- **Box Packing** is always available for families, teams, groups, or individuals. Most Monday and Wednesday evenings from 6:15 - 7:15 p.m.

Yours in Christ,
Karen Foust, Chairperson
(586) 491-0652
karenwiegand@gmail.com

For more information, please visit hopeforthehungrypantry.org.



CHRISTMAS DECORATING: On Saturday, December 2, please plan to help decorate the Sanctuary and put up the outdoor nativity. We will meet in the Sanctuary at 9:00 a.m. With some music, laughter, and some willing hands, the work is made light and we'll be done around 10:30 a.m. We especially need some extra men to help with the heavier jobs. Please call or text Vickie Wangelin at (586) 749-3325 if you can help. What goes up, must come down, so we will be putting the indoor trees and the outdoor nativity away on Saturday, January 13, at 9:00 a.m. We sincerely appreciate everyone who is willing to come help as it adds so much to our Christmas celebration! May God bless you and your families as you prepare your hearts to honor the birth of our Lord Jesus.

Board of Trustees and Altar Guild

The Christian Growth Board needs your help! We need volunteers to help clean up the doughnuts and coffee after the 11:00 a.m. service on Sundays. (Approximate time is 12:30 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.) If you can spare some time to keep this service rolling, we would appreciate your help!

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30E094BADA2DA1FA7-44641920-sunday/118641298#/>

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Christian Growth Board Members:

Liz Kukuk
(586) 623-7100
Lizboik@yahoo.com

Lisa Ventimiglio
(586) 405-9272
lventimiglio@splcs.net

American Red Cross Blood Drive Sunday, December 10

Blood and blood products are in constant demand. When you become a donor, you help save a life. On Sunday, December 10, from 7:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., St. Peter will be hosting a blood drive in Kaiser Hall, which is located by entering Door #12 on the south side of the building.

We ask you to prayerfully consider becoming a lifesaver by signing up through redcrossblood.org or contacting Ann Meerschaert at (586) 524-0469.

Thank you!

PTL School Fundraisers:

Join us **Tuesday, December 12**, at Tap & Barrel Grill located on Van Dyke in Shelby Twp. from 4:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. for our December restaurant night out! A portion of the evening's sales will be donated back to our church and school. We hope to see you there!

It's back! The Gala Committee is excited to announce that the annual **St. Peter Macomb Spring Gala & Auction** will be held **Friday, March 1, 2024**, at The Palazzo Grande. While the committee is hard at work planning a memorable evening, we can't do it without YOU! This is our largest fundraising event of the year, and the proceeds help the school and church to minister to our students, teachers, staff, and entire church community.

We're looking for sponsors and donors to help make this event successful. If you own or know of a business interested in sponsorship opportunities, or if you are looking for information on how to donate items/experiences, email us at stpetergala@splcs.net. Additional information including ticket pricing and sales dates is coming soon!



CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS Would you like to place an order for a Christmas Poinsettia in memory or in honor of someone or just for blessings received? These poinsettias from Hessel's Greenhouse will be used to decorate our chancel and may be picked up after the Christmas Day Service. The cost is \$15.00 and must be paid for when ordered. Please make checks payable to Women's Ministry. The order forms are available in the Church Office or on the Welcome Desk. They must be turned into the Church Office by **Monday, December 4**. Please call Vickie Wangelin (586) 749-3325 if you have any questions.



Thank You...

Thank you to all who wished me a happy birthday, and for all those who gifted St. Peter with a Thank Offering for my birthday. God Bless, Bill Esch

As 2023 is drawing to a close, Women's Ministry/LWML and the Quilting ladies want to thank you for all the donations of material and supplies to make the quilts, and also the various items for the Wellness Kits and Baby Kits. We have sent 83 boxes out to be shipped to various countries. We want to thank Bob Kogelmann for taking them down for us again this year. He is truly a humble servant! In a couple of months, we will be receiving a list from LWR as to where these items are being sent.

Our Evergreen Zone LWML ladies assembled 100 Health Kits at the Fall Retreat. These were picked up by Roseville Fireman, Mike Schwartz, who explained that they will be given to homeless individuals, those living in shelters and families who have had a home fire and lost everything.

Continue to save your lotions, soaps, etc., as well as used sheets and blankets, cancelled postage stamps and used eyeglasses for our various mission projects.

Again, thank you for your generous donations! *"In as much as you have done it unto one of the least of these thy brethren, you have done it unto me."* - JESUS

Questions, contact either MaryAnn Demetrakeas or Joyce Schwark.

Again, we sincerely thank you,
Women's Ministry/LWML/Quilters

Thank you so much for your prayers, cards, and encouraging words during my hip replacement surgery and recovery. I am so blessed to have such wonderful friends in this St. Peter family.

Love, Gwynn Oberly

Thank you for all your love & support for me and my family during my recovery from my recent surgery...and for all the prayers, cards, phone calls, and meals. We appreciate our St. Peter family very much and are grateful. *The Elliott Family*

The Board of Trustees would like to thank Don & Diane Zienert of Zienert's Sprinklers for winterizing the lawn sprinklers at His Rock Youth Building and the sprinklers on our Church & School grounds.

Memorial Offerings

In loving memory of Don Alter,

a contribution has been given to:

Church Ministry by Dean and Lynn Endlich

In loving memory of Nancy Penny,

a contribution has been given to:

Church Ministry by Donna Eplett

In loving memory of Don Schwark,

a contribution has been given to:

Church Ministry by Charlotte Brohl, Ann Crandall, Greg and Jan Davis, Marie Detlae, Will and Anne Ebel, William Esch, Chris and Katie Eppert, Gail Harm, Ed and Karen Hessell, Neal and Paula Hoegemeyer, Adam and Nicole Hollmann, Robert and Cheryl Jones, Jim and Sue Kaiser, Ruth Klein, Frank and Kathy Kobylarz, Gary and Char Kogelmann, Dean and Lois Kratz, Lyle and Betsy, Mary Lou Moschel, Raymond and Vonda Rahn, Jamie and Amy Roy, Jo Schultz, Dennis Schwark and Family, Norma Schwark, Paul and Melissa Stade, Sunset Elementary, Mr. & Mrs. Jim Theut, Jim and Karen VanSteenkiste

Debt Reduction by Lee and Donna Lambert, Ron and Marilyn Rutz

Endowment Fund by Terry and Rhonda Fiebelkorn, Matt and Diane Miller

Giving Tree by Donna Eplett, Roy and Karen Fagg, Carol Harm, Shelly Fowler, Stan and Marion Krakowski, Shelly Penzien, Mary Rychlewski, Dennis and Paula Schramm, Roy and Joyce Schwark, Gary and Phyllis Stade, Hank and Kim Stallmann, Terry and Jeanette Yonka

Missions and Outreach by Lynn McKinley

Music Ministry Stuart and Mary Arends, Erv and Judy Aufdemberge, Rock and Ann Headrick, Robert and Lori Herbert, Ellen Kelly, Ron and Geri Milliron, Wayne and Virginia Oehmke, Steve and Kim Woodfin

In loving memory of Julie Walters,

a contribution has been given to:

Endowment Fund by Mike and Dawn Bettcher, Wayne and Marie Niemann

Church Ministry by Leroy and Donna Lambert, Rev. and Mrs. Walter Schmidt

Giving Tree by Donna Eplett, Shelly Fowler, Carol Harm, Shelly Penzien, Joyce Kraatz, Stan and Marion Krakowski, Kathy Krause

Music Ministry Karen Gluski, Wayne and Virginia Oehmke

School Ministry by Neal and Paula Hoegemeyer

Thank Offerings

In celebration and thanksgiving for Bill Esch's 90th birthday,

a contribution has been given to:

Buildings and Grounds by Bill and Merlene Thompson

Endowment Fund by Wayne and Marie Niemann

Giving Tree by Bob and Judy Juengel, Dennis and Paula Schramm

In celebration and thanksgiving for Frieda Schluessler's birthday,

a contribution has been given to:

Giving Tree by Neal and Paula Hoegemeyer

For blessings received,

a contribution has been given to:

Endowment Fund by Jim and Cindy Moschel

In thanksgiving for the Harvest Hymn Festival, a contribution has been given to:

Music Ministry by Neal and Paula Hoegemeyer

DID YOU KNOW that you can remember a special occasion or loved one by purchasing flowers for the front of Church? Maybe it's a birthday, anniversary, baptism, wedding, or just a special day to honor someone.

Please sign up in the Church Office. It's easy to do and it will be noted in the weekly bulletin. The cost is \$25. Checks made payable to: *St. Peter Women's Ministry.*

Questions? Please call the Church Office.



Connection



For more information about current and upcoming Bible studies and small groups, please visit stpetermacomb.com

Bible Studies:

Sundays (9:30 a.m.):

- “Foundations: Prayer” led by Chris Oberly
- “Feasts & Festivals” led by Charlie Wolf (Administrative Conference Room)
- “Book of Romans” led by Terry Davis (Fellowship Hall)
- Youth Bible Study, ages 7th - 12th grade, led by Joel and Angela Schepmann (Library)
- Sunday School, ages 3 yr. old - 6th grade

Women in the Word Wednesday Bible Study

Will Meet: 11/29, 12/06, & 12/13
Will NOT Meet: 12/20, 12/27, & 1/03

May God Bless you and your family with a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Bible Study will return 01/10/2024

Enter Door #28 - Large Conference Room

9:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

Questions? Karen Gluski at
gludog2003@yahoo.com or (586) 207-6201

**“Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving.”
Colossians 4:2**



Moms in Prayer - Moms... and women! Come and join us each week as we pray for our children, schools, and community. Groups meet Mondays from 7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. (Zoom), Tuesdays in-person from 8:30 a.m. - 9:30 a.m. at His Rock (doors open at 8:00 a.m.) and Wednesdays from 9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. (Zoom). Please contact Kelly Chirco or Nicki Wargo (nwargo@splcs.net) for more information.

**Moms
in Prayer**
INTERNATIONAL™

LGBT Family and Friends Support Group: Do you have a family member, loved one, or have an acquaintance with someone who is not engaging in a relationship by God’s design? Do you struggle with how to interact with them, not wanting to judge others but to show God’s love and just meet them where they are at? Then the Family and Friends of LGBT Support Group is for you! **We will meet tentatively on the third Thursday of each month at 7:30 p.m. in the Small Conference Room in the Administration Wing.** For questions, please call Carol Poterek at (586) 566-3785.

"Joining Jesus" Sermon Series & Bible Study

*Adapted from Rev. Greg Finke's book titled
"Joining Jesus on His Mission"*

Talking to people about your faith in Jesus can be viewed as a challenge for all kinds of reasons. For one, many of us feel unprepared to simply go out and talk to others about Jesus. To help us refocus on the mission to which we've been called and the mission that Jesus has been on since before the time of His first Advent on the outskirts of Bethlehem, a Sermon Series and Bible Study called "Joining Jesus" will be offered in January and February. In both, practical "how to" witnessing points will be shared so that we, as Christ's people, actively participate in and join Jesus on the mission work He's already doing ... in everyday moments of our lives!

For now, watch for more information for our five-week Bible study that is set to begin on Wednesday, January 10, with the five-week sermon series to follow, beginning on January 14.

DECEMBER WOMEN'S MINISTRY EVENTS

- **COOKIE WALK** – Saturday, December 9, & Sunday, December 10, after each service in the Fellowship Hall. Free-will donation with all proceeds going to the parsonage renovations. Also, we are looking for bakers to donate several dozens of Christmas cookies. Please bring them to Door #1 on Saturday, December 9, between 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. (in disposable containers, please).
- **USED CHRISTMAS DECORATION SALE** – Do you have a number of Christmas decorations that you are looking to donate? Consider bringing them to our "Used Christmas Decoration Sale!" Donations will be accepted on Saturday, December 9, from 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. and then sold during the Cookie Walk on December 9 & 10. Free-will donation with all proceeds going to the parsonage renovations. Please NO large, broken, or non-working items.
- **FREE CARD TABLES** – To open up storage space, the Women's Ministry is looking to find new homes for the used card tables they've had for decades. They will be FREE to anyone and available in the Fellowship Hall during the Cookie Walk on December 9 & 10. First come, first serve.
- **CAROLING** – There will be NO Women's Ministry meeting this month. However, we will be caroling at The Orchards – Armada (Assisted Living building – Pine View) on Thursday, December 14, at 10:30 am. ALL are invited ... MEN as well! We will be going to Papa's Restaurant afterwards at 11:30 a.m. Please let me know if you will be joining us for lunch!

Questions or to RSVP for caroling, please call or text Lois Bellhorn at (586) 770-3002.

**COME AND PREPARE YOUR
HEART AND MIND AS WE
BEGIN THE SEASON
OF ADVENT.**

**The Lutheran North Concert
Band and Concert Choir are
presenting their annual
Christmas Concert at St. Peter
Macomb on Sunday,
December 3 at 2:00 p.m.**

Ideo...Gloria in Excelsis Deo

A concert presented by the
Michigan-Ohio Chorale under the
direction of Erwin Aufdemberge
with Charles Russell, Organist,
and 8 Instruments.

St. Paul Lutheran Church
22915 Greater Mack Avenue
St. Clair Shores

**Sunday, December 17
3:00 p.m.**

Refreshments following concert.

Free-will Offering

Blood Pressure Screening has been
cancelled for Sunday, December 10.
Screening will resume in January.
Practice healthy habits through this
blessed Christmas season!

GriefShare The present 13-week GriefShare session wraps up on Tuesday evening, December 12 and Thursday morning, December 14. The facilitators have faithfully walked this healing journey with several grieving people during this session. We welcome all grieving people to consider attending the next session which begins on Tuesday, January 9, 2024, at 6:30 p.m. and Thursday, January 11, 2024, at 10:00 a.m. The Tuesday and Thursday sessions are identical so you can choose which meeting time works best for you.

We will be hosting another **Surviving the Holidays** meeting on Sunday, December 10, at 2:00 p.m. We know the holidays can be a difficult time when you have that empty chair at the holiday table. This one-time session offers practical ideas to help those hurting get through these trying times. The meeting will be in the Large Conference Room just off the Church Office. Please enter through Door #28.

Just after the new year, we will be offering the one time session **Loss of a Spouse**. We have had several people attend these sessions in the past and we have received many positive comments about this class. Loss of a Spouse will be held on Sunday, January 7, 2024, at 2:00 p.m. We will also meet in the Large Conference Room just off the Church Office. Please enter through Door #28.

If you are aching and grieving the loss of someone dear to you, please consider attending GriefShare, Surviving the Holidays and Loss of a Spouse. Also, please share this information with others who may benefit from these classes. We genuinely wish to walk the journey of healing with all who are hurting. For more information, please contact the Church Office at (586) 781-3434 or Darcel Bennett at (586) 255-7090.

The **Detroit Lutheran Singers** announce their Christmas Concert Series entitled Gloria. Four identical concerts will feature a wide variety of Christmas music, including Rutter's Gloria, songs from around the world, and familiar favorites. As always, the audience is invited to sing the Hallelujah Chorus with the choir as a finale. Come join us at:

- Saturday, Dec. 2, 7:00 p.m.
Christ Our Savior Lutheran Church
14175 Farmington Rd. Livonia, MI
- Sunday, Dec. 3, 3:00 p.m.
Historic Trinity Lutheran Church
1345 Gratiot Ave. Detroit, MI
- Friday, Dec. 8, 7:30 p.m.
St. Paul Lutheran Church
21915 Beech Street Dearborn, MI
- Saturday, Dec. 9, 7:00 p.m.
Ascension Lutheran Church
16935 W 14 Mile Rd. Beverly Hills, MI

Tickets are \$15 general admission, \$10 seniors and students over 12. They may be purchased online at detroitlutheransingers.com or at the door.

Christmas Through the Ages—The Lutheran Choralaires Annual Christmas Concert *directed by Terry Herald*

- Saturday, December 2, 4:00 p.m.
St. John Lutheran Church
1011 W. University Dr. Rochester, MI
- Saturday, December 9, 4:00 p.m.
Historic Trinity Lutheran Church
1345 Gratiot Ave. Detroit, MI

Suggested donation: \$10/Adult, \$5/Child

Further information: Paul Kienman (248) 890-4405, Dan Ragle (419) 902-7090, info@lutheranchoralaires.org, lutheranchoralaires.org, or Facebook - Lutheran Choralaires

Advent By Candlelight

Tuesday, December 5
6:30 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Women, join us for music, nourishment, and fellowship!

Register at stpetermacomb.com

Questions: Lisa Ventimiglio (586) 405-9272 or Larry Tilney (586) 292-7953

STUDENT MINISTRIES *Angela Schepmann, Student Ministry Assistant*

"It's the most wonderful time of the year..." That Christmas tune really sticks in my head when I hear it. The more I think about the words, though, the more I realize, it isn't really true. Yeah, the hustle and bustle of the season can be fun, the music is great, and I love spending time with my family. My kids love the days off of school, the decorations are beautiful, and who doesn't love a good Christmas party? But with all of that, I think there is a time of the year I love more...EASTER. Christmas is the time we celebrate the birth of our Lord. He came down from Heaven in the form of a little baby for the ultimate purpose of dying on the cross. Our sins are forgiven, and our salvation is secure because of the death and resurrection of Christ. Without Christmas, there would be no Easter. Without that little baby born in a manger, we have no perfect man who took our sins on himself to the cross. Christmas is great...our Savior being born in a manger is amazing....but the most wonderful, marvelous, magnificent glorious thing is our Lord Jesus dying and rising to give us new life!

NYG 2025-New Orleans:

As we usher in the new year, there are a lot of exciting things happening with Student Ministry. In 2024, we are taking some adults to the 2024 National Youth Workers Convention in New Orleans. This is a wonderful event meant to get us ready for the National Youth Gathering (NYG) July 19 - 23, 2025 also in New Orleans. Theme for the 2025 NYG is ENDURE Hebrews 12:1-3. The gathering takes place every three years and is open to all LCMS churches. This year's current 7th-12th graders would be eligible to go. We will be having a meeting in January 2024 to give out more information. Please consider this amazing opportunity for your student. For a short video visit: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BqfamXIY6ul>

Student Ministry Volunteer Opportunities:

We are looking for parents who are passionate about sharing Jesus with our students. If you feel God moving in your heart to work with our youth, we will be having a zoom meeting in January (potential date is Wednesday, January 17) for anyone interested in volunteering with our Student Ministry. You don't have to have any previous experience or training, just a heart for Jesus and students. Please don't hesitate to reach out beforehand with any questions—aschepmann@splcs.net or text/call (586) 615-4186.

Upcoming Student Ministry Events for December and January:

RECHARGE Student Ministry Fellowship (Grades 6th-12th)

- December 3, 3:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.—SERVANT EVENT: Making Christmas Cards for shut-ins
- December 10, 3:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.—Hot Cocoa Bar
- December 17, 3:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.—FAMILY CHRISTMAS PARTY including snacks, Christmas cookie decorating, Christmas music and games
- NO RECHARGE December 24, 31, and January 7 (Enjoy Christmas Break!)
- January 14, 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. (special time)—GLOW PARTY: Ring in the new year with glow-in-the-dark games including glow-in-the-dark 9-square! Wear your neon!
- January 21—Possible trip to Bower's Farm for glow tubing
- January 28, 3:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.—Cereal Olympics-Come hungry! Who will take home the golden spoon?!



BIBLE STUDY: Sunday at 9:30 a.m. in the Library

- No Bible Study December 24, December 31, January 7
- Starting back up on January 14

Please watch announcements for any time/date changes! *Best way to contact me is call or text (586) 615-4186 or email at aschepmann@splcs.net.

Education

Sunday School



Our entire Sunday School—teachers, helpers and students—are very busy learning Bible stories each Sunday along with practicing songs and recitations for our Christmas Service. We will present the service entitled, “From The Cradle To The Cross,” Sunday, December 10, at the 9:30 a.m. service.

We are excited to celebrate Jesus birth and proclaim the “Good News “, that our Savior is born. St. Peter family, please come and enjoy the celebration!

Our Sunday School continues to pursue the vision at St. Peter to, “Glorify God by making and growing disciples of Jesus Christ!”

Wishing all a very Blessed Christmas!

Pay Losey
Sunday School Superintendent

School Update

November brought another fun event for school families. PTL hosted *Doughnuts with Dad and welcomed over 500 participants!! What a blessing to share this special time with families.*

Classrooms are getting ready for the upcoming Advent and Christmas season. Practice has begun for the school Christmas program. The Kindergarten-2nd grade program will be held Wednesday, December 20 at 3:30 p.m. and the 3rd-8th grade program at 7:00 p.m. as part of the Advent service. This Thanksgiving several classes shared their blessing with local organizations. KinderBridge organized a food drive to assist Hope for the Hungry Food Pantry. They also did Blessing Bags to send along as well. Mrs. Bettcher's Tuesday/Thursday class put together Blessing Bags for the local VFW to bless disabled Veterans in our community. Our Preschool-8th grade classrooms also adopted families for Christmas through the Macomb Charitable Foundation. We are so thankful for the generous support of this ministry and the opportunity to share God's love with families in our community.

Preschool - 8th Grade Open House for the 2024-2025 School Year
Sunday, January 21, 12:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.

“With my wedding, I have made the angels laugh and the devils weep.”
Martin Luther

This month’s Life Team article focuses on Family Living, Biblical Marriage, and Parenthood. The following are excerpts from Marriage, Life and Family: Reflecting the Holy Trinity by the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod.

The Holy Trinity – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – created and gave gifts reflecting Himself, especially the gifts of marriage, life, and family. As the Holy Trinity is the unity of three, so also marriage, life, and family form a unity of three that echoes the reality of God. Families are not human constructs subject to change, but creations of God sharing His unchangeableness. Fundamentally, the household – considered as a creation of God – comes into being through holy matrimony. The household, not the individual, is the irreducible unit of human society.

Marriage: “It is not good for man to be alone” (Gen. 2:18). Mankind was not created for autonomy, but for relationship. Man was created for woman, and woman for man. Their very bodies were made different in order to become one. Marriage is not an afterthought. It is the crowning act of God’s creation because this great mystery was intended from the start to image the one true marriage, the marriage of Christ and His Church (Eph. 5:32). Man was created for communion with God. Marriage was instituted as an icon of the union. “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife, and they shall become one flesh” (Gen. 2:24). According to this divine institution, marriage is an exclusive (“leave”), permanent (“cleave”), and complementary (“one flesh”) union.

Life: The one-flesh union of man and woman is the divine means whereby every new life comes into the world. By God’s design, life is conceived within holy marriage, and the child, this new image-bearer, is placed into that marriage. Just as “it is not good for the man to be alone,” human life arises, and is protected, nurtured, and grows healthily only in the nest of holy marriage. Children not only receive love, but also return that love. Father, mother, and child share a love created by the Triune God. In this way the family reflects the living God who exists in the love of the Holy Trinity.

Family: The perfect revelation of God is a revelation of Three. So also, the marriage of two does not collapse upon itself, but moves outward to others. The marriage of a husband and wife unites not only two people into a new relationship, but a whole host of relationships. Parents become in-laws, entire families, clans, tribes and even nations, are united by marriage. These family relationships are not incidental to human flourishing. They are not human inventions. They are, rather, specific gifts of God in their own right. The interconnections of family provide the identity which the human spirit craves, and without which we die. As gifts, these relationships are to be received in faith and thanksgiving. They should be extolled and protected for the unique ways that they uphold marriage and protect human life.

Therefore, the family is not something we create. The family is used by God to create us. Our families are grounded in God Himself. Our marriages are shadows of the relationship between Christ and the Church (Eph. 5:32). Our parenthood is a shadow of our true parent, God the Father. In our daily family interactions, God is at work.

For Life Team questions, comments, or concerns, please contact Carol at carolpoterek@gmail.com.
lutheransforlife.org | www.lflmi.org

HISTORY CORNER



It is important to remember that St. Peter History is not meant to show how great St. Peter is, but how amazing God is as He works through His Word and Sacraments among us. History is His story. Our History is a Ministry that proclaims His great deeds to future generations.

The following is a poem that was found in the Christmas Eve order of service from 1985.

"This Christmas"

Author Unknown

Mend a quarrel
Seek out a forgotten friend
Share some treasure
Give a soft answer
Encourage Youth
Keep a promise
Find the time
Listen
Apologize if you were wrong
Be gentle
Laugh a little
Laugh a little more
Express your gratitude
Welcome a stranger
Gladden the heart of a child
Take pleasure in the beauty and
wonders of the earth
Speak your love
Speak it again
Speak it still once again.

Submitted by Dianne Wetzel, Historical Committee Member

"How else can I stay up-to-date?"

- Check out our "In The Know" page at stpetermacomb.com.
- Check out our weekly bulletins (available at worship services and online).
- Follow our social media pages: Facebook & Instagram (@stpetermacomb).
- Join our Facebook group: St. Peter Plugged In.





Rev. Kurt Wenzelburger
Senior Pastor



Rev. Mark Arendell
Pastor Emeritus



Rev. Craig Meyer
Pastor Emeritus



Mrs. Sandra LaPerriere
Interim Principal



Mrs. Robyn Adams
Early Childhood Director



Ms. Diane Hernden
Business Manager



Mr. Tim Leinberger
*Operations &
Project Management*



Mr. Charles Russell
*Traditional Worship
Director*



Mr. Robert W. Costa
*Modern Worship &
Communications
Director*

ST. PETER'S VALUES

Our Mission Statement:

To glorify God by
making and growing
disciples of Jesus
Christ

Matthew 28:19-20

Go therefore and make
disciples of all nations,
baptizing them in the
name of the Father, of
the Son and of the Holy
Spirit, teaching them to
observe all that I have
commanded you. And
behold, I am with you
always, to the end of age.

Articles for **January 2024 Keynotes** must be submitted before 4:00 p.m. on December 15.
Please submit all articles for consideration by email to Allison Tebay at atebay@splcs.net.
All submissions should include your contact information. Please submit articles without
formatting (table, text boxes, etc.) in a Word document. Thank you!



17051 24 Mile Road, Macomb, Michigan 48042
Church: (586) 781-3434 School: (586) 781-9296
StPeterMacomb.com

Worship Service Times:

Saturday	6:00 p.m.	Traditional
Sunday	8:00 a.m.	Traditional
Sunday	9:30 a.m.	Traditional
Sunday	11:00 a.m.	Modern

Please visit **StPeterMacomb.com** to see other
opportunities to worship through Sunday School,
Bible studies, small groups and more!

St. Peter Lutheran Church and School is a member congregation of The LCMS.