

# The Voice



*From the Desk of Pastor Mark:*

**“This is the day that the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it.”**

- Psalm 118:24

The month of November is the month of thanksgiving. At least, that’s what it has always been for me. November instantly reminds me of gratitude, and things for which I am thankful. It’s the national holiday of Thanksgiving that makes me think of this, of course, for which I am “grateful.” Many mental health studies have been done on the importance of gratitude. I had a former pastoral colleague that said he used to think of 5 things he was thankful for when he woke up in the morning and 5 things he was thankful for before he went to bed. Studies I’ve now read show that that is a really

good practice. I’ve tried that practice at times, and I really like it. Unfortunately, it’s not one I’ve sustained permanently as my former colleague had. I’ve also tried journaling daily 10 things for which I’m thankful. This is one I can’t say I do regularly, but I do go back to sporadically throughout the year. I also have the benefit of working in the church building. This means I regularly take time to walk through the sanctuary and throughout the church. During these times I offer up my prayers of thanksgiving to God. The prayers almost always begin with my offering thanks for the St. Peter Lutheran community. I offer thanks for the members, ministries and ways that St. Peter brings the Good News of God’s love to a hurting world through our presence, words and actions. Thanking God for our blessings is a good practice.

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## *IN EVERY ISSUE:*

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## Worship Schedule

*Thank you for joining us  
for worship!*

Sunday worship occurs at 8:00  
and 10:30 a.m.

Sunday school runs from 9:15-  
10:15 a.m.

Wednesday worship is at 6:30  
p.m.

Wishing you a  
blessed  
Thanksgiving  
holiday!

There will be no  
Wednesday worship on  
Wednesday,  
November 27.

The Church office will be  
closed on Thursday,  
November 28, and Friday,  
November 29, in  
observance of the  
Thanksgiving holiday.

### 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.

The national holiday of Thanksgiving is coming up on November 28th this year. It is a great time to give thanks to God for the many blessings we enjoy as Americans. It's a great time to give thanks for those who have worked hard in the past and present to bring about the blessings we enjoy in America today. Giving thanks for the country we live in also reminds me that we have an election coming up in November. In the ELCA we believe it is important to be active participants in our society, which includes voting. I don't tell people who to vote for, but I do encourage people to vote. It is my calling to address matters of the Christian faith. Christian Nationalism is a topic I've heard quite a lot lately in regard to the public and political realm.

What is Christian Nationalism? One ELCA site I found gives this definition: "Christian Nationalism identifies human-made governments as lockstep with God's will and seeks to privilege Christians, typically only white Christians. This type of ideology is not only dangerous but distorts the difference between holding government accountable to God as opposed to identified strictly with God's will." Presiding Bishop of the ELCA, Elizabeth Eaton shared, "Lutherans believe that government should be held accountable to God, but never dictated as God's will. We must remain committed to strengthening the public space as a just space for all who seek peaceful governance, regardless of religion or worldview." In my own simple words, I believe Christian nationalism sets up an "us" verses "them" mentality. It becomes "real" Americans are Christian, born in America, and often meaning white. All others aren't "true" or "real" Americans. It reminds me of a saying that I heard long ago by one of my professors, "Any time you draw a line between "us" verses "them", just remember Jesus is on the other side." I've also noticed that many Christian Nationalists tend to identify more strongly with the state than they do their baptismal identity in Christ, meaning hate and violence overrules love and peace.

On the surface Christian Nationalism sounds like a good thing, or at least not bad. Love of God and love of country are good things, so why would Christian Nationalism be bad? That was one of my initial thoughts anyway, when I first heard the term long ago. I've since learned that the type of Christianity that is being promoted is far from my own, or the ELCA's, understanding of what it means to be loved by God, and to be a follower of the way of Jesus, which is the way of love and peace. Love of God and love of country is a good thing. That is, until you put them on an equal level, or worse—adapt your faith to fit with your politics, which is what I believe Christian Nationalism does.

November reminds us there is much to be thankful for. I'm thankful to able to vote, thankful for free speech, and so many other blessings we enjoy in America. I'm thankful for Iowa and the community of Grimes where I live. I'm thankful for my family, friends and so many things. As always, I'm thankful for you, members and friends of St. Peter Lutheran Church. I'm thankful I get to be a pastor in such a wonderful church. The love of God in Christ Jesus is evident in our life together, and for this I give God much thanks and praise.

Gathered to Grow. Sent to Serve.

Pastor Mark

Gathered  
to  
Grow

Sent  
to  
Serve

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

Thanks!

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

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

## All Saints Sunday—November 3

All Saints Sunday is a time to remember family and friends who have been welcomed into God's eternal kingdom. We will remember loved ones with the lighting of candles and in our prayers on Sunday, November 3 at both worship services.

If you have a family member or friend who has entered into the Saints of Heaven, we invite you to fill out the bulletin insert or contact the church office and let us know their name and their relationship to you. All requests of remembrances of loved ones must be received in the church office by Monday, October 28.

### Mini Me Music November 3 at 9:45 a.m.

Join Beth Hansen for a fun gathering of musical play! This class is designed for children ages birth—3 years old to attend with their loved ones. Enjoy some fellowship and music time with us! Please register to help Beth prepare our instruments and materials!



### WELCA Silent Auction November 10

The annual WELCA Silent Auction will be held November 10. Contact a WELCA Board member if you are interested in donating hand-crafted items or services, baskets or basket items. Not sure what to donate? Some ideas will post-ed inside the church entrance!

We will also offer a frozen goods and traditional bake sale. All are welcome to donate and purchase frozen treats, soups, casseroles, etc. as well as traditional bake sale goodies.

We're looking forward to this fun event, and we appreciate all who donate items and make purchases. Proceeds from the auction support ministries inside and outside of the church walls, including sponsoring Mosaic activities, the St. Peter kitchen, church décor updates, our Myamba partnership, and much more!

## Pastoral Acts

James Scarlet Wilson, daughter of Garret and Jennie Wilson, was born on December 30, 2023, in Des Moines, IA. James was baptized at St. Peter Lutheran Church in Grimes on October 20, 2024, by Rev. Mark Schlenker. Erin and Nate Stevenson are James's baptism sponsors.

Shawn Diane Stoner was born on February 14, 1962, in Clarinda, Iowa. She passed away on November 22, 2023. Pastor Mark Schlenker led a graveside service at Sunny Hill Cemetery on October 10, 2024.

Jeff and Jean Harbeck were married on September 4, 2021. Pastor Mark led a vow renewal service for them on October 20, 2024.

## Thursday Bible Study

Bible Study meets on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays of the month at 1:00 p.m. All are welcome!

Questions? Contact Jill at [faithformation@stpeterofgrimes.org](mailto:faithformation@stpeterofgrimes.org)

## Men's Group

Join us for our monthly Men's Group Gathering this month! Men's Group usually meets the first Sunday of the month. Contact Bradley Fasse with any questions, and join the Men's Group Facebook page for the latest updates and news. @Facebook:



Wednesday Children's Choirs Sing  
November 24 at 10:30 a.m. worship!

## Christmas Season Calendar

- Dec. 8—Gingerbread Event at 11:30 a.m.
- Dec. 11—Confirmation & MOSAIC Christmas Party/Program 5:00 p.m.
- Dec. 15—Sunday School Christmas Program at 10:30 a.m.
- Dec. 15—Christmas Caroling at 4:30 p.m.
- Dec. 22—Christmas Cantata 8:00 & 10:30 a.m.
- Dec. 24—Christmas Eve worship at 4:00, 6:00, & 9:00 p.m.



## Grimes Giving Tree

You can help make the Christmas holiday brighter for some local families! Near the end of November, WELCA will work with the Grimes Giving Tree to offer gift ideas for local children who might otherwise go without. Take an ornament with a gift idea from the tree in the front entryway, and sign up beside the ornament number on the ornament list. **Please bring the wrapped gift back to the church by December 9 with the ornament tag attached to the outside of the package/gift bag.** The presents will be delivered to the families before the holidays. Here are some other helpful notes:

- Each child is given 2 clothing items and 2 toy/fun items (4 gift tags per child)
- Gifts are intended to be in the \$20-\$30 range
- Gifts can be wrapped/put in a gift bag and returned to the church anytime in early December.

Look for more details in the eNews and bulletin mid-month! Thank you for your help!

We support the Grimes Storehouse Food Pantry!

Our November focus will be:

Holiday  
Baking



Bring in donations of cake mixes, cans of frosting, cookie mixes, flour, sugar, salt, soda, baking powder, food coloring, and holiday sprinkles. 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 Emily Wells.

If you would like to be a **reader**, please contact Sue Dooley.

If you can help **host** by greeting worshippers and helping them find their worship materials, contact 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!



## Adult Education: In the Footsteps of the Savior

Join Adult Education November 3 - December 15 for this study, where we will "join Max Lucado on an inspirational journey through the hills, the dust, and homes of the Holy Land." All are welcome!

### HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING OCTOBER 10, 2024

#### Pastor's Report:

- Fall season is in full swing. Wednesday and Sunday programming is off to a good start.
- I led a Bible introduction for 3 year olds and parents, as well as 5th graders and parents on Sunday, September 8th. We presented them with Bibles of their own in worship on Sunday, September 15th.
- I got the adult ed. class started with the stewardship study for the season by leading the class on Sunday, September 22nd. Several other adults rotate leading the discussions on other Sunday's for adult education.
- September 29th, I led first communion instruction with 2nd graders and parents. There were also a few older kids and youth that joined in the class. Many families join St. Peter from different faith backgrounds, which don't have communion for 2nd graders. We celebrated their first communion on Sunday, September 29th.
- October 6th, I led the new member class. We have 4 new family units that will be joining St. Peter on Sunday, October 13th.
- Myamba team has met a number of times this past month. There was a fantastic response to the Myamba scholarships this year. Enough was raised for 115 scholarships, plus money for bibles and other equipment for the schools. The goal was 95, with a stretch goal of 100, so the goal was far surpassed. Praise God!
- Myamba team has also been meeting to prepare for the emissary trip to Myamba. Dates for the trip will be January 13-26th, 2025.
- I will be leading a graveside service for a family this Thursday. They are not members, but their daughter used to come to St. Peter youth group. One of the many ways St. Peter ministries reach out to the community with the love of God.
- Next week Oct. 17-19, I will be at a preaching conference in Dubuque.

#### Faith Formation Report—Jill Capps

- **Faith Formation:** Thank you to everyone who participated in the Grimes Storehouse Food Drive for "God's Work Our Hands" Sunday. St. Peter families donated 1,122 pounds of food.
- **Creation Station** – we continue to have around 30 children attend creation station each week. Volunteers always welcome.
- **Confirmation:** Confirmation has been studying Martin Luther and the Reformation for the past few weeks, learning more about our Lutheran history. Confir-

## From the Stewardship Committee— Blake Franzen & Brenda Johnston

### September 2024

Income: \$30,011.08

Expense: \$27,699.89

Net Gain: \$2,311.19

### YtD 2024

Income: \$236,027.46

Expense: \$265,093.37

Net Loss: -\$29,065.91

- General Fund—September 2024 mtd, expenses were less than monthly income, thus it finished with a gain of \$2,311.19.
- General Fund—September 2024 ytd, expenses were greater than income, thus it finished with a loss of (\$29,065.91)

mation students also collected change \$45.17 in change to be donated to the Myamba Missions/Confirmation program.

- The confirmation retreat will be held at St. Peter on October 26th from 9am-8pm. Students will be learning about their confirmation promises and participating in fun activities like the "Amazing gRace" around Grimes.
- **Thursday Afternoon Bible Study:** We will continue to meet on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of the month from 1:00pm-2:30pm. All are welcome to join this study. We will begin our study on Esther which we will continue through December when we end with a holiday potluck. A change to our schedule - our December meeting & potluck will be on Wednesday, December 11th from 12:00pm-2:00pm.
- **Sunday School:** We had over 15 children & youth participate in First Communion Classes with Pastor Mark.
- We will need to create a new storage system for our Sunday school curriculum and supplies. Will speak to a couple members who can hopefully help create the needed storage at as minimal cost as possible. In addition, several of the tables in the classrooms need to be repaired or replaced due to the metal brackets breaking away from the tables.
- **Technology & Misc.:** I have performed a few upgrades & fixes on the livestream equipment during the past few weeks. The system continues to provide an important service to our members, with about 50 people watching each week. The guest WIFI at church now has a password, that will be changed every couple months. If you need access, please reach out to me. Please be sure to turn off WIFI on your devices during worship services, as this pulls from the same system as our livestream and can drastically affect the ability to stream the service.

#### Youth Report

- Middle School Youth Group has been fun with around 27 kids attending on the 1st /3rd Wednesday.
- High School Youth Group is going well with around 10 kids attending on the 2nd /4th Wednesday. I did cancel youth group the week of Homecoming (9/25) as a majority of kids were either participating in or watching the Iron Man Games.

- The Informational Mission Trip meeting went well and we already have 28 youth and 10 adults interested in going on the trip to Copperhill, Tennessee the week of July 20-26, 2025. Hurricane Helene came very close to Copperhill. I will be in touch with TEAMeffort in the next few weeks to confirm this site is still an option.
- Breakfast Club (the first Sunday of the month during Sunday School for 7th -12th graders) was a success on 9/8 with 7 kids. I provided breakfast for the first meeting and led a discussion from Faith Lens.
- I'm using an app called Remind to get in touch with the kids.
- Trying to schedule a time when Tim Schiller and Matt Schmidt are both available to help remove the wall in the youth room. We do not have enough carpet tiles in storage so I'll need to look into another carpet option. Tim said we can just cover the floor opening with existing carpet for the time being. The youth are excited to help in this renovation project!
- A huge thank you goes to Matt Morris, Mindy Morris, and Jason Hughes! I appreciate them being a part of our Middle School Youth Group!

#### Treasurer's Report:

- August and September financials approved

#### Stewardship :

- The pledge drive ends this Sunday with Celebration Sunday in combination with New Member Sunday. The men's group and Evangelism will be providing the meal for everyone to enjoy. Pledges and time and talent sheets will be gathered on Sunday.
- September Financials: Expenses were less than monthly income finishing with a gain of \$2,311.19. YTD 2024 expenses are greater than income finishing with a loss of \$29,065.91
- PCI compliance was renewed with Vanco for another 12 months.

#### Building & Grounds

Work completed:

- Fixed leaking toilet in men's bathroom
- Signed snow removal agreement – Rate will be \$25/per time with addition of our drive and parking.

## 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](http://www.stpeterofgrimes.org) and click on the yellow Online Giving link or scan the QR code printed here.



- Signed HVAC agreement
- Flipped winter/summer hours on main sign
- Replaced broken light on main sign
- Leg work on parking lot lights: Reviews done with 2 companies, quote back from 1 and waiting for the other. Would be good to have the lights in place by fall time change since it gets darker earlier in the evening. Quotes and proposal would be before 2 poles, 3 lights. Placement plan drafted with an estimate near \$25,000. Discussed the option to approve up to \$27,000 to plan for any adjustments that might be needed. Allocate from the Real Estate Land Sale funds.
- Approval to hold on the second sign until after the road construction is completed

#### Education:

- Sunday School kids sang to celebrate Matt's years of service, led by Mady Brown.
- First Communion - bread making, education with Pastor, and chalices were prepared and given to 2nd graders.
- Beginning to work on preliminary budget

#### Evangelism:

- Fellowship hour continues to be a welcome time to engage others between services. Please utilize our Signup link or reach out to Rob Ridnour, Tim Schiller or the church office.
- Upcoming events include partnering with the Men's Group and serving lunch Sunday, October 13, Celebration Sunday. Thank you Bradley Fasse and all participants from the Men's Group.
- Additionally, we have scheduled our annual Fall Outreach event on Sunday, October 27. Please consider volunteering for this community outreach event that includes assisting both congregation and community families. We will meet after our 8AM service, split into teams and attack the work!! Followed by a return to church for a pizza lunch!!

#### Worship & Music :

- Mini Me Music Nov. 3 and December 8 from 9:45-10:15
- Working on a time for Sunday School kids to sing
- Children's Choir fall session is Sept. 4-December 18; spring session is Jan. 8-April 16
- **Special Sunday Services for 2024**
- Oct. 13 Celebration/Stewardship Sunday.
- Oct 27 - Reformation Sunday
- Nov 3 – All Saints' Sunday
- Dec 1 – First Sunday of Advent
- Dec 15 – Children's Christmas Program
- Dec 22—Christmas Cantata
- Tues, Dec 24 – Christmas Eve Services
- Wed, Dec 25 – Christmas Day – No service this year. (Will hold when Christmas falls on a Sunday.)
- Looking into options to help with volunteer sign-ups
- Determined we should continue tuning both pianos once a

year.

#### Old Business:

- Council Retreat Nov. 2, 9am-2pm at Grimes Community Center

#### New Business:

- Council Roles and Responsibilities: action item for each committee to complete a review, update, and have a draft to Exec Council by December meeting. Agreement to have some standard type of information that benefits a new member coming on to a committee—a basic description
- Council Retreat—provide Carol with lunch selection
- Approved purchase of a new youth computer
- Emissary trip coming up in January. The Myamba team has requested for Pastor Mark to go. Council approved.
- Budgets are due to Chad by November 22

#### Local Mission Donation: Lutheran Disaster Response

### HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE WELCA MEETING

OCTOBER 15, 2024

- Old Business – Bonfire social event, great turn out. Thank you Millers!

#### Board Reports:

- Mission: Stewardship/Treasurer- donation to Myamba \$400. Balance \$6,498.33.
- Mission: Justice- Baptism James Scarlett Wilson, Oct 20<sup>th</sup>.
- Mission: Discipleship- Ellie working on getting wish list from Mosaic.

#### Discussion

- Board member nomination- discussion of new nominees.
- Donation allocation- approved giving \$500 to ELCA website for hurricane response, \$100 to GVSS. We are anticipating \$500 allocation to the kitchen fund for supplies. Kerry reached out to Bambi and Jill on youth, confirmation or school needs before year end.
- Upcoming event planning

#### October:

- Dessert & Devotion 10/22 6:30 pm with Jill Capps i
- Winter coat/blanket drive for Capitol Hill Lutheran Clothes Closet – collecting through 10/31; **November:**
- Silent Auction Sunday, 11/10 7:30 am-noon
- Kerry and Nicky talk to Sunday school classes about basket donations at Sunday school-10/20.
- Jill send a reminder to kids to bring back baskets-10/27, baskets back to church by 11/3.
- Friday 11/8- 6:00 pm auction set up and Saturday morning, 11/9- 9am- 11 am finish auction set up
- Giving Tree- Lauri will reach out

#### December:

- MOSAIC shopping scheduled for 12/10 at 6:30 pm Target Waukee.

Next meeting Tuesday, 11/19 at 6:30 pm