

St Peter Lutheran Church Tidings

December 2023

Pastor Pedersen's Points – The Gift That Keep on Giving

I do not know about you, but my wife and I usually have most of our Christmas shopping done at the end of November or first week of December. It seems like we just finished giving thanks alongside all our families with the assistance of copious amounts of food. We quickly transition from “giving thanks” to “giving gifts.” What should we get everybody? What should we tell others to get for us and our two kids? What is an appropriate price to set for your parents when they've given you so much? What the heck can we even get our parents, anyways? So many questions and planning! On top of the planning of gifts, for Megan and I there is the planning of fitting in as much family as possible. When will we be able to make it to Chicago, Jefferson, and Des Moines? Oh...and I guess there is the question of what the five of us (Millie included!) will be doing for Christmas as a family, too.

Perhaps you have many of these questions and planning to do as well? It is important amidst all of that planning and preparation to not forget the reason for the season, Jesus. The Christmas story is one many have heard. It is a story many of us have heard countless times as well. This Christmas season I invite you to read through that story (Luke 2:1-20). You can do this by yourself, as a family, or with a friend. Shut out the planning and preparation while you are doing it. Simply be present in the story of Jesus' birth. What jumps out at you as you read it? Is there something you've never noticed before?

This is the story of God's gift to each and everyone of us. This is the gift of God's own Son. Jesus was not just born for our sake. Jesus died and rose for our sake, too. As you read that story feel free to ponder about the gift that keeps on giving. Through haphazard planning and a little improvisational skills from an innkeeper our humble Savior came into this world surrounded by hay, shepherds, and animals... and even without all that planning I'd say it went pretty well!

I would also like to take this opportunity to invite you to hear that Christmas story at one of our Christmas Eve worship services. We will be having a service at 4:00 pm and 7:00 pm. Come, ponder, worship, sing your favorites, and do so with a bunch of people who love Jesus. What more could you ask for!?

In humble service,
Pastor Reed Lee Pedersen

Dates to remember

- ◇ Sunday School Christmas Program, during worship, December 17 at 9:00 am
- ◇ Blue Christmas, December 17, 6:30 pm
- ◇ Christmas Eve Worship, Sunday, December 24, 4:00 & 7:00 pm
- ◇ No Christmas Day Worship



*The Word became flesh
and lived among us*

JOHN 1:14

Worship & Music Server

Sunday worship - 9:00 am

** Volunteers needed – please sign-up online or contact the office*

| | December 3 Sunday 9:00 am | December 10 Sunday 9:00 am | December 17 Sunday School Christmas program Sunday 9:00 am | December 24 Christmas Eve 4:00 pm 7:00 pm | December 31 Sunday 9:00 am |
|------------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|--|--|----------------------------------|
| Organist | Amy Lockhart | Sheryl Moeller | Amy Lockhart | 4pm-Amy Lockhart 7pm-Amy Lockhart | Sheryl Moeller |
| Acolytes | | Tyler Nuss & TBD | | 4pm-Tyler Nuss & | |
| Communion Assistant | Sue Buss & TBD | | | Aubrey Roethler | Susan Buss |
| Scripture Reader | Amy Lockhart | Jim Jurgenson | | | Sheryl Moeller |
| Multimedia | | | | | |
| Sunday School Parent Helper | Derek & Alexandra Gielau | Amber Niemann & Gavin Carman | NA | NA | |
| Sound System | Steve DeVries | Philip Michels | Roger Donaldson | 4pm-Larry Oltrogge 7pm-Alton Midthus | Steve DeVries |
| Video taping | | | | Aubrey Roethler | |
| Altar Guild | Terrie Thurm, Lori Thurm, Mandy Gesme, Tricia Kurtz | | | | |
| Usher/Greeters | Gary & LaVonne Westendorf, Chuck & Trudy Essmann, Monte Nuehring | | | | |

BLUE CHRISTMAS

Worship service

Sunday, December 17

6:30p.m.

A service of wholeness & healing

ST. PETER LUTHERAN

ALL ARE WELCOME



The year's longest day of darkness is December 21. The winter solstice, often known as the first day of winter, occurs when the sun is at its farthest southern point in the sky in the United States than on any other day of the year.

For some, 2023 has been filled with darkness. They may have lost a loved one and are still mourning that loss. Maybe they received a health diagnosis that is raising questions about the quality of their health going forward. Some others might be dealing with a divorce or shattered relationship or are concerned about their job situation or are experiencing financial hardships.

With Christmas and New Year centered on family get-togethers, it can be a tough time for those who have lost loved ones – especially recently – or are dealing with personal struggles to find joy during the holiday season. Knowing that people in the community are dealing with sadness, concern and anxiety, St. Peter Lutheran Church will be having a “Blue Christmas” service on the evening of December 17 at 6:30pm.

The purpose of the service is to serve as a reminder to those of us who are struggling right now that God is with them, that God loves them where they are, and that the church community is here for them. For those who are going through a tough time of year, come experience a service of tranquility and peace, remembering that God is present for us, even when we are hurting and challenged by what we are facing.

Community



The Mission Board wants to extend a big THANK YOU to everyone that put together a Chemo Kit. We finished with 100 Chemo Kits!

They delivered 50 to Mercy One Cancer Center and 50 to Unity Point Cancer Center.

Both centers were so thankful for the kindness gifted to their patients.



Offering Envelopes

The 2024 Offering envelopes are available for pick up on the table outside the office.

If you would like offering envelopes, please let us know, we have extras.

St Peter Choir

Our Holiday Christmas Choir will sing Christmas Eve at 4:00 pm. Please consider singing in this choir. We will practice at 6:30 pm on Wednesday, December 13 and 20. If wished, music can be picked up for either choir from Mary Stevens.



Helping Hands Clothing Closet

October was the busiest month so far this year at Helping Hands Clothing Closet with 360 client visits; 166 adults and 194 children. These clients came from 14 communities in northeast Iowa. Our volunteers gave 48.5 hours of their time to helping our clients. Our needs throughout the winter will be for winter coats, boots, gloves and hats for all ages. Blankets, towels and school age children's clothes are also needed. Hours: 9:00 - 11:00 am Tuesday mornings, 6:30 - 7:30 pm Wednesday evenings, and 9:00 - 11:00 am the first Saturday of the month. Located at 2029 Viking Ave. Sumner, IA. *Carolyn Mohlis 319-279-3247 or carolyn.mohlis@gmail.com*

November Baptisms

We welcome our newly baptized member into the body of Christ and into the mission we share at St Peter. Harper Rose Nabholz was baptized on November 12.

We also welcome into the body of Christ, William Frederick Beckel, who was baptized at St Peter on November 26. We are united with all the baptized and join in God's mission for the life of the world.



December Birthdays & Anniversaries

| | |
|---|--|
| 1 Dave & Jaime Leonhart | 16 Cavin Newby |
| 2 Jennifer Clayton | 17 Sharon Robinson Greg Thies |
| 3 Dalton Brinkman | 18 Emery Niemann |
| 4 Lincoln Gustafson Shirley Thurm Burton & Sharon Diercks | 19 Elaine Dove Melodie Foelske Jack Niewoehner |
| 5 Candi Nuehring Kasey Wirtjes | 20 Carolyn Becker |
| 6 Sharon Diercks Cody Hougen Linda Krueger Megan Pedersen | 21 Tim Mueller |
| 7 Nathan Thurm | 22 Jennifer Sawyer |
| 8 Jillian Clayton Jaime Gienau Ames Kuecker Mia Leonhart Linda Schult Robert & Sharon Foelske | 23 Emma Haase Morgan Smith |
| 9 Lauren Carman Darlys Milius | 24 Jeremiah Kern Alexander Oltmann |
| 11 Holly Smith | 25 Breanna Sadler |
| 12 Lynette Lahmann | 26 Braven Beaumont Jack Mixdorf Greg Smith |
| 13 Garrett Wahl | 27 Tom Lahmann Bob Weston |
| 14 Ellie Brocka | 28 Klair Heim Kenny Lamb Amy & Richard Mortenson Tyler Nuss Aubrey Roethler |
| 15 Andrew Brown Alexandra Swanson David & Jo VanDeBerg | 29 Cassandra Vohsman |
| | 30 Monte Nuehring |
| | 31 Max Thrasher |

We apologize if your birthday or anniversary are not listed or listed incorrectly. Please notify the office with additions or corrections. Thank You

Church News

A Word from the Stewardship Board: What might your name be?

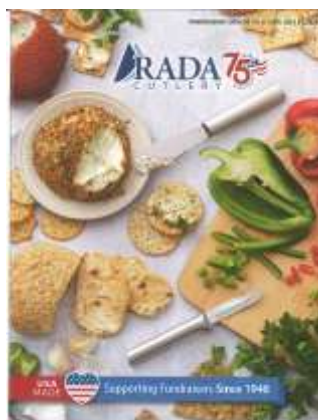
This past summer the Stewardship Board sought to make and maintain name tags for members of the congregation. The purpose of the nametags was twofold: (1) to help Pastor Reed see the names (2) to help everyone else see your name. St. Peter has welcomed many new people over the past years, and we have heard from others that it is nice to be able to see the names of people at church. We would like to encourage you to continue wearing your name tags for worship. If you do not have a nametag you can write your name on a temporary tag and let the office know, so that we can make one for you. If you would prefer to wear the name tag on a lanyard instead of by magnet, we have lanyards to hand out. Please help us get to know each other better in this Christmas season.

The Christmas Offering will go to Lutheran Disaster Relief

Lutheran Disaster Response share's God's hope, healing and renewal with people whose lives have been disrupted by disasters in the United States and around the world. When the dust settles and headlines change, they stat to provide ongoing assistance to those in need.

Noisy Offering

November & December Noisy Offering will go to the Salvation Army. We collect the this offering the 3rd Sunday of the month, December 17.



Rada Fundraiser

The St Peter Youth Group are selling Rada products to raise money for their trip. There are catalogs and order forms in the office. You must pay when you place the order. Christmas shopping made easy:) orders placed with Lisa or the office will save on shipping costs.

Community & Mission News



Good Gifts

Christmas is rapidly approaching and no doubt, one of the things you will be thinking about is holiday

shopping. This year, many people will be feeling the impact of the financial crunch plus the stress of already busy schedules and extra December commitments. Perhaps the need to simplify seems even more appealing when you consider all the time and money you may be expending on Christmas gifts.

Do we need more "things" and more "stuff" to clutter and complicate our lives? How would neighbors or friends feel if you told them that for Christmas this year you bought a mosquito net for a family in a malaria-prone area or six water jugs for ease in transporting clean water? Would your children find joy in knowing that a pig or goat was given in their honor to a poverty-stricken family in Africa? The Board of Mission would like to make a suggestion for families to consider as an alternate plan for sharing the spirit of Christmas with others. The ELCA has published a Good Gifts Catalog that features out-reach gifts that can and will make a difference in the lives of both the giver and receiver.

You may get a Good Gifts Catalog in the Friendship Room or call 1-800-638-3522 for a copy to be sent to your home. Christ's love is a gift. Share it with others!!!



Denver's Old-Fashioned Christmas will be held Saturday and Sunday, December 2 & 3. This is the 20th year for the event sponsored by The Denver Betterment Committee! This year's theme is "Bright & Beautiful" Once again there will be a gingerbread house contest, place settings, pictures with Santa, and of course the Festival of Trees.

Make sure to check out St Peter's Christmas Tree!

BINGO

Bingo at the Denver Sunset Home Friday, December 15, at 10:00 am. We are looking for three volunteers to assist the residents.

Please contact Joyce Miller if you can help.

Blessed by Books Box

The Blessing Box that was built and used during Covid for food items for those in need, is no longer viable. It will be converted into a "BLESSED BY BOOKS BOX". St Peter members and community people are welcome and encouraged to put children and adult books in the box for other people to read and return. It will be like a mini drive-up library in the north parking lot. What a wonderful way to recycle books and provide literary food for the mind and soul!



Thanksgiving cards delivered at Willow Winds

The residents enjoyed receiving them almost as much as the kids enjoyed handing them out and visiting their Willow Winds friends. Seeing the intergenerational friendships is so heart warming.



Faith Formation

GRAND TOTAL from the PIE

Auctiondrumroll....\$3230.00!

Thanks to everyone that donated pies.

This was a huge success and so much fun.

Coming Soon dates for a drop in babysitting clinic.



2023 Sunday School Dates

December 3rd

December 10th

December 17th *Christmas Program during church* - NO SUNDAY SCHOOL following.

December 24th NO SUNDAY SCHOOL

December 31st NO SUNDAY SCHOOL

Holiday Shoppe

Thank you to everyone that bought gifts for under the Bremer County Holiday Shoppe tree we had up in the Friendship Room. And thanks to Joyce and Mary for delivering the gifts to Redeemer Lutheran Church in Waverly. Approximately 500 gifts will be distributed and make Christmas a little brighter for some children.



Should you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to a member of the education team.

Amy Oltmann on behalf of the Education Team
Jaime Leonhart, Julie Gleason, Mandy Gesme, Bri Drewelow

An Education Team member will Lead the Sunday School each week. Pastor will meet with all of the kids for song practice & Sunday School Collection, the Education Team member will read the bible story and be prepared to direct the games/crafts being completed that day. The program does require a minimum number of adults be involved to be successful.

Parents are being asked to assist as a Parent Helper two times throughout the 2023-24 year per Sunday School student. This will allow the Education Team to continue to provide a strong Sunday School program. Thank you to those who signed up already. Moving forward, you may sign-up via the Worship Servers Volunteer Sign-up <http://www.stpeterdenver.org/volunteer.html>

Grandparents, friends, confirmation & high school students, congregation members are all welcome to sign-up but it is expected the slots be filled. The Education Team simply can not continue without helpers.

What does a Parent Helper do? The parent... if you see a child whose attention is waning, remind them to be quiet, help direct focus, and assist in whatever the Education Team Leader asks for Game or Craft assistance. Your kids will LOVE having you be part of the days you sign-up for!

Prayer Shawl Ministry

The Prayer Shawl Ministry meets on the 1st Thursday, every other month at 1:00 pm.

Next meeting: Thursday, January 4.

If you know of someone who is in need of a Prayer Shawl, please take one from the closet in the Friendship Room. Please make sure you fill out a form (located next to the new shawls).

Christmas Poinsettias

We will be ordering poinsettias from Hy-Vee floral for Christmas. You may pick up an order sheet on the information table outside the office; place filled in sheet with a check for \$10.00 in the basket by December 6.



His Hands Food Pantry

Serving families in the area that are experiencing food insecurity. Current Request: Canned vegetables, Pasta, Boxed Baking Mixes. Open Tuesdays, 5:00-8:00 pm. And Friday, 9:00 am - noon. October Statistics, Household Served-113. Individuals Served-348. Food Distributed-9,712 lbs. Questions -319-638-4357 or Mary Burgart 563-920-3857. The donation box is located in the library.

December 2023



| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|--|--|--|--|---|---|-----------|
| | | | | | 1 | 2 |
| 3 7:30 am Bell Choir 9:00 am Worship 10:15 am Sunday School 7:00 pm Confirmation | 4 | 5 7:30 am Womensfest 7:00 pm AA/Alanon | 6 8:00 am Mensfest | 7 10:00 am Bulletin deadline | 8 | 9 |
| 10 7:30 am Bell Choir 9:00 am Worship 10:15 am Sunday School 7:00 pm Confirmation | 11 | 12 7:30 am Womensfest 7:00 pm AA/Alanon | 13 8:00 am Mensfest 7:00 pm Council Meeting 6:30 pm Choir Practice | 14 10:00 am Bulletin deadline | 15 10:00 am Bingo @ Denver Sunset Home Newsletter Deadline | 16 |
| 17 7:30 am Bell Choir 9:00 am Worship and With Noisy Offering Sunday School Christmas Program 6:30 pm Blue Christmas Service | 18 | 19 7:30 am Womensfest 7:00 pm AA/Alanon | 20 8:00 am Mensfest 6:30 pm Choir practice | 21 10:00 Bulletin deadline | 22 Office closed in the afternoon | 23 |
| 24 Christmas Eve 4:00 pm & 7:00 pm Worship | 25 Merry Christmas No worship service Office closed | 26 7:30 am Womensfest 7:00 pm AA/Alanon | 27 8:00 am Mensfest | 28 10:00 am Bulletin deadline | 29 | 30 |
| 31 9:00 am Worship | | | | | | |

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St. Peter Evangelical Lutheran Church
540 East Franklin Street ~ P.O. Box A
Denver, IA 50622
Phone: 319-984-5648
www.stpeterdenver.org ~ info@stpeterdenver.org
Pastor Reed Lee Pedersen 515-370-5114

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2023 MINISTRY BOARDS

Ministry Boards are a vital part of the congregational system. Lay members are currently needed for each of these boards to function as intended. Please consider where you might share your gifts in these important ministries of the congregation. If you would like to know more about a board please contact The Congregational President. Thank you!

Church Council: Todd Foelske, Mary Stevens, Marcia Joerger, Jackie Fober, Amy Oltmann, Jayson Gesme, Jill Nuss, Linda Schult, Donna Kittle

Executive Board: Jayson Gesme, Marcia Joerger, Todd Foelske, Jill Nuss

Property & Management: Gene Leonhart, Leroy Homeister, Roxane Franzen, Jim Jurgenson, Jayson Gesme, Steve DeVries, Jim Moeller

Parish Education: Amy Oltmann, Jaime Leonhart, Mandy Gesme, Julie Gleason

Worship & Music: Mary Stevens, Amy Lockhart, Jo VanDeBerg, Niki Skaar, Nancy Lamos, Sheryl Moeller

Mission: Sue Buss, Pat Leonhart, Shirley Thurm, Kelley Carman, Marcia Ott, Leah Homeister, Linda Schult, Kim Lamb

Stewardship: Jackie Fober, Jan Gienau, Dori Jurgenson, Mary Stevens

Youth & Family: Eve Pautsch, Krista Olson, Sarah Sanderson, Julie Brinkman, Lisa Michels, Marcia Joerger

Evangelism: Jan Gienau, LaVonne Westendorf, Roger Donaldson, Marilyn Mueller

Financial Board: Dwight Diercks, Paul Meier, Jim Moeller, Todd Foelske, Jim Jurgenson