

# ST. PETER COMMUNICATOR

43 N 3rd St., Hilbert, WI 54129

Office: (920) 853-3217

March 2025

## From the desk of Pastor Peterson

Grace, mercy, and God's peace to each of you from our risen, victorious, and ascended Lord Jesus Christ, Amen. How time flies. When I was growing up, I can remember going to Saint Mary's Catholic Church for their annual Lenten fish fry. Those Friday fish fries as they are here in Wisconsin are very delicious indeed. Since we are now very close to Lent, it would well serve us to see what Lent is in the Christian tradition.

The season of Lent, in the Christian church, a period of penitential preparation for Easter. In our Lutheran Church and other churches, in recognition of this penitential we remove the Hymn of Praise and the Alleluia verses.

In Western churches it begins on Ash Wednesday, six and a half weeks before Easter, and provides a 40-day period for fasting and abstinence (Sundays are excluded), in imitation of Jesus Christ's fasting in the wilderness before he began his public ministry. The word "Lent" has Germanic roots referring to the "lengthening" of days, or springtime. The word is traced etymologically to an Old English word "lencten" that simply referred to the season of spring. As a Church term, "Lent" is unique to English, in almost all Latin type languages the name for this season finds its origin in the Latin word Quadragesima (the forty days) which refers to the length of season. The Lenten period of forty days refers to the forty hours of total fast that preceded the Easter celebration in the early Church.

Lent starts off with Ash Wednesday. We do have the imposition of ashes as a reminder that we need the forgiveness of sins, and to repent of our sins. The pastor says "from dust you have come, and to dust you shall return" Genesis 3:19. There God tells Adam and Eve after they have sinned that they came from dust and to dust they will return. That is a pronouncement of judgement (See also Daniel 9:3 and Eshter 4:3).

As we journey through the season of Lent, we celebrate other important dates as well. From Palm Sunday (The Last Sunday in Lent, where we begin the journey into Holy Week) where Jesus enters Jerusalem on a donkey, on His way to the cross. During Holy Week, we also see where Jesus instituted the Sacrament of Holy Communion on Maundy Thursday (Mandatum Thursday). Jesus celebrates the Last Supper and then heads to Gethsemane. There He was in deep prayer and was betrayed by Judas. Then we come to Good Friday where Jesus is nailed to the cross for our sins. He suffers and then He dies. Holy Saturday marks the transition from death to life. Many churches celebrate Holy Saturday with a service (Easter Vigil) where the focus is on Jesus' time in the grave, and His transition to eternal life.

So, with Lent upon us, let us with a repentant heart and the promise of the forgiveness of sins, and the resurrection of the body, focus on what Jesus has done for us. He Has Risen; He Has Risen Indeed!! Alleluia.

Pastor Peterson



## LUTHERAN WOMEN IN MISSION

### **Quarterlies:**

Once again, WIM has voted to subscribe to the LWML magazine, the Lutheran Woman's Quarterly, for each adult woman in the congregation. We hope that you are enjoying the articles that feature the various missions in the LCMS, spotlights on individual women, Bible studies (we often use these at our meetings), grant updates, mission projects by women around the country, and many other enriching and edifying articles.

A major part of the current issue, Winter 2024, is the information needed to make plans to attend the LWML convention in Omaha this June. Attending a national LWML convention is one of the most inspiring events you will encounter. And if Milwaukee in 2023 was just too close to home to seem special, perhaps Omaha will entice you. After all, it's just a state away! All we have to do is pass through Iowa!

### **Gifts From the Heart:**

Our gifts to the Bread of Life Food Pantry were gladly received! As expected, the shelves were almost bare, and our donations are making a major difference for those in need in our communities. Thanks to everyone who shared their blessings, thanks to Thrivent for a Thrivent Action card, and thanks to Dean and Jan for the use of their Thrivent card and for delivering all of our gifts.

The next recipient of our Gifts From the Heart will be A Place of Refuge in Milwaukee. This is our Safe House for pregnant women and their children who are in danger and in need of safe living quarters. We will receive these items from April 13 to May 11 – just in time for Mother's Day. Find out more about A Place of Refuge online at [apor.org](http://apor.org).

### **Leadership Workshop:**

LWML SWD will hold a workshop on March 8 in Sheboygan entitled "Loving Leadership". This workshop is for any and all women and will be held from 8:30-3:00. For details, see [lwml-swd.org/workshops](http://lwml-swd.org/workshops).

### **Soup Luncheon:**

Plans are being finalized for a soup luncheon on March 23 at 12:30. This is a joint event with St. Luke and will benefit our VBS. We will be serving chicken noodle soup, chili, grilled cheese sandwiches, and desserts. There will be a free-will offering. Watch for more information as the month progresses. We are asking people to sign-up in advance so that we can be prepared for this new venture, and we invite you to bring your family and neighbors. Just sign them up.

### **Bird Houses and Bird Feeders:**

On Fellowship Sundays we will have a new feature. Ken Plate has been making bird houses and bird feeders. He will be bringing two or three to each of our Fellowship Sundays and will offer them for \$30. Of that, \$15 will go to missions and \$15 will be returned to Ken for supplies. We are thankful to Ken for sharing his talents to benefit our many mission recipients.

### **Another Outreach:**

Thanks to another Thrivent project, we have purchased a display rack and pamphlets from Lutheran Hour Ministries/Lutheran Layman's League for display in the community. Thanks to Karen Price for using her Thrivent card, to Pam Menge for coordinating this project, and to Brady's Automotive Center for providing a visible place to display this material.

### **Next Meeting:**

Our next meeting is March 11 at 1:00. All women of the congregation are members of LWML, and all are invited to our meetings for planning and Bible study.

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## From the mission field: Short-term mission

by Cheryl Magness



A short-term mission team from LCMS International Mission led activities at Castillo Fuerte, a children's program, during a 2023 trip to La Victoria, Peru. (Doug Hoyt)

LCMS short-term mission volunteers and teams serve alongside LCMS missionaries and Lutheran partners to proclaim Christ for anywhere from one week to six months. Volunteers serve in a variety of ways — teaching, counseling, providing health care, assisting with construction projects and more — to spread the Gospel, plant Lutheran churches and show mercy.

If you have ever considered serving as a short-term mission volunteer but have wondered what it would be like, you can read firsthand accounts by past volunteers at [resources.lcms.org/commentaries](https://resources.lcms.org/commentaries). These volunteers have participated in opportunities in Taiwan, the Czech Republic and Latin America as well as in the United States, doing everything from leading vacation Bible school to teaching basic health and first aid.

Samantha Hoyt, a member of Immanuel Lutheran Church, East Dundee, Ill., has served on several short-term mission teams, including in Peru in 2020 and 2023. After her 2023 trip, Hoyt wrote:

“I flew home from Peru at the end of February 2020. Three weeks later, the world locked down.

“Looking back, I still marvel at God’s goodness. ... Our group was able to hand out soap in some of the most economically depressed neighborhoods in Lima. We were able to teach children about hygiene and how to keep themselves and their loved ones healthy. We were able to introduce people who had never set foot in a church to local church workers who would be able to care for and minister to them through the coming year of uncertainty and fear. ...

“I returned to Peru in October 2023. ... So much had changed. Some people we had looked forward to seeing had moved away. Several had been called to their eternal home.

“While some of the news was bittersweet, so much more filled us with joy. Babies had grown into vibrant and energetic preschoolers. People who had spoken no English on our first visit were elated to practice their new language with us. A shy Venezuelan refugee I met in 2020 had become a deaconess student and one of the kindest, most loving people I have ever had the privilege to know. God worked in Peru through us, and it was so, so good to see how He kept working there long after we had left.”

Read the rest of Hoyt’s account, and those of other volunteers, at [resources.lcms.org/commentaries](https://resources.lcms.org/commentaries). Visit [lcms.org/missionary-service](https://lcms.org/missionary-service) to learn more about LCMS Short-Term Mission and see a list of volunteer opportunities.



**Don't forget to set your clocks ahead before bed on Saturday March 8<sup>th</sup>.**

### A Kingdom Not of This World: The Church Is Both Hidden and Manifest

by Matthew Harrison

*“Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom” (Luke 12:32).*

The kingdom of heaven is God’s good Gospel gift. Luther commented, “If our dear Father were not to give the kingdom to us, we would never buy it from Him or earn it. The word is give, give, give. Therefore, we should thank Him with a cheerful heart and not boast about our worthiness” (Luther, St. L. IX.1812; my translation).

John the Baptizer saw this kingdom in Jesus and confessed it loudly and clearly: “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). Jesus taught clearly that the kingdom of God came in His person, His acts and His preaching. “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel” (Mark 1:15). Jesus also tells us the kingdom of God has to do above all with the Gospel. “And He went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom” (Matt. 4:23). The kingdom is preached and believed. “He said to them, ‘I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns as well; for I was sent for this purpose’” (Luke 4:43). The kingdom is received by faith. “Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it” (Mark 10:15). The kingdom comes and exists on earth, yet Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world” (John 18:36). His kingdom is here and now yet fulfilled in eternity. “Truly, I say to you, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God” (MARK 14:25). Christ Himself defines the mission of His disciples until the end of time: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing ... [and] teaching” (Matt. 28:19–20).

On earth, God’s kingdom is the Church Militant, the struggling church. It is the totality of all believers in Christ’s Gospel of free forgiveness by His cross and resurrection, no matter who they are or where they find themselves. The church is at once exclusive (“No one comes to the Father except through Me” [John 14:6]) and completely inclusive (“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only [begotten] Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life” [John 3:16]). The church is at once hidden, for no one can see faith in the heart (“You have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God” [Col. 3:3]), and manifest in the marks of the church. The Word of the Lord does “not return ... empty” (Isaiah 55:11), and so we know where the kingdom of God is on this earth: precisely where the Word of God is preached and Baptism and the Lord’s Supper are both administered according to Christ’s institution and intent. These are the marks of the true church.

We see the Word of God in use along with Baptism and the Lord’s Supper far beyond our fellowship in the LCMS. And we thank God that wherever these are kept, even if partially hidden by false teaching, Christ creates believers. The church is hidden also under its divisions, and even under false teachings (1 Cor. 3). The New Testament uses the same word for the entirety of believers (in the sense of the Nicene Creed’s “one holy Christian and apostolic church”; for example, when Jesus said, “on this rock I will build My church” [Matt. 16:18]) as it does for a local gathering or congregation of believers (for example, “the church of God that is in Corinth” [1 Cor. 1:2]). The word sometimes indicates a group of believers in a whole region: “The church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and was being built up” (Acts 9:31). In every case, the church is the Body of Christ, made up of “saints” or “holy people” (see Eph. 1:1; Phil. 1:1). Because these believers are baptized into Christ, they are one body. “So we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another” (Rom. 12:5).

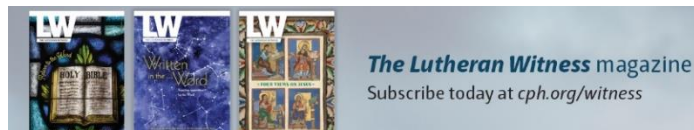
As individuals have different gifts and weaknesses, so do churches or congregations. This we see clearly in the New Testament. Paul praises all the local churches that are the recipients of his letters (1 Cor. 1:4–9), yet in these same letters he lays out the terrible problems he sees that must be corrected if

the Gospel is to be retained (Galatians). Some of the congregations Paul addresses or speaks about are quite large. Others are small, like the church in Macedonia (2 Cor. 8:1–15). Just like today, there were large churches in urban areas and hundreds of small churches across the far-flung population. Some lacked pastors, and Paul called on his helpers to ordain men for them (Titus 1:5). Some were experiencing terrible factions (Corinth, Galatia), false teachers and false doctrine. They were failing to hold to apostolic teaching and therefore the very words of Jesus. The Gospel was at stake! Jesus had warned, “Beware of false prophets” (Matt. 7:15). Some churches were wealthier (Corinth), some poorer Macedonia). Some faced intense persecution (Thessalonica; church in Asia Minor; see also 1 Peter 1).

We have many similar challenges today in the LCMS. Thank God we have broad doctrinal unity. Our doctrinal convention resolutions — even on the challenging issues — receive overwhelming majorities (94% against women’s ordination, 88% for closed Communion, and similar numbers for maintaining the order of worship). But some of these issues chafe here and there. We have large, very gifted congregations. We have many more small and even very small churches, which also have their gifts. We have personalities. We have church workers, congregations and schools that are suffering for various reasons. The culture is relentless in its attack against the mind and teaching of Christ. But here we are. In the midst of all this — just like at the time of the apostles — “the kingdom of God is at hand.” This message of Jesus and His free forgiveness continues to grab hearts. We have great pastors. We have great lay leaders and congregants. We’ve all got our strengths and weaknesses. The weaknesses are given that we not boast in ourselves, for as St. Paul says, “When I am weak, then I am strong” (2 Cor. 12:10). We have Christ. Or shall I say rather, Christ has us.

“Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom” (Luke 12:32).

—Pastor Matthew C. Harrison



## The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod LCMS Stewardship Ministry Newsletter article – March 2025

### God’s Instruments, God’s Stewards

*For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. (Eph. 2:10)*

Some pastors refer to these words as “the most forgotten words in the Scriptures.” They are forgotten because they follow the familiar and critical words before it. The preceding two verses that overshadow Ephesians 2:10 are words of justification: “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast” (Eph. 2:8–9). These are words preached regularly. They are assigned as confirmation verses. They carry with them the very heart of what it means to be a redeemed child of God!

Precisely because the previous verses are so central to salvation, they often overpower our practice of stewardship! We have been saved by grace. This is certain and sure because of Jesus. Works play no role in our salvation. No credit taking for us! Grace is freely given. Faith is miraculously created by the Spirit and joyously received. This truth is so wonderful and so encompassing that we often miss out on WHY we are redeemed.

The grace of God revealed in Jesus calls us to faith. But St. Paul doesn’t stop with grace and faith. He continues to the logical conclusion. Just like the creation declares the handiwork of God, the redemption of sinners like you and me declares His greatest handiwork! Redeemed stewards are created to reflect the grace and mercy God showers on us to others.

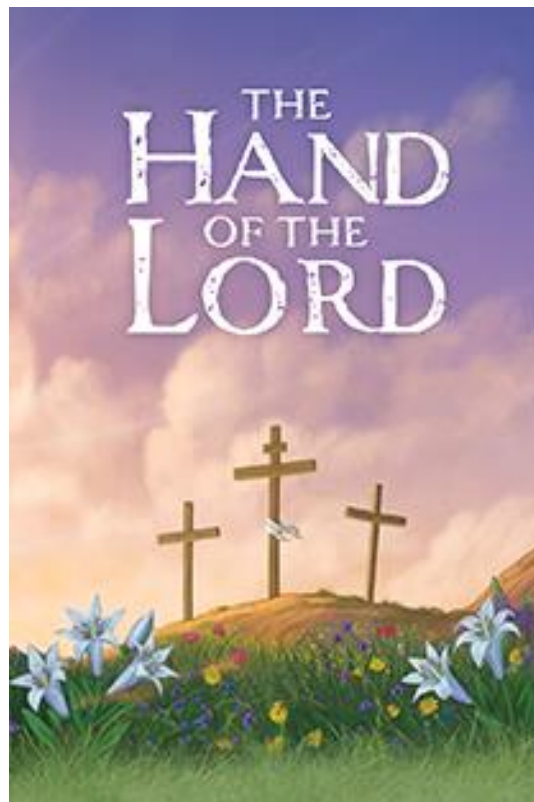
As Lutherans, we understand that good works flow from faith in Jesus Christ. They are the fruit of the tree of salvation into which we have been grafted by grace. Sanctification and stewardship are both on-going and active confessions of what the Lord has done in us. These works are not always spectacular. Many times, they are simply parents showing Jesus to their children. They are compassionate actions that live out the truth of the

Gospel to co-workers and even complete strangers. While they can be grand endeavors, more likely they are simple, beautiful works which highlight what Jesus has done in us.

These works aren't random either. They have been planned by God. God planned to use you as a faithful steward as you walk the road that leads you through your daily life. There are no chance encounters or coincidences. They have been planned by the Lord of the universe for the benefit of His creation. Good works are what point to God's greatest work: Jesus!

He calls you and me to walk in this faith, which flows from this grace, which has been poured out on us in Jesus. But even this is not to our credit. We are simply called to be faithful stewards of God's grace so that we may share it with those who need it as much as we do. God's Spirit carries us along in this. We are just the steward — the instrument in His hand to accomplish His plan and glorify Him!

– LCMS Stewardship Ministry: [lcms.org/stewardship](http://lcms.org/stewardship)



## Weekly Sermon Themes for Lent and Easter

“The Hand of the Lord Who . . .”

### Ash Wednesday

Freely Gives

Giving hands are dependent on the Lord, who has first filled them with His good gifts of forgiveness, life, and salvation.

Matthew 6:1–6, 16–21

### Week 1

Creates and Saves

Jesus, the Creator of all, stretches out His compassionate hand to save us.

Matthew 14:22–33

### Week 2

Casts Out Demons

Though Satan's might is stronger than ours, the finger of God has defeated him. Christ has plundered the strong man's house in order to free us from his grasp so that we are now His and live under Him in His kingdom.

Luke 9:37–43; 11:14–23

## *Happy Birthday*

### MARCH

- 9 Kurt Kamps
- 14 Casey Manders
- 15 Charley Fochs
- 16 Carissa Schwalenberg
- 17 James Fredrich
- 18 Marjean Plate  
Patrick Hernke
- 24 Zachary Wittmann  
Devin Roehrig
- 25 Dale Mueller
- 26 Diane Roehrig
- 30 Maria Schroeder





# March 2025

| Sunday                                                                                                                                                                                            | Monday                                                      | Tuesday                                                                  | Wednesday                                                                                                                     | Thursday                              | Friday                                                       | Saturday  |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>Altar Guild:</b><br>Mar. 2+5 Dean & Jan Bergelin<br>Mar. 9 Dan & Cindy Koffarnus<br>Mar. 16 Bonnie Ott & Cheri Koffarnus<br>Mar. 23 Donna Marose & DeAnn Eldred<br>Mar. 30 Dean & Jan Bergelin |                                                             |                                                                          |                                                                                                                               |                                       |                                                              | <b>1</b>  |
| <b>2 The Transfiguration of Our Lord</b><br><i>White</i><br><br>8:30 Divine Service<br>9:30 Sunday School                                                                                         | <b>3</b><br><br>7:00p Joint<br>Committee Mtg<br>@ St. Peter | <b>4</b><br><br>6:30p Bible Study                                        | <b>5 Ash Wednesday</b><br><br>10:30 Divine Service<br><br>7:00p Service @<br>St. Luke                                         | <b>6</b>                              | <b>7</b><br><br>10:00 Bible Study @<br>Terra Verde, Chilton  | <b>8</b>  |
| <b>9 First Sunday in Lent</b><br><i>Violet</i><br><br>8:30 Divine Service (NC)<br>Fellowship<br>9:30 Sunday School<br><br><b>Daylight Saving Time Begins</b>                                      | <b>10</b>                                                   | <b>11</b><br><br>1:00p WIM Meeting &<br>Bible Study<br>6:30p Bible Study | <b>12</b><br>10:30 Midweek<br>Lenten Service<br><br>4:15p Catechesis<br>@ St. Luke<br><br>7:00p Midweek<br>Service @ St. Luke | <b>13</b>                             | <b>14</b><br><br>10:00 Bible Study @<br>Terra Verde, Chilton | <b>15</b> |
| <b>16 Second Sunday in Lent</b><br><i>Violet</i><br><br>8:30 Divine Service<br>9:30 Sunday School                                                                                                 | <b>17</b>                                                   | <b>18</b><br><br>6:30p Bible Study                                       | <b>19</b><br>10:30 Midweek<br>Lenten Service<br><br>4:15p Catechesis<br>@ St. Luke<br><br>7:00p Midweek<br>Service @ St. Luke | <b>20</b><br><br><b>Spring Begins</b> | <b>21</b><br><br>10:00 Bible Study @<br>Terra Verde, Chilton | <b>22</b> |
| <b>23 Third Sunday in Lent</b><br><i>Violet</i><br><br>8:30 Divine Service (NC)<br>9:30 Sunday School<br>12:30 Soup Luncheon                                                                      | <b>24</b><br><br>Newsletter Articles Due                    | <b>25</b><br><br>6:30p Bible Study                                       | <b>26</b><br>10:30 Midweek<br>Lenten Service<br><br>4:15p Catechesis<br>@ St. Luke<br><br>7:00p Midweek<br>Service @ St. Luke | <b>27</b>                             | <b>28</b><br><br>10:00 Bible Study @<br>Terra Verde, Chilton | <b>29</b> |
| <b>30 Fourth Sunday in Lent</b><br><i>Violet</i><br><br>8:30 Divine Service<br>9:30 Sunday School                                                                                                 | <b>31</b>                                                   |                                                                          |                                                                                                                               |                                       |                                                              |           |

Divine Services marked (NC) will not have Holy Communion