

St. Petri Evangelical Lutheran Church
804 Grand Avenue
Story City, Iowa 50248-1417

You can also view the newsletter online at www.stpetri.org

The St. Petri Messenger

A publication of St. Petri Evangelical Lutheran Church

Join us for Holy Week

Maundy Thursday Apr. 2 7pm

Good Friday Apr. 3 7pm

Easter Vigil on Facebook Apr. 4

Easter Sunday Apr. 5

9a Easter Breakfast

10a Easter Festival Service

11a Easter Egg Hunt

Sunday Worship Schedule

9:00 a.m. Sunday School

10:00 a.m. Worship Service

11:00 a.m. Coffee/Fellowship

St. Petri Church Office Hours

Monday - Friday 8:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
except, Wednesday afternoon

Church Office Phone: (515) 733-4623

Email address: stpetrilutheran@stpetri.org

Pastor – Rev. Tim Malek

Missionaries– Patrick & Jacqueline Bencke, Japan

Parish/Financial Secretary – Veronica Wright

Custodian – Deb Lancaster



APRIL 2026

ST. PETRI LUTHERAN CHURCH, STORY CITY, IA

APRIL 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p><u>Every Sunday AM</u> (unless noted)</p> <p>9:00a Sunday School 10:00a Worship Service 11:00a Coffee//Fellowship</p>			<p>1</p> <p>No Lenten Service</p>	<p>2 Maundy Thursday</p> <p>7p Maundy Thursday Service at Bergen</p>	<p>3 Good Friday</p> <p>7p Good Friday Service - Bergen</p>	<p>4</p> <p>Vigil of Easter on Facebook</p>
<p>5 Easter Sunday</p> <p>No Sunday School 9-10a Coffee/Fellowship with cinnamon rolls 10a Easter Festival Serv. 11a Egg Hunt</p>	<p>6</p> <p>10:30a Staff mtg.</p>	<p>7</p> <p>9a-3p Bethany Quilters</p>	<p>8</p> <p>5:30p Property/Trustee Mtg. 5:30p Compass 6:30p youth meal 7p AXIS</p>	<p>9</p>	<p>10</p> <p>Pastor's Day Off</p>	<p>11</p> <p>9:30a-4p Riverside Spring Blast (ages 2nd-6th grade)</p>
<p>12 Communion</p> <p>11:15a Council Mtg.</p> <p>6:30p Confirmation-Bergen</p>	<p>13</p> <p>10:30a Staff mtg.</p>	<p>14</p> <p>9a Bethany Quilters</p>	<p>15</p> <p>5:30p Compass 6:30p youth meal 7p AXIS</p>	<p>16</p> <p>2p WELCA Bible Study</p>	<p>17</p> <p>Pastor Day Off</p>	<p>18</p> <p>8am Weekend Women's Bible Study at parsonage</p>
<p>19</p> <p>3-6p 10th grade Confirmation Faith Journey Event at Bergen</p>	<p>20</p> <p>May Newsletter articles due</p> <p>10:30a Staff Mtg</p>	<p>21</p> <p>9a-3p Bethany Quilters</p>	<p>22</p> <p>5:30p Compass 6:30p youth meal 7p AXIS</p>	<p>23</p>	<p>24</p> <p>Pastor Day Off</p>	<p>25</p> <p>8:30a-noon Riverside Spring Work Day</p> <p>10a-noon St. Petri works at Loaves & Fishes</p>
<p>26 Confirmation Sunday Communion</p> <p>Church reserved 11a-2p 6:30p 8th/9th grade Confirmation-St. Petri</p>	<p>27</p> <p>---- LWR Quilt making 9a-noon Mon-Wed ----</p> <p>10:30a Staff Mtg.</p>	<p>28</p> <p>9a Bethany Quilters</p>	<p>29</p> <p>5:30p Compass 6:30p youth meal 7p AXIS</p>	<p>30</p>	<p>May 1</p> <p>Pastor Day Off</p>	<p>May 2</p>

St. Petri Messenger



APRIL 2026

Faith Seeking Understanding

Our Journey Draws to its Conclusion

We have now entered Holy Week, our journey through Lent has led us to new life, life eternal, in Jesus Christ and will soon culminate in the joyous celebration of the Resurrection of our Lord, Easter.



Pastor Tim Malek

We enter the Holy “Three Days”

Maundy Thursday, April 2nd. (Thursday 7:00PM at Bergen, Pastor Tim preaching, youth lead liturgy)

Christian theologians have taught that the passion, death, and resurrection of Christ must be held together to be adequately understood. Thus, it was that since at least the fourth century, the Christianized Passover festival that English-speakers call Easter took three days, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and the first communion of Easter. The Three Days begins on Maundy Thursday with an act of confession and absolution that concludes the season of Lent and prepares everyone for the baptismal renewals of Easter. “Mandatum,” the “command” to love is the source of the term Maundy. The eucharist recalls Jesus’ last meal with his disciples before his death. The service concludes with a stripping of the worship space of all adornment, in preparation for Good Friday.

Good Friday, April 3rd. (Friday 7:00PM at Bergen, youth led Tenebrae service)

In ancient times this second of the Three Days was called the Triumph of the Cross. English speakers call the day Good because we know the end of the story, for the Three Days carries us into the resurrection. Friday’s Bible readings present several

quite different ways to think about the death of Christ: Christ is the lamb, Christ is the high priest, and Christ is the king reigning from the cross. Christ is both human and divine: he suffers, and he is the I AM. The service concludes when at the foot of the life-giving cross, we pray for everyone and everything on earth and engage in a ritual of reverence for the cross on which hung Christ, the Savior of the whole world.

The Vigil of Easter, the Resurrection of our Lord, April 4th. (Available online beginning Saturday)

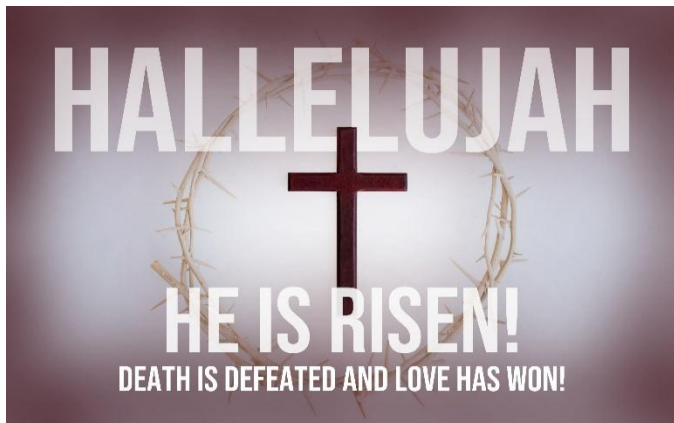
The Vigil of Easter, the most solemn and joyous celebration of the resurrection of our Lord, is traditionally composed of four parts: the lighting of the paschal fire, the service of readings, baptisms and baptismal renewal, and communion; we will only be doing the service of readings. Our youth will be presenting the 12 Old Testament and 2 New Testament readings which will be available for viewing on Saturday through Facebook. Through these readings the church proclaims many biblical images of divine salvation. Each can be seen as picturing God, Christ's resurrection, and the baptismal life.

The Resurrection of Our Lord: Easter Day, April 5th. (Sunday 10:00AM)

By the second century, Christians had shaped Passover into an annual celebration of Christ’s resurrection, having agreed to keep this Christianized Pascha on the Sunday following the Jewish festival. Since to be Christian is to believe in the power of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, observing Easter became the primary mark of a practicing Christian.

(Portions from Sundays and Season, Augsburg Fortress, 2011)

This is the high holy season of the church year. These are the worship services that focus on the core of our faith. I pray that God will bless us richly as we worship during this holy season. See you in church, Pastor Tim



Come and celebrate the Resurrection of Our Lord on April 5th, 2026! Begin the morning by attending our **cinnamon roll and coffee fellowship from 9-10am**, then stay for the **traditional festival service beginning at 10am**.

There will also be an **Easter Egg Hunt** following the 10:00am worship service.

COMPASS & AXIS Youth Groups

will resume Wednesday, April 8th.

5:30pm COMPASS

6:30pm Youth Meal

7:00pm AXIS

The Weekend Women's Bible Study Group will meet **Saturday, April 18th** at 8:00am, *at the parsonage*.

Bring your Bible and enjoy time with friends and coffee. See you there!



Adult New Testament Class

We will get back on track in April when we meet Sunday April 19th at 11:15 AM in the old nursery (across the hall from the Youth Room) and discuss Colossians.



In March 2026

In Our Prayers

Larry Reisetter, Judy Schnurstein

PRAYERS OF ONGOING CONCERN

Linda Fevold, Paul Wierson

Prayers for those not near to us:

Patrick and Jacqueline Bencke, ELCA Missionaries, Japan
Soldiers, Peace Workers, and Humanitarian Aid Workers
Those in Ukraine and Russia

**Our Japan Missionaries
Patrick & Jacqueline Bencke**



May newsletter articles are due Monday, April 20, 2026.



WELCA REPORT

April 16 WELCA Bible Study
April 27-29 Quilt Making

Come join the quilters the last Monday thru Wednesday of each month from 9am-noon for fun, food, & fellowship. There is a variety of tasks – cutting, tying, pinning, and stitching! Everyone welcome!

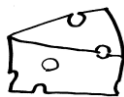


Hi, it's Church Mouse!

I didn't know if the "Jingle Jar" was going to get any business during Spring Break, because families were out of town. But to

the rescue came **Miss Alysann Patterson**, who totally stepped up and did the work of 10 kids. **She understood the assignment.** She looked over the congregation like a pro, going to the back, making sure no one was left out. So proud of you!

My heart is full, Church Mouse



St. Petri has a YouTube Channel

We post videos past events and services... We hope to post more church-related events in the future. You can find the YouTube Channel at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC44o0DUzQrLYR7CEJBHCegQ>
Questions? Please contact: Abby & Tim Patterson or Angie & John Hinz

APRIL C.A.R.E. GROUP 2026

CARE Group 4 Leaders
Cheryl Hoffman, Wanda Holm
Doug & Kendra Braucher Eloise Ericson
Ver & Barb Frohling Vivian Gossel
Donna Guard Allen Holm
Tom & Amelia Klett Pat & Jo Murken
Jim & Karen Nelson
Jason & Jeannie Patterson
Kevin & Peg Patterson
Tim & Abby Patterson
David & Gail Sporleder
Scott & Shelley Stevenson
Nate & Kayla Tafolla



**VOLUNTEERS:
VERY VALUABLE!**

Many hands make light work!

MAY C.A.R.E. GROUP 2026

CARE Group 5 Leader
Sherri Keigan
Lorene Anderson Gary & Hope Brown
Nancy Carlson
Tony Edwards & Jennifer Knutson
John & Linda Fevold Evelyn Fink
Seth & Willow Hill Patty Hoversten
Karen Jacobson Jim Keigan
Lowell & Beci Lande Janet Mortvedt
Paul Ness Randy & Kelsey Olson
Connie Phillips Shirley Stakey
Rick & Angie Stover
Chuck & Patty Van Patter
Wayne Williams



BIRTHDAYS

April 1: Nick Stover
April 4: Jennifer Andersen, Nicole Finley
April 9: Al Holm, Jadyn Nelson, Gloria Severson
April 10: Sherri Keigan, Shirley Stakey
April 11: Austin Ihle, Nathaniel Tafolla
April 13: Ben Chelsvig, Kaylee Knutson
April 15: Murray DeRidder
April 16: Nancy Hermanson, Jim Keigan
April 19: Alan Gossel
April 20: Delaney Holdredge
April 21: Olivia Schwartz
April 22: Brittany Peterson
April 23: Tyler Hobbs, Zac Thiessen
April 24: Brooke Andersen
April 25: Kim Finley
April 26: Eleanor Sayre
April 29: Makinlea Johnson, Tatum Tafolla

If you would like to view St. Petri's newsletters online, go to: www.stpetri.org

WEATHER CANCELLATIONS

Check Facebook or the church's answering machine.

If Roland-Story schools are dismissed early due to bad weather, then church events will also be canceled.



OUR MISSION:

*We are Disciples of Jesus Christ,
called to grow in Christ
and to invite all to follow him.*

St. Petri Lutheran Church Approved Council Minutes February 8, 2026

Present: Travis DeRidder, Rick Stover, Angie Stover, Nancy Carlson, Jo Murken, Kelsey Olson, Pastor Tim Malek Absent: Ann Healy

Meeting called to order at 11:32 a.m.
Travis offered Devotions.

The Council needed to reapprove the 12/14/25 minutes to reflect a change. It had been noted that Nancy Carlson's sister-in-law's donation was for the keypad lock at the southwest entrance project and not the church sign project as it should have. (Her donation had been deposited correctly - only the minutes were incorrect.) Kelsey made a motion to make this change to the already approved minutes; Rick seconded. No discussion. Motion carried. Angie S. presented the January 7 and the January 11 minutes for approval. Kelsey made a motion to accept the minutes as written; Jo seconded. No discussion. Motion carried.

Rick read a letter he drafted to Reliance State Bank regarding changes in signatories on St. Petri accounts. He, Travis and Pastor Tim signed the letter and Rick agreed to take it to the bank. Rick presented the Treasurer's report and read through the checks written since the January meeting. Rick highlighted that the 2025 dispersions agreed upon at the 1/7/26 meeting had been made at the end of January. He also noted that the organ repair bill from Dobson Organ Company had been paid. Kelsey made a motion to accept the Treasurer's report as presented; Jo seconded. No discussion. Motion carried.

Pastor Tim announced that Pastor Joy Edeker (formerly of Bethesda Lutheran Church in Jewell) had passed away

unexpectedly the previous week. He explained the 2026 Lenten rotation. St. Petri will be hosting the Ash Wednesday service and Bergen will be hosting the Maundy Thursday and Good Friday services. There will not be a Sunrise service at 8 a.m. on Easter but to look for youth involvement at the 10 a.m. service. There will be food and fellowship at 9 a.m. as well. Pastor Tim is continuing to monitor illness in the community in regards to resuming homebound communion. He reported that Bergen and we are getting closer to hiring a youth director.

Christian Fellowship: No report

Worship: Jo explained that she and Abby will work together to complete the committee's tasks. She said that the youth will be singing on Palm Sunday and she also let the Council know that the Middle School and High School youth will be involved at the 10 a.m. Easter service. She announced plans to experiment for a few months with ways to get more congregational involvement in helping with worship services in addition to SignUpGenius.

Property and Trustees: Nancy said the bid for work on the Parsonage sink has been accepted and that the committee will proceed. She made the council aware that the Eternal Candle was changed to wired lighting and installed with a flickering lightbulb. Other topics the committee is working on include: the custodial "cleanout," removal of the wooden mailboxes across from Pastor Tim's door, looking for bids for adding insulation under the roof, door lock/keypad lock and ongoing investigation of options for a new outdoor sign.

Faith Formation: Kelsey reported that there will be an Easter egg hunt following

the 10 a.m. Easter service. There will be no Sunday School both Saturdays of Spring Break and the final session of Sunday School will be May 10.

No Old Business per Travis

New Business: Rick will assume the duties of working with any WELCA money issues. Jo made a motion to close the separate WELCA checking account and combine it with the General Fund with future distributions to be made from there; Kelsey seconded. No discussion. Motion carried. The status of the Student Loan fund was discussed briefly with a plan to discuss it further at a later meeting.

John Grinde has requested to be removed from the membership roll. Kelsey made a motion to accept this request; Nancy seconded. No discussion. Motion carried. The Council wishes him Godspeed.

Meeting adjourned at 12:57 p.m. and closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,
Angie Stover

Contributions(General Fund)

February -\$1,733.59
2026 YTD -\$ 642.97





**RIVERSIDE LUTHERAN
BIBLE CAMP EVENTS**

For questions or to register,
call 733-5271 or go to
www.riversidelbc.org

Spring Blast! 2nd-6th grade
Sat., April 11, 2026; 9:30a-4p; \$45 ea.
Tons of camp packed into a Saturday!

Riverside Spring Work Day
Sat., May 2nd 8:30am-lunch
Meet at the Dining Hall RSVP by April 25th
Projects will include: Deep-cleaning the
Dining Hall (upstairs and downstairs/rec
hall area); Deep-cleaning cabins; Cleaning
out landscaping areas; Removal of small
trees/brush areas around camp.
Dress for the weather, bring work gloves,
chainsaws & loppers (if you have them).

'Lil Cowpoke May 2nd or 9th, 2026
10am-noon or 12:30-2:30p-both days
For cowboys and cowgirls 4-8 yrs. old
Each child must be accompanied by at least
one parent or adult who is willing to lead
their Lil' Cowpoke on a horse. A great way
to enjoy the horses, ranch, and learn more
about Jesus! There's time to ride horses,
play games, and get the chance to paint a
horse, fellowship and lunch!
Additional adults welcome to register for
\$10. Cost: \$40/child; \$10/adult (meal
included)



Teach us to pray

In Luke 11:1-13 (NIV), Jesus teaches about prayer.

Directions: Add or subtract the letters indicated and unscramble the letters to form a new word, using hints from the passage. Then unscramble the circled letters to answer the question below.

party - t = p r A y (v. 1)

lady + i = _ _ o o _ (v. 3)

drab + e = _ o _ _ _ (v. 5)

rod + o = _ o _ _ (v. 7)

bask - b = _ _ _ (v. 9)

keeps - p = o _ _ _ (v. 9)

define - ee = _ o _ _ (v. 9)

shift - t = _ _ _ o (v. 11)

sneaky - y = _ _ _ _ _ (v. 11)

sift + g = _ _ _ o _ (v. 13)



What will the Father give to those who ask of him?

_____ (v. 13)

Answer: pray, daily, bread, door, ask, seek, find, fish, snake, gifts, Holy Spirit

The Bencke Family in Japan



March 2026: 112番



I actually posted this picture and caption in the last newsletter that I sent at the end of December. It seemed timely to re-post it here as we are moving into the last weeks of Lent. The Christmas Nail is to be hung on a sturdy branch near the trunk that will hold such a spike without being noticed by admirers of the tree. The Christmas tree foreshadows the Christ-tree.

End of the year activities

It is the end of March, which is the end of the academic year and a time of major transitions. In Japan, many job changes occur at this time, as it aligns with the fiscal year for many academic institutions and businesses. Graduations are celebrated in March, and the new school year starts on April 1st. Hannah, our daughter, will be a senior at Luther High School, on the same campus as us. It is not lost on me that this will be the last year there are more than just the two of us on campus. The empty nest is not too far on the horizon. She and I (Jackie) went to the United States in February to look at campuses. No decisions yet.

Similar to how the end of December seems to evoke some reflection as we move into a new year, the end of March and beginning of April has a similar feeling. It often overlaps in the heart of Lent and Easter. This year, for example, we will hold an entrance ceremony which is big and bright and beautiful, on Good Friday. It seems odd to do that, but there isn't much that can be done. Then we start the school year with a new group of freshmen on the day after Easter. The term "Lent," in Japanese, is *junansetsu*. Literally, it translates as "Seasons of Suffering." The kanji characters are 受, which means to undergo or accept, 難, which means difficult or impossible, and 節, which means season. In this case, I find more meaning in the Japanese term for this church season than the term Lent, which is widely used in North American churches. "Lent" comes from the word *lencten*,

meaning lengthen, and refers to the longer periods of sunshine. Somehow, *junansetsu* seems fitting.

Recently, I was talking with my physical therapist about kanji, and how there is so much culture and context built into the language. I gave him the example that the term for thank you in Japanese is arigatou or 有難う, which means “you have done something difficult, and I recognize that.” Maybe you noticed that the second character of arigatou (難) is the same as the second character of junansetsu. Ironically, writing the character is also difficult. 18 individual strokes to get that bad boy down on paper! Anyway, I asked the PT person if he could think of any other examples of how a kanji character explains how Japanese thing. He said, *hito*, which means person. The character is two strokes (人), and implies that humans cannot exist without someone else, so there are two strokes that are fused together. I shared with him that the origin for “goodbye” is “God be with you.”

It takes getting used to looking at Kanji as being pictorial. In the front of our chapel, there is a large cross. One elementary student, upon seeing it for the first time, asked why there was a letter “t” hanging on the wall. He saw the cross as a letter. The cross also has two lines. The first service that I lead at chapel, I start with the cross and how it can be thought of as two strokes, where the vertical stroke is the Father and the Son, and the horizontal stroke is the Holy Spirit, wrapping arms from east to west around the world.

As you ponder the words and symbols and colors and culture in these next weeks, what do they evoke to you? How would you use those images to convey an understanding of the gospel to someone who has never seen a cross in a chapel and asks why there is a lower case “t” hanging on the wall?



Left: Patrick and I rarely get our pictures taken at graduation, but here we are in our garb.



Right: On March 11th, we remembered the victims of the earthquake and tsunami that happened 15 years ago. As I flew in to Tokyo a few weeks ago, we happened to cross over the coast where you can still see the line where the tsunami pushed in to the coastline.

