



ST. PETER'S

EST. 1880 EPISCOPAL CHURCH

THE CROSSKEYS

DECEMBER 2025

From the ~~Rector~~ The Rev. John Mousely

Dear Saints of St. Peter's,

Greetings from the tiniest corners of your beloved church! As you know, I am Father Mousely, St. Peter's mouse vicar, serving alongside my trusty curate, the Rev. Thomas Cracker. We are ever grateful for your warmth and generosity toward our small congregation of church mice—and for the way you greet us each week with such kindness, crumbs, and smiles.

I have some most exciting news! Just this morning, I received a very important letter from the office of the mouse bishop, and it is my pleasure to announce that Bishop Evelyn Undersqueal, Archbishop of Cheddarbury, will be visiting St. Peter's this Christmas! She will be accompanied by the venerable Canon Rowan Whiskers and her chaplain, Fr. Samuel Squeakbury. What an honor to celebrate the birth of Christ with such esteemed mouse ministers!


Now, dear friends, we mice may be small in your eyes, but Scripture reminds us that nothing small is insignificant in God's eyes. Indeed, God delights in using the small to change the world! Even our Lord and Savior came to us in the most wondrous smallness—as a tiny, baby born of Mary.

This Advent, as we scurry about in preparation for Christmas, I encourage you to watch for God in the small things. That is where God will surely be, awaiting your eyes to see and hearts to receive.

And here is a mouse-sized request from Bishop Undercheese herself: she will be taking a portion of her Christmas joy to those in our community without shelter. **If you are able, please bring new socks and travel-size hygiene items to Christmas Eve Mass**, so she may deliver them to those in need. Even the smallest gift can bring the warmest comfort.

And do keep an eye out this Christmas for all five of our mouse ministers! We shall be hiding in corners, peeking from pews, and scuttling under chairs. Be sure to greet us—we will be overjoyed to meet you!

May your cheese be plentiful, your holes be warm, and your hearts be filled with joy.

Fr. John Mousely 



THE REV. JOHN MOUSELY
VICAR OF ST. PETER'S
EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Love God

Worship & Formation Opportunities at St. Peter's and Beyond

CENTERING PRAYER AND MORNING PRAYER

Join Fr. Derek for Centering Prayer each weekday morning from 7:30am-8:00am in the church right before Morning Prayer. Centering Prayer is a receptive method of Christian silent prayer, rooted in the early church, which deepens our relationship with God—a prayer in which we can experience God's presence within us, closer than breathing, closer than thinking, closer than consciousness itself. Reach out to Fr. Derek to learn more about the practice or find out more here: <https://www.contemplativeoutreach.org/centering-prayer-method/>

CHURCH OPEN FOR PRAYER

St. Peter's welcomes visitors for prayer most weekdays, between the hours of 7:30 am and 5:30 pm. You are invited to come and spend some quiet time in our sacred space for reflection and prayer.

Bible Study with the Rector In-Person and Online!

Each week on Wednesdays at 10:30am, eight to twelve parishioners gather in Bender Hall to reflect and study the Scripture passages assigned for the upcoming Sunday. Now we have added the opportunity for folks to join us online using zoom. If you would like to join the in-person meeting online, please send an email to Fr. Derek at rector@stpetersplantcity.com.

fAmILy Mass

Family Mass is held at the last Sunday's 10:30am service each month. All families are welcome—large and small, families of birth and of choice. Not all families include children, but some do, and making worship friendly and accessible for all ages is part of what we're called to do as members of Christ's church. The Family Mass is an all-ages Episcopal worship that centers children and youth in a more obvious way. It's an opportunity to share, to learn, and to grow together as God's family through all generations. Join us!

Growing into GRACE

A PODCAST FROM
ST. PETER'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
IN PLANT CITY, FL

ST. PETER'S HAS A PODCAST!

Subscribe wherever you listen to podcasts and get each week's homily (and occasionally other content) whenever is convenient to you!

You can also find videos and manuscripts of homilies at www.DerekMichaelLarson.com.

THE TRAINS RAN BOTH WAYS

By John Santosuosso

"I am the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."

Acts 7:32

"Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven
and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more."

Rev. 21:1

Much of my time during that part of my "formative years" that lasted from the third to the sixth grade was spent at the Robert Zane Elementary School in Collingswood, New Jersey. Named for an early settler in the area, there was nothing special about the building. It was beginning to show its age, and tended to be a bit gloomy inside. However, our teachers were very dedicated, compassionate, and highly competent, more so than we appreciated at the time.

For me personally Zane School held one other virtue in addition to its staff. It was located very close to the railroad station of the Pennsylvania-Reading Seashore Lines. I had become a "railroad nut" ever since, while I was still at a very young age, my grandfather on several occasions had taken me by train to New York City. A retired machinist from the Pennsylvania Railroad locomotive shops in Altoona, he would travel the country using the passes his "golden years" now offered. Sometimes my grandmother would go along, but she was somewhat "turned off" when by rail and ferry they went to Havana, and walked into a restaurant only to discover a live pig wandering about the place.

I never made it to Havana, but with my two closest friends, "Ace" and "Rube," we would sometimes go to Philadelphia's 30th Street Station to do some train watching and riding from 30th Street to North Philadelphia. We rode some of the best trains in the country, even if it was only for five miles in one direction. No matter, the ride was usually free, and if a conductor did come by he only charged you a quarter.

Of course such excursions had to be limited. That is what made Zane School special. By taking a slightly longer walk home, I was able to make a meaningful if brief stop at the station. It was on the main line of the PRSL, which ran from Camden to Atlantic City. However, only a few morning and evening local trains stopped here, plus a mid-afternoon one running between Camden and Hammonton. If I was lucky, I could spot that one at the station at the very end of the school day. My station visits were supplemented with actual rides when possible. Haddonfield was within short biking distance, and from there you could catch a train to Philadelphia, Camden, Atlantic City, or even Cape May.

The trains did run both ways. I loved the return rides almost as much as those that had taken me to my original destination. It was an enjoyable journey, a chance to reflect on the wonders I had seen and the places I had experienced, such as Atlantic City's famous Steel Pier with its diving horses, probably more fun for me than the horses, there was Mr. Peanut stirring his kettle at the Planter's Peanut Store on the boardwalk. In addition, those after school station visits left me with dreams of future trips. These were experiences I still savor from time to time.

In later years as I would recall those days, they struck me as in some ways similar to our life journey. We have the ability to look back as well as forward, and that can be a gift, although sometimes with a high price. How many times did we feel that God was directing our path? How many times did we feel we were alone? Barbara Brown Taylor writes about "Learning to Walk in the Dark." The mountain top experiences can be fulfilling, but sometimes the valleys are filled with lessons, some painful, but all of them ones we need to learn. Life flows in both directions. Looking back we can see where we have been and learn from it. Looking forward we can sometimes see where we need to go. Always we can be assured we do not ride or walk alone. The universe is a strange and awesome place, filled with things we cannot understand. But we can understand Jesus because He experienced what we have experienced. He came to forgive sins, but more importantly to make us whole, what God intended us to be. He came that we might, "Live fully, love wastefully, be all that we can be." For that gift we can be truly thankful. Happy Thanksgiving.

Love God

Worship & Formation Opportunities at St. Peter's and Beyond

St. Peter's Faith Formation Opportunities (for Adults, Children, & Youth)

Sunday mornings between services, from 9:15 am to 10:15 am, St. Peter's offers Sunday school for all ages. These classes include:

Pathfinders (Adults)

Pathfinders is our adult Sunday school class, which gathers each Sunday in Bender Hall. On Sundays, November 30 - December 21, join us for a series on Advent.

Little Lambs (Kindergarten or younger)

Children in Kindergarten or younger are invited to participate in a Sunday school designed just for them. The classroom is located down the back hallway in Bender Hall, across from the Godly Play room. For more information, contact LauraAnn Larson.

TruthWalkers (1st through 5th Graders)

TruthWalkers is St. Peter's Sunday school class for school-aged children in 1st through 5th grade. The class meets most Sundays during the school year in the Godly Play Room, located down the back hallway of Bender Hall. A Christmas party is planned during class on Sunday, December 14. Watch for upcoming details or contact Cindy Gutowski for more information.

Table Flippers (Middle and High Schoolers)

This Sunday school class is for students in middle and high school & meets in the corner classroom adjacent to the choir room off Bender Hall. For more information, contact Caleb Johnson.

Second Sunday Youth Gathering

All middle and high school students are invited to join us at the church every Second Sunday from 5:00-7:00pm for games, community, food, and prayer. December's gathering will take place on Sunday, December 14 for a "Youth-mas" Party", specially planned by the youth! All youth, come enjoy the festivities and bring your friends!!!

Love God

Worship & Formation Opportunities at St. Peter's and Beyond

Prayer and Worship in Advent and Christmas

Lessons and Carols

Sunday, December 14, 2025 at 10:30am

Lessons and Carols is a beloved service that originated at King's College, Cambridge in 1918 and has since become a cherished tradition around the world. Through a series of Scripture readings ("lessons") and carols sung by choir and congregation, the service tells the sweeping story of God's love—from creation and the prophets to the birth of Jesus. There will be no Holy Communion at this service, however the sacrament will be offered that day at the 8:00 am mass.

Carol Sing and Special Music

Christmas Eve at 4:30 pm

As a prelude to our Festive Eucharist with Children's Pageant, join us in church as we sing Christmas carols and hear special music and anthems to brighten our spirits, awaken hope, and prepare us for the celebration of the Nativity of our Lord.

Festive Eucharist and Pageant

Christmas Eve at 5:00 pm

Our first celebration of the Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ is a festive Eucharist designed especially for families. It begins with a children's Christmas pageant, includes readings from Scripture, a homily, and holy communion, and concludes with the candlelight singing of Silent Night.

Carol Sing and Special Music

Christmas Eve at 10:00 pm

As a prelude to our Solemn Midnight Mass, join us in church as we sing Christmas carols and hear special music and anthems to prepare us for the celebration of the Nativity of our Lord of Jesus Christ.

Solemn Midnight Mass

Christmas Eve at 10:30 pm

Our celebration of the Nativity of our Lord continues with a traditional Midnight Mass with carols, special music, Scripture readings, homily, holy communion, and a candlelight singing of Silent Night. The service includes incense.

Christmas Holy Eucharist

Christmas Day at 10:30 am

A spoken mass with no music will be offered on Christmas morning.

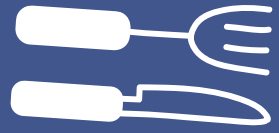
"It's Still Christmas" Family Mass

December 28, 2025

Join us on the fourth day of Christmas at 10:30am as we continue our celebration of the birth of Christ for a special and playful Family Eucharist with children's homily. There will be no 8:00am mass on this day.

Let's Get Social!!

engage cafe



Includes SOCIAL TIME (beginning at 5:30pm)
and SUPPER (served at 6:00pm) in Bender Hall.

Please RSVP by noon on Mondays using the emailed form,
or by calling (813) 752-5061
or emailing st.peterspc@verizon.net (the parish office).

Watch your weekly email for details!

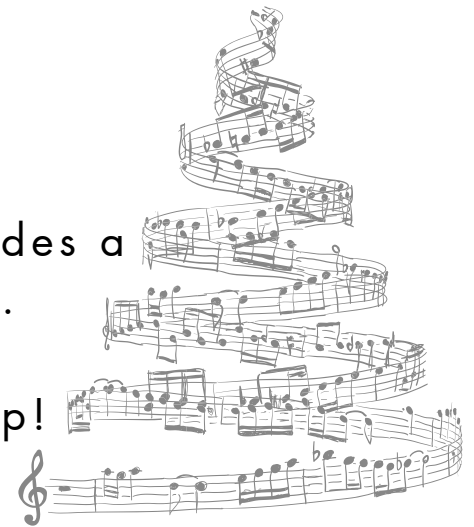
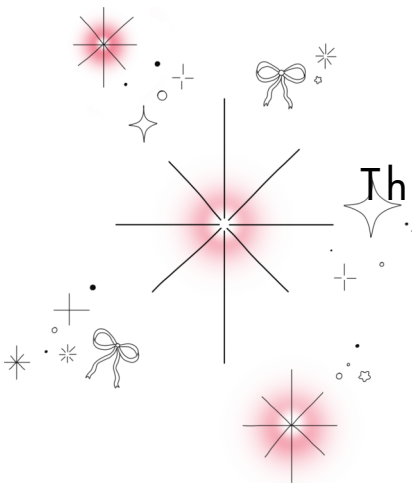
Christmas Sing-along at ENGAGE CAFE!

December 17, 2025

This special Engage Cafe includes a
Christmas song sing-along.

Come sign up for karaoke
or sing with the whole group!

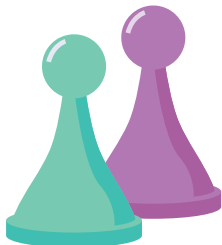
Please RSVP as usual.



FAMILY GAME NIGHT

Join us for our twice monthly game night!

Bring a sandwich or takeout,
your family,
a game to share,
and a friend!



DECEMBER
1ST and 15TH
6:00 pm

Share God's Love with the World

Mission & Outreach Opportunities at St. Peter's and Beyond

Laundry Love Fundraisers

Let me start by thanking everyone who participated in our BBQ and vacation auction fundraisers. Special thanks to Neal Ward and Jim Jeffries for donating their Hilton Honors vacations for the auction. Thank you to Christy Lyle for organizing the fundraising events and thank you to our talented auctioneer, Mark Hamilton, who kept things moving.

We raised \$1215 at the BBQ fundraiser. Burning Bush BBQ once again donated their services and product back to Laundry Love, which is how we raised so much money. We made \$1300 from the vacation auction. I hope those who won will have a great time. An anonymous donation of \$1000 was given to Laundry Love recently as well! Thank you to this donor also.

Our Laundry Love ministry would not exist without our ministry team and the support received from all of you. Thanks to your generosity, we have not missed one month due to lack of funds, which is so important because our neighbors have come to depend on St. Peter's to show up each month to assist them in being able to have clean clothes, bedding, and towels. This ministry continues to be vital in supporting our neighbors and helping to provide the dignity each of us deserves.

Though we have raised a good bit of money we continue to spend our max amount at each session. For each of the last three months we have spent \$500 and had to end our sessions early because we ran out of money. We will be re-evaluating the need to raise our total per session again in the new year.

"Love never ends; neither does laundry."

Peace,

Deacon Denise



Altar Art Auction

Thank you to everyone who bid on and purchased the Sunday art work. Thanks to our talented and stylishly dressed auctioneer, Mark Hamilton for his description of the artwork and encouragement. We don't have the final figures in but I am guessing that several hundred dollars were raised for the general church fund through this auction.

Stay tuned there may be more to come. Thank you to all the Sunday artists. It was a hard decision when Cindy Gutowski and I looked through the pictures to choose the 10 to auction. Thank you, Cindy, for your assistance. God's handiwork is ever present.

Deacon Denise

Share God's Love with the World

Mission & Outreach Opportunities at St. Peter's and Beyond



Laundry Love - Monday, December 8th 4-6:30pm

Our monthly Laundry Love event will take place from 4:00 pm to 6:30 pm at Olde Henry's Coin Laundromat, located on US 92. Thank you for your ongoing support for this vital ministry.

"Love never ends and neither does laundry."

Check out www.laundrylove.org for more information; please contact Deacon Denise (revdzz@gmail.com) to donate or volunteer.

Our next meeting will be held
December 11, 2025 at 11:00 am.
Tour of the food bank at 10:00 am.



Thanksgiving Baskets

Thank you to everyone who contributed to our Thanksgiving Basket outreach. We were able to fill and deliver 25 beautiful baskets to families of local schoolchildren for their Thanksgiving meal.

THANK YOU!

ANGEL TREE

Thank you to all who are so lovingly participating in our Angel Tree ministry this year. Your generosity will make Christmas Day truly special for needy children in our community, and we are deeply grateful for your kindness. **Please bring your gifts to the parish hall by December 10th. As a reminder, YOU DO NOT NEED TO WRAP YOUR GIFTS! Simply put them in a large plastic bag with your angel attached.** Our dedicated gift-wrapping team will carefully wrap each present for you. We will attach a label to each bag of gifts listing the contents so that parents will know what their children are receiving. These gifts will be delivered to the participating schools on December 17th. Thank you again for sharing the spirit of Christmas in such a meaningful way!



Friends in the Park - December 24th, 4:30 pm
Shekinah Glory Cathedral 402 English Street, Plant City

Our monthly participation in Friends in the Park ensures that dozens of hungry Plant Citians receive a square meal at no cost. If you have not experienced this time of fellowship and service, please consider getting involved by cooking, serving or greeting. Contact Lindsay Hunt for more information or to sign up (l.robertshunt@gmail.com). **Sign up sheets are in the parish hall.**

Share God's Love with the World

Mission & Outreach Opportunities at St. Peter's and Beyond

19th Annual Christmas Meals on Wheels Basket Outreach

Our 19th year of providing personal care baskets to the MOW homebound has arrived. Once again, we will collect 20+ personal care items for each basket, wrap the basket in plastic and festively decorate them.

This year we are building 46+ baskets. Several items are donated in their entirety by long time devoted participants and are not included in the list below. These include baskets, plastic wrap, decorative bows, non-slip socks and inspirational books.

We are always hoping more of the items needed will be provided entirely by a parishioner, so if you are interested, speak to any MOW committee member.

We are in need of the below items:



- sugar free candy
- holiday theme coffee/tea mug
- tooth paste, tooth brushes, mouth wash and dental floss
- body wash, body lotion and deodorant
- shampoo, conditioner and hair brushes
- 2026 calendars, pens and note cards (not holiday themed)
- lip balm and hand sanitizer
- kleenex (the smaller boxes are easier to pack)
- lap robes

**Baskets to be
Distributed
Dec. 15th**

If possible, unisex items are preferred, but all donations will happily be used.

And as always, monetary donations are always welcome as it allows us to fill in the gaps.

Thank you from your MOW committee



St. Peter's has long been a dedicated supporter of the United Food Bank of Plant City, collecting food donations throughout the year. We invite you to think about adding an extra item to your cart during your next grocery shopping trip. Taking advantage of store sales is a great way to stick to your budget while also contributing something to share. All food donations can be placed in the baskets located at each entrance to the church.

Opportunities for Parish Leadership

FROM OUR BY-LAWS:

"The Clerk shall cause notice of the nomination period to be published in the church newsletter. Such notice shall provide: the positions for which nominations are being received; the requirements for each position; the method of making nominations to the nominating committee; and the time period during which nominations may be made."



**We are now accepting nominations for
Vestry members
and
Lay Delegates to Diocesan Convention**

Qualifications of nominees

Adult member in good standing for a period of one year prior to the Annual Meeting, confirmed or received member of the Episcopal Church, 18 years of age or older, regular in attendance at divine services, and makes stated contributions of record to the general support of the church.

Method of nominating

Provide the name and the consent of the nominee to a member of the Vestry.

Deadline for nominations is: Sunday, December 14, 2025.

St. Peter's Annual Meeting will be held Sunday, January 18, 2026.



NEWLYWED TREE

We are in the planning stages for our annual "Newlywed Tree." This tradition, in which parishioners "shower" recently married church members with ornaments for their first Christmas tree, began in 1991. These honorees include current church members and those who grew up as active members of St. Peter's or St. David's (Church, Sunday School, Youth Group, etc.). We realize that after high school graduation, many of our young adults go away to college or move to other towns, and are only able to return for holidays and special occasions. Traditionally, we have continued to honor these adults as long as they still have family members who are active at St. Peter's. We don't want to leave anyone out; so **if anyone has a family member or knows of a parishioner married within the last year, please contact Starr Anderson at 758-7383 or starrander@aol.com.**

SUPPORT
OUR MISSION

SPREAD
THE WORD

SHOW
SOME STYLE

Purchase St. Peter's t-shirts, hoodies, hats, coffee mugs, and more by scanning the QR code or going to <https://www.bonfire.com/store/st-peters-episcopal-church/>.

Every purchase contributes to our ongoing mission and ministry!



Would you like to support the mission of St Peter's, spread the word about our community, and look great while doing it? Head on over to our new online store for all your great St. Peter's merch! We earn money for the church from every purchase. You can see samples of the products in Bender Hall, where you can also purchase old shirts for \$5.



<https://www.bonfire.com/store/st-peters-episcopal-church/>

TIME TO
Celebrate

Happy Anniversary

Margaret and Wayne Parrish 12/12
Cindy and Gregg Gutowski 12/27
Jennifer and Mark Hamilton 12/28

Flowers, Candles, & Wine

Sunday, December 7 - Opportunities Available
Sunday, December 14 - Communion Wine given in Thanksgiving for Devon Moore, granddaughter by Darlene Nelson
Sunday, December 21 - Opportunities Available
Sunday, December 28 - Opportunities Available

Donations for Christmas Altar Flowers are being received by the Altar Guild. Flowers can be given as memorials or thank offerings. Checks should be payable to St. Peter's Altar Guild and marked Christmas Altar Flowers.

Please include the following information along with your donations: In Memory of:_____ or In Thanksgiving for:_____ by: Your Name:_____. *The deadline to have names printed in the Christmas Bulletin is Thursday, December 18th.*

Happy Birthday

Kevin Peter Brown	12/01
Billy Williams	12/02
Charlotte Weronik	12/02
Tom Sistrunk	12/04
Rebecca Ham	12/04
Arthur Schaffer	12/07
Elizabeth Lyle	12/09
Ellie Taylor	12/12
Stephen Galloway	12/12
Dorothy Kemp	12/15
Nola Olatubosun	12/16
Bud Caudell	12/17
Tim DeShong	12/18
Frankie Wilson	12/19
Kennedy Clark	12/19
Eda Snyder	12/25
Meri Kenney	12/26
Ethan Black	12/26
Ally Black	12/26
Amelia Jelsovsky	12/26
Erick Corryn	12/27
Don Williams	12/29
Michael Johnson	12/29
Owen Johnson	12/30
Tony Wilson	12/30
Philip Weronik	12/31



MONTHLY METRICS REPORT

96

October
ASA

##

Sunday
Visitors

##

YTD New
Members

##

Outreach
Impact

6

Last Year Total:
1

YTD
Baptisms

\$22,444

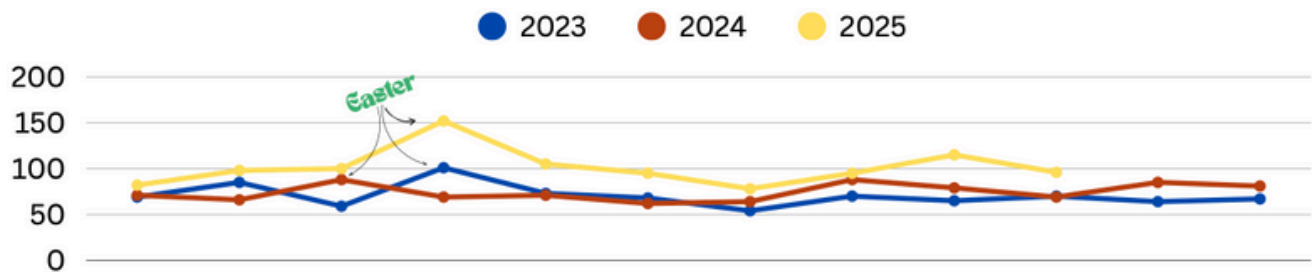
Budgeted:
\$30,691

October
Income

\$27,919

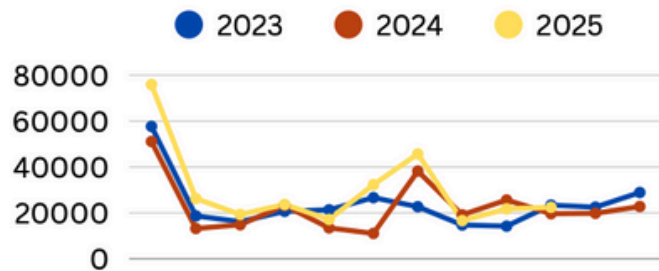
Budgeted:
\$30,691

October
Expenses

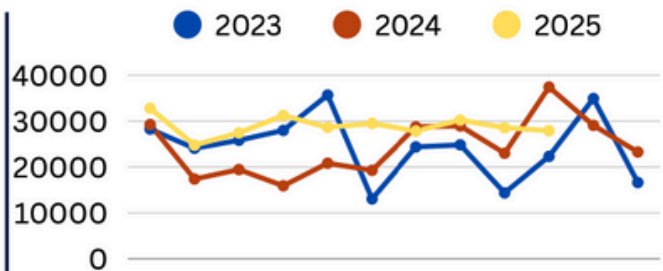


AVERAGE SUNDAY ATTENDANCE BY MONTH AND YEAR*

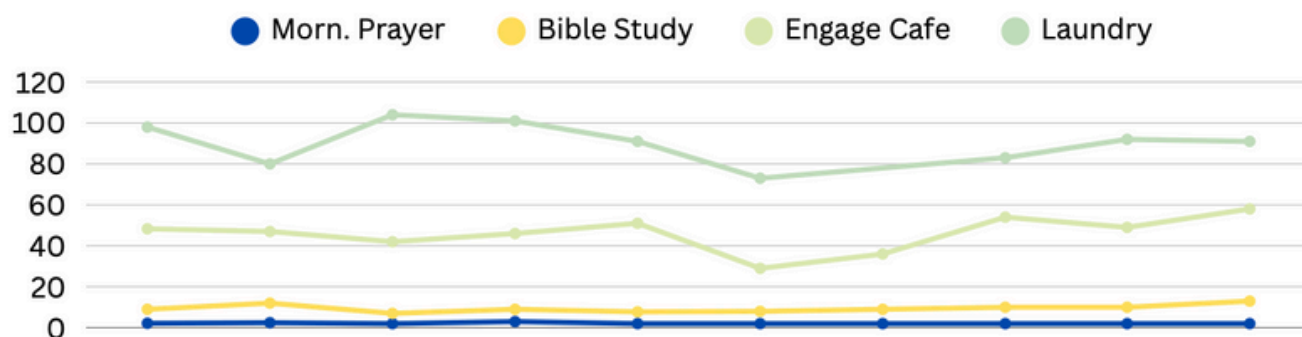
IN PERSON ONLY



INCOME BY MONTH AND YEAR



EXPENSES BY MONTH AND YEAR



WEEKLY ACTIVITY ATTENDANCE AND ENGAGEMENT

St. Peter's Episcopal Church
302 North Carey Street
Plant City, FL 33563
Phone: (813) 752-5061
E-mail: st.peterspc@verizon.net

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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED



The CrossKeys
December 2025

St. Peter's Online <http://www.stpetersplantcity.com>

Sunday Services
8:00am Holy Eucharist
10:30am Holy Eucharist

Office Hours
Monday-Thursday
9am-3pm

Parish Administration
Rector: The Rev. Derek Larson, TSSF
Deacon: Denise Healy
Parish Administrator: Sarah Dean
Director of Music Ministries: Helen Jones
Treasurer: Trey Stevens
Sexton: Tony Wilson

Vestry
Senior Warden: Patti Booher
Junior Warden: Ron Everett
Clerk: Patty Linder
Sandy Black
Mark Conner
Cindy Gutowski
Christy Lyle
Eda Snyder