

ST. PETER'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH 1889 THE CROSSKEYS

JANUARY 2026

From the Rector

Dear Saints of St. Peter's,

As January begins, we find ourselves standing at a threshold.

In Scotland there is a tradition called Hogmanay. In the wee hours of the night, homes are lit and doors are watched as people wait to welcome the new year. Voices join together in Auld Lang Syne, hands link, and then come the knocks at the door. The first footers arrive—guests who cross the threshold bearing gifts for the year ahead: cheer for celebration, food for sustenance, and fuel for warmth.

There is something deeply human—and deeply holy—about that image: a knock at the door, a guest waiting to be welcomed, hope carried across a threshold.

It is an image that echoes the Christian story. Scripture speaks of Christ as the One who comes to dwell among us—standing at the door, knocking, bearing gifts of grace and new life. Christ does not force entry. He waits to be received.

The beginning of a new year gives us a natural moment to pause and ask: How will I open the door this year? What intentions will shape my prayer life? What practices will help me notice God's presence more clearly? And how will I offer myself—my time, gifts, and care—to the shared life of St. Peter's?

Much has happened in this past year at St. Peter's. We have worshiped, served, welcomed, mourned, and celebrated together. I am deeply grateful for the faithfulness and generosity of this community and for the ways you continue to show up for one another and for our neighbors.

Now, the door opens again. The year ahead holds new possibilities for ministry, growth, and deeper connection. My invitation to you is simple: be intentional. Set aside time to pray. Consider how Christ might be asking to enter more fully into your daily life and into our life together as a parish.

Perhaps it is in participating in the daily prayer of the Church. Starting the week of January 5th, Morning and Evening Prayer will take place each weekday at 8:00am and 5:15pm. As Christ enters the door of our hearts each day, what would a practice of entering the doors of his Church look like throughout the week?

On the threshold of this new year, Christ stands at the door and knocks. May we have the courage and humility to open the door and receive the gifts he brings.

In God's Peace,

The Rev. Derek Larson, TSSF

Love God

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

DAILY PRAYER AT ST. PETER'S

CENTERING PRAYER

MONDAY - FRIDAY 7:30-8:00 AM

Join Fr. Derek for Centering Prayer each weekday morning from 7:30am-8:00am in the church. 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/>

MORNING AND EVENING PRAYER

Join Fr. Derek and members of the Daily Office team to pray the daily office, Monday-Friday, in the church.

Morning Prayer

Monday-Friday
8:00 am

Evening Prayer

Monday - Friday
5:15 pm

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!



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.

A (SORT OF) CHRISTMAS STORY

By John Santosuosso

"And our eyes at last shall see him,
Through his own redeeming love;
For that Child so dear and gentle,
Is our Lord in heav'n above;
And he leads his children on
To the place where he is gone.

Cecil Alexander, "Once in Royal David's City"

"And man will live forevermore because of Christmas Day."
Harry Bellafante, "Mary's Boy Child"

NOTE: The story below is true. Only the names have been changed to protect the guilty. A special thanks to the late Jean Shepherd for some helpful inspiration.

It was over eighty years ago, but it seems like only yesterday, the first day of kindergarten. Under the compassionate supervision of our teacher, Miss Richardson, there we sat stringing beads and stacking blocks, unaware of the dramatic change that was taking place in our young lives. We were about to embark on a long journey, one filled with success for some but tragedy for others.

Mary Langdon, however, sensed something, something she did not like. She made a bee line for the classroom door in a desperate attempt to exit, only to have it blocked by Miss Richardson and her mother. Sobbing, she was sent back to her beads. Gloria Gomez threw a miniature plastic Santa Claus across the room in protest, but it bounced harmlessly off the blackboard, changing nothing. In the far corner of the room Mark, the son of a locally prominent clergyman would periodically utter, "Here comes the boogey man." The rest of us were too confused to do much other than continue our bead stringing. We were about to be born into a new world, but the reality of that had not yet dawned upon us.

Gradually we began to learn to adapt, one of the reasons we were here in the first place, though we did not yet understand that. By the time we made it to the first grade the girls had learned several games they could play at recess, and the boys had taken up football. The Frank M. North Elementary School failed to provide us with athletic equipment, but no matter, somebody's hat could serve as the ball. Bill Dempsey soon established himself as our quarterback, an honor and task that were his until high school graduation.

The years passed by almost without notice. Some of us would graduate together. Others moved away. Tragically there were a couple of suicides, but there were success stories as well. Mark gave up boogeymen for a Ph.D. and joined the faculty of a very prestigious university. Regardless of the success any of us were fortunate enough to enjoy, none of us has made the journey without falling into some nasty potholes. My good friend "Ace" lost his loving wife to cancer. At least one classmate fell victim to alcoholism. Still, as a whole we managed to survive, at times even thrive. On occasion we reached the mountaintops. At other times we had to walk through the dark valleys. But there are those tasks that all of us are called to complete. Birth opens the door to opportunity, but that opportunity inevitably comes with a price.

Some two thousand years ago there was a birth in Bethlehem that heralded a new beginning. Shepherds and magi alike would join the celebration of the event. However, later they would not be there. That birth led to a sometimes lonely dangerous journey that ended in death at Golgotha. Jesus encountered all of it and dared to overcome it, but it did not come easily. It came at a terrible price.

Think about your own journey. As a child there may have been the joy of a first pet, and also the sorrow of the death of that little creature that gave you unconditional love. Do you recall the first time you fell in love, and the first you encountered rejection? Was there the joy of your first paying job and the pain of later losing it? Did love ones whom you adored later grow ill leaving you to wonder why? Still, we have marched on, called by the death and resurrection of our Lord to learn all and be all that God intended for us to be.

Christmas day commemorates the birth of Jesus. It is also our day of birth into a journey with the one who went before us, a journey to a glory that will never end. Some will have less difficulty making the trip than others, but never forget our Lord will work without end to make certain no one is left behind. Have a blessed Christmas.

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 9:15am - 10:15am, St. Peter's offers Sunday school for all ages. Please note there will be NO Sunday School classes on Sunday, January 18th as there will be only one service followed by our Annual Meeting.

St. Peter's Sunday School classes include:

Pathfinders (Adults)

Pathfinders is our adult Sunday school class and gathers each Sunday in Bender Hall.

Little Lambs (Kindergarten or younger)

Our younger children 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)

The TruthWalkers class meets most Sundays during the school year in the Godly Play room, located down the back hallway of Bender Hall. Contact Cindy Gutowski for more information.

Table Flippers (Middle and High Schoolers)

This Sunday school class meets in the corner classroom adjacent to the choir room off Bender Hall. For more information, contact Caleb Johnson.

Family Sunday School (Last Sunday of the Month)

On the last Sunday of the month during Sunday School time, all ages will gather in Bender Hall for an abbreviated intergenerational Sunday School with discussions, games, and activities. At 9:45am, children and youth will leave to prepare for the Family Mass.

Rector's Lectionary Bible Study each Wednesday in January at 10:30am, join Fr. Derek in the Altar Guild Room as we pray, study, and reflect on the Scripture passages assigned for the upcoming Sunday's worship. If you would like to join the meeting via Zoom, please email Fr. Derek at rector@stpetersplantcity.com.

Second Sunday Youth Gathering

All middle and high school students are invited to join us at the church every Second Sunday from 5:00pm-7:00pm for games, community, food, and prayer. January's gathering will take place on Sunday, January 11. All youth, come, and bring your friends! For more information, contact Fr Derek.



To our wonderful Christmas Eve Pageant participants:

Thank you to all our children for your joyful energy and for bringing the Mystery of Christmas to life with such wonder. We are so proud of our youth who stepped up as narrators and assistants, showing great responsibility behind the scenes and on stage. Finally, a sincere thank you to the adults who dedicated their time to supporting our young performers. Your hard work and spirit made Christmas a little brighter for us all.

Love God

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

Feast of the Epiphany Family Mass
and 12th Night Celebration
Monday, January 5, 2026 at 5:30pm

Join us as we celebrate
the arrival of the Magi,
the end of Christmas,
and the Feast of the Epiphany
with a special family Eucharist
and chalking of the doors
for a blessing over the new year.

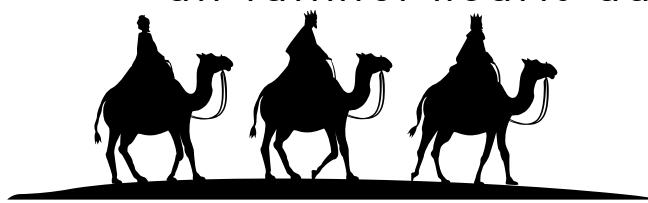


O Light of light, Love given birth;
Jesus, Redeemer of the earth:
more bright than day your face did show,
your raiment whiter than the snow.

May all who seek to praise aright
through purer lives show forth your light.

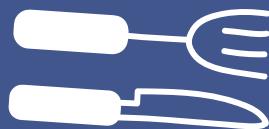
To you, the King of glory, now
all faithful hearts adoring bow.

Hymn #134



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!



FAMILY, GAME: NIGHT

JANUARY
5th and 19th
6:00 pm

Join us for our twice-monthly game night!
Bring a sandwich or takeout,
your family,
a game to share,
and a friend!

St. Peter's 4th Annual Neighborhood Block Party

Bring your family and join us as we welcome our neighbors for a family-friendly, **free** event!

Lunch, treats, and fun are provided.

Would you like to help make this event the best one yet??

Please sign up to help!

Sign-up sheets are located in Bender Hall.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 31ST 11AM-1PM

Share God's Love with the World

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

OUTREACH

Thank you to all of St. Peter's for supporting our Outreach projects in 2025. In December, we were able to fill 45 baskets for Meals on Wheels and have some toiletries left to give to Friends in the Park. We also provided Christmas presents for 25 Angels from 5 different Elementary Schools. Thank you as always for your thoughtfulness and generosity.



January 8 - 11am - Outreach Team Meeting

PARISHIONER ENGAGEMENT

Thank you to Truthwalkers and Table Flippers Sunday School classes for making over 70 Christmas cards to be mailed to Parishioners on the Prayer List and our shut-ins. We mailed over 60 Christmas cards and almost 60 Thanksgiving cards. Thank you to Sandy Black, Su Booher, Sarah Dean, Carolyn Durst, Evelyn Grant, Cindy Gutowski, Hilda McCarter, and Marilyn Reed for addressing and letting our Parishioners know we are praying for them.

January 8 - Noon - Parishioner Engagement Meeting

January 25 - Hello Again Check-in Meeting after the 10:30am service



Laundry Love - Monday, January 12th 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.

**Friends in the Park - January 28, 5:00 pm
Shekinah Glory Cathedral 402 English Street, Plant City**



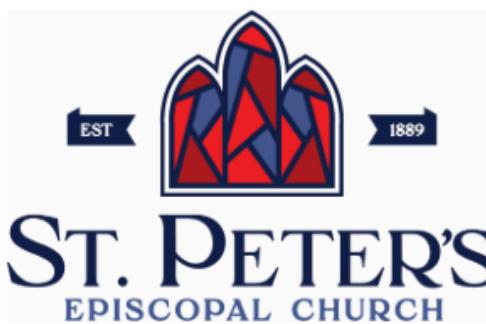
Our monthly participation in Friends in the Park ensures that dozens of hungry Plant Citians receive a square meal at no cost. If you have not experienced this time of fellowship and service, please consider getting involved by cooking, serving or greeting. Contact Lindsay Hunt for more information or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



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.

Share God's Love with the World

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



Dear St. Peter's Family,

Throughout the year, our clergy and staff care for our parish with dedication, compassion, and countless behind-the-scenes efforts. Their steady leadership and faithful service help make our worship meaningful and our parish life strong and vibrant.

Each year, we invite the congregation to show our appreciation through a **Clergy & Staff Purse**, a special monetary gift shared among our dedicated team:

- **Fr. Derek Larson**, Rector
- **Rev. Denise Healy**, Deacon
- **Sarah Dean**, Parish Administrator
- **Helen Jones**, Director of Music Ministry
- **Tony Wilson**, Sexton

This purse is a simple but meaningful way for us to say *thank you* for all they do.

If you would like to contribute, please mail or drop off a check made payable to **St. Peter's Episcopal Church** with "**Clergy/Staff Purse**" in the memo line. **All gifts must be received by Sunday, January 11, 2026**, to be included.

We also recognize that not everyone is able to contribute financially. If that is the case, we invite you to support our clergy and staff by offering prayers on their behalf or by writing them a personal note of appreciation. Your words and prayers are treasured gifts.

The purse will be distributed at our **Annual Meeting on January 18, 2026**, where we will have the opportunity to express our gratitude together.

Thank you for helping us honor the people who serve our parish with such dedication. Your generosity, whether through gifts, prayers, or words of encouragement, truly makes a difference.

With gratitude,

Patti Booher
Senior Warden, on behalf of the vestry

Opportunities for Parish Leadership



ST. PETER'S
EST. 1889 **EPISCOPAL CHURCH**

Notice of Annual Meeting Sunday, January 18, 2026 at 10:30 am

Pot Luck
Lunch
Bring a
dish to
share!

Join us for one service on January 18th at 9:45 am as we celebrate the Feast of the Confession of St. Peter, followed by our annual meeting in which we vote on new vestry members and convention delegates, hear updates and reports from our parish leadership, and anticipate our collective ministry in 2026.

VESTRY NOMINEES

LINDSAY HUNT
DIANA JOHNSON
BRIAN REID-2 YR TERM
CHRIS THOMAS

CONVENTION DELEGATES

LYN FUHRMAN
DIANA WEEKS
KELLI CUMMINGS
FRANK CUMMINGS, ALT.



**Arise, shine, for your light has come,
and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.
For darkness shall cover the earth
and thick darkness the peoples,
but the Lord will arise upon you,
and his glory will appear over you.
Nations shall come to your light
and kings to the brightness of your dawn.**

Isaiah 60:1-3

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

Judy and Stephen Galloway 01/08

Flowers, Candles, & Wine

Sunday, January 4 - Christmas Flowers

Sunday, January 11 - opportunity available

Sunday, January 18 - Flowers in the High Altar given by Mike and Patti Booher in Thanksgiving for our St. Peter's family
Sunday, January 25 - opportunity available

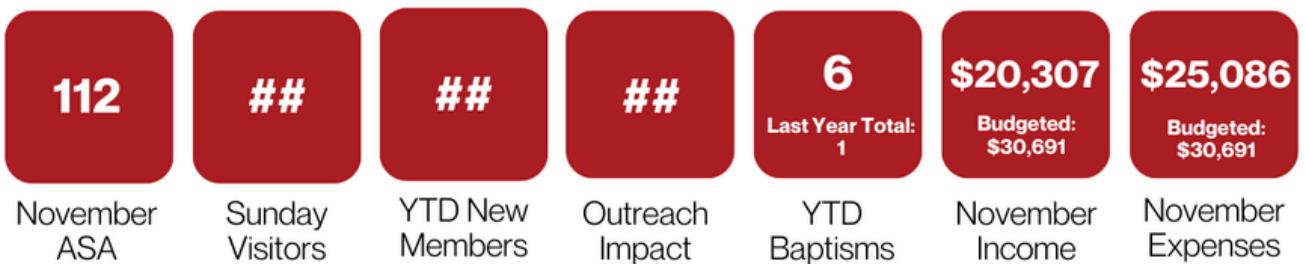
To sign up for Flowers, Wine, & Candles, please fill out the sign-up sheet located in the entry hall of the parish hall, or you can call 813-752-5061 for assistance.

Happy Birthday

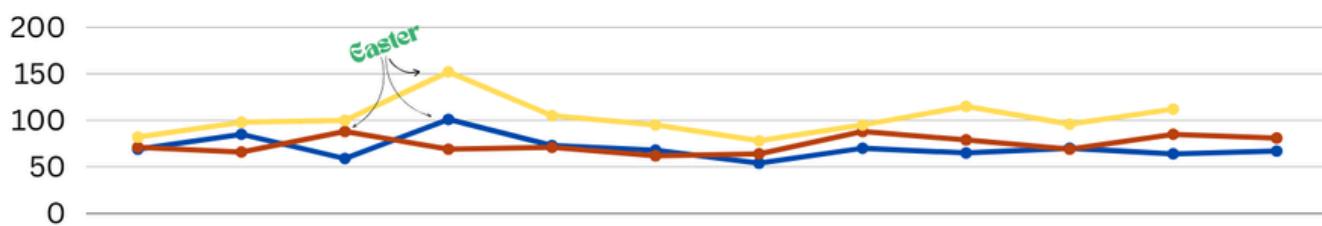
Charles Kellner	01/01
Don Richardson	01/01
Phillip Price	01/01
John Kenney	01/02
James Frey	01/03
Donald Barnes	01/05
Austin Everett	01/07
Lily Thomas	01/08
Eric Stevens	01/09
Campbell Hunt	01/09
Hilda McCarter	01/11
Sue Blanton	01/15
Stevens Tombrink	01/16
Jason Snyder	01/16
Jane Williams	01/18
Marilyn Frey	01/18
Cathleen Evans	01/20
Jennifer Sidney	01/20
William Butler	01/21
Jennifer Hamilton	01/21
Haylee Tidwell	01/22
Laura Booher Benton	01/24
Amy Booher	01/24
Jamey Moody	01/25
Kent Gutowski	01/25
Chris Bender	01/26
Danielle Lawniczak	01/26
Piper Stevens	01/27
Dylan Hunt	01/27
Toni Nettles	01/28
Greg Crumpton	01/29
William Hawkins.	01/29
Anastasia Staskowski	01/31



MONTHLY METRICS REPORT

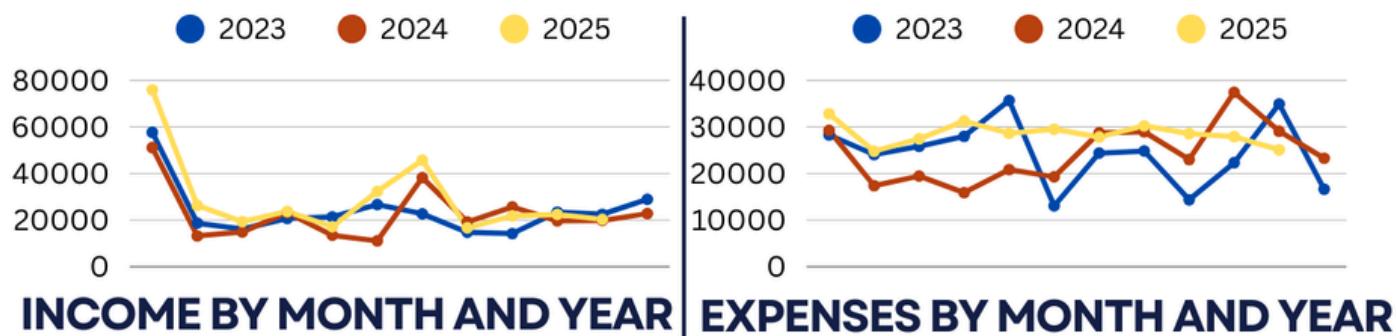


● 2023 ● 2024 ● 2025



AVERAGE SUNDAY ATTENDANCE BY MONTH AND YEAR*

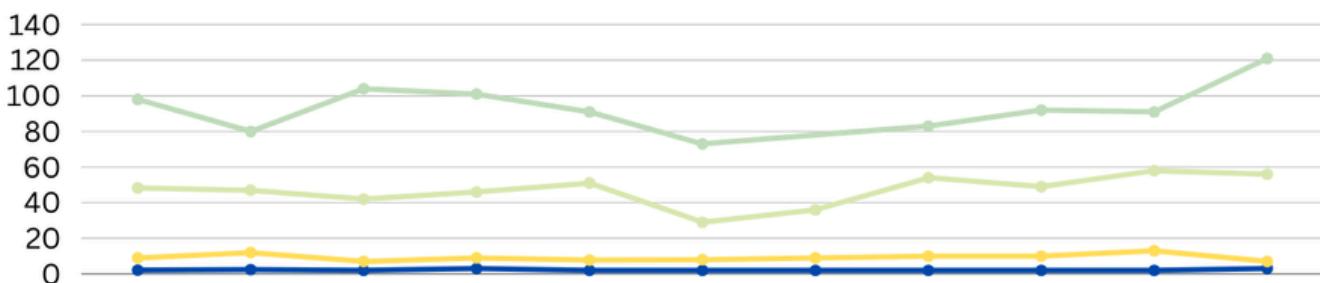
IN PERSON ONLY



INCOME BY MONTH AND YEAR

EXPENSES BY MONTH AND YEAR

● Morn. Prayer ● Bible Study ● Engage Cafe ● Laundry



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
January 2026

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