



The Messenger

Hello and Happy New Year!

I pray that your celebrations, travels, and gatherings were or will be (for those who spread out the holiday) joy-filled and safe!

I don't know about you, but after the holidays are done there is peculiar feeling. It is equal parts relief, gratitude, and uncertainty at what to do next. The long exhale that is the week after Christmas can sometimes leave us asking the "now what?" questions. In the Church year, the "now what?" is answered by the Day of Epiphany. Epiphany is the day which we commemorate the Magi (the Wise Men, as I grew up learning about them) following the star and finding the Christ Child in Bethlehem. Matthew 2, where the story comes from, isn't very descriptive. All we know is that they came from a long way away, following a star to find Jesus, and that they brought three gifts – gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

But there is more about them than what is just on the page. Their presence in our story is one that should make us pause. Their short story is one of the first indications in Matthew that God is doing something different that we might expect. The Magi are "outsiders" in every sense of the word – they have come from a faraway land, they are not Jewish, and they seem to have very little understanding of the political situation in Israel. Yet, they are named as important witnesses to God's presence found in this little child. They saw, more clearly than even the religious leaders at King Herod's beck-and-call, that God was up to something different, and they wanted to be a part of it.

Those "outsiders" teach us something about how God works in the world and they remind us that it is often those on the margins who see more clearly what is happening. They also foretell some of the struggles that Jesus will have with the authorities – not everyone wants to see the world change. And they also are a clear sign that God is not playing by the us-versus-them mentality. These Magi to bear witness to the way God is working. And they don't find Jesus in Herod's throne room, but in a small working-class family in a small village.

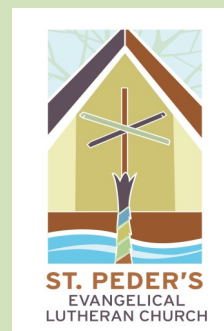
In the end, the presence of this group of outsiders reminds us of God's grace. None of them had the credentials or ritual purity to receive such an honor. None of them had earned the right to demand to see Jesus face-to-face. There is no gift they could bring that would pay back what Jesus would do for them and the world. They, just like us today, could do nothing but respond to God's gift. The gift of God that they beheld is still the gift given freely to you. I hope you'll find and follow the stars in your life and you find your way to the Child, too.

Peace,
Pastor Bryan



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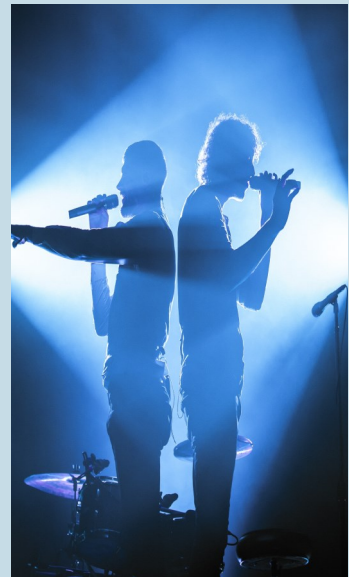


New in the Library

Olympic medalist and FIFA Women's World Cup winner Megan Rapinoe's best-selling memoir, *One Life*, brimming with humor and humanity, is not only about her remarkable story as a soccer champion but also her personal journey into social justice. It makes you ask what you will do with your one life. And back in the library (after having disappeared for a few years), a replacement copy of our former pastor Mary Albing's heartfelt personal story, *Called into Ministry: To Be a Good and Faithful Pastor: Reflections of a Partnered Lesbian*. And don't miss an opportunity to read Shannon Kearns' equally stunning story, *In the Margins: A Transgender Man's Journey with Scripture*. All can be found in the Gene Paulsen display case.

Winter Songwriter Showcase

We are lucky to live in an area with many talented songwriters and musicians, and we are going to give a few of them a chance to showcase their work! On the 3rd Saturday of January, February, and March, St. Peder's is going to host a Winter Songwriter Showcase. Two artists each week will showcase their talents for 30 minutes each in the sanctuary. The shows will begin at 7 pm, with doors opening at 6:30 pm, and will include refreshments in the fellowship hall after the performances. There is a suggested donation of \$5 (though you are welcome to give more), that will be split evenly between the performers. January will host Nathan Eies and Azalea Furstgaard, February will be Sam Grover and Matt Jensen, and March's entertainers are still being determined. Stave off cabin fever and support local artists at the same time!



Announcements

Renters News

Starting in the New Year, we will become the meeting place of two new groups! The DeafBlind Club will begin meeting on the 3rd Saturday of each month. This group is hosted through Rise, Inc, and the DeafBlind Services of Minnesota. Also, Matt Jensen will begin hosting a 6-week class for beginner bluegrass musicians. His Wernick Method bluegrass jamming classes will be on Thursday nights starting February 1st. If you are interested, please contact Matt at learntojam.org@gmail.com

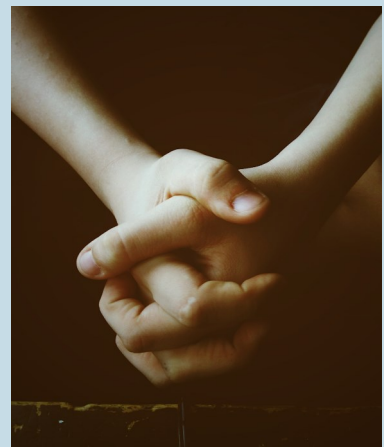
Christmas Gratitude

December is a busy and blessed time at St. Peder's, with lots of bonus moments that could never happen without the work of the congregation. To name everyone who helped this past month would be impossible! So, if you helped out with worship planning, brought treats for after worship, read lessons, offered special music as a soloist or part of an ensemble, delivered meals, told a friend or neighbor about St. Peder's, came to rehearsals (or brought children to rehearsals), gave your time to come to worship on Sundays or Wednesdays, assisted with decorating, clean up, or cooking, or did any other thing to build up St. Peder's, thank you. We are the church that we are because of all of you. Thank you.

Prayer Spotlight- 2024 Growing in Prayer

During this time of year, we all have an opportunity to look back at 2023 and revisit some of our biggest successes as well as our largest challenges. Maybe for you this year has had some challenges which seemed like mountains difficult to climb, where there is an immediate realization of how big we need God to be in the circumstances we face. As a Christian we know that we have so much to be thankful for, but there are times we all face things that challenge our faith, and it is in these difficult times when we realize the need for connecting with God in prayer. One of the best gifts we can give as Christians is that God promises to draw near to Him. As we look into 2024, we have a strong desire to come together to learn, grow, and encourage one another in our prayers and practices. We want to walk with you as we explore a deeper prayer life.

Prayer can transform a life by providing a connection with God to further experience His peace, love, kindness and strength, and we are excited to grow with you in this new year. Maybe you are familiar with one expression of prayer, but it is interesting in growing your practices in meditation, prayers of praise, corporate prayer, or overall increasing of our personal prayer life. We are very excited to open up some additional newsletter spotlights, workshops, prayer practice experiences, and to grow together in 2024. If this sounds like something you would be interested in, please stay posted for more details to come.



News from the Office

Lessons from the Pandemic

What have we learned from the pandemic, collectively and as individuals? Throughout COVID-19, author and artist Brian Bard has been studying its social and psychological effects. He will be joining us on January 21st to help us discuss what a Roadmap to Recovery looks like in each of our lives. We hope you can join us for that conversation following worship.

Giving Envelopes

The giving envelopes for 2024 are now available for pickup. If you are unable to come get them, please contact Lyn at office@stpeders.org or call the church at 612-722-8000 to request your envelopes be mailed to you.

Annual Meeting Notice

Our annual meeting will take place on January 28th, 2024 at 10:30 am, following worship. Please plan to attend the meeting to make decisions about the ministry of St. Peder's for the upcoming year and to celebrate what God has done within and through us in 2023. All are welcomed to attend, and all confirmed members are invited to vote. Refreshments will be provided for a brief time beforehand.

Exercise Classes

Are you looking to make good on a New Year's resolution to get healthier, exercise more, and feel better? We've got just the thing! Jim O'Brien has been gathering people in our fellowship hall every Tuesday and Thursday at 10 am for years and you are invited to join! The class offers affordable fees (and waived fees if money is tight), fun music, a friendly atmosphere, and a workout tailored to your abilities. Come and get moving! You'll be glad you did!



A Note from Sarah– Faith Formation Coordinator

Thank you all for making our Christmas program special! I wanted to take a moment to say thank you to our parents and students for their successful efforts in this year's Faith Formation Christmas Service! This year's program, entitled "Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever!" was a huge success and a good reminder that while our culture may be different from when Jesus was born, we can still seek Him and find Him to be faithful today. During the service, our students proudly shared different roles from music to readings. Additionally, the students also created "prayer chains" displayed in the lobby area as a fun way to contribute their thankfulness and prayers for St. Peder's attendees. Each link was either a drawing they made while thinking and praying for the church, a Bible verse, or a written prayer for the church. I hope that you are blessed by what our very talented kids shared. This service could not have happened without the extra hours that students and parents put into the musical



performances, readings, and rehearsals. Each student has something very special that they bring to the church, and I am so thankful that all of our parents encourage them to participate and share those talents and gifts. I hope you all have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! I am so excited for all that God has in store in 2024 for our students.

-Sarah Raj Laulunen

Volunteer News and Opportunities & Financials

Together in Mission 2023

The offerings of your financial resources allow us not only to support the mission of our congregation, but to share our resources with others in ministry so that all may know of Christ's love. TOGETHER we work on Christ's behalf in the world - none of us can do it alone! Thank you for your offerings through the 5th month of 2023. A detailed financial summary report is available at the church office for anyone who'd like to see it.

Income

| | | | |
|-------------------|-----------|----------------------|-----------|
| Month of November | \$14,110 | Budget for the month | \$23,124 |
| Year to Date | \$298,747 | Budget Year to Date | \$262,372 |

Expenses

| | | | |
|-------------------|-----------|----------------------|-----------|
| Month of November | \$21,674 | Budget for the month | \$23,757 |
| Year to Date | \$254,065 | Budget Year to Date | \$261,857 |

Mission Support to Minneapolis Area Synod \$13,999.95 YTD

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Blood Drive

You've seen the new reports... blood is in short supply. Minnehaha Communion is hosting a blood drive on Thursday, January 25. They are looking for donors and volunteer helpers from St. Peder's. It will run from noon to 6 pm at Minnehaha Communion Lutheran Church at 4101 37th Ave S. Sign up to donate at this link: <https://www.redcrossblood.org/give.html/drive-results?zipSponsor=MinnehahaLuth> The next blood drive at St. Peder's will be held on Wednesday, April 24th. Mark your calendars!

Grocery Delivery

Are you looking for an impactful way to make a difference with a small volunteer commitment? St. Peder's is looking for 4-6 volunteers on each date to help deliver groceries one Monday evening every other month to the residents at Hiawatha Towers through Community Emergency Services. CES has been working with our neighbors for 50 years. Let me know if you are interested and available for any of these dates. The residents are so appreciative when they see us!

Dates:

Monday, January 22, 2024

Monday, March 25, 2024

Monday, May 20, 2024

Monday, July 22, 2024

Monday, September 23, 2024

Monday, November 25, 2024

Time: 6:00 to 8:00 pm

Location: Meet at Hiawatha Towers Apartment Complex located at 2121 - 16th Avenue South, Minneapolis (There are 3 buildings. 2121 is the "middle" building. Look for the CES cargo van (with CES logo.) For any questions about either of these events, please talk to Sue Nielsen at suenielsen76@gmail.com or 612-360-3936.



January

'24

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--|--|---|---------------------------------------|----------------------|--------|---|
| | New Years Day 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| | | 10 am Exercise Class 6 pm Bible Study NO sisters in Crime meeting NO Chronic support group | 9 am Quilters | 10 am Exercise class | | 2 pm Fiber Arts / Fellowship hall |
| 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 |
| 9 am Worship w/ Holy Communion 10 am Coffee & Fel- lowship | 6:15 pm Kith & Kin rehearsal | 10 am Exercise class 12pm Potluck 6 pm Bible Study | | 10 am Exercise class | | |
| 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| 9 am Worship 9 am Youth Faith For- mation 10 am Coffee & Fel- lowship | Annual Report Due 6:15 pm Kith & Kin Rehearsal | 10 am Exercise class 6 pm Bible Study | 9 am Quilters 7 pm Council Meeting | 10 am Exercise class | | 2 pm Fiber Arts 7 pm Songwriter Showcase |
| 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 |
| 9 am Worship 9 am Youth Faith For- mation 10 am Coffee & Fel- lowship | 6:15 pm Kith & Kin Rehearsal 7 pm Music & Worship committee meeting | 10 am Exercise class 6 pm Bible Study | | 10 am Exercise class | | 10:30 am Brownies |
| Annual Mtg. 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | | | |
| 9 am Worship 9 am Youth Faith For- mation 10 am Coffee & Fel- lowship 10:30 am Annual Mtg | 5:45 pm Kith & Kin Potluck & Rehearsal | 10 am Exercise class 6 pm Bible Study | | | | |

January Volunteer Schedule

Thank you for sharing your time and talent at St. Peder's!
Please try to arrange your own trades. Reminder emails are sent weekly along with contacts for substitutes. If you are pressed for time or have questions, please contact the office

January 7

Greeters: Tim & Elizabeth Anderson

Ushers: Peter Juhl & Julie Ebbesen

Acolyte: Elena Wilson

Reader: Leslee Nestingen

Communion Set-Up: Dwight Lundby & Judy Hogan

Communion Servers: Sue Schnickel & Karen Vetsch

Communion Bread & Wine: Dale & Jackie West

Counters: Jackie West & Curt Peterson

Livestream Technician: Cameron Jamison

LSS Safe House Dinner for January 8: Craig & Marcia

Rocheleau, Dwight Lundebly & Kari Bullard

Social Hour hosted by Shepherding Group: 5

January 14

Greeters: Sonja Walker & Eunice Montgomery

Ushers: Lisa Jensen & Butch Vossen

Acolyte: Maren Odeen

Reader: Chuck Johnson

Counters: Cameron Jamison & Sue Schnickel

Livestream Technician: Darrick Jensen

LSS Safe House Dinner for January 15: Dale & Jackie West

Social Hour hosted by Shepherding Group: 6

January 21

Greeters: Andrea & Auggie Wollak

Ushers: Jim Nelsen & Craig Rocheleau

Acolyte: Aemilia Wollak

Reader: Allison O'Day

Counters: Steve Austin & Paul Aitchison

Livestream Technician: JeriLynn Young

LSS Safe House Dinner for January 22: Sonja Walker, Joe & Annalise Munnich

Social Hour hosted by Shepherding Group: 7

January 28

Greeters: Casey Clementson & Ben Campbell

Ushers: Mark & Jodi Jensen

Acolyte: Fletcher Campbell

Reader: Joe Munnich

Counters: Terri Vetsch & Sue Nielsen

Livestream Technician: Darrick Jensen

LSS Safe House Dinner for January 29: Glen & Martha Olsen, Paul & Michelle Aitchison

Social Hour hosted by Shepherding Group: 8



December Worship Schedule

Sunday, January 7

9 am Worship

9 am Youth Faith Formation

10 am Coffee & Fellowship

Sunday, January 14

9 am Worship

9 am Youth Faith Formation

10 am Coffee & Fellowship

Sunday, January 21

Song Service

9 am Worship

9 am Youth Faith Formation

10 am Coffee & Fellowship

10 am Roadmap to Recovery

Sunday, January 28

Annual Meeting

9 am Worship

9 am Youth Faith Formation

10 am Coffee & Fellowship

10:30 am Annual Meeting

**St. Peder's Evangelical
Lutheran Church**

St. Peder's affirms the
welcome of God to all persons.

St Peder's welcomes you to a community of faith nurtured by God's abundant grace, Christ's peace and the Spirit's lively presence! In response to such love, we open our hearts and hands and doors to joyfully serve our neighbor – whether it's you or someone across the world. We invite you to join us for worship or any activity at the little church on the corner of 46th Avenue and 42nd Street in south Minneapolis.



Want to support our mission to joyfully live the gospel with open hearts, open hands and open doors? Make a donation from your smartphone by scanning the QR code or head to this website: <https://bit.ly/stpedersgiving> Thank you for sharing your gifts.

Church Staff:

Pastor: Rev. Bryan Odeen

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Caretaker: Jim Austin

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