



*From the desk of*  
**PASTOR HAYS**



Welcome to this edition of Ministry Matters!

One of my favorite times of the year is Holy Week. During this sacred week, we walk with Jesus through His passion—from His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, where He is welcomed as King, to the cross on Good Friday, where He gives His life for the world. Yet death could not hold Him. The glorious celebration of His resurrection assures us that we are made right with God and given the promise of eternal life with Him. To God be the praise!

We also give thanks for the wonderful things God is accomplishing at St. Peter. When we completed our Five-Year Strategic Plan, I had no idea how quickly we would begin to see such meaningful progress. One by one, we are

witnessing the fruits of that vision come to life.

A significant milestone in this journey is the installation of our new Pastor of Family Life Ministries, Zach Huffman. He brings renewed energy and vision to a ministry that is deeply important to our life together. You are blessed with an outstanding ministry team at St. Peter. In the pages that follow, you will hear reflections on where we have been and, even more, where God is leading us next.

I pray you have a blessed Easter, and I look forward to seeing you as we continue to grow together as the St. Peter family—loving people and serving the world in the name of our risen Lord.

+Peace in Christ+  
Jerry D Hays, Senior Pastor

*From the desk of*  
**PASTOR MATT**



"For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another." – Galatians 5:13

Paul says it plainly: freedom in Christ isn't about us. It's about being set free to love and serve. That's what St. Peter has been about since 1847 — and the months ahead are full of opportunities to live it out.

SHINE! Servant Event – April 10-19

Our Northern Illinois District is hosting a 10-day, district-wide servant event, and St. Peter is all in. Groups of 2 or

more will serve our neighbors and community in the name of Jesus — yard work, meal prep, acts of kindness, whatever the need. This is who we are: a faith-filled community providing refuge and hope right here in Schaumburg. Watch for details on how to get involved. AND if you've got an awesome idea on how to serve our neighbors, let me know!

## VBS Volunteers Needed – June 8-12

Vacation Bible School is coming, and we need people to make it happen. Teachers, craft leaders, snack helpers, setup crew – there's a spot for you. This is one of the best weeks of the year for sharing Jesus with kids.

Contact Pastor Zach if you want to serve.



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MINISTRY UPDATE NEWSLETTER

**Belize Mission Trip – June 13-20:** Join us as we serve alongside LCMS missionaries and the Belize Mission Society. Since 2015, this partnership has been planting Lutheran churches across Belize through VBS programs, dental clinics, feeding programs, and building real relationships in communities that are hungry for the Gospel. Our team will be on the ground doing the work – sharing Jesus' love through practical, hands-on ministry. Space is limited. Reach out to Pastor Matt for details. Another Belize Mission Trip is coming in October 2026 – An informational meeting is coming soon!

**WHAT'S NEW AT ST. PETER?** Our 5/2 vision process is moving forward, and the fruit is already showing. Out of that work came a renewed mission: St. Peter is a faith-filled community in an uncertain world that provides refuge and hope for your family. Several new ministry groups are already getting off the ground – The Lord's Garden Network, a children's clothing swap, a baptism connections ministry, and a Bibles & Brews study group, with more on the way. If any of these sound like where God might be calling you, contact Pastor Matt.

God is at work among us. The best days of St. Peter's ministry are not behind us – they are right in front of us. Where is the Lord calling YOU to join in?

Pastor Matt

*From the desk of*  
**PASTOR  
HUFFMAN**

God's richest blessings to you all!

I am truly grateful and excited to join you here at St. Peter as your new Associate Pastor of Family Life Ministries. My wife Jodi and I, along with our children Eli and Mia, can't wait to get to know all of you better. We look forward to

walking this journey of faith together—growing closer to God and to one another as a community.

As I arrive during this holy season of Lent, with Easter's joy just on the horizon, I'm reminded of the encouraging words from Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians: "Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain" (1 Cor. 15:58).

The ministry ahead in family and youth life will be full and rewarding. We'll share updates along the way about what's happening and how we can all get involved. But no matter how much there is to do, we know it's all worthwhile—because God Himself has called us to this faithful work, and He promises that nothing we do for Him is ever wasted.

Please know that you are all in my daily prayers. I ask that you keep my family, me, and the ministry here at St. Peter in yours as well. May God continue to bless and unite us as we serve Him together.

Pastor Zach Huffman

The students and staff have been quite active during the last trimester. We celebrated Lutheran School Week with a variety of engaging activities. We kicked off the week with an Open House and a field trip to Feed My Starving Children. Throughout the week, we also held a Spelling Bee contest, an Art Fair, a Learning Fair, and more.

In February, we introduced a new initiative called Day of Service. Families came together to complete service projects that benefited our church and local organizations. Our efforts included providing blankets and cards to Phil's Friends, creating Valentines for Marklund, Meadows, and Clearbrook, making Community Blessing Rocks, donating craft supplies to St. Alecian Brothers Hospital, crafting God's Eyes for the St. Peter Food Pantry, giving crosses to Encore Nursing Home, and much more.

We are excited about the PTL's Bi-Annual Gala, "A Night at the Races." The committee has put in tremendous effort to create a memorable evening. Funds raised during the Gala will support new curriculum initiatives, STEM equipment, updated technology, and playground improvements. We extend our deepest gratitude to the dedicated team who made this Gala a success. Special thanks to Mary Bahn, Julie Stretch, Sarah Tewksbury, Kim Strom, Lisa Zika, Cindy Oleson, Kevin and Beth Bartosik, Kim and Tony Miltz, Julianne Scully, Sherry Sheppard, Lori Stadel, Jamie Racutt, Jeanna Rice, and Christina Schultz.

We are also incredibly grateful to the parents and staff who organized classroom baskets, managed ticket sales, and are volunteering their time tonight. Finally, a warm welcome to our 298 guests—thank you for being part of this special evening!

We are looking forward to an incredible evening filled with fellowship, entertainment, and fundraising for a wonderful cause for St. Peter.

The seventh and eighth-grade students will be going on their class trip to Springfield, IL, in April. During this trip, they will visit various sites in Springfield while learning about history, science, government, and more. Please pray for the safety of the students and chaperones during their travels.

Nine students from seventh and eighth grade participated in the Regional Science Fair, and all nine received a Gold Medal. Congratulations to Ariel, Ella, Jeffery, Makayla, Katie, Josey, Regina, Nola, and Gia!

Jeffery received the top project award in the Product Science division, while Katie received the top project award in the Earth Science division. Gia was honored with the Edge One Medical Award, which recognizes engineering and scientific excellence. Makayla received the Lincolnshire Rotary Club Service Before Self Award for her project, which demonstrated a scientific approach to making the world a healthier place.

Ella, Jeffery, Makayla, Katie, Josey, Regina, Nola, and Gia have also been invited to participate in the State Science Fair on April 24 and 25. We are excited to see how they perform. Thank you, Miss Duff, for all the hard work and dedication you have invested in the students!

End-of-year celebrations will take place in May, with the eighth-grade graduation on Thursday, May 21, 2026, at 7:00 pm. Please join us!

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Blessings to all.

As we approach Holy Week and Easter, there is a lot to reflect on. We remember and celebrate it every year as we do anniversaries and birthdays. Anniversaries with our spouse is a remembrance of our love and commitment to each other. Other anniversaries based on events, as 9/11 we reflect the evil is in the world and what brave individuals sacrificed for others. Birthdays may be a moment to reflect on what we have done in our lives to that point and refocusing on what we want to achieve in the future.

So, what do we reflect on for these next couple weeks? The suffering that our Lord accepted to save this sinful world. The humiliation. The scourging. The pain of being nailed to a cross. Taking all sins of the past, present and future onto Himself for the sake of His creation. Death. Yes, and more.

Personally, when I really think of what Jesus went through the heaviness of guilt causes me to break down knowing that I contributed to the suffering He went through. It can leave me in a very depressed state.

Then we celebrate His rising from the dead. He has conquered all of our sin and made it possible for us to have eternal life with Him. That anguishing loss has turned around and become our greatest joy. How awesome is our God!

We have now come to an immense feeling of hope and love from a God who cares for all of His creation. What do we do to show our thankfulness? It is giving back and doing God's work on earth. He gives us all we have so returning it should never be a burden as we did not have it to begin with.

Use the time, talent and treasure He has given us. Find out what you can volunteer to do at St Peter. Use the talent the Lord has blessed you with. And give your treasures out of gratitude to support the church, its ministries and bring others to know the joy of our Savior.

May you have a deep spiritual Holy Week and a joyous Easter. Christ is Risen!

Your servant in Christ

Rick



*From the desk of*  
**JULIE SAWUSCH**

Following a short break after Christmas, the Music Ministry has been busy preparing for Lent and Holy Week. Both the Traditional Vocal Choir and Handbells have been busy rehearsing (plus the addition of singing

Following a short break after Christmas, the Music Ministry has been busy preparing for Lent and Holy Week. Both the Traditional Vocal Choir and Handbells have been busy rehearsing (plus the addition of singing and ringing for Pastor Huffman's installation!).

We have been blessed as the choir has grown this year. Handbells also has a very dedicated core group that puts their all into every rehearsal. We have one more service after Easter and then we will take a much-needed break for the summer.

I would like to personally thank everyone for their dedication and hard work throughout the year. Julie Sawusch

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*Young at Heart*  
**UPDATE FROM  
GERIE KAY**

The Young at Heart (Y@H) group consists of St. Peter members and friends that are 55 years young or over. They usually meet on the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of the month for regularly scheduled meetings, devotions, fun activities, guest

speakers or special trips. Here is what they have been up to lately.

Jan 22- As we started a New Year it was fun to share what we did on New Year's Eve and tell of any interesting New Year's Eve traditions of the past.

Feb 26- Was a day of bingo and table talk. The Encore sales team provided us with a lovely catered lunch that day.

March 26- Our guest speaker was Adrian Bringham. He told us the story about "Smoky the war Dog." We enjoyed the program and enjoyed our special guests.

Join us when you can! All seniors are welcome!