



# Blackberry Beacon

*“Let your light shine before others,  
so that they may see your good works  
and give glory to your Father in heaven.”*

*Matthew 5:16*

*February 2025*

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## The Minor Prophets: Joel

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

During 2025, we will be journeying together through the minor prophets. This month I invite you to read the book of Joel. We normally hear from the prophet Joel at two times during the church year:

- On Ash Wednesday, a reading from Joel is the appointed Old Testament reading.
- On Pentecost, Peter quotes Joel in his sermon in Acts 2.

Joel is a unique book. The author was clearly immersed in other biblical writings.

- Take away: It's important to understand the broad sweep of Scripture. It's why we regularly read the whole Bible.

Joel invites us to repentance. We tend to link repentance to Lent (in the church year) or the confession (in worship). But Martin Luther says that the entire life of believers is to be one of repentance (see the first of the 95 Theses).

- Take away: How is God calling you from your sin and toward him?

Joel tells us God is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love. This is not the only book of the Bible that describes this character trait of God. Joel is also a book of restoration and hope, for the day when God will fully and finally deal with evil.

- Take away: How are you being invited to trust and rest in God?

Grace and Peace,

+ Pastor Matt

P.S. Our synod has published a Bible reading plan that takes us through the whole New Testament, reading five minutes a day, five days a week (<https://nwos-elca.church/listening/>, scroll to the bottom). Check it out!

# Stewardship Reflections

## Love Everyone

*I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.*

**John 13:15**

I can vividly imagine the foot-washing scene in the Gospel of John: Jesus taking off his outer garment, wrapping a towel around his waist, kneeling to remove the disciples' sandals, and then washing and drying one dusty foot after another. My eyes well up at the image. If the Savior of the world was willing to take on such a humble task, we should all be willing to serve others too, regardless of who we are and who they are. Following Jesus' example of servant leadership means being willing to engage with those around us no matter their background. Because of Jesus' love for us, we can show love to everyone, no matter our similarities or differences. So let us strive to show others a love that respects everyone's right to have differing opinions. A love that asks, "How can I help you?" A love that acknowledges our own weaknesses and shortcomings - a love that focuses on Jesus.

## **Jesus calls me to look beyond earthly divisions and to love all people.**

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## Isaiah 117 House Update

As of now, we are actively working on finalizing all the necessary steps before we can break ground. We've been working through the process of surveying the land and securing its release from a larger parcel. We are nearly finished with this step and are very close to having the land officially transferred into our name. Our next step will be to submit architectural plans to the City of Oregon in order to apply for building permits. After receiving approval, we'll be ready for our groundbreaking, which we hope to hold in the early part of 2025.

To date, we have raised over \$200,000 in monetary donations, in addition to the land donation, and countless local individuals, organizations and businesses have stepped up to organize their own donation drives and fundraisers. These efforts have been pivotal in helping us get closer to our goal.

There is still much work to be done. In order to open our doors the home must be fully debt-free, plus, we need to have the first year's operating budget of \$175,000 in the bank. We are committed to ensuring that once the house is built, it will be fully equipped and ready to serve without the burden of debt.

## **The Parable of the Good Samaritan**

### **Luke 10: 25-37**

Please read these verses to help us understand who Christ considers to be our neighbor.



The **Worship Assistants** signup sheet located in the narthex is available for members to volunteer to help our Sunday Services run smoothly. Ways to help include Greeter, Usher, Reader, Communion Assistant, and Fellowship Host. All of these are a ONE Sunday obligation. If you are not sure what to do, PLEASE contact a member of the Outreach Ministry for guidance.

### **Super Bowl Subs**

Cost: \$8 per sub

Pickup Saturday, February 8 between 10 – 11am or Sunday, February 9 after worship service. Proceeds will go towards Sunday School expenses and camp scholarships.



### **Valentine Potluck**

**Sunday, February 16**

11:45 AM

Come and share the love with us!

**Let's Build Beds** is currently in need of pillows and twin-size bedding. If you would like to donate, you can bring your items to church and we will see that they are delivered.

### **Bed Building Opportunity**

(open to the public)

1280 Conant St., Maumee.

February 8, 2025

9 am - 12 noon

The **Caring Shepherd Ministry** is active and wanting to grow. Please stay tuned for future opportunities.

We have been in contact with many members via a note, attempting to update our **phone directory**. If you have any information changes, please let the church office know so that we have an accurate directory.

The **Salvation Army Red Kettle Campaign** was completed just before Christmas. Claudette and Rufena are our representatives and worked hard to fill in the hours for ringing at The Miller's New Market in Genoa. The final tally for that site was \$5,432.31. We have such a generous and giving community. Thank you!



We are making plans for activities our congregations can participate in this coming year. We welcome any ideas you may have that grow our Outreach impact. We strive as a ministry to outreach to our own congregations, our immediate neighbors, our regional neighbors, our USA neighbors, and our world neighbors. WE are Christ's Light Shining in the World. Stay tuned for opportunities to be that shining Light.

### Outreach Ministry Members

Claudette Allred, Pam Frayer, Rufena Hartford, Jean Witt, Steve and Barb Yunker (St. Luke's), Pastor Matt, and Cindy Bench. We currently plan on meeting the 3rd Wednesday of each month at 10am. Our next meeting will be February 19.

We failed to do a picture board in 2024 and we would like to assemble one belatedly. If you have any church-related pictures from last year, please add them to the board. We ARE also starting a 2025 board, so feel free to add your pictures as you take them.



### Office Administrator Needed

Shirley Caldwell has announced her retirement as office administrator at St. Peter, effective at the end of April. We are searching for a new office administrator. Main responsibilities include creating publications, staffing the office, and financial bookkeeping. If interested, please send a cover letter and resume with three references to Pastor Matt at [mattmusteric@proton.me](mailto:mattmusteric@proton.me). Candidates are encouraged to apply by February 7, but applications will be accepted until the position is filled.

**Weather Policy** - If a **Level 2** or **3** is declared, services are cancelled.

### PHILLIP THE BLUE BARREL FOOD COLLECTION

#### February - Red Foods to St. Paul's Episcopal, Oregon

Be creative - items such as tomato soup, beets, kidney beans, jello, koolaid, tomatoes, pasta sauce, cherries, and 'red labels' count.

#### March - Green Foods to Elliston Food Pantry

items such as peas, asparagus, spinach, green beans, jello, olives, and 'green labels' count



1 - David Bench  
Joshua Lowe  
2 - Ray Gall  
Josh Overmyer  
3 - Bob Brown  
4 - Katie Larson  
Susan Lowe  
Brenda Shaneck  
Kennedy Miller

5 - Sunny Peth  
6 - Zachary Wolff  
7 - Judy Gahler  
Adelyn Wolff  
9 - David Bolen  
12 - Blayne Starkey  
13 - Caleb Meinke  
20 - Charlotte Allgier

20 - Nonnie Harris  
22 - Marlene Behlmer  
Christine Bolen  
24 - Hailey Beyer  
25 - Riley Malkemus  
27 - Glen Tank  
28 - Richard Wilburn

3 - Andy & Valerie Meinke  
- Jay & Kelsey Nino  
10 - Steve & Karen Connor  
12 - Wes & Judy Gahler  
15 - Ron & Shirley Lajti

16 - Glen & Beth Lepper  
17 - Ray & Barbara Gall  
19 - Jamie & Kelli Lacer  
22 - David & Cindy Bench  
25 - Jon & Gail Overmyer



### *Abigail Circle*

Monday, February 3  
Cooper's Hawk Dinner

### *Hannah Circle*

Thursday, February 13  
10:30 AM @ the church

### *Sew Group*

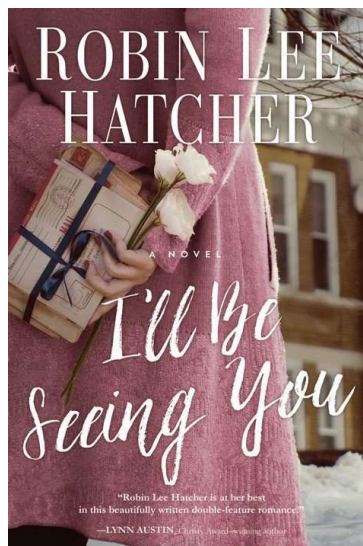
Every Tuesday  
9:00 AM @ the church

### *Book Discussion Group*

Wednesday, February 12  
10:00 AM @ the church

### *Bible Study*

Wednesday, February 12  
12 PM



Brianna falls instantly for charming Greg. Then a college assignment has Brianna interviewing Daisy, her great-grandmother about WWII--revealing sibling rivalry over a crush on a pilot. Will great-grandmother's past mistakes save Brianna from future heartache?

**ST. PETER LUTHERAN COUNCIL MEETING**  
**Monday, January 13, 2025 at Church**

Attendance: Cindy Bench, Mark Cuthbertson, Gary Diefenthaler, Al Gahler, Wes Gahler, Jody Kapp, Jon Overmyer, Kim Reif, Karen Schanke, Pastor Matt Musteric.

The meeting opened with a devotion on the 10th Commandment & Prayer by Pastor Matt.

Cindy made a motion seconded by Jody to approve minutes from the December 9 council meeting. MC.

Jody made a motion seconded by Kim to approve November Treasurer's Report. MC. Mark made a motion seconded by Gary to approve December Treasurer's Report. MC.

**Pastor's Report:** Pre-School program tentatively set for Sunday, Feb. 23; **Lent** starts on March 5 with Wednesday services at St. Peter and **Easter** is April 20; Number of Visits and meetings were given; Our synod has designated 2025 as a "**Year of Listening**"; will apply for **Sabbatical** in March 2025 for possible Sabbatical in 2026; **Vacation Sunday, Feb. 2** and Pastor Greg Olsen will be presiding minister.

**President:** Wes reported that **Shirley Caldwell** is retiring as Office Administrator effective April 25 and notice for replacement will be placed in bulletin, announced in church, and put on Facebook, Executive Committee will review Job Description; **LMM Annual meeting** is scheduled for Monday, March 10 @ 2:00 pm; Thank you note was read from Debbie (Herman) Miller for use of fellowship hall.

**Education:** will be meeting January 21; planning sub sale for February 9.

**Property:** Al reported that John Schneider cleared **parking lot** of snow; Wadsworth reported that there was a failure of electrical system causing bad relay to motor – not under warranty and more work needs to be done on **boiler system**; thanked Gary Diefenthaler for **striping parking lot**.

**Outreach:** Cindy reported that **Blue Barrel** items were selected for 2025; discussed **Caring Shepherds** program; discussed Rufena's notes to inactive members and **updating phone directory** – Cindy & Jody will investigate "Instant phone directory"; discussed **2025 outreach activities** and collecting pillows and bedding for Let's Build Beds; will do **picture board** for 2024 & 2025 and need pictures from 2024; Cindy made a motion seconded by Gary to hold **Valentine's potluck** on February 16 at 11:45. MC

**Worship:** will meet January 28.

**Old Business:** St. Peter was given four cemetery plots at Restlawn Cemetery many years ago and discussion was held about selling them or disposing of them, but no decision was made; will look into whether committee has been formed to explore ways for membership growth that was approved at annual meeting.

Jon made a motion seconded by Cindy to adjourn. The meeting was closed with the Lord's Prayer.

**NEXT MEETING February 10, 2025 at 7:30 p.m.**

Karen Schanke, Secretary