



# 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*

*May 2025*

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## The Minor Prophets: Jonah

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 Jonah.

Jonah is probably the most well-known of all the minor prophets, but perhaps for all the wrong reasons. We remember the large fish that made an underwater tomb (Or is it a womb?) for Jonah and then vomits him back up. But we might miss the point of the book: God's love for our enemies... and our frustration with that kind of forgiving love.

Jonah is a reluctant prophet, He is so reluctant that his first response to God's call to go to Nineveh is to run (sail) the complete opposite direction. When he finally does go to Nineveh he preaches a very short sermon and then gets out of Dodge to see if God will fry the evil Ninevites. In a surprising turn of events, however, the Ninevites repent and turn to God. But Jonah is not happy about it. The book ends with Jonah's frustration about God's mercy.

Read the book of the prophet Jonah this month and see if you see yourself in it. You can see and hear more by watching the video:  
<https://bibleproject.com/videos/jonah/>.

Justice and Peace,

+Pastor Matt

P.S. We will be blessing farms, fields, livestock, and equipment this year as part of **Rogation Days**, the days leading up to **Ascension Day** (Thursday, May 29). Contact me if you would like to me to bless your farm, field, livestock, and equipment. There will also be an Ascension Day worship service and meal at Solomon Lutheran Church in Woodville on May 29.

## Stewardship Reflections

### A Lesson In Serving

*“Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did it to me.” Matthew 25:40*

After a rough day at work, I stopped at the store, I got what I needed and chose the shortest check-out line, The man in front of me had a basket of groceries, I knew that he must have used food stamps to cover part of the cost because he told the cashier he should only have to pay for his can of soda. The cashier scrolled through the list, taking what seemed like forever. I just wanted to check out and go home. Finally the cashier found that his food stamps could not be used to pay for his strawberries. The man asked her to check again. At this point, I though, How much longer will this take? Then the man behind me said, “Give him his strawberries, I’ll cover it all.” The man with the food stamps told him, “Thank you. I just became homeless last night.”

I was ashamed of myself for my selfish thoughts and lack of action. Why had I not been like the man behind me and offered to cover this man’ purchase? This experience reminded me that we are to have compassion and humility, always moving to serve others as Christ commands. God will always provide up opportunities to serve. We need only to turn our thoughts from ourselves to the person in front of us.

### Opportunities to love God are right in front of me.

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**Have you noticed the Weekly Outreach Opportunity** in your bulletin? These are just gentle suggestions of ways YOU can shine your light in the world. We Welcome any suggestions you may have or ways to be like Jesus in our daily lives.

### **Congregational Recruitment Meeting**

Sunday, May 4 at 11:30am. Come to share your ideas on how to increase church attendance and membership.

Thanks to all who have been signing up for Worship Assistants. One position that is usually open is Usher. This is an easy position...pass out bulletins, count and record attendance, help those who may need assistance, and let Pastor know if anyone needs Communion brought to the pew. Please continue to sign up as this helps our Worship Service run smoothly.

### **Phillip the Blue Barrel**

May – Personal Care toiletries for St. Paul’s Episcopal Food Pantry.

We are in the beginning stages of starting an “**Instant Church Directory**” for our congregations. Jean Witt is spearheading this effort. The initial start-up will take some time gathering information, organizing, taking pictures, and just learning how to use the system. Once in place, however, it will be a living document that can be updated any time. We are excited to see how this all plays out. It will help everyone put names and faces together.

Please print and share your pictures you may have of church events so we can get the **2025 Picture Board** going.

### **KISERENY TANZANIA MATCHING GIFT CHALLENGE**

During the months of April and May we will be taking a collection for Kisereny. Our goal this year is to increase the number of households giving to the Kisereny kindergarten to 35 ... one family for each preschooler. If we have 35 (or more)

households participating, an extra \$2000 in matching gifts will be released. Let's give generously! (Checks can be made payable to St. Peter Lutheran Church.)

Thank you to ALL who helped in any way with the Packing of 100 Lunches for distribution in the Junction Neighborhood AND for preparing, serving the Chicken meal, and providing desserts for the Salem Easter Meal. 250+ meals were handed out.

### **MARK YOUR CALENDARS!**

We will be holding another Seminar September 24<sup>th</sup> at 11:45 am. Jennifer Ramon is an attorney who presents a great informational program "Estate Planning Essentials". She will tell us about Estate Planning Tools, How to Avoid Probate, Protecting Assets, and more.

A meal will be provided and she welcomes your questions. Feel free to bring a friend or neighbor, Sign-up sheets will be out at the end of August. This will be the final portions of our series. This is a FREE event.

### **CHURCH FINANCES**

#### **MARCH 2025 CHURCH FINANCES**

For March 2025, we had a beginning balance of \$103.26, receipts of \$31,715.08, expenses of \$27,840.15 and an ending balance of \$3,978.19. We benefitted from having 5 Sundays in the month of March.

During our Spring maintenance inspection, our Wadsworth tech found the compressor on the 10-Ton condenser A/C unit was fried. This unit supplies air conditioning to our church sanctuary. It is thought that a lightning strike knocked out the compressor. The quote to repair is \$12,995.

On April 11, the Sunday School wing lost heat. A bad relay and deteriorated wiring was discovered. Repairs will be provided by an electrician.

Gary Diefenthaler



2 - Kim Reif  
10 - Caitlin Lohner  
11 - Wade Kapp  
    Jamie Lacer  
    Thomas Reinhart  
    IV

15 - Nathan Moore  
    Trenton Overmyer  
16 - Gregory Lowe  
17 - Thomas Reinhart,  
    Jr.

18 - Lila Goulette  
    David Reinhart  
20 - Terry Lowe  
    Andrea Sorg  
23 - Caleb Wittman  
25 - Larry Schanke

2 - David & Dawn Bolen  
10 - Mark & Becky Cuthbertson  
21 - Rusty & Paulette Sekinger  
25 - Tait & Amber Miller



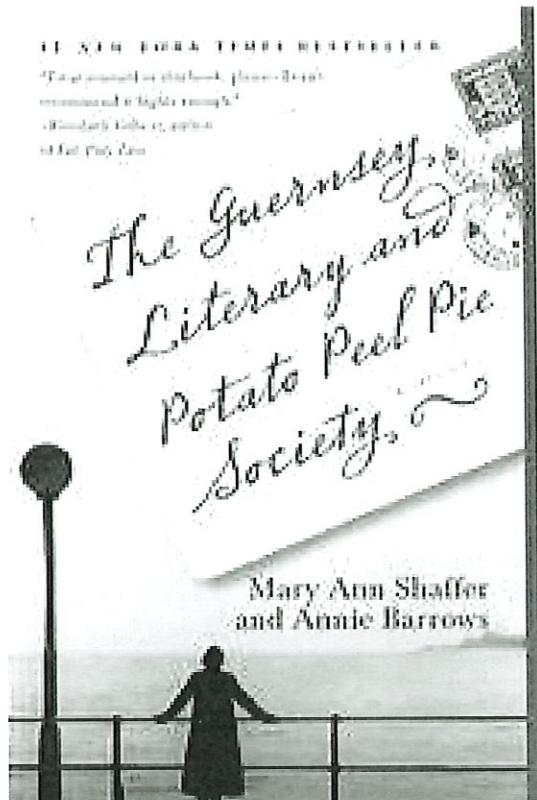
*Abigail Circle*  
Monday, May 19  
7:00 PM @ the church

*Hannah Circle*  
Thursday, May 8  
10:30 AM @ the church

*Sew Group*  
Every Tuesday  
9:00 AM @ the church

## Book Discussion Group

Wednesday, May 14  
10:00 AM @ the church



After learning that the society began as a cover for residents breaking curfew during the German occupation of Guernsey, Juliet begins a correspondence with several members of the Society, hoping to work them into an article she is writing on the benefits of literature for The Times Literary Supplement. Juliet also learns that Elizabeth McKenna, the Society's beloved founder, was arrested and sent to a prison in France by the Germans and has yet to return home. The members of the Society are raising her child, Kit, among themselves



I would like to thank everyone, for the prayers, cards, flowers, food, visits, and phone calls. My surgery was successful and I am hoping for a full recovery. Shirley Lajti

**ST PETER LUTHERAN COUNCIL MEETING**  
**Monday, April 14, 2025 at Church**

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

The meeting opened with devotion from the Small Catechism & Prayer by Pastor Matt.

Cindy made a motion seconded by Jon to approve minutes from the March 10 council meeting. MC.

Mark made a motion seconded by Cindy to approve March 2025 Treasurer's Report. MC.

**Pastor's Report:** Easter April 20; **Confirmation:** TBD; **Rogation Days:** May 27-28; **Ascension Day** (worship at Solomon Woodville): May 29; **Pentecost:** June 8, **Ryder Nino** Baptism: March 23. March Pastoral Care & Visits total was 19; Confirmation Retreat March 21-22 at Lutheran Memorial Camp / HopeWood Pines. Healthy Congregations Leadership Series March 21, obtained a 50% scholarship to attend Principles and Techniques of Fundraising (Indianapolis) sometime this year. May take some time off after Easter Sunday.

**President:** Concerns with on-going Boiler and HVAC systems, to be covered by Property Ministry.

**Vice-President Report:** with the change in the office administrator position, an audit needs to be completed to recognize this transition. Jon made several attempts to get up-to-date status of all of the church's bank accounts and encountered some difficulties. We need to get a definitive record from the bank to see who has what access to the church's bank accounts.

A motion was made by Mark to authorize the bank to allow Jon Overmyer access to our bank accounts, in order to find out the current list of individuals that have access to the church's bank accounts. Jody seconded the motion. MC

**Executive Committee:** no report

**Congregational Life:** no report

**Education:** Gary reported on catechism retreat, **Family Time** gatherings have had 1-13 youth and 8-12 adults attending, last day of Sunday School May 18, **Sunday School choir** to sing May 11 worship and **Cradle Roll** will be restarted. Gary made a motion to hold **Sunday School Teacher Recognition** on May 18, **Graduate Recognition** on June 1 and **Vacation Bible School** on August 3 (tentative Noon to 3pm). Cindy seconded the motion. MC

**Finance:** Mark reported that they discussed routine monthly matters; working with Rachel Goulette and Gail Overmyer to start integrating **Shepherd's Staff software** into some office aspects, **Insurance policy** renewal us May 27, Christy Diekman has been enlisted to be our Social Media Manager, will start using online music to enhance our Sunday Live video ... CCLI streaming license upgrade will be \$51.33 for the rest of this year. It was suggested that we provide Shirley Caldwell with a thank you gift for all of the special condensed training she provided. Cindy made a motion to provide a thank you gift totaling \$150, possibly split between a couple of eateries. Mar seconded the motion. MC. Cindy will get the gift certificates.

**Property:** Al reported that the mower is scheduled for service at Streaker's in May. Terry Lowe will be taking care of the lawn and other yard repairs this year at no cost. The boiler backflow has been repaired and report will be filed with the state. During Spring maintenance, Wadsworth tech found the compressor on the 10-Ton condenser A/C unit was fried. The quote to repair is \$12,995. A lightning strike probable caused this. On April 11, the Sunday School wing lost heat. A bad relay and wiring was discovered. Repairs will be provided by an electrician.

**Outreach:** Cindy reported that the **April Blue Barrell** is donor's choice to Lutheran social Services, packed and distributed lunches on March 28 and 29, Jean is working on **Instant Church Directory**, April 27<sup>th</sup> Church Picnic has been cancelled due to a scheduling conflict, **Salem Easter** meal was supported on April 8, toilet paper collection continues and the **419 Cares Used Shoe** collection was highlighted. Cindy made a motion to place a basket our for **Kisereny Collection** the rest of April into May. Seconded by Jody. MC

### **Worship: no report**

**Women of the Church:** Judy reported that we are co-host of the North Central Ohio Assembly on May 3. We have no one signed up at this time. This is a concern.

**Old Business:** Does the Blink camera work, who sees it and does the bell work? Yes, the camera works. Mark, Jim Vermilyea and the office computer has access to the video. The bell should work in the office. Volume levels will checked.

**New Business:** Mark Cuthbertson will be stepping down from the Finance Ministry Chair position, while still remaining on the ministry. The master church calendar needs to be kept up-to-date.

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

**NEXT MEETING:** May 12, 2025 at 7:30 p.m.  
Gary Diefenthaler

