



# 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

January 2026

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St. Peter Lutheran Church  
17877 W. State Route 579  
Martin, OH 43445

Phone: 419-836-8903  
Email: [stpeterblackberry@gmail.com](mailto:stpeterblackberry@gmail.com)

Web: [stpeterblackberry.org](http://stpeterblackberry.org)  
[facebook.com/spblackberry](https://facebook.com/spblackberry)

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## Thank You!

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ at St. Peter and St. Luke's,

Thank you!

Thank you for supporting the ministry and mission of St. Peter and St. Luke's with your time, talent, and treasure! (That last word always makes me think of pirates.)

Your support also overflows to our ministry partners at Salem, local food pantries in Elliston, Oregon, and Jerusalem Township, and in Kisereny and Mlenga in Tanzania. It also overflows to relief agencies such as Lutheran Disaster Response and Lutheran World Relief, as well as our partnerships with the Northwestern Ohio Synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Giving thanks is simply something we do as Christians. One of the earliest words for Holy Communion is Eucharist. It comes from a Greek word that means “to give thanks.” Our whole lives as Christians are to be lived eucharistically, giving thanks to God, receiving God’s gifts, then overflowing with those gifts to others, particularly to those most in need.

Thank you!

† Pastor Matt

## Stewardship Reflections

### THE KINDNESS OF OTHERS READ TITUS 3:1-8

*By their fruit you will recognize them.  
Matthew 7:20 (NIV)*

I volunteer by delivering meals in my mountain community. After a major winter storm with single-digit temperatures and power outages, I drove up a steep, snow-covered road to check on an elderly woman who lived alone. When I saw snowmobile tracks leading to her house, I worried she might have had an emergency. I was relieved to find her healthy, content, and warm beside a wood fire in her stove. When I asked about the tracks, she told me, "Oh, some kid stopped by to check on me." Even though she didn't know the person, she knew someone had made the effort to confirm she was safe.

I don't know who the snowmobiler was either, but on some level I feel that I do. This person's selfless act reflected the care, concern, and grace our Lord show us every day. We all are on a journey to our eternal home and, at one time or another, we all need a helping hand. As Jesus, our Savior and Guide, said, "Do you love me?...Take care of my sheep" (John 21:16). May each of us be ready to respond to those in need and be equally ready to accept the help others offer us.

Prayer: Gracious God, thank you for the kindness we see in others, which is an extension of the grace and mercy you bestow on us. Amen.

**THOUGHT FOR THE DAY:** Kindness extended to others reflects the Lord's care.



Thank you to all for your generosity throughout 2025. YOU have made a difference through your volunteering, donations, and support of the many Outreach Opportunities St. Luke's and St. Peter's has undertaken throughout 2025. We are ALWAYS looking for new opportunities, so feel free to share your ideas with any member of this Ministry.

We will be having our 2026 Planning Meeting, January 7<sup>th</sup> at 11:30 AM at St. Peter. Feel free to join us with your ideas.

Our Outreach Ministry Members are Steve and Barb Yunker, Claudette Allred, Pam Frayer, Rufena Hartford, Jean Witt, Cindy Bench and Pastor Matt. Reach out any one of them if you have ideas

### **Phillip the Blue Barrel**

Thanks abound for all of your generosity in providing items for our area Food Pantries. You always donate above and beyond and when the items are delivered they are SO APPRECIATED. January's Blue Barrel Collection is donors choice going to Lutheran Social Services.

### **Caring Shepherds**

Caring Shepherds will gather at St. Luke's January 11, 2026 at 11:30. Anyone interested in helping to reach out to our homebound, hospitalized, etc. are welcome to come. Planning for the year and for direction the group wants to go will be discussed. This ministry can really become something great, but we need your help. Questions? Contact Pam Frayer or Cindy Bench.

### **Air Conditioning Fundraising Campaign**

At our November 2025 Annual Meeting, it was discussed that one of our two sanctuary air condition units was not working during the 2025 cooling season. We have gotten a quote for replacing this unit, at an approximate cost of \$15, 605.

A decision was made to run an air conditioning fundraising campaign through April 2026 in attempts to collect the needed funds. If we are short on funds, we will use some parsonage sale proceeds to make up the difference.

If you can make some special donations towards this campaign, it will be appreciated. Please note your special donation as Air Condition Fund on your check or envelope. Thank you for your help with this campaign.

### **Sunday School Happenings**

**Super Bowl Subs:** The Sunday School department will again be selling sub sandwiches for Super Bowl Sunday. Order forms will be available January 18, 25 and February 1. You will be able to pick up your subs on Saturday, February 7 or Sunday, February 8. Congregational support has always been strong and appreciated for this annual event. Proceeds go towards Sunday School materials and Catechism Camp scholarships.

January's Bible verse is *Trust in the Lord with all your heart.* Proverbs 3:5

*Abigail Circle*

Monday, January 19  
7:00 PM @ St. Peter

*Hannah Circle*

Tuesday, January 20  
10:30 AM @ St. Peter

*Book Club*

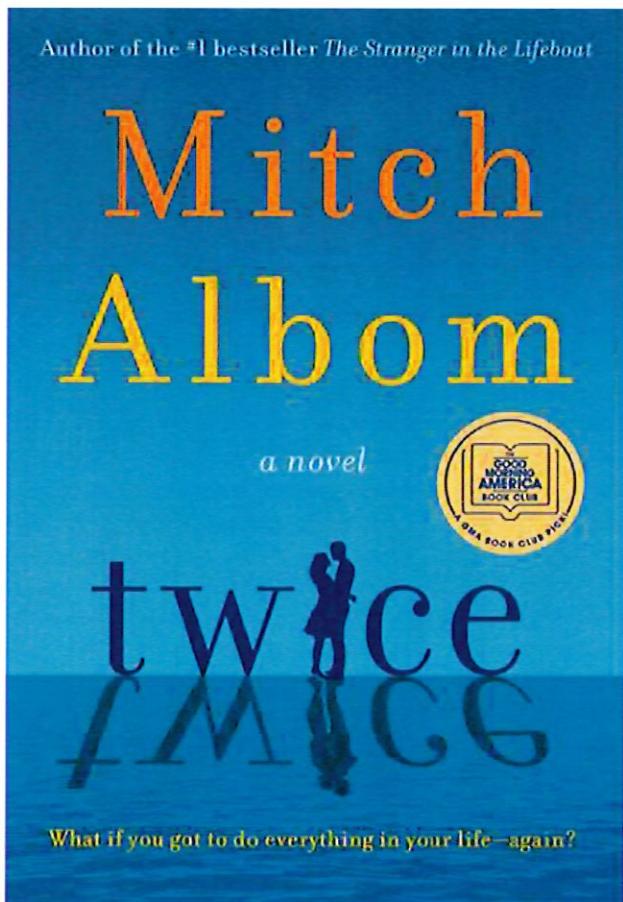
Wednesday, January 14  
10:00 AM @ St. Peter

*Sew Group*

Every Tuesday  
9:00 AM @ St. Peter

*Bible Study*

Wednesday, January 7  
12 Noon @ St. Peter



January

Book Club Selection

*Twice*

By Mitch Albom

A GOOD MORNING AMERICA BOOK CLUB  
PICK • AN INSTANT NEW YORK  
TIMES BESTSELLER

What if you got to do everything in your life—twice? The heart of Mitch Albom's newest novel—charmingly narrated by Mitch himself—is a stunning love story that dares to explore how our unchecked desires might mean losing what we've had all along.

When he is eight years old, Alfie Logan discovers the magical ability to get a second chance at everything. He can undo any moment and live it again. The one catch: he must accept the consequences of his second try—for better or worse.

He grows up correcting his mistakes and saving himself from adolescent embarrassments. He even takes foolishly dangerous risks, just to see what it's like to come close to death, before tapping back to safety.

# JANUARY



1 - McKenna Large  
Renee Moore  
3 - Pamela Frayer  
Danielle Lajti  
8 - Judy Brown  
Mark Cuthbertson  
Kennedy Miller

10 - David Behlmer  
11 - Thomas Reinhart III  
Kathy Starkey  
12 - Paulette Sekinger  
13 - Kimberly Lacer  
14 - Marcia Amonette

16 - Jody Kapp  
John Schneider  
18 - Barbara Gall  
22 - Jared Diekman  
31 - Jeffrey Diekman



31 – Jason & Julie Overmyer

# January 2026

## Monthly Planner

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																																																																										
	<table border="1"> <tr><td colspan="7">Dec 2025</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td>M</td><td>T</td><td>W</td><td>T</td><td>F</td><td>S</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td></tr> <tr><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td></tr> <tr><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td></tr> <tr><td>28</td><td>29</td><td>30</td><td>31</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table>	Dec 2025							S	M	T	W	T	F	S	1	2	3	4	5	6		7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31				<table border="1"> <tr><td colspan="7">Feb 2026</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td>M</td><td>T</td><td>W</td><td>T</td><td>F</td><td>S</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td></tr> <tr><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td></tr> <tr><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td></tr> <tr><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td></tr> </table>	Feb 2026							S	M	T	W	T	F	S	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	1 HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!	2	3
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## ST. PETER LUTHERAN COUNCIL MEETING

Monday, November 10, 2025

Attendance :Cindy Bench, Gary Diefenthaler, Judy Gahler, Wes Gahler, Jody Kapp, and Pastor Matt Musteric.

The meeting was opened by Pastor Matt with a devotion based on the Small Catechism: The Lord's Prayer: The Second Petition and prayer.

Gary made a motion seconded by Cindy to approve the minutes from the October 19,2025 council meeting. MC.

There was no October 2025 Treasurer report submitted for council.

**Pastor's Report:** Worship: November 23 Christ the King Sunday, November 30, Advent starts. Pastoral Acts: None. Pastoral Care and Visits: for September totaled 20, October totaled 5. Teaching: Catechism focus on the Small Catechism, Bible Study on the book of Leviticus. Continuing Education: Healthy Congregations Leadership Series and "Lunch and Learn" series. September/October: Effective Use of AI in Fundraising Strategies: September 24; Doxology Conference and Kingfisher gathering: Holland, Michigan October 6-9; Principles and Techniques of Fundraising: Indianapolis December 8-11. Vacation: October 26: Pastor Greg Olsen; December 28, 2025 – January 3, 2026

**President Report:** Work continues with the Finance ministry. **Council** attendance has been low recently. Would another day of the week/month be better?

**Vice-President Report:** No report

**Executive Committee:** No report

**Congregational Life:** No report

**Education:** There is an upcoming Catechism Camp opportunity March 20-21, 2026. The cost is about \$100. Education is budgeted \$50.00 per student. **Gary** made a motion to hold Sunday School Christmas program on December 21, during worship; **Sell** Super Bowl Subs and make available Feb 7-8, 2026; Set up Mitten and Hat tree for November 30, 2025 with distribution to local schools. Seconded by Jody. MC.

**Finance:** No report.

**Property:** No report.

**Outreach:** Blue Barrel November donations will be canned meat or pet food to St. Paul's Episcopal. Caring Shepherds will meet at St. Luke's on **January 11, 2026 at 11:30am**. Salem's annual Thanksgiving meal is November 18. Desserts are still needed. The Instant Church Directory is pretty much done. LHOM Christmas collection of items should be placed under the tree. The list is available in the Narthex. Salvation Army Red Kettle bell ringing...Rufena is busy filling in times. The next meeting is January 7, 2026 at 11:30am.

**Worship:** Poinsettias will be sold all 4 Sundays in November. All 3 pianos have been tuned. Looking at Christmas Eve late service. It is possible the late service may have to be discussed if attendance keeps falling below 30 people. Looking for a reader at Thanksgiving service at St. John, Williston. Lent begins February 18 and St. Luke's will host. Tentative Pre-School program is scheduled for March 8, 2026. Looking at a combined worship service with St. Luke's on Memorial Day weekend. Phoebe Jackson will provide piano music pre- and post-worship on November 30, 2025. Next meeting is February 4, 2026.

**Women of the Church:** No report

**Old Business:** Air conditioning operations need to be discussed at Annual meeting.

**New Business:** Focused on Annual meeting preparation. Reviewed proposed 2026 budget. Revisions need to be made to several line items and calculations. An updated October Treasurer's report and current 2025 budget expenditures need to be provided for the Annual meeting. Regarding nominations, still need a recording secretary, Jared Diekman nominated for the Finance Ministry and Dawn Bolen nominated for Education Ministry. Endowment fund interest needs to be identified for distribution (40% to capital expenses, 40% for outreach and 20% for Synod benevolence). Judy made a motion that outreach recipients be Isaiah House and Urban Wholistics, seconded by Cindy, MC. When covering air conditioning system, a public appeal should be asked for or Ameriprise funds may have to be used as an option. The need for a church website should be discussed. A tentative agenda was prepared for the Annual meeting.

Gary made a motion seconded by Cindy to adjourn the meeting. MC. We closed with the Lord's Prayer.

**NEXT MEETING:** December 15, 2025 at 7:30p.m.

Gary Diefenthaler



To all the people who sent me cards and kept me in prayers in my mother's passing. I appreciate your thoughtfulness, and special thanks to Pastor Matt. Thanks, Mary Dehring.

THANK YOU for all of the donations for the personal care bags. We were able to send 47 personal hygiene bags to Ottawa County Transitional Care and RuthAnn's House.

Once again, St Peter's family goes above and beyond supporting the ministries of the church. The Quilt Sewing Ladies.

**Ministry Reports** will be due to the office by **January 19, 2026**. Please place a typed copy in church secretary mailbox or email if possible.

**Weather Policy** – If a **Level 2** (or higher) is declared, services are cancelled.

**Altar Flower** sign-up sheets for 2026 are now posted on the bulletin board. Please take a look and consider helping out by memorializing or honoring those you love. Be sure to place your name and the reason for placing the flowers. Please remember to designate if you wish to keep your flowers. If you wish to place flowers on the same date as someone else, please use the Lectern line if you so wish. The price for altar and lectern flowers remains at \$25.00 There was no cost increase for 2026.

**Roof and Boiler Loan-** As of December 31, 2025 the balance owed is \$35,000.00.

#### **Endowment Fund Interest**

The \$4,500.00 earned interest from the endowment fund this year is divided into three entities. 40% to Capital Improvement, 20% to Synod Benevolence and 40% to Outreach ministries. Isaiah 117 House and Urban Wholistics were selected. 20% will be sent to each.