



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

March 2026

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

Phone: 419-836-8903
Email: stpeterblackberry@gmail.com

Web: stpeterblackberry.org
facebook.com/spblackberry

Almsgiving, Prayer, Fasting: Welcome to Lent

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

Every Ash Wednesday we hear from Jesus about practices that the church has found helpful to focus on during the seasons of Lent: almsgiving, prayer, and fasting (Matthew 6:1-21). The teaching on these practices is right in the middle of the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) and so they take on a special importance.

Lent is a kind of “spring training” for us as Christians. All of the things we are invited to do during Lent are things we can do every day as Christians, but that we give particular focus to during Lent.

Almsgiving is the practice of giving gifts (usually money) to the poor. I find it interesting that Jesus talks to us first about money. Perhaps this is because he knows what an important part money plays in our lives. Think about setting up an “alms jar” (or envelope) at home. Take any money not spent from the practice of fasting (see below) and put it in this jar, to be given to the poor. Giving alms to the poor helps us fulfill the commandment to love our neighbors as ourselves. It also helps us grow in gratitude.

Prayer can take many forms. Prayer is talking with God, listening to God, and being in God's presence. Consider learning a new prayer form. You may want to devote extra time to reading Scripture. Pray the Psalms. Memorize a verse (or a chapter) from the Bible. Write out your own copy of an entire Gospel. Lent is a great time to try a new faith practice.

Fasting is abstaining from food and drink for a specified period of time. In the long history of the church, the Lent fast was not a complete fast, but a partial fast, focusing on abstaining from certain types of foods during the season. Today, people fast from certain types of food, but it is also appropriate to fast from social media, entertainment, or other things that consume our time. Consider linking fasting with almsgiving. If you are giving up a certain food or eating at restaurants, take the money you would have spent on those things and lavish them on the poor.

It's easy to overdo it when it comes to Lent practices. We have great plans and then give up by week three (or earlier). If you stumble in any of the practices of Lent, simply begin again.

One final word of caution: The whole point of these practices is to *increase our love of God and neighbor*. If a particular practice is getting in the way of loving God or our neighbors, it's better not to do it!

Grace and Peace,
+ Pastor Matt

Stewardship Reflections

Read 2 Corinthians 3:13-18

*We all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.
2 Corinthians 3:18 (NIV)*

I pause along the edge of the pond during my morning walk to take a picture of the blue heron that stood motionless among the reeds and grasses. A perfect mirror image of the heron was reflected on the surface of the water. The reflection was radiant in the early morning light and reminded me of how we are called to reflect the image of Christ to the world.

When I was a new Christian, I thought I needed a special talent or ability to be able to make Christ known to others. However, as I studied the Bible, I learned that it is the Holy Spirit who makes Christ known by transforming us to be more like him in holiness, grace, and love (see Rom. 8:29). As we cooperate with the Spirit's work, we mirror Christ through our words and actions, reflecting the character of Christ and shining his light to the world around us.

Prayer: Thank you, O Christ, for giving us the incredible privilege of reflection your image. May the light of your Holy Spirit shine brightly in us and through us. We pray as you taught us, "Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation"(Luke 11:2-4, NIV). Amen.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY: THE HOLY SPIRIT EMPOWERS ME TO REFLECT CHRIST'S LIGHT TO THE WORLD.



There are lots of exciting things going on at St. Peter's and St. Luke's in the coming months. If the weather can cooperate, it should be a fun season.

Please be taking pictures and sharing them on the 2026 picture board which will soon be ready to receive your pictures. Let's FILL it Full this year with Church activates.

The Instant Church Directory is up and available via the app. If you download the Instant Church Directory app to your smart phone, you will have access to your church families information. If you need to add a picture, change information, etc. its's super easy. Not tech savvy??????? No problem. Just contact the church office and a copy can be printed for you. Thanks once again to Jean Witt and Pastor Matt for all of their hard work;

The gifts we collected for LHOM under the Outreach Tree during Advent were greatly appreciated. Please see the thank you note from the Lutheran Home of Mercy on the bulletin board.

The Ottawa County Red Kettle campaign was a "ringing" success. Rufena and Claudette lined up the ringers for Miller's New Market in Genoa. \$6,678.96 was raised at that location and for the year \$50,761.01 was collected. 171 families were helped, 357 children with toys and 166 gift cards for teens. This amount was ONLY raised in Ottawa County!! WOW. Thanks to all who volunteered their time to make this successful.

Every day, God provides each of us opportunities to share our time or talents or treasures. Keep your eyes open for these God moments.

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. March's Blue Barrel Collection will be **Green** Foods to Elliston Food Pantry, April's collection will be Donor's choice to Lutheran Social Services. There is a Wish List on the bulletin board for their needs. Also enclosed is a Food Pantry Wish List for Lutheran Social Services listing what they need or can use. It will give us ideas for donations for Lutheran Social Services, Blue Barrel collection for months of April, July and October.

Sunday School Happenings

March's Sunday School Bible verse is: *The Lord is my Shepherd. I shall not want.* Psalm 23:1

Upcoming Social & Service Events – You're invited!

Life is better when we grow in faith and friendship together! Our church is more than a place to attend on Sundays—it's a community where we serve, laugh, worship, and support one another. We'd love for you to join us at these upcoming events and to invite friends, neighbors, and family to come along too.

- **Family Movie Time & Shuffleboard**

March 1, 11:00 AM . Bring the whole family for a relaxed and fun gathering as we watch the movie *David* and enjoy some friendly shuffleboard.

Abigail Circle

Monday, March 16th
7:00 PM @ St. Peter

Hannah Circle

Tuesday, March 17th
10:30 AM @St. Peter

Sew Group

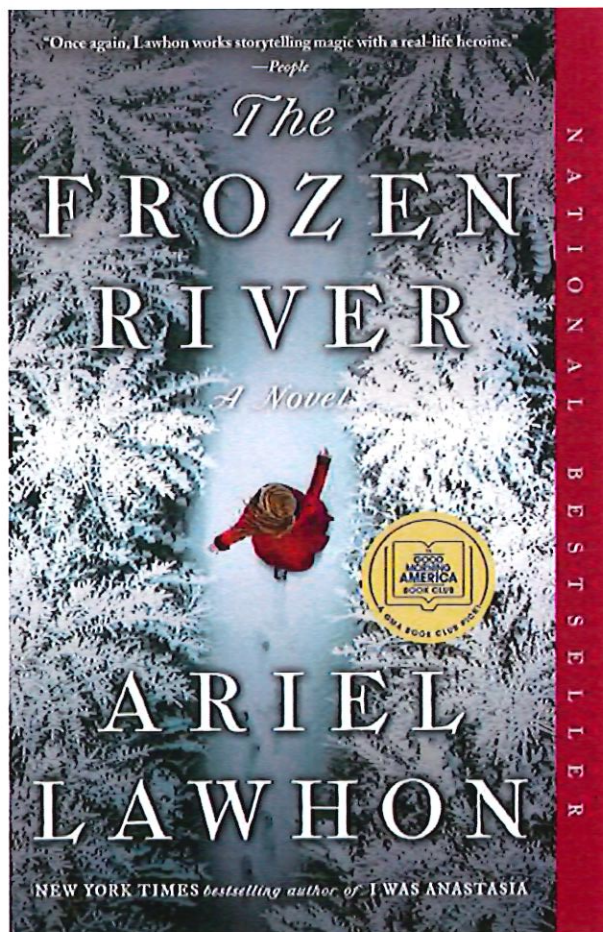
Every Tuesday
9:00 AM @ St. Peter

Book Club

Wednesday, March 11
10:00 AM @St. Peter

Bible Study

Wednesday, March 4th
12 NOON @ St. Peter



"Once again, Lawhon works storytelling magic with a real-life heroine." —People Magazine

Maine, 1789: When the Kennebec River freezes, entombing a man in the ice, Martha Ballard is summoned to examine the body and determine cause of death. As a midwife and healer, she is privy to much of what goes on behind closed doors in Hallowell. Her diary is a record of every birth and death, crime and debacle that unfolds in the close-knit community. Months earlier, Martha documented the details of an alleged rape committed by two of the town's most respected gentlemen—one of whom has now been found dead in the ice. But when a local physician undermines her conclusion, declaring the death to be an accident, Martha is forced to investigate the shocking murder on her own.



BIRTHDAYS

1 - Tom Ottney
2 - Dawn Bolen
5 - Bob Behlmer
6 - Melvin Peth
9 - Mary Tarr

10 - Jason Overmyer
Hope Musteric
11 - Linda Tarr
12 - Jenna Peeler
16 - Kara Magrum

24 - Raymon Behlmer
Arianna Bench
26 - Avery Sorg
27 - LeAnne Butzin
29 - Caleb Bench

30 - Jane Tank
Samuel Musteric
31 - Karen Connor
Phyllis Dehring
Tom Siefke



19 - Bob & Becky Beyer
22 - Tom & Bonny Ottney
John & Margo Wolff
29 - Terry & Susan Lowe

March 2026

Monthly Planner

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																																																													
<p>1</p> <p>8:45 AM Worship Service</p> <p>10:00 AM Sunday School 10:15 AM Adult Sunday School</p> <p>11:00 AM -1:00 PM Movie Day & Shuffleboard</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>3</p> <p>9:00 AM Quilt Sewing</p>	<p>4</p> <p>12:00 PM Bible Study</p> <p>8:00 PM AA Meeting</p> <p>Lenten Service @ St. Luke's: 6:00 PM Soup Supper; 7:00 PM Worship</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>6</p>	<p>7</p> <p>Remember to spring your clocks ahead one hour tonight!!</p>																																																																													
<p>8</p> <p>8:45 AM Worship Service with Precious Moments Winter Program</p> <p>10:00 AM Property Ministry</p> <p>10:00 AM Sunday School 10:15 AM Adult Sunday School</p> <p>12:00 PM -1:15 PM Catechism</p> <p>Aluminum Can Collection Day</p> <p>Daylight Saving Time Begins</p>	<p>9</p> <p>Finance and Church Council Meetings moved to March 23</p>	<p>10</p> <p>9:00 AM Quilt Sewing</p>	<p>11</p> <p>10:00 AM Book Club</p> <p>8:00 PM AA Meeting</p> <p>Lenten Service @ St. Luke's: 6:00 PM Soup Supper; 7:00 PM Worship</p>	<p>12</p>	<p>13</p>	<p>14</p>																																																																													
<p>15</p> <p>8:45 AM Worship Service</p> <p>10:00 AM Sunday School 10:15 AM Adult Sunday School</p>	<p>16</p> <p>7:00 PM Abigail Circle @ St. Peter</p>	<p>17</p> <p>9:00 AM Quilt Sewing</p> <p>7:00 PM Education Ministry</p>	<p>18</p> <p>8:00 PM AA Meeting</p> <p>Lenten Service @ St. Luke's: 6:00 PM Soup Supper; 7:00 PM Worship</p>	<p>19</p>	<p>20</p> <p>FIRST DAY OF SPRING!!!!</p>	<p>21</p>																																																																													
<p>22</p> <p>8:45 AM Worship Service, Bring a Friend Sunday</p> <p>10:00 AM Sunday School 10:15 AM Adult Sunday School</p>	<p>23</p>	<p>24</p> <p>9:00 AM Quilt Sewing</p>	<p>25</p> <p>8:00 PM AA Meeting</p> <p>Lenten Service @ St. Luke's: 6:00 PM Soup Supper; 7:00 PM Worship</p>	<p>26</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>28</p>																																																																													
<p>29</p> <p>8:45 AM Worship Service</p> <p>10:00 AM Sunday School 10:15 AM Adult Sunday School</p> <p>PALM SUNDAY</p>	<p>30</p>	<p>31</p> <p>9:00 AM Quilt Sewing</p>	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p style="text-align: center;">Feb 2026</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; text-align: center;"> <tr><th>S</th><th>M</th><th>T</th><th>W</th><th>T</th><th>F</th><th>S</th></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> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p style="text-align: center;">Apr 2026</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; text-align: center;"> <tr><th>S</th><th>M</th><th>T</th><th>W</th><th>T</th><th>F</th><th>S</th></tr> <tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td></tr> <tr><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td></tr> <tr><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td></tr> <tr><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td><td>30</td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table> </div> </div>				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	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		
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																																																																													
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																																																																															

ST. PETER LUTHERAN COUNCIL MEETING

Monday, January 12, 2026,

Attendance: Cindy Bench, Judy Gahler, Wes Gahler, Al Gahler, Jody Kapp, Jon Overmyer and Pastor Matt. The meeting was opened by Pastor Matt with prayer and explanation of the 3rd petition of the Lord's Prayer. Cindy made a motion seconded by Jon to approve the minutes from the December, 2025 council meeting. MC. Financial Reports were not completed, will approve when they are completed at February meeting. MC.

Pastor's Report: Worship: Pastor shared that there will not be a round robin for Lent this year. He will be using the series, *Half Truths* by Adam Hamilton to base services on. Wednesday services will be at St. Luke's with a meal before, Maundy Thursday at St. Peter and Good Friday at St. Luke's. Ash Wednesday is February 18th this year. He also reported on Luna Clark's baptism that will be held next week. Visits for December 2025; Homebound 3, Hospital 4, Other 3, Phone Calls 1. Pastor will be attending a Lent Preaching Retreat in Howe, IN, January 18-20 as well as AFP NOW: Building Donor and Partnership Connections That Last in Bowling Green on January 28.

President Report: Wes reported that conversations have started with the family of Marlene Base on where they would like her memorial used, possibly towards the AC and Heating projects we have currently.

Vice-President Report: Jon reported on some rough totals of where our Ameriprise accounts are sitting: approx. \$6000 (3.43% interest), \$96,000 (9.02% interest) \$170,000 (11.52% interest). Jon also brought up that we may want to look into putting the funds that are in our memorial fund into Ameriprise to try and grow the money until we need to use it. He also reported that there was an issue with our credit cards through Croghan. There was a fraud alert that we were never made aware of by Croghan and they closed the account. Due to ongoing issues with Croghan, Jon made a motion to move all of the account for church except our current loan from Croghan to Genoa Bank. Al seconded, MC.

Executive Committee: No Report.

Congregational Life: No Report.

Education: No Report.

Finance: Wes reported that they discussed possible memorial projects. Renovating the lounge has been discussed, but they feel that is not used enough to have as a project. Another project idea they discussed was possibly updating the kitchen.

Property: Al reported that the boiler repairs from last month should be completed this week.

Outreach: No Report.

Worship: No Report.

Women of the Church: No Report.

Old Business: Shared Ministry meeting needs to be scheduled, Wes will take care of getting this done.

New Business: There was some discussion about moving our Council Meetings to the 3rd Monday to allow more time for Finance to go over the monthly reports and have the info ready for the meetings in time. Will discuss more at next meeting. Judy made a motion to allow Education to have a Sub Sale January 18th to February 1st to raise money for Sunday School. Cindy seconded, MC.

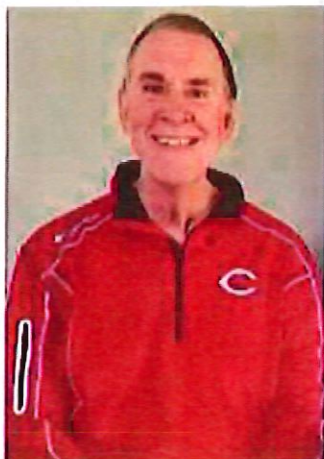
Jon made a motion seconded by Judy to adjourn the meeting. MC. We closed with the Lord's Prayer.

NEXT MEETING: February 9, 2026 at 7:30 PM.

Respectfully Submitted, Jody Kapp

Roof and Boiler Loan- Balance is \$33,062.42 as of February 28, 2026.

We extend our Christian heartfelt sympathy to the Alan Graening Families and LeAnne and Charles; Faye and John Jaeger Families.



Alan Lee Graening

April 5, 1957 - January 30, 2026

Alan Lee Graening, 68, passed away surrounded by the love of his family. Born on April 5, 1957, in Oregon, Ohio, Alan was the son of Carleton and LaVada (Blecke) Graening. He grew up in Trowbridge, Ohio, where his curiosity, creativity, and knack for building things first began to shine.

Alan graduated from Oak Harbor High and Penta County Vocational School in 1975, later earning an Associate's Degree in Mechanical Engineering from Owens Technical College in 1980. His talent for design and problem-solving became a lifelong calling—he was always tinkering, sketching, building, or dreaming up the next improved project. If something could be improved, redesigned, or reimaged, Alan was already halfway through figuring it out.

On September 25, 1982, Alan married the love of his life, Cecile (Magrum). Together they shared 43 years of marriage, moving to Cincinnati, Ohio in 1984 to raise their family and build a life filled with laughter, warmth and countless memories. Cecile survives him, carrying forward the love and partnership they built together.

Alan's happiest moments were spent with the people he loved. He had a gift for making others feel welcome—always smiling, always joking, always finding a way to connect. His positive outlook and joyful spirit were constants in every room he entered. He loved the outdoors, whether soaking up the sun, taking a leisurely drive, or sitting peacefully by the water listening to the waves roll in.

He is survived by his three children, Carly Andenoro (Joseph), Craig Graening (Chelsea), and Alex Graening (Kristina); and his grandchildren, Finn, Nolan, Cameron, and Jessa. He is also survived by his sisters LeAnne Jaeger (Charles), and Faye Jaeger (John).

Alan is further survived by his in-laws: Cindy Anderson (Tommy), Charles Magrum (Darla), Cathy Hall (Leroy), Carol Barr (Michael), and Jenny Magrum; as well as many nieces, nephews, and extended family members who adored him.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Carleton and LaVada Graening, and by his in-laws Howard and Shirley Magrum, Cristine Magrum, Curtis Magrum, and Chad Magrum.

Alan will be remembered for his creativity, his humor, his generous heart, and the joy he carried so effortlessly. He had a way of turning ordinary moments into something special—through a clever joke, a thoughtful gesture, or a simple smile that made everything feel lighter. His immediate family will forever remember him pausing with a gentle, familiar “before you go”—his way of asking for a small favor, a quick hand, or just one more shared moment before someone walked out the door. It was his quiet way of staying connected, of keeping his loved ones close. His legacy lives on in the family he cherished, the projects he built, and the countless lives he brightened.

A Memorial service for Alan was held at St. Timothy's Episcopal Church, 8101 Beechmont Ave., Cincinnati, OH 45255, on Sunday, February 15, 2026 at 2:00 PM. Arrangements were handled by E.C. Nurre Funeral Homes.

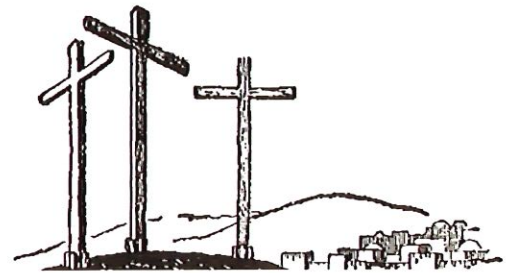
Thanks
So Much

Thank you to everyone who supported or recent fundraiser drive to replace the church's AC unit. Through your heartfelt giving, we raised \$8,640.00, and we are grateful to share that the remaining amount was provided through a recent memorial donation. Because of your kindness and commitment, we have reached our \$12,000.00 goal. Thank you again for your generosity!

NEW ADDRESSES FOR MEMBERS:

Mary Tarr, Rm. 303
Landings of Oregon
3450 Seaman Road
Oregon, OH 43616

1LT Raymon Behlmer
HQ, HSC, HHBN, 101st ABN DIV
2520 Heavly Ave.
Mailbox 69
Ft. Huachuca, AZ 85613-7002



HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE

Maundy Thursday, April 2,
7:00 PM @ St. Peter*

Good Friday, April 3, 7:00 PM
@ St. Luke's*

Easter Sunday, April 5
Sunrise Service, 7:00 AM
@ St. Peter
Easter Breakfast, 7:30 AM

Easter Sunday Worship Services,
8:45 AM @ St. Peter
10:30 AM @ St. Luke's

* Denotes no soup suppers during Holy Week.

Raymon Behlmen birthday is **March 24th**. Outreach Ministry has received, (through sources), that Raymon likes to receive letters and cards from home (not so much packages). Let's shower him with "birthday wishes" this month and "Thinking of you" in the other months while he is serving.

GENTLE REMINDER FOR OFFICE DEADLINES:

Bulletin article deadline is Tuesday before the Sunday you would like your announcement in. Printing of the bulletin roughly begins at 11:30 AM on Wednesdays (just in case some unforeseeable problem arises).

The Beacon deadline will be the **21st of each month**, except for December. The December 2026 deadline will be the 19th at NOON.

Exceptions can be made for unforeseeable crisis, just ask.

Thank you for all your help by submitting articles early. It is greatly appreciated. Thank you, Gail



LUTHERAN SOCIAL SERVICES
of Northwestern Ohio

Strengthening People in Body, Mind and Spirit

Food Pantry
Wish List

- CANNED MEATS (TUNA, CHICKEN, SPAM)
- CANNED FRUITS AND VEGETABLES
- CANNED SOUP, RAVIOLI, CHILI, BEEF STEW
- RAMEN
- CRACKERS
- CEREAL
- OATMEAL OR GRITS
- PASTA
- PASTA SAUCE (MARINARA OR ALFREDO)
- KETCHUP, MAYO, MUSTARD
- CAKE OR BROWNIE MIXES AND FROSTING
- CEREAL BARS
- JELLY
- PEANUT BUTTER

2149 Collingwood Blvd., Toledo, Ohio 43620
419-243-9178