

THE *ST. PETER'S*
VOICE
OF JUNE 2018

From the Pastor:

After a cold, wet spring, it finally looks like summer will arrive! School will soon end. The grass is growing green and so are the leaves on the trees. The flowers are beautiful. Some of us are growing gardens. Some of us will soon be going on vacations. The weather is becoming warm and pleasant. Soon there will be days with a slower summer pace just to enjoy and appreciate the nice weather, the warmth of the sun, and God's beautiful earth. As Psalm 19 reminds us:

*How clearly the sky reveals God's glory!
How plainly it shows what God has done!
Each day announces it to the following day;
each night repeats it to the next.
No speech or works are used, no sound is heard;
Yet their message goes out to all the world
and is heard to the ends of the earth.
God made a home in the sky for the sun;
It comes out in the morning like a happy bridegroom,
like an athlete eager to run a race.
It starts at one end of the sky and goes across to the other.
Nothing can hide from its heat.*

Seasons come and seasons go, both in our calendar year and in our lives—but God is with us through all our seasons, both in the year and in our lives. God is present with us. God cares for us. God loves us.

In the beautiful balmy air of summer, we breathe deeply—and we remember God, who is always close to us, our God of love.

Yours in Christ, Pastor Richard

ASK THE PASTOR

What Is Stewardship?

*The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it,
the world and those who dwell therein.
For the Lord has founded it upon the seas
and established it upon the rivers.*
(Psalm 24:1-2)

Stewardship is based upon the realization that since everything has been created by God, everything therefore really belongs to God. We are not really the owners of things. We are stewards, that is, caretakers of that which really belongs to God. Stewardship, then, is being a good caretaker of what God has entrusted to our care.

Stewardship is about living in a state of gratitude to God. It is God's very nature to be loving and giving. The Apostle John reminds us that "God is love" and that "God so loved the world that God gave God's only Son" for the salvation of the whole world. Martin Luther points out in his *Small Catechism* that out of "divine goodness and mercy" God gives us "all the necessities of life." Recognizing God's loving and giving nature inspires in us a sense of gratitude to God. Reflecting on the many ways that God has blessed us in our lives inspires us to be loving and giving in our daily lives.

Stewardship involves every aspect of our lives. Since "the earth is the Lord's," stewardship involves our care for the earth. Since we belong to God, stewardship involves our prayer and devotional life. Since the Church is the family of God, stewardship involves our spiritual connection to our Church family. Since God is the Creator of time and the Lord of history, stewardship involves how we use the gift of our time. Since God is the giver of all talents and abilities, stewardship involves how we use our talents for the good of others.

Stewardship also involves money and possessions. Those, too, really belong to God and are entrusted to us to use wisely for the benefit of ourselves, our families, and other people. Stewardship means giving out of gratitude for what God has given to us. Stewardship means sharing generously in proportion to the generous blessings which we have received from God.

WEDNESDAY NIGHT LIVE

In our Wednesday Night Live sessions we are wrapping up our focus on the Reformation Period in England and on the continent. Wednesday, June 6th will be our final session before our summer break. Sessions will resume in September.

CONFIRMATION CLASS NEWS

Our combined Middler (Eighth Graders) and Senior (Ninth Graders) class concluded its study of the history of the Christian Church with sessions on the problem of slavery in the USA and Martin Luther King, Jr. and the civil rights movement.

The Junior Class (Seventh Grade) members joined with the Middlers and Seniors for a session on Martin Luther King, Jr.

On May 20th the Rite of Confirmation was celebrated for Dawson Fleisher, Osric Smith, Matthew Ulsh, Angel Venzl, and Haylie Yoder.

Highlights from the May 3rd Council Meeting

Property Committee Report: a leak in the main water line outside the Church was repaired at a cost of \$644; there are still problems with the handicapped toilet in the women's room; the video project has been completed and will begin functioning on Sunday, May 6th.

Stewardship Committee Report: more needs to be done to educate the congregation about stewardship; Marty Beck will do a Temple Talk; the remaining 2018 offering envelope boxes will be mailed.

New Business: the Council approved a special appeal for pre-buying heating oil during the summer in order to save money on heating costs for the upcoming winter.

SPONSORS

Some things are still available to be sponsored in June.

Altar Flowers are available for June 24th – cost is \$20.

Call the church office (570-345-3306) or sign the charts in the hallway.

Vacation Bible School 2018

VBS is coming soon! It will be June 18-22nd this year. We'll begin at 9am and be done with our morning right at noon. You can participate by coming, donating anything, wishing us well, keeping VBS in your prayers, or by being aware of our week of learnings and activities. Snacks department always looks for donations of food. There will be a VBS planning meeting at 6:00PM on Thursday, June 7th.

Here is the list of things they need:

2 – 16oz. Ranch Dressing	1 – 28oz. jar Peanut Butter
2 – 26oz. jars of Cheese Balls	5 bags of Large Marshmallows
3 boxes of Ritz Crackers	1 Large box of Gold Fish
1 – 500 pack of Napkins	5 packs of 5oz. Cups
4 packs of Orange Jello	4 packs of Strawberry Jello
4 packs of Lime Jello	4 packs of Grape Jello

St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Cemetery Association **has cemetery lots available.**

If interested, contact Kurt Wessner at 570-345-8020.

Prices are as follows:

<u>Member of St. Peter's</u>		<u>Non-member of St. Peter's</u>
4 grave lot	\$800	\$900
2 grave lot	\$600	\$700
1 grave lot	\$400	\$500

Please clean lots of flowers and decorations in a timely manner.

Pre-Buy Oil

-The Finance Committee voiced their concern with the church's oil expenses and would like to start an annual early buy oil purchase beginning in August of 2018. From July 2017 to April 2018 we used a total of 6025 gallons to heat the church and parsonage, with the total cost being **\$13,885.58**. Pre-buying oil last August would have saved \$4,500.

-The Committee is taking steps to plan ahead financially and we are asking the congregation for help in making a difference, in an effort to help save dollars off of the 2019 oil expense.

Starting now until July 29th our goal is to raise \$8,750 dollars in contribution offerings specifically to pre-buy oil at a discount summer price. All Pre-Buy Oil offerings will be a designated fund and will be held in the Capital Improvement Fund.

-Please write "Pre-Buy Oil" onto any offering or regular envelope.

Enjoy The Convenience of Online Giving

St. Peter's wants to remind you that we offer online giving as a way to automate your regular weekly offering and offers convenience for individual congregation members and provides much-needed donation consistency for our congregation.

-Direct Debit Giving is used to automatically transfer funds from your checking or savings account to the church's bank account.

-Credit & Debit Card Giving allows you to make offerings automatically on a pre-determined schedule using a credit or debit card.

-Online Giving allows you to go to stpeterslutheranpinegrove.org at any time to set up an automatic donation plan, change your donation plan, make a one-time donation or view your online donation history.

*Please Contact Ben Moyer if you need further assistants. An authorization form and a "Frequently Asked Questions" flyer are available from the church office.

Thank you for your continued generosity towards:

St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church

Church Finances (April 2018)

April General Income: \$16,817.27 April General Expenses: \$17,437.90
YTD General Income: \$ 54,922.00 YTD General Expenses: \$61,797.19

Checking Balances as of April 30th were:

General Fund --\$ 200
Capital Improvement Fund --\$ 17,409.34 (\$2,040 for the Fellowship Committee to use for Kitchen Improvements and \$1894.26 for Video/Audio)
Memorial Fund --\$ 11,731.32
Youth Ministry Fund --\$ 4,946.01

Saving Balances as of April 30th were:

Stew Zerbe Scholarship Fund --\$ 8,954
General Savings -- \$100

YTD All Funds Total \$ 59,202

Includes the following Funds

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General, Lent/Easter, Youth Ministry, Plate, Oil, Benevolence, Memorial, Building, Capital Imp, World Hunger, Hall Rental, Sunday School, Flowers, Initial Offering, Weekday Church School, Hunger Food Table, VBS, Bulletins, Communion, Newsletter, Stew Zerbe Memorial, Endowment, Needy Fund, Candle Oil, Souper Bowl of Caring, Christmas, Christmas Baskets, Sanctuary Light, Disaster Relief, Pentecost/Ascension, Harvest Home, Reformation, Thanksgiving & 200 Anniversary

Youth Ministry News

Undeniably, our youth lead busy lives with the many activities available to them. We work through the day-to-day haste of making it to practices, games, concerts, recitals, etc., etc. It feels like there are too few hours to accomplish it all. Time is a commodity, right? It is the one thing we can never get back which makes each minute so precious, especially every minute we spend watching our children experience their young lives. With so much happening, we need to make the most of our time and while we encourage manners and respect, instilling a Christ-like character in our children can sometimes seem like “the last thing on our minds”.

As part of our mission, our youth ministry committee encourages our children to be more Christ-like by exercising our faith in our communities. In the past year, the children have visited shut-ins in our nursing homes to sing Christmas carols, created birthday cards and gifts for our shut-ins, shopped for and organized donations for our local food pantries, shopped for and created meal kits for Our Fathers House, which is a homeless shelter in Pottsville and most recently volunteered time at CATRA which is a therapeutic horse association that aids challenged and disabled children. What is the most exciting about all of this work is that just when I think we may have tired them out, they are ecstatic to do more. These amazing kids truly bring a smile to my heart.

We look forward to each and every experience we have growing in faith with our youth and hope to encourage more children to experience our youth ministries.

To thank our youngsters for their hard work and also to have the opportunity to appreciate and learn about another piece of God’s great creation, the Youth Ministry Committee planned a trip to Lake Tobias on May 20th. We had a total of 47 children and families who participated. The trip was no cost to children and their families. The committee rented a small mini bus from Ravine Transportation, and provided lunch. Photos of this event will be in July issue.

We have many fun events planned in the upcoming months, so be sure to stay tuned!

The next YMC meeting will be on June 10th at 11:30am.

The next youth group meeting for Jubilee group (ages 2-5) and Spark group (ages 6-12) is on July 8th at Noon. We will be taking the month of June off since VBS will be held the week of June 17-22nd which will provide tons of fun and adventure. Please be sure to visit our website to register for VBS.

REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS:

- ✝ Those who were hospitalized, recuperating, ill, or in any need in the month of May:
Jean Herring, Nancy Reichelt, Richard Becker, Dennis Ditzler, Noah Venzsl, Andrea Knoll, & Nancy Miller.
- ✝ The Family of Merlin Jones, who passed away on April 30th.
- ✝ Joanna Leigh Gruber, the daughter of John and Janelle Hoenich Gruber, who was baptized May 6th by Pastor Bob Hoenich at Friedens Lutheran Church in Bernville.
- ✝ The Family of Doris Halye, who passed away on May 4th.
- ✝ The Family of Betty Miller, who passed away on May 7th.
- ✝ Our Confirmands: Dawson Fleisher, Osric Smith, Matthew Ulsh, Angel Venzsl, and Haylie Yoder.

**The Prayer Circle will meet on Wednesday, June 6th @ 9:00AM.

-Bible Journaling - Our new Bible Journaling Group, led by Nancy Reichelt, will meet on Tuesday, June 5th at 6:30 PM. Everyone is welcome!

Memorial Gifts... To the Glory of God

(Memorial Fund)

- \$100 in honor of Thelma Lengel by Howard and Shirley Lengel.
- \$51.38 in memory of Merlin Jones by Timothy D. Frank.
- \$20 in memory of Betty Miller by Norman Kreiser, Sr.
- \$25 in memory of "My Mother" by Elaine Benko.
- \$25 in memory of Betty Miller by Card Club Members – Janet Rehrer, Jean Barr, Joan Zimmerman, Carolyn Brander, & Shirley Koenig.
- \$25 in memory of Betty Miller by Barbara Schwartz.
- \$100 in memory of "My Mother on her Birthday" by Linda Venzsl.
- \$25 in memory of Merlin Jones by Linda Venzsl & Vince Kulbitsky.
- \$50 in memory of Betty Miller by Linda Venzsl & Vince Kulbitsky.
- \$25 in memory of Merlin Jones by Gary & Cynthia Wolfe.
- \$25 in memory of Betty Miller by Carol Baldwin.
- \$20 in memory of "My Dad, Rich Wertz," for His Birthday by Jerry & Missy Witherow & Family.
- \$25 in memory of Betty Miller by Shirley Koenig.
- \$35 in memory of Betty Miller by Arlene M. Knoll.
- \$250 in memory of Betty Miller by Donald Weikel.
- \$30 in memory of Betty Miller by Howard and Shirley Lengel.
- \$30 in memory of Merlin Jones by Howard and Shirley Lengel.
- \$50 in memory of Betty Miller by Gene and Penny Hindman.
- \$100 in memory of Betty Miller by Irvin and Linda Miller.
- \$50 in memory of Betty Miller by Grace Aungst.
- \$100 in loving memory of James Bender by Wife, Elaine and Family.

(General Fund)

- \$100 in memory of "All Dear Mother's on this Special Day, Mother's Day" by Virginia Schwartz.
- \$30 in memory of "Loved Ones" by Charles, Bessie, and Tina Keefer.
- \$50 in memory of Merlin J. Jones by John & Frances Heinbach.
- \$50 in memory of Betty Miller by Virginia Schwartz.
- \$25 in memory of Betty Miller by John and Frances Heinbach.

(Endowment Fund)

- \$100 in memory of Betty Miller by Stephen Hikes Family.

- The **Candle Oil** for **June** is given to the Glory of God in honor of "Our Wedding Anniversary" by Dennis and Gail Adams.
- The **Sanctuary Candle** for **June** is given to the Glory of God in memory of "Loved Ones" by Glenn and Doris Moyer.
- The **Newsletter** for **June** is given to the Glory of God by Kurt and Sharon Wessner.

