

# ST. PETER COMMUNICATOR

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December 2022

## From the desk of Pastor Peterson

Dear fellow redeemed in Christ. Thanksgiving will have come and gone by the time you read this. Christmas will be upon us in just a month. These holidays are a time of preparation as we plan meals, family gatherings, who is coming to the house, or where we are going to celebrate. Presents, in the case of Christmas are already purchased or in the process of being purchased. I know that for myself and Kali, we are planning to spend time with my family in Iowa. I mentally am going through a checklist of presents, travel and other items or situations that may come up. I am, and as you also are “adventing” (not sure if that is an actual word) for the holiday season.

Our Lord also is preparing for His second coming. He first came as a little baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger. Jesus is coming back a second time as King of King and Lord of Lords. In the meantime, He is preparing us for His second coming by inviting us to His House for church. As I have mentioned in previous newsletters about church attendance declining and also covering the whys and how we as Christian-Lutherans worship, this newsletter will focus on the same issues: Why we worship the way we do.

The focus of the Divine Service is our gracious Lord coming down to serve us with His gifts. The most important parts of the Divine Service are those times when He descends to meet us with saving grace in the most personal ways. His serving us makes three high and holy things: the Holy Absolution, Holy Scripture, and the Holy Communion. Everything else either prepares for Him to meet us in these high things or responds to Him.

What follows is the text of one of the Divine Services used at St. Peter and St. Luke along with explanatory notes and Scripture references. This particular service is one that we are familiar with and are very similar to other settings in our LSB.

### Hymn

**Note:** The hymns are considered “propers,” that is, they change each Sunday to fit with the readings, the season of the Church year, and the themes of the service.

### The Invocation

*In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.*

**Amen.**

**Note:** In the invocation we call on the Triune God. How can we dare to do this? Because this is the name in which we were baptized! Since His name is here, He Himself is here, too. This reality shapes the entire service. Everything that takes place happens with Him present and by His authority. All the congregation responds with “Amen,” which means “so be it!” See Mathew 28:19 and 18:20.

### The Confessions of Sins

*Beloved in the Lord, let us draw near with sincere hearts to confess our sins to God, our Father, and to plead in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ for His forgiveness.*

*Our help is in the name of the Lord,*

**who made heaven and earth.**

*I said, I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,*

**and You forgave the guilt of my sin. Almighty God, merciful Father, I, a poor, pitiful sinner, confess to You all my sins and unrighteousness. By them I have continually offended You and fairly deserved Your punishment, both now and eternally. But from my heart I am sorry for them, and I sincerely repent of them, and I pray You, in Your limitless mercy for the sake of the holy, innocent, bitter sufferings and death of Your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, be gracious and merciful to me, a poor, sinful being.**

**Note:** When we confess our sins, we agree with what God says about us in His Word: “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23) and “If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us” (1 John 1:8). In the presence of the Lord, our sins are obvious, and He wants to remove them from us. See Psalms 124:8 and 32:5.

### **The Holy Absolution**

*Upon this your confession, I, by virtue of my office, as a called and ordained servant of the Word, announce the grace of God unto all of you, and in the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.*

**Amen.**

**Note:** Jesus Himself is here and speaking through the pastor’s mouth. Here we are brought back to our baptism. Our sinful nature, having been crucified again with Christ, is clothed in His righteousness. We are declared innocent! See John 20:19–23.

### **The Introit**

**Note:** The introit is another “proper,” which comes from the psalms or occasionally from another Scripture passage or liturgical text. With the introit, we respond to the absolution by entering (*introit means “entrance”*) the altar of God. Having been cleansed and declared holy, we are welcome in His presence. See Psalms 95:2 and 100:2.

### **The Gloria Patri**

*Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.*

### **The Kyrie**

*Lord, have mercy on us.*

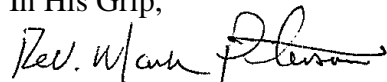
*Christ, have mercy on us.*

*Lord, have mercy on us.*

**Note:** “Lord, have mercy” is a translation of the ancient Greek *kyrie eleison* (pronounced *KEE-ree-yay e-LAY-son*). This ancient prayer is sung in preparation for the hearing of Holy Scripture. With these words, we cry out to our Lord like beggars and surrender to Jesus as the conqueror who overcomes sin, death, and the devil. See Mark 10:47.

The next newsletter will continue with this theme of how we worship and why we worship. On a personal note: I want to wish each and every one of you a blessed and Merry Christmas. Just as God came to us in the flesh to serve us, and does so continually through His Word and Sacraments, we are forever grateful to Him. I have enjoyed serving with all of you for the last year and half. I am truly blessed to serve you as your pastor.

In His Grip,



Pastor Peterson



## LUTHERAN WOMEN IN MISSION

### Second Sunday Coffee:

The Veterans' Sunday coffee hour turned out very nice, and we're happy that some of our veterans and their families were able to attend. It is good to get together! At this writing, some of the pictures are still on display. If you haven't had a chance to look at them, step into the Fellowship Hall and see these remembrances.

Our December event will be our Christmas brunch. We're hoping more people will join us for this food and fellowship. Again, it is good to get together. If you look in the Narthex on the sign-up table, there is a sheet for attending and whether or not you are able to bring any food. It is a potluck, but if bringing food is difficult for you (or if you forget), please attend anyway as we are thankful to have received a Thrivent grant to offset expenses. You may have noticed that our Fellowship Hours are never lacking something to eat! Come join us!

### Gifts from the Heart:

Thanks for all the clothing and supplies for our needy veterans. Distribution is now being handled by the Salvation Army, and they were pleased to receive our items. I'm sure our needy veterans will also be grateful. It's also commendable that the various organizations in our area can work together to meet the needs of our people.

Our next gathering will be food items for the Bread of Life Food Pantry. We will start this after Christmas and continue until Super Bowl Sunday. Remember? This will be our Souper Bowl Sunday ingathering.

### Meeting Schedule:

Because of all the extra church services and activities and other Christmas events, WIM will

not meet in December. However, in January we will once again start our meetings on the second Tuesday of the month. Bring your Bible and your Winter Quarterly, but if you forget or have misplaced your Quarterly, we share.

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## Mission Matters

### LCMS SWD Office of Mission and Mercy

Have you had a chance to check out our LCMS SWD website lately? It's full of relevant information and is much more user friendly than it was in the past. You can find it at [swd.lcms.org](http://swd.lcms.org) When the home page comes up, click under offices, and then click on Office of Mission and Mercy.

Currently, there is information about available micro grants, new church plants, mission partners, mission moments, campus ministry, disaster response, and SWD food banks. Did you know that eleven churches in our district have a food bank? The closest one to us is Trinity, Menasha, and the other one you may recognize is Mission of Christ in Milwaukee.

Check out our district website and see the opportunities for mission available to us and to our communities. The lead article at present is entitled "Confessing Christ for the Next Generation". The concluding paragraph is:

Together we are seeing the mission field surrounding us and, in witness of the gospel, we are impacting our changing and diverse communities.

Take a few minutes and see what's happening in our district! Perhaps we will see other ways in which we can serve our Lord Jesus and share His Gospel.





## How to Study the Bible at Home

By Jason D. Lane

*Reflections on why we have difficulty studying the Bible regularly at home, and practical tips for home devotions.*

### What prevents us from studying the Bible?

Christians often struggle to keep up a regular routine of reading the Bible at home. There are several reasons for this struggle. First and most evident to us is our own flesh, which “does not want to hallow God’s name or let His kingdom come” (SC III:3). Our old nature does not want to hear God’s Word, because it exposes the old man in us and condemns him.

It is important to remember, however, that the new man in us, born anew by water and the Spirit (John 3) in Holy Baptism, delights in the law of the Lord and lives by every word that comes from the mouth of God. Routine study of God’s Word puts the old man in his place and raises up the new man in us daily. Through it we enter into the baptismal rhythm of our life under the Word of God: repentance and

faith, death and resurrection. God promises to make us new creatures through His powerful Word for the sake of Jesus Christ.

Besides their own sinful nature, Christians often face other challenges that prevent them from studying God’s Word at home. The Bible is sometimes hard to understand, especially for those who have not been properly trained or have not had a good deal of experience reading it. As in any other area of study, one must practice, and make a habit of reading Scripture and becoming acquainted with the Holy Spirit’s voice.

Further, Christians are faced with many duties of life. Even though they desire to please God and serve their neighbor, they have responsibilities that can draw them away from the first things: God’s Word and prayer. Luther is rumored to have said, “I have so much to do that I shall spend the first three hours in prayer.” Whether or not he said it, this echoes our Lord’s words: “But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things [clothing, food, earthly goods] will be added to you” (Matt. 6:33). We must decide to make our meditation on God’s Word the first thing and let everything else revolve around it.

Martin Luther translated the Bible into German for common people to read because he was convinced that the Sacred Scriptures should be on the lips of Christians at all times. He believed that they are clear and can be understood by every Christian. They are so straightforward, in fact, that some dismiss them as simplistic, even if their riches could never be fully mined to their depths. Luther exhorts us:

I beg and really caution every pious Christian not to be offended by the simplicity of the language and stories frequently encountered there, but fully realize that, however simple they may seem, there are the very words, works, judgments, and deeds of the majesty, power and wisdom of the most high God. ... Therefore dismiss your own opinions and feelings, and think of the Scriptures as the loftiest and noblest of holy things as the richest of mines which can never be sufficiently explored, in order that you may find that divine wisdom which God here lays before you in such simple guise as to quench all pride. (LW 35:236)

## Short guide to studying the Bible individually

It is almost always best to begin your study of Scripture at home with a concrete routine, whether you are doing this individually or with your family. Use a model that has worked for others.

The two most common ways that Christians have studied the Scriptures privately are, one, to take a short passage and study it carefully, meditating on its meaning, as one may do with *Portals of Prayer* or *Day by Day: 365 Devotional Readings from Martin Luther* (CPH), or, two, to follow a broader reading of the Bible, such as reading one whole chapter or more each day. A lot will depend on the time you can reasonably put aside for the task and your abilities as a reader. Whether you are reading a large portion of Scripture or a brief passage, your reading should involve meditating or reflecting on God's Word.

Devotional readings are often like training wheels. They are intended to prepare you to do it on your own. When you are ready to take off the training wheels of a prepared devotion, I suggest using Luther's fourfold formula for praying or meditating on a biblical text or text from the catechism: (1) Instruction, (2) Thanksgiving, (3) Confession, and (4) Petition. You can find Luther's formula wonderfully set forth in his little booklet called [A Simple Way to Pray](#) (CPH 2012) in which Luther teaches his barber, Peter, how to pray. Luther suggests that we should take one verse or one brief passage and consider four things: (1) What does God want to *teach* me or what does He command of me in this text? (2) For what should I give *thanks* from this text? (3) What sins should I *confess* in light of this Word of God? And (4) what do I *ask* of God based on this text? This formula requires no prepared prayers — it requires no more than your Bible or catechism.

Let me show you how this fourfold prayer could look, using a familiar passage from Romans 3:28:

*“For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law.”*

1. **Instruction:** Here, Lord, You teach me that I cannot be justified or made righteous by works of the law, but only by faith in Jesus, that is, faith in

His righteousness for my sake. This faith therefore cannot be a work of the law, because I am not justified by works but by faith. This faith, therefore, must be Your gift.

2. **Thanksgiving:** I thank You, Heavenly Father, that You have not judged me according to my works, but have justified me by faith for the sake of Your dear Son. Your works and Your promise have justified sinners like me and for this I owe You my faithfulness and thanks.

3. **Confession:** Lord, I confess that I have tried to make something of myself by works of the law, rather than believing Your justifying Word to me. I have either been arrogant and tried to become pleasing to You by what I do and what I think, or I have despaired of my sin so much that I have not believed Your mercy and forgiveness for Jesus' sake.

4. **Petition:** Heavenly Father, magnify Your justifying Word for me as a gift. Teach me to believe that my justification for Christ's sake is not something I have earned or deserved, nor is it a promise too lofty for a sinner like me, but it is the Word that truly does make me and all sinners righteous. I believe, Lord; help my unbelief.

These are things one would typically pray out loud, while reflecting on the text, as one is given insight by the Holy Spirit through the text. We may stumble, but the Holy Spirit does intercede (Rom. 8). We must also believe that the language of faith will develop in us through a regular study of God's Word.

If you have more time, and become more advanced, take up more text. Read more expansively. A great resource is *Treasury of Daily Prayer* (CPH 2012), which allows you to follow the Church Year and offers readings through much of the Old and New Testament, readings from the *Book of Concord* and church fathers. I have found that sometimes it can be too much for one sitting. So you may want to just take a portion and consider that as the light on the path for that day. Use the same fourfold method above and make a habit of doing it when you can sneak away from your duties. Luther suggests, as does Scripture (Psalm 1:2), that morning and evening are good times to meditate on God's Word.

## Thoughts for family devotions and Bible study

All the same things apply to family that apply to the individual. But since a family is more multifaceted than an individual, I can only share a few things that have worked for me and my family. In our house, it has been an 18-year-long work-in-progress, and our study of the Scriptures together continues to develop according to the abilities of our children and our competency as parents. Take what is good and helpful here and refashion what you must to make it work for your family.

My wife and I enjoy the company of our eight children, ranging from ages 17 down to four months, and we teach them at home. Therefore, we have some flexibility that I recognize others do not have. Due to my work schedule, my wife usually leads morning devotions; I lead in the evenings. As a family we love to sing, so hymns are a major part of our devotional life together. For most families, and we are no exception, the breakfast table is a wonderful place to do family devotions before the kids are off to school or off to their studies. The living room has become the place for evening devotions. Find a place and a routine that works for your family.

For our morning study of the Bible, we have been using a little sheet that our pastor prints off and inserts into our church's bulletin every week. (Pastors, please do this for your people!) On it, he provides a short liturgy, which includes the opening versicles from the Office of Matins, the psalm of the week (usually the psalm sung for the Introit in the Divine Service that Sunday), then a list of readings for the week, which he has taken from *The Lutheran Hymnal* (1941). It includes a morning lesson and an evening lesson for each day. After the lesson from Scripture, we recite a brief section from the Six Chief Parts of Luther's Small Catechism. It is intended to be spoken together and eventually learned by heart. We then sing the hymn of the week, which is the "sermon hymn" for that Sunday, and we sing it every day for that week. By the end of the week, you're already on your way to learning that hymn by heart. The hymn is followed by the Apostles' Creed, Lord's Prayer, the Collect for the Week and then special petitions for our local congregation or those we add as a family. After the

special petitions, I or my wife use Luther's fourfold structure to take up one part of the readings for that day and formulate a prayer for the family in light of God's Word. We end with Luther's Morning Prayer and a Benediction. There is a lot of flexibility in the prayers, but I have found it helpful to stick to a basic pattern. Choose one that works for you and yours and keep at it. Altogether devotions take us about 15–20 minutes.

While mornings are dedicated to a more careful study of the text of Scripture, our evening devotions are less rigid and usually shorter, since the children typically have a shorter attention span by then. This is our time to read Bible stories from a variety of wonderful resources, such as CPH's *The Story Bible*. But use whatever works to get your child or children familiar with the great stories of the Old and New Testaments. For little ones and for parents who are familiar with the Bible stories, use a good picture Bible and tell the stories to your children freely. For older ones, read together right out of the Bible. We find that, when time is at a minimum, the Invocation, the Lord's Prayer, and a stanza or two from a favorite hymn keeps up the routine and brings peace to our evenings and resolution to our day in Christ.

The most important thing I have found for family study is the routine. Even if you can only do a little, taking the time to study God's Word every day sets a wonderful example for your children, and teaches them that first things are first. It takes time and attention to establish a study of God's Word as part of your family's home culture. But as parents learn to do this with joy, the children too will take it on joyfully as a family tradition, so that both parents and children will have the Word of God dwelling among them richly and by it they will drive out the Enemy from their homes. This is what the Lord has taught us to do: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God" (Col. 3:16).



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## **Anxiety vs. Trust**

Jesus, in His Sermon on the Mount, teaches those who follow Him that worrying about the necessities of life is idolatry: worshipping a false god. Worry and anxiety show what we care about. Our anxiety reveals what we love and what we're devoted to. It reveals what we trust in.

This is why our Lord begins this section with an overarching principle: “No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money” (Matt. 6:24).

But you say: “I must eat and drink. I must have clothing to wear and have a home in which to dwell.” Yes, all these things you need. And Jesus says that your Father in heaven will ensure that you have them. He demonstrates this with a simple argument: your Father in heaven feeds the birds of the air, who neither sow, nor reap, nor gather into barns. He clothes the lilies of the field, who neither toil nor spin but are arrayed more luxuriously than Solomon in all his glory. If, then, your Father in heaven feeds the birds, if He clothes the lilies, how will He not also feed and clothe you, when you are worth more than they are? (Matt 6:25–33).

Do you know that you are worth more than them? You are worth infinitely more. You are worth the price of the eternal Son of God. Did the Son of God come down from heaven and become a lily? Did He descend and take on the form of a bird? No! He came down from heaven and became a man: flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone (Gen. 2:23). He is one of us, our brother. And what did He do when He became flesh to dwell among us? He gave His holy, precious blood, through His innocent suffering and death, that you might be His own and live under Him in His kingdom forever.

God became man in Christ Jesus. He lived the life we failed to live, and He died the death we deserved. He was raised again on the third day overcoming sin and death ... for us. He was crucified for our transgressions and raised for our justification. So, if your Father in heaven has given His Son to die for us

in order that we might live with Him eternally, how will He not also give us all things to support this body and life?

To be anxious about the necessities of life, to devote yourself to food and clothing, to care about these things and find security in them, is to serve another god. It is to deny that you will live forever because Jesus, the Son of God, is risen from the dead and lives and reigns for all eternity. It is to believe that the God who created you, redeemed you by the death and resurrection of His Son and sanctified you by His Spirit, will not keep His promise to sustain you in this life.

Jesus says, “Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness” (Matt. 6:33). God’s kingdom is His rule among us. His rule among us comes when our Father in heaven gives us His Holy Spirit, so that by His grace we believe His Holy Word and lead godly lives here in time and there in eternity. This is what we ask God to do for us in the prayer that Jesus taught us.

Your Father in heaven knows what you need — food and clothing, house and home — and He promises to give it to you. Chief of the things you need is His grace and mercy in His Son, Jesus Christ. So, seek after that. And those who seek will find. And all the necessities of life, our Lord says, will be added to you.

– LCMS Stewardship Ministry  
[lcms.org/stewardship](https://lcms.org/stewardship)

## **St. Peter**

### **Christmas Brunch**

### **Sunday, Dec. 11<sup>th</sup>**

**Invite your family and friends to join us as we visit, enjoy Christmas music, win door prizes, do Christmas activities and games and enjoy delicious food!!**

This is a Thrivent Action Team Project!

**Sign up today!!**

## UPCOMING SPECIAL SERVICES

### Midweek Advent Services

Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m. @ St. Peter

Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m. @ St. Luke

November 30, December 7, 14, 21

### Christmas Eve

December 24<sup>th</sup> 5:00 p.m. @ St. Peter

7:00 p.m. @ St. Luke

### Christmas Day

December 25<sup>th</sup> 8:30 a.m. @ St. Peter

10:30 a.m. @ St. Luke

### New Year's Eve

December 31<sup>st</sup> 5:00 p.m. @ St. Peter

## Christmas Brunch Menu

(Food items that will be provided)

**Ham**  
**Sausages**  
**Rolls**  
**Cheese**  
**Hash brown casserole**  
**Egg Bakes**  
**French Toast Bakes**  
**Fresh Fruit**  
**Yogurt**  
**Doughnut holes**  
**Kringles**  
**Beverages**

**Potluck items provided by members.**

## *Happy Birthday*

### December

- 1 Susan Reeve
- 2 Abby Marose
- 3 Pastor Peterson
- 5 Elena Weyenberg
- 6 Doug Koffarnus  
Coreen Behnke
- 7 Wally Jentsch  
Tom Kamps
- 10 Michael Hostettler  
Rebekah Bergelin
- 11 Lori Ott
- 12 Debbie Manders
- 13 Dean Bergelin
- 15 Sue Plate
- 17 Germaine Zahn
- 23 Ben Marose

## HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

Dec. 9<sup>th</sup> Don & Karen Price



# December 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>Altar Guild:</b> Dean & Jan Bergelin				<b>1</b>	<b>2</b> <i>10:00 Bible Study @ Terra Verde, Chilton</i>	<b>3</b>
<b>4 Second Sunday in Advent</b> <i>Blue</i> 8:30 Divine Service 9:30 Sunday School	<b>5</b> <i>7:00p Joint Committee Meeting @ St. Luke</i>	<b>6</b> 7:00p Bible Study	<b>7</b> 10:30 Midweek Advent Service  <i>@ St. Luke</i> 5:30p Meal 7:00p Advent Service	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b> <i>10:00 Bible Study @ Terra Verde, Chilton</i>	<b>10</b> Set up for Christmas Brunch
<b>11 Third Sunday in Advent</b> <i>Blue</i> 8:30 Divine Service (NC) Christmas Brunch	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b> 7:00p Bible Study	<b>14</b> 10:30 Midweek Advent Service  <i>@ St. Luke</i> 5:30p Meal 7:00p Advent Service	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b> <i>10:00 Bible Study @ Terra Verde, Chilton</i>	<b>17</b>
<b>18 Fourth Sunday in Advent</b> <i>Blue</i> 8:30 Divine Service 9:30 Sunday School	<b>19</b> Newsletter Articles Due	<b>20</b> 7:00p Bible Study	<b>21</b> 10:30 Midweek Advent Service  <i>@ St. Luke</i> 5:30p Meal 7:00p Advent Service	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b> <i>10:00 Bible Study @ Terra Verde, Chilton</i>	<b>24 Christmas Eve</b> <i>White</i> 5:00p Service @ St. Peter 7:00p Service @ St. Luke
<b>25 Christmas Day</b> <i>White</i> 8:30 Divine Service (NC)	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b> <i>10:00 Bible Study @ Terra Verde, Chilton</i>	<b>31 New Year's Eve</b> <i>White</i> 5:00p Service @ St. Peter
----- Pastor Vacation ----->						

Divine Services marked (NC) will not have Holy Communion