

St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church



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Intentional Interim Pastor: Rev. Gary Braeuer

April 2026

A PASTORAL LETTER: IDENTITY

Greetings brothers and sisters in Christ,

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

As we look toward the future of our ministry together, I have been reflecting on a fundamental truth: we cannot effectively go forth in ministry or mission until we truly understand who we are as a congregation. To fulfill the mission Christ has set before us, we must first attend to our identity as a people reborn.

Walking Together

Before a building can rise, the foundation must be level. In our Lutheran tradition, we often speak of walking together. This is more than just attending meetings; it is the sacred, communal process of listening to the Holy Spirit and to one another.

Healthy renewal and growth happen when the Christian fellowship rests upon a strong foundation (Lutheran tradition) and follows a path of love and service to our neighbours. By discerning God's will together, we ensure that our movements are not driven by anxiety or desire to follow trends, but by the steady guidance of the Spirit. When we listen deeply to each other's stories and struggles, we strengthen the connective tissue of the Body of Christ.

Obtaining a Heart of Flesh

Our health as a congregation will be rooted in what Jesus describes in John 3:5-8 as the New Birth. We are first and foremost to be people of spiritual regeneration. Just as the wind blows where it chooses, we cannot control or domesticate the Holy Spirit. We cannot manage God's grace regardless of how many meetings we hold or spreadsheets we construct. However, while the wind is invisible, its effects are undeniable. We see the Spirit in the bending of branches and the passing of a storm. Likewise, we see the Spirit in a life changed ... a heart once hardened by cynicism or stone being replaced by a heart of flesh (Ezekiel 36:26). Transformation of our lives and the lives of our neighbours into God-bearing people should be the purpose of everything we do.

Our Call

Knowing whose we are provides the energy for the Great Commission. Matthew 28:19-20 is not a heavy burden laid upon us, but a joyful call to be God's people. Because we have been given new hearts, we naturally look beyond our sanctuary walls. Our identity as a redeemed people is the very thing that compels us to make disciples of all nations, baptizing and teaching with the promise that Christ is with us always.

Growth in Spirit

When we walk together in and remain open to the Spirit, the results will be fruitful. This growth is twofold: welcoming new voices and souls into our fellowship will not diminish our faith, but lead us deeper into relationship and study ... two of the strongest components in discipleship. Growth is evidence of all living things. As we carry on in this season of discernment, let us pray for courage to let God's Holy Spirit blow through us and make all things new.

Peace be with you all,

Interim Pastor Gary



A Roadmap for our Future: Report on Intentional Interim Ministry

Intentional Interim Ministry Developmental Task 1: Coming to Terms with History.

In the Lutheran tradition this task is more than reminiscing. It is about "holy remembering" ... seeing where God was present in the joys and the traumas of the past, so that the congregation can move into the future unburdened.

Reconciling Our Past, Embracing Our Future

"The deeply personal reconciliation between the creator God and the human race in and through Jesus the Messiah can hardly be explored too often, or too thoroughly." This is the powerful opening line to N.T. Wright's *The Day the Revolution Began*. It sets the stage for his argument that the crucifixion of Jesus wasn't about individual sin management, it was and is about a massive, world-changing reconciliation ... and event to restore humanity's original purpose. Wright often argues that we've made the Gospel too small, and this quote is his way of saying that the deeper you dig into the Christ's salvific work, the more expansive and beautiful it becomes.

We are three months into a season of intentional ministry together. Wright's words carry a lot of weight for me ... and I hope they will help to unburden you. Congregations in transition often feel a frantic pressure to fix things: to find the next pastor quickly, to update the bylaws, or to launch a new program that will make the church relevant and trendy. To do so is to treat the church like a corporation or a machine that needs a new part.

Romans 8:26–39 reminds us that the church is not a machine ... it is a body currently groaning in expectation. Saint Paul tells us that the Holy Spirit intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. Before we can plan for the future we should stand still in the present and look honestly at where we have been.

Intentional interim ministry provides time and space to come to terms with your history. I am not referring to old council minutes or recent projects, but a spiritual process of reconciliation. One through which you ask yourselves:

- What are the stories we tell about ourselves?
- What are the past conflicts that linger and continue to be raised when we gather?
- Where have we experienced God's grace, and where have we left wounds unaddressed?

To ignore your history is to ignore a fundamental truth of God's saving action. Jesus Christ's death on the cross did not only reconcile you to God ... you were reconciled to each other, even to your enemies. To move forward, you must first "forgive as we have been forgiven."

The Model of the Cross

The world tells us that history may be used as a weapon. We use the past to justify why we don't speak to certain people or why we've always done something a certain way. Romans chapter 8 offers a radical reconfiguration of history. Saint Paul asks, "If God is for us, who can be against us?" In a divided world, we usually hear this as a win/loss statement. But look at the evidence: God did not spare his own Son. The Cross is the model for our work together. It is an act of radical vulnerability. To come to terms with our history, we must be willing to lay down our self-righteousness and our grudges at the foot of the Cross. This is the only way to bring unity across divided families and divided congregations.

Why This Matters Now

This isn't just "church talk." This is a survival strategy for a fractured age. Our mission to "Forgive as we have been forgiven" is as radical today as it was 2,000 years ago. When we serve our community, we don't do it to become relevant ... we do it because we are a reconciled people who have nothing left to prove and a loving and merciful message of Good News to share.

Looking Ahead: Our Collective Work

Over the next few months, you will be invited to participate in "History Events" and storytelling sessions. You might find these uncomfortable. You might wonder, why are we digging up the past? We do it because Romans 8:38-39 promises us that nothing ... not our past mistakes, not our previous conflicts, not our anxieties about the future ... can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

Because we are secure in that love, we can afford to be honest. We can afford to confess. We can afford to reconcile.

Reflection Questions for the Next Month:

1. The Highs: When was a time this congregation felt most "alive" in Christ? What was happening then?
2. The Lows: Is there a "hushed" story in our history that still causes pain? How might the Cross provide a cure for that pain?
3. The Hope: If we truly forgave as we have been forgiven, how would our fellowship look different?

We are called to be ambassadors of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, not because we are worthy, but because He who loved us has already claimed our past, our present, and our future.

Peace be with you,

Rev. Gary Braeuer, Intentional Interim Minister

President's Update:

Michael Zacharias

On March 15, 2026 we held our Annual General Meeting. Thank you to everyone who attended; and to those who participated in set-up, clean-up and providing soup and desert.

We were fortunate this year to elect three new members to council: Dylan Grymonpre, Christel Parkhill and Ulrike Schreckenbach. Thank you for your willingness to serve on council and represent our church community. Christel was installed at the March 22nd service, and Dylan and Ulrike on March 29th. We would also like to extend a big thank you to Georg Schreckenbach who has completed his 2 terms and served for the last 6 years and is leaving council. We thank all of our council members for their dedication and work during this difficult year.

After the AGM, the new council met to elect the executive officers, and they remain the same as last year. Here is the full council of St. Peter's for the year 2026-27:

Pastor Gary Braeuer – Intentional Interim Pastor
Michael Zacharias – President
Barbara Schott – Vice President
Allison Erhardt – Recording Secretary
Ralf Oppitz – Treasurer

Paul Bergsagel
Dylan Grymonpre
Linda Lurvey
Ortrud Oellermann
Christel Parkhill
Ulrike Schreckenbach

This year we recognized the following individuals at our AGM for their service to our church community:

Allison Erhardt

Over the years Allison has helped out with Sunday School and with VBS. She is always willing to organize and help out with our special events like coffee hour, Easter Breakfast, and all of our special functions. Allison has been indispensable on council for the last four years. She serves as the recording secretary, taking the minutes at our meetings and AGMs, and also providing the council report provided in the AGM booklet. Most recently we had the good fortune of witnessing how capable and knowledgeable Allison is as a “first responder” when we had a medical emergency. Thank you Allison for everything you give to our congregation.

Jordan O'Brien-Moran

This year we celebrate that Jordan has been with us for 25 years. He has been incredibly loyal in his service, is always here, and both flexible & accommodating to our needs. Thank you Jordan for everything you do for St. Peter's.



Michael & Allison



Jordan & Michael

photo credits: Jerry Roehr

Picnic Update

For the past few years, our picnics have been held at Assiniboine Park. Based on feedback we've had, members at the AGM indicated -- through an informal showing of hands -- a preference for a different location. Our Annual Picnic will be held on June 14th at Highland Provincial Park which is located off Henderson Highway, just a short distance north of the north perimeter. This site has a larger shelter, more picnic tables, proper washrooms, and better amenities for our needs. More information will be made available closer to the date, but please keep the date in mind.

February Financial Report

Sow generously and reap generously - 2 Corinthians 9:6

It is still really early in the year, but so far we are on track with the budget.

Ralf Oppitz, Treasurer



The next **St. Peter's Eaters** breakfast will be held in the church basement on Saturday, April 25, 2026 at 8AM. It's a men's breakfast group to which all men are invited for food and fellowship. If you plan on coming, please sign up on the bulletin board at the back of the church or contact the church office by phone (204.775.6477) or email stpetersoffice@mymts.net

The next **Women's circle** will meet on April 26, 2026
All women visiting or worshipping at St. Peter's are invited to attend after the service.



We are reminded that Malawi is still one of the poorest countries in the world, marked by elevated inflation, declining living standards, and a high rate of food insecurity. The development of the school is truly remarkable. The latest pass rate for Grade 12 students was 99%, with 65% of examinees passing the college entrance exam.

Attracting qualified teachers and offering a safe, aesthetically pleasing environment is key, as is self-sustaining food from their farmlands and livestock. At Kuwala, food preservation is more than a farming practice—it’s an investment in resilience, dignity, and self-sustainability. For students, having their own bed, access to clean water and modern washrooms, as well as Canadian-type classrooms, science and computer labs, with evening study groups, enhances their study environment and prepares the girls for a successful life in a male-dominated society.



“Right picture”. A commercial generator and a 2000-litre diesel tank will give power security with solar/national grid and a new generator. The size is bigger than currently needed to plan for future power needs. A separate on-site tank for 10,000 litres for the tractor is also planned to be as self-reliant as possible.

Hope Academy (St. Aidan’s School) reports that next September, Grade 9 classes will be offered at the Hargrave campus. That provides the opportunity to continue to educate and guide students into their high school years. The Elementary and Middle school classes are full to capacity this year! The need for affordable Christian education in our city is significant, and with our support, they are able to continue offering tuition prices that are manageable for lower-income families and newcomers.

Mission Budget Update. Our congregation has always supported Mission initiatives in Winnipeg and around the world. We are so thankful for the Mission support we receive through our offering envelopes. As we received some of your donations earlier in the year, we were able to send support to the North American Lutheran Church and the following agencies:

\$ 1,020.00	Canadian Lutheran Bible Translators
\$ 2,000.00	Canadian Lutheran World Relief
\$ 5,000.00	North American Lutheran Church
\$ 1,000.00	North America Lutheran Church, Canada Section
\$ 500.00	Lutheran Association for Missionaries and Pilots

North American Lutheran Church (NALC). At our Annual Meeting on March 15, 2026, a short update on the NALC was provided. Here are some of the presentation highlights:

Since our congregation’s founding in 1930, we have always been part of a larger Lutheran Church. Previously, we were members of the United Lutheran Church, the Lutheran Church in America, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, ELCIC.

In 2013, the leadership in our congregation, supported by congregational meetings, disagreed with some of the ELCIC’s theological statements, consequently dissolved our partnership with the ELCIC and joined the North American Lutheran Church (NALC). The NALC was constituted just two years earlier by then former

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) member congregations who had the same theological difference as we had with the ELCIC. At the time, we joined approximately 80 NALC congregations. It had a small staff in different locations, with administrative offices in Minneapolis. The NALC is now 15 years old and consists of over 565 congregations. It owns a 10-year-old seminary, and this is important; it owns the seminary. Other Lutheran Churches ordain clergy from different seminaries; the NALC appoints the seminary president and has full control of the curriculum to ensure that the teachings always align with the NALC theological principles. A special position, the Director of Vocational Discernment & Recruitment, travels the country to be in contact with potential students for the ministry. Enrollment has been going up every year and is currently at least seventy-five.

The NALC is not a political Church, even though sometimes we think it should be. The NALC has four core values, grounded in Christ, **and** as displayed in our sanctuary: Christ-Centred, Mission-Driven, Traditionally Grounded, and Congregationally Focused.

While the NALC has contacts in 25 countries, supports 22 global workers and 9 partner agencies, it is focused on supporting congregations. We experienced some of that through the Forward in Mission initiative, which has now been further developed and improved. As a matter of fact, Tom and Linda Lurvey, as well as Jerry Roehr, will participate in a one-day seminar in Calgary as part of the Rocky Mountain Theological Conference and Canadian Mission District Meeting.

We are part of the North American Lutheran Church, and they are part of us. So, who should we call our neighbour Lutheran churches? I suggest it is Joy Lutheran Church in South Winnipeg, and just recently the Lutheran Church of the Holy Trinity, in Hilo, Hawaii, and the 299-year-old Emanuel Lutheran Church in Pittsgrove, New Jersey. By the way, 299 is older than the United States.

In assessing what kind of pastoral leadership our congregation will need, our council turned to the NALC for help and some guidance. Pastor Kevin Ree, the Assistant to NALC Bishop Dan Selby, visited with our Church Council several times.

When Pastor Meinhardt left unexpectedly last August, Canadian Mission District Dean Mac de Waal suggested engaging Pastor Gary Braeuer for an intentional interim ministry. His ministry started on January 11th, 2026 and he was installed by the Dean on February 26th. Pastor Braeuer is from Edmonton but will live in Winnipeg for six months as he serves our congregation. By the way, on March 14th through 21st, Mrs. Catherine Braeuer visited with us for the week.

NALC Youth event in 2026

NALC Continental Youth Gathering 2026 - July 7 - 10, 2026
at St. John Lutheran Church in Roanoke, Virginia.

Please see website below for more information and registration.
<https://thenalc.org/en-us/our-work/equipping-disciples/families/>

Younger Adults

Submitted by Ulrike Schreckenbach

Young adults aged 18–28 from NALC congregations are invited to participate in *Word & Witness*: a week-long mission experience serving under-resourced neighborhoods here in Winnipeg. It takes place May 23-30, 2026. For details, please see the Bulletin Board or the NALC website. Young adults who attended this event last year were interviewed by Pastor Teresa Peters. They testified to the meaningful impact this experience had on them personally. This interview can be accessed here: <https://vimeo.com/1095148770>

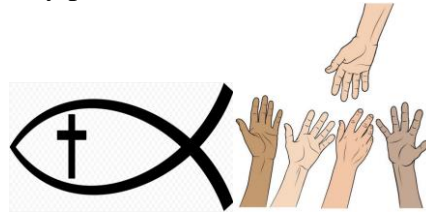
Questions?

Would like more information?

Know someone you would like to see invited?

Please talk to *Ulrike*, or contact her:

By email: schrecke@mymts.net Or by phone: 204-255-5262 (landline).



Volunteer Opportunity

Submitted by Linda Lurvey

We are in great need of volunteers to assist in looking after the area around the altar for our worship services. It involves preparing and or cleaning up the elements from Holy Communion and seasonally changing the paraments - the fabric hangings on the altar, pulpit and lectern - according to the church year.

Training provided.

Please contact Gudrun at the church office if you are interested in serving: 204-775-6477

SAVE THE DATE & LOCATION UPDATE!

Our **Annual Church Picnic** will take place on **June 14**. Location: Highland Provincial Park.
Hope to see many of you there!!

Special Birthday Celebrations for April 2026

For members at least 65

Doreen Schorn – April 5

Edith Erhardt – April 11

Karin Lylyk – April 15

Wanda Marten – April 16

Monika Krampetz – April 17

Helga Roehr – April 18

Frieda Schwing – April 26

Frieda Pretzer – April 30

Wishing you a very Happy Birthday and the Lord's continued Blessings!

We are starting to plan this years' **Special Confirmation Anniversary Celebration** which will take place at St. Peter's either on Sept 20 or 27 (date to be confirmed closer to the time).

We will be celebrating confirmation anniversaries for those who were confirmed 25, 50, 60, 70, and 80 years ago, i.e., those confirmed in the years 2001, 1976, 1966, 1956, 1946. A list of those who were confirmed in these years at St. Peters appears on the bulletin board in the Narthex and was also emailed out. However, if you are currently attending St. Peter's and were confirmed in one of these years but do not appear on this list, we would like to also honour you that day. Please send me an email or call me so I can add you to our list (see contact details below).

Help needed: If you have contact information for anyone that appears on this list, please send it to me asap. .

Contact details: email bellermann@gmail.com OR call me at 204-487 2175 (please leave a message if no one answers). Thank you to those who have already provided some information in this regard.

We are looking forward to seeing many of you at this event.

Holy Week Services

Maundy Thursday - April 2 - 7:00 p.m.
Good Friday - April 3, 11:00 am
Easter Sunday- April 5, 11:00 am

9:45 Easter Sunday

*Come early for Coffee,
Conversation and a
Sweet Treat!*

The Power of Prayer

Please continue to pray for the four Afghani women - Taiba and her teenage daughters Hania and Oswa and friend Latifa who are waiting to come to Canada. They are waiting for the Canadian Visa Office in Pakistan to approve their applications to come to Winnipeg. Their situation as refugees in Pakistan is very precarious, as the Pakistan government is in the process of deporting thousands of Afghani refugees.

Here is a prayer written by Bruce Adamson one of the co-sponsors:

May they fall into the hands of government officials who will understand the urgency of their situation and help expedite approval and relocation so that all four may one day soon find themselves face to face with brothers and sisters who will walk closely with them on their journey to becoming Canadian citizens who flourish in their new surroundings and new found freedoms. AMEN.

Submitted by Linda Lurvey

April 2026 Calendar

*TC=Tai Chi *HS=Healthy Start *Immanuel Anglican Church=IAC

*CCS=Centre for Christian Studies

Sunday	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
			1 TC 7pm	April 2 Maundy Thursday Service & Communion 7:00 pm	April 3 Good Friday Service & Communion 11:00 am	4 TC 10am 3pm-6pm IAC
April 5 - Easter Sunday 9:45 Coffee hour & sweet treat 11:00 am Service in English with Communion	6	7 HS	8 TC 7pm	9	10	11 TC 10am 3pm-6pm IAC
12 11am Service in English	13	14 HS	15 CCS 8-5:30pm TC 7pm	16 CCS 8-5:30pm	17 CCS 8-5:30pm	18 TC 10am 3pm-6pm IAC
19 11am Service in English with Communion	20 Council Meeting 7:00 pm	21 HS	22 TC 7pm	23	24	25 Men's breakfast 8am TC 10am 3pm-6pm IAC
26 11am Service in English Women's Circle to follow after the service	27	28 HS	29 TC 7pm	30		

Any submissions for the May 2026 edition of the St. Peter's Newsletter should be made by noon Thursday, April 23, 2026. Submissions should be sent to Ortrud Oellermann at stpetersnewsl@gmail.com