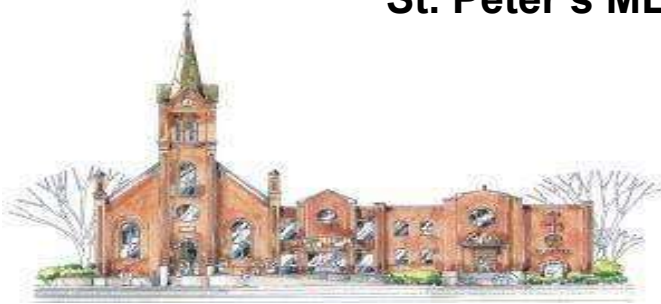


St. Peter's MESSENGER



St. Peter's United Church of Christ
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February 2025

Dear Friends,

I look out my office window and still see piles of snow! Yes, the ice was so bad that we had to cancel church on January 12. It's always strange beginning a week without worship. But February is soon to arrive and while winter has a ways to go, the days are getting longer. Hopefully by the time you receive this edition of the Messenger, I finally will have removed the last of the stubborn ice.

This year is also a bit different as Lent doesn't begin until March. One of the few holidays this February is St. Valentine's Day. And while St. Valentine's Day is a day for sweet hearts, it does give us an opportunity to reflect on the gift of love. Love, of course, is central to our faith. We remember Jesus' teaching of the Greatest Commandment. "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength. The second is this, you shall love your neighbor as yourself." (Mark 12:29-31) Some of the most beautiful and challenging words of scripture are Paul's hymn to Christlike love in I Corinthians 13. That chapter ends with these words. "Now faith, hope, and love remain ... these three things ... and the greatest of these is love."

This February, however, we are reminded of that hardest love possible. Our scripture lesson for February 23 is Luke 6:27-38. Here Jesus teaches us how we as Christians are to love even our enemies. This is one of the hardest teachings of Jesus and one which goes against the grain of many of our human inclinations. But in the contentious, self-centered and hate-filled climate in which we live, this teaching of Jesus continues to speak to our greatest challenge. How can we love as God loves? And that is a powerful question that will lead into March and the Lenten season.

Blessings,
Pastor Kurt

Blessed are those who mourn... for they shall be comforted. Please pray for:

The family and friends of Harold Lindauer who passed away Jan. 2

The family and friends of Pam & Dave Mutert on the loss of her father, Maurice Mittler

The family and friends of David Philabaum, Pastor Kurt's cousin

The family and friends of Alvie & Donna Buchholz on the loss of her father, Alfred Spreckelmeyer

The family and friends of Charles Michael Heidmann

All 2024 Boards and Committees: **Year-end reports** are due to the MESSENGER for printing in March 2025 for the Annual Report. Please forward the reports to Newsletter Annual Report (newsletter@stpeters-ucc.org) on or before Mon., Feb. 17, 2025. Thank you. I have a few already... good job!!

New members St. Peter's UCC will welcome an additional group of new members in the near future. If you are interested or know someone who might be interested, please contact the church office or Pastor Kurt.

Souper Bowl of Caring 2025

On February 8 and 9, we will celebrate the **Souper Bowl of Caring**. Yes, I spelled that right. The Souper Bowl of Caring began in 1990 when a South Carolina youth group asked if they might address hunger in their community on the weekend of the Super Bowl, by asking worshippers to contribute a single dollar as they left worship. That year 22 congregations collected \$5,700 and gave it to local hunger ministries. That idea just grew and grew. Since 1990, \$198 million has been collected across our country by many houses of worship and other organizations. Our offering that weekend will benefit the work of the Harvest Table.

The **Mission Team** will host a Lunch and Learn on Sun., Feb. 16 following worship. We will have lunch and then learn about Back Bay Mission in Biloxi, Mississippi. Our team that traveled to the Mission last September will present a program on what Back Bay Mission is and our experiences while there. Another trip is being planned for the 3rd week in September this year, Sept. 20-27. All are welcome to come have lunch and learn more about Back Bay Mission!



Mardi Gras

Our annual Mardi Gras celebration will be held **Sunday, March 2, 2025**. We would like to REJUVENATE our annual Board of Christian Education fundraiser by inviting anyone with new thoughts or ideas to reach out to the BCE members: Wendy Wisdom, Jennifer Kroeter, Barb Bauer or Linda Patterson and please share. We are also inviting anyone/family who is interested in creating and running a game booth to please reach out. Of course, we will also need our usual dessert donations for the cake walk and basket donations for the raffles. Mardi Gras set up begins on Sat., March 1, 2025. Time TBD.

Weather Relief Center

The Justice Witness Committee wants to highlight an opportunity for volunteers from St. Peter's to join with others of Peace Lutheran to help those in our community in need. As you may be aware, even here in Washington we have individuals who have no place to stay inside at night.

The Weather Relief Center was born on January 19, 2024 when Peace opened a portion of the downstairs of their church from 8pm at night until 8am the next morning for individuals to escape the cold. The Center was open when the overnight temperatures were predicted to drop below 32° or below 40° with precipitation. That first winter, the Weather Relief Center was open 32 nights through April 2nd and served 25 different individuals, evenly split between men and women. The lowest attendance per night was 1 guest; The highest attendance was 16 guests. Fifty various volunteers served as hosts, working in teams of 2, for 4-hour shifts (8pm- midnight, midnight – 4am, and 4am-8am). Most of the guests would sleep on a provided cot or mat. When summer heat came later in the year, the Weather Relief Center again opened, this time as a cooling center. Currently the Weather Relief Center has served 35 different people and has about 30 volunteers.

Unfortunately, this 2024-2025 winter, Peace Lutheran was notified that their building needs an expensive update to meet the City Building Code which allows people to sleep overnight. This update, an emergency sprinkler system, will cost upwards of \$50,000. In the interim, while raising funds and updating their building, the Weather Relief Center to be open from 6pm-10pm. They provide a simple meal (usually soup and bread) plus portable food items and toiletries and try to find coats, hats, and gloves for those who need them. They also provide a limited number of vouchers (funded by the Franklin County Homeless Task Force) for a space in a room on a cot with 3 other people at the American Inn. Drivers are also provided to transport the individuals to the American Inn.

Volunteers are always needed, some to donate an evening meal, some as an evening host or driver. Volunteer hosts and drivers must be 18 years of age and always work in pairs (at least one being a man). Interested potential volunteers can come to visit the Weather Relief Center to observe the routines and shadow the regular volunteers until ready to take on more responsibility. Volunteers can then sign up to work with a friend/spouse or be paired with another volunteer. Of course, monetary donations for the required sprinkler update are also accepted.

If you are interested in a possible volunteer opportunity, please contact: Nancy Nagel by email at: peaceweatherrelief@gmail.com or text or call her at: 314-808-3072.

Matthew 25:40 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me.'

Food Pantry News

Thank you to ALL the volunteers who help the food pantry continue its vital ministry in our community. In December, 119 individuals representing 56 families were served. We also thank the following for their generous donations – December Food Pantry Donors: Joline Logan, Brenda Bruns, Wendell & Mary Lou Tyree, Bill & Janet Hubbard, Gary & Beth Brehe, Jim & Diane Gephardt, United Way, Verna Borgmann, Optimist Club of Washington, Franklin County MU Alumni Association, Kurt & Kimberly Voss and Barb Kell

WERF News

The Washington Emergency Relief received 214 calls in the month of December. We were able to assist 100 people, giving out 32 grants totaling up to \$7,357.29. Seven of those grants were for electric, four for water, and 21 for rent. It was a busy month.

We would also like to thank Bruce & Sara Barnett, Ron & Brenda Brinker, Stephen & Pat Forget, Royce & Mary Lovern, Kirk & Cindy Kriete, Ruth Rinne and Jim & Diane Gephardt for the donations you made last month. It's those donations that allow WERF to reach out and help more of our neighbors. Thank you!

Harvest Table served 587 Meals in December:

12/8	145 meals	12/22	167 meals
12/15	145 meals	12/29	130 Meals

Women's Fellowship

Women's Fellowship will meet on Thurs. Feb. 13 at 10 a.m. Our program is sharing with one another what you did to stay safe and sane during the snow storm of 2025. Did you start a new craft, read a great book, work on a jigsaw puzzle, or clean a closet? If possible, bring a picture or an example of your activity. Lunch will be served. It will be a fun time of sharing!



Note from the Cemetery Just a reminder that there will be a cemetery cleanup and removal of Fall and Christmas flowers starting March 1 through March 15. If you would wait until March 16 to place Easter and spring flowers it would be appreciated so they are not accidentally removed. Thank you, St. Peter's Cemetery Board

The **Cemetery Board** is seeking volunteers to assist with mowing and trimming at the cemetery for the 2025 mowing season. We typically mow weekly using zero turn mowers. The time required for mowing is typically 2.5 to 3 hours per cutting. We trim every other week with gas powered string trimmers which are provided. The time for trimming is approximately three hours. The more people the less time it will take. Even if you cannot work the whole time any assistance would be appreciated. Our mowing season typically starts late March or early April and ends usually at the end of October. If interested call or text Gary Edler at (636) 667-0918

St. Peter's UCC Church
Council Meeting Highlights Tuesday, January 21st, 2025

Treasurer's Report:

The December and Year End financials ended in the positive by \$7,910

We received the following donations in December

- Food Pantry: \$3,000 for electricity
- Harvest Table: \$3,000 for electricity
- Anonymous Donation: \$5,000
- Festival of Trees donated \$227.90 in January for expenses.

Finance Board: (Diane)

- Joan & Jim Heisel's bequest of \$135,625.36 to the church specified that the funds must first be used to pay off any debt before the balance (if any) can be applied elsewhere.

The church currently has a loan with Cornerstone for approximately \$39,549.84.

On behalf of the Finance Board, Diane made a motion that the Cornerstone Loan Balance is paid off in full immediately and the balance of the Heisel trust invested in a 7-month CD at Heritage Bank. Jon seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Cemetery Board:

- Cemetery's 150 celebration, held at the Cemetery, scheduled for May 18. (June 1 is the rain date.) Event details are being finalized.

Board of Christian Education:

The Pray Ground will stay down, until there is a need.

Mardi Gras is scheduled for March 2. The BOCE is working to rejuvenate Mardi Gras. They are reaching out to church members and other boards for assistance in organizing and running the annual event. Susan will work with a group of middle/high school students on updating games. Also suggested we market Mardi Gras on social media.

Missions Committee:

- A lunch and learn is scheduled for Feb. 16 to share information on the Back Bay Mission Trip scheduled for this fall.

Advisory Board: (Diane/Cindy)

- As part of our regular 5-year membership roll review (2025), two reports from the membership survey were shared: a list of past members, who asked to be removed from our membership rolls and a list of long-time inactive members, reviewed by several church leaders/members, who were recommended to be removed from our membership rolls.

A motion to remove the names from our membership roll, from both lists presented, was made by Susan and seconded by Dottie. Motion passed. A third member group will be contacted to determine future interest.

Council, boards & committees review: Susan, Diane, Dottie & Ben and two congregational members will meet to research, review and possibly restructure boards and committees. They will review feedback submitted to council from each board/committee and bring recommendations to Council.

Dates for the 2025 Congregational meetings were approved.

- Spring meeting: March 23 (4th Sun.)
- Fall meeting: October 19 (3rd Sun.)

Financial Report

Receipts	December	YTD 2024
General Fund	\$ 71,988.51	\$ 485,809.96
Building Fund	\$ 3,925.38	\$ 40,387.89
Youth Fund	\$	\$ 351.00
Memorial Fund	\$ 260.00	\$ 16,342.75
Sanctuary Music Fund	\$ 50.00	\$ 1,313.00
Pass Thru In	\$ 9,788.21	\$
Total Receipts	\$ 46,991.71	\$ 544,204.60

Expenses	December	YTD 2024
General Fund	\$ (39,343.67)	\$ (466,087.49)
Building Fund	\$ (2,858.16)	\$ (35,114.62)
Youth Fund	\$	\$ (1,147.52)
Memorial Fund	\$	\$ (15,171.38)
Sanctuary Music Fund	\$ -	\$ (494.20)
Pass Thru Out	\$ (9,788.21)	\$
Total Expenses	\$ (34,435.08)	\$ (518,015.21)

Bank Balance Report 12/31/2024

Heritage Bank Balance	\$ 98,752.98
Less Building Fund	\$ 11,989.46
Less Youth Fund	\$ 7,914.84
Less Memorial Fund	\$ 66,817.36
Less Music Fund	\$ 4,120.84
Less Perpetual Member	\$
General Fund Balance	\$ 7,910.48

2025 Great Decisions

The 2025 Great Decision program will be held again at the Washington Public Library. The dates are Wednesday's February 12 thru April 2 at 1 p.m.

It is helpful to know if you plan to attend so that enough handouts are prepared. Please RSVP to Bill Schwab whswish@yhti.net

The following are the topics for this session:

American foreign policy at a crossroads This topic will explore the contours of the U.S. foreign policy debate as it is playing out in a world of multiple and escalating crises and domestic polarization. U.S. changing leadership of the world economy. Under President Biden, the U.S. has advanced new ideas about trade, technology, industrial policy, competition with China, and the organization of the world economy. For most of the postwar era, the U.S. has tied its global leadership to cooperative agendas aimed at creating a more open world trading system, but that has apparently come to an end. What are America's options and opportunities as a leader of the world economy? How will America's "foreign policy for the middle class" and strategic competition with China impact its leadership role? How can the postwar rules and institutions of the world economy be made safe for economic nationalism and great power competition?

U.S.-China relations Washington's relations with Beijing have reached an ominous low ebb. Both American political parties have identified China as the country's preeminent geopolitical challenger and, in the eyes of many, a systemic threat. What is driving this deterioration of Sino-American relations, and what are America's strategic options in the face of Chinese power and ambition?

International cooperation on climate change. The 2015 Paris Agreement established a UN-sponsored framework for negotiations on climate change and global warming. In subsequent COP meetings, experts and political leaders have come together seeking common cause of this growing global crisis. What is the future of these efforts, and what has it yielded? What is the U.S. role in fostering cooperation on climate change? In a divided country, what is the range of possible futures for American policy leadership?

The future of NATO and European security European security is more uncertain than it has been for decades. Putin's Russia has launched a war with Ukraine on its doorstep, and America's uncertain role as leader of NATO and security provider has been called into question with the failure of Congress to pass supplemental military support for Ukraine. What are Europe's options and how might developments on both sides of Western Europe – in Ukraine and across the Atlantic – impact its choices? What are America's stakes in NATO and Europe's strategic dilemmas?

AI and American National Security The AI revolution is the leading edge of a larger high-tech revolution that promises to transform the world. Experts argue that international cooperation is needed to expand the opportunities that these new technologies hold while protecting societies from their dangers. What are the key policy debates in this area, and what are the opportunities and limits on global AI rules of the road? How will the AI revolution impact American national security? What are its policy options to secure the benefits of AI and guide against its dangers?

India: between China, the West, and the Global South India is an emerging major power in world affairs, occupying a pivotal position between China, the United States, and the Global South. Its population size, economy, and geopolitical location ensure that it will be an influential voice in debates and political struggles over global order. What are India's choices and opportunities for regional and global leadership? How will it maneuver between China and the United States, and what is its role as a voice of the Global South? What opportunities exist for Washington to work with India?

After Gaza: American policy in the Middle East The war in Gaza has brought the region to a crossroads. What are the possible outcomes of the war, and how might the United States use its influence to shape a long-term settlement that leaves both Israel and the Palestinians in a better position? How might Arab states in the wider region be brought into a settlement? What are America's interests in the Middle East and how can it advance them?

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2025 Altar Flowers If you would like to place altar flowers in honor or in memory of someone, or a special occasion, please contact the church office by phone 636-239-6176 or email office@stpeters-ucc.org and we will make a note on the 2025 Altar Flower Chart, letting you know whether or not that particular date is already spoken for. The chart is posted at the back of the sanctuary if you would like to sign up. Information we need from you: date you wish to provide the two arrangements; the information you wish to have printed in the worship bulletin; whether or not you will come by church the Monday after worship to pick up the bouquets. After a date has been secured, please contact a florist and make arrangements to have them deliver your selection on Friday before noon. Thank you

2025 Worship Bulletins The worship bulletin is an integral part of our worship service each week. If you would like to purchase the bulletins for a service in honor or in memory of someone, please mark the Bulletin Chart (2025 chart is posted at the back of the sanctuary) accordingly and contact the church office to inform us at to what you wish to have printed in the bulletin. Thank you

2024 Contribution Statements were mailed the week of January 20. If you have not received yours, please be in touch with Carol in the church office.

Ken McGee who wrote the book "Veiled" will be at the Washington Public library Thurs., Jan. 30 at 6:30 for an author talk.



February

Birthdays

Benjamin Geisert	02/02
Bryanna Winfree	02/02
Cheryl Gillig	02/03
Keagan Moeller	02/04
Joe Thornsberry	02/04
Callie Briggs	02/05
Brenda Brinker	02/05
Parker Smith	02/05
Bobby Hackett	02/06
Mason Fitzpatrick	02/07
Briana Juergens	02/07
Hank Anderson	02/09
Kassydy Wolking	02/10
Amy Hellmann	02/11
Deanne Kriete	02/13
Logan Monzyk	02/13
Angela Skelton	02/13
Sharon Bacon	02/14
Lena Kemp	02/14
Alyce Menefee	02/14
Allison Montgomery	02/14

Marty Derner	02/15
Ronald Montgomery	02/16
Danielle Mooney	02/16
Barbara Schroepper	02/16
Theo Jacquin	02/17
Leroy Eggert	02/18
Joline Logan	02/18
Kitty Parsons	02/18
Brandi Fredeking	02/19
Trent Wacker	02/19
Chad Briggs	02/20
Patricia Forget	02/20
Charles Sincox	02/20
Daniel Wisdom	02/20
Kaylyn Wolking	02/21
Marge Jones	02/22
Dan Roewe	02/22
Lauren Schonaerts	02/22
Kali Coppotelli	02/23
Sheila Smith	02/24
Clifford Mueller	02/25
Rodney Schwentker	02/25
Robert White	02/25
Patti Fleer	02/27