



"FOR PETE'S SAKE"

St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Zurich, ON

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May 2026 Newsletter

Pastoral Ponderings

"To Ponder" is to think deeply about something. For me it is one of the most important things that we can do as people of faith. I like to invite and challenge people to think deeply about the important issues that we face in life that help us to continue to grow as people and disciples of Christ. I am looking forward to pondering with you as we begin to work together and as we travel through this transition period. What might that mean practically?

One Sunday I was preaching at my home congregation and I started the sermon by saying "Today I am going to provoke you...."

You can imagine that my first comments raised some eyebrows. A deaconess whom I knew for a long time was sitting near the front and she had a look of confusion and concern on her face as I made that statement. I was clear she was a bit concerned about what was coming next.

I then reread to them part of the second lesson that we had read that morning:
And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds. Hebrews 10: 24

We are called to be disciples of Christ. That means we are called to live out our faith in both what we say and what we do, not only on Sundays but every day of our life. I invite you to ponder, as we begin working together, what the term disciple means to you. What does being a disciple mean for you and what does it require of you, both as an individual and as a congregation?

A congregation can only flourish when all disciples have a role and make time to share their gifts for the work of the congregation. John 13: 34- 35 makes it very clear that we are to be disciples and instructs us on how we are to be disciples. "I give you a new commandment that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love

one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another”

I have so far been impressed by the welcome and the enthusiasm I have experienced from you. I said to my wife that it has been a long time since I have left more energized after a first worship service together. I have found openness, enthusiasm and genuine commitment to the work of being a disciple and an active congregation in my first interactions with you. I look forward to where that might take us all.

One important aspect that you need to know about me is that I consider myself to be an Intentional Interim Minister and I have been issued a call for that specific work. That means that I am not coming to just fill in until a new pastor is called and in place. It means that I will be intentional in working with council, committees and members to help you explore what the next steps in your mission and ministry will be, the types of skills and experience you require to do that, including what that means for the calling of a new pastor and how to continue to celebrate and strengthen your community of faith. I will be asking lots of questions, inviting you to consider how your ministry can continue to flourish and grow. In short, I will be inviting you to ponder with me the future of St. Peter's and the work that it will take to move forward and how you will continue to be a witness to the community you are part of and serve.

I believe that the church needs to be engaged in and ministering to the world around it. I believe that congregational members need to do this and I believe that this also applies to a Pastor. I am clear that a part of calling as a Pastor is to work in the midst of the community to bring our Christian values of grace, hospitality, love and compassion, to name just a few. My work with congregations in the past has focussed on how this may happen in the context and situation of the individual congregation.

Lots to think about, I know. I am looking forward to pondering with you and provoking you during our time together. Given what I have experienced so far it will be a fun, challenging and blessed journey. Thank you for welcoming me into your midst. I know God's blessings and gifts will guide and direct us as we move to continue to discover God's mission and ministry for St. Peter's and for each of you as a disciple of Christ.

So let us begin.

Pastor Stephen

Upcoming Worship Service Dates:

April 26 - Tracy Lather - Service of the Word - Sanctuary -

Children's Message (Laurie Erb) - Kids' Club (Judy Roth & Linda Bluhm)

May 3 - Pastor Stephen - Sanctuary - Holy Communion - Blessing of Food Basket items

May 10 - Rick Deichert - Service of the Word - Sanctuary

- Children's Message (Jenni Towton) - Kids' Club (Kelly & Danica Jeffrey)

May 17 - Doug Klopp - Service of the Word - Sanctuary

May 24 - Pastor Stephen - Sanctuary - Pentecost - Holy Communion
- Children's Message (Cathy Hugill) - Kids' Club (Kelly & Danica Jeffrey)

May 31 - Pastor Stephen - Parish Hall - Holy Trinity - Holy Communion
ELCIC Day of Action (See May newsletter for information) - Please bring
toiletry items to the church for Blessings by this date.

Other Important Dates for St. Peter's:

Thursday, May 7 - Women's Dinner at Hessenland - 5:30 pm
-To reserve, email Diane Klopp **NO LATER THAN APRIL 30th**
dklopp@hay.net

Tuesday, May 14 - Council Meeting 6:30 pm

Sunday, May 24 - Pastor Nadine's Installation at Trinity Lutheran Church
in London - 4:00 pm. See information in your May
Newsletter.

Monday, May 25 - Call Committee Meeting 7:00 pm

Wednesday, June 17 - Father's Day Supper Reunion at Hessenland
Social time 5:30-6:00 pm; Meal served at 6:30 pm
-**Deadline for RSVP** to Hub Thiel - **MONDAY, JUNE 8th**
Text or phone Hub at (519) 878-4527 or email at hubthiel@icloud.com

Sunday, June 21 - Weather-permitting, an outdoor service at our cemetery
on Goshen Street. Please share this date with family and friends
who may like to attend.

July 13-17 - Vacation Bible School "The Great Canadian Quest" - See poster on
bulletin board in the entrance to the parish hall for information.

FYI - Parish Hall Bookings:

Wednesday, April 22, 2026, Afternoon - Evening, Blessings – Volunteer Appreciation Event

Sunday, May 17, 2026 - Celebrate Marilyn Heimrich's upcoming 90th Birthday
at an Open House in the Parish Hall 1:30 pm -4:30 pm

Thursday, June 18, 2026, Afternoon – Evening, Good Neighbours, back up for Strawberry Social

Saturday, June 27, 2026 – Family Picnic

Vacation Bible School Information and Registration Links

Hello everyone,

We're excited to share that registration for this year's Vacation Bible School is now officially open! **VBS Dates:** July 13–17

This year's theme is *Great Canadian Quest: Discovering God's Ways*, and it's going to be an incredible week filled with fun, faith, and adventure. We can't wait to welcome your children for a meaningful and memorable experience as we explore God's truth together.

Child Registration

If you would like to register your child, please sign up as soon as possible to help us prepare for numbers, groups, and materials. **The deadline is July 1 with NO EXCEPTIONS!** Also, please feel free to pass along to other families that may be interested.

[Child Registration](#)

Volunteer Registration

We are also looking for volunteers to help make this week amazing! Whether you enjoy leading a group or simply being present with the kids, there is a place for you. Please consider signing up to serve—it's a rewarding and impactful way to be part of what God is doing.

[Volunteer Registration](#)

Communication from Council

We were happy to celebrate Pastor Nadine's 15+ years of ministry at St. Peter's on Sunday, April 12. There were lots of emotions, hugs and tears as we said our farewells. I know that Pastor Nadine was thrilled with the event we planned in her honour, and with the gifts she received. She was also happy with the number of members who were able to attend. The moving truck came on April 23 to pick up all of their furniture and take it to London, but the family will continue to move some smaller items and clean things up at the house until April 30. She begins her ministry at Trinity in London on May 1st.

THANKS to Phil and his helpers, especially Tanya and Chuck, Sharon and Christa for the delicious dinner that was served on April 12! Thanks also to the GREAT crew who stayed to clean up at the end! What a team we have here at St. Peter's!

Pastor Nadine's Installation service, at Trinity Lutheran Church in London, is Sunday, May 24 beginning at 4:00 pm. If you are able to attend, and will be staying for the

reception, please let them know as soon as possible by calling Angela in the church office at 519-432-4832 or go online trinitylutheranca@yahoo.ca so they know numbers when planning the food. The church address is 746 Colborne St., London.

We are happy to welcome Pastor Stephen Gross as our Intentional Interim Pastor! You could describe him as a pastor with a purpose. Pastor Stephen has a wealth of knowledge, experience and advice to offer us as we complete the required documents in preparation for calling a new pastor. He will be working with the Council and the Call Committee on our journey toward finding the right pastor for us at this crucial time in our history. He loves to make us think and helps us to see things through the eyes of a potential new pastor, which has been very helpful.

Call Committee

Our Call Committee met for the first time on April 20. This was an organizational meeting to start becoming familiar with the process. There was good discussion and many ideas that were shared. The Committee was able to go through the entire Congregational Mission Profile, that Council has been working on, and make suggestions. We were able to come up with a potential timeline for the next few months which will, hopefully, lead us to a meeting in June with Pastor Christie Morrow-Wolfe, who is our advisor from Synod.

We'll be Needing Your Help

As with any transition, especially one in which the pastor has been in the parsonage for such a long time, we know there will be repairs and renovations to do as we prepare for a new pastor. The property committee will be having a walk-through of the parsonage in early May to assess what the priorities are. After that, you will be informed about what we need to do to welcome a pastor in the way we like to do things here at St. Peter's. We will need financial assistance to complete this work at the parsonage as well as, hopefully, freshen up the office at the church. It makes sense to do that while the office is empty since most of the furniture was Pastor Nadine's. Please prayerfully consider how you can help us complete these upcoming projects, as well as keeping up with all the regular day-to-day expenses of running our church. Stay tuned for more details.

In an Emergency

Please know that if any emergencies come up, such as a serious illness or a death in the family, you will be cared for by Pastor Stephen and our members. Phone messages can be left on the church phone (519-236-4697). These recorded messages come directly to me through email, and I am checking more than once every day so no message will be missed. I can also be reached at my new chairperson email address forpeteschair@gmail.com

ELCIC News

If you haven't already, I would recommend signing up to receive a weekly newsletter called "The Eastern Synod Weekly." The newsletters inform their readers about all the good work that our synod is doing locally and around the world, as well as offering training (some sessions are virtual so anyone can attend from anywhere) and providing support to congregations. Reading these articles has helped me better understand some of what Synod does with Benevolence dollars received from congregations, and the number of initiatives they organize and support.



[Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada](https://elcic.ca)

<https://elcic.ca>

ELCIC Day Of Action

Sunday, May 31 we've been invited to join congregations across the ELCIC in stepping beyond our own church walls and participating in acts of service that will help our community. Council has decided to support this initiative by donating to Blessings, beyond our regular monthly donations on the first Sunday of each month. Our church has been signed up, and Blessings has been contacted and asked what they need. They have told us they would appreciate donations of shampoo, conditioner, body wash, toilet paper, paper towels, deodorant and any other small toiletry items. You may bring these items in at any time, and we will bless them on Sunday, May 31st, during the worship service in the parish hall.



Thank you for all of the support I am receiving as your council chairperson! It makes it much easier to complete the many duties that are required during our pastoral vacancy. Please continue to pray for our church leadership teams as we travel through this period of transition. There is excitement in the air at St. Peter's, and working together, we will become an even stronger community of believers.

In His Service,

Laurie