



# *"FOR PETE'S SAKE"*

*St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Zurich, ON*

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## **June 2026 Newsletter**

### **Pastoral Ponderings**

I had an appointment recently where I was going to have time to kill so I took a book with me that I had not read in a long time. As I sat down to read, I had this feeling—"I remember this book" and, as a result I assumed that it would simply be a review of what I had read before and what I had underlined as being important.

Quite quickly I found myself surprised that I was discovering things that I did not remember as being intriguing when I had last read the book. I found myself moving more deeply and thoughtfully into the ideas being presented. My brain started going down a bunch of different rabbit holes about how I might use the new "revelations" I was discovering.

One of the things that came to mind was something I learned back in seminary over 40 years ago about liturgy. I have loved the fact that, as Lutherans, we are a liturgical church. The structure and flow has been a comfort in the midst of the chaotic nature of life. The liturgy reminds us of God's action in claiming us and calling us to be the people of God. The liturgy calls us, at its best, to continue to work to become what God has called us to be and what God has called us to do.

In a conversation about how doing the same liturgy and the same format week after week can be boring and performative, the professor told us about comments a liturgical theologian (whose name is long since forgotten) said about the liturgy. In short, the writer (my summation) said several things:

- that doing liturgy week after week helps to shape us and guide us because we need to be taught over and over again who we are and whose we are and because we forget those very things with all the other stuff that happens in our life

- the liturgy is full of so many different aspects of God and human beings that it takes a lifetime of doing it over and over to learn what it means for us in our everyday life, (and, the one I have always found comforting),
- when I come to worship with the challenges of life filling my mind and simply go through the motions, I can find strength that there are others there who are paying attention for me and supporting me in worshiping when I cannot.

The liturgy is like the familiar book I was reading. We are familiar with it, have done it, said it and read it over and over again. At times it will even be boring. And yet, if we are open to paying attention to it as we are able, we may discover new things about God, ourselves and each other. A word, phrase or idea may speak to us in ways we had not considered before, or that we may need to hear in the particular time of our life. It, of course, won't happen all the time, but there is so much richness in the words, music and process, that it can and does take a lifetime to learn.

In liturgy we are welcomed, reminded we are baptized (and all that goes with that experience), we are fed emotionally and intellectually, we are reminded of how our faith calls us to live and we are physically fed at God's table (and it is also our table) and then sent forth blessed and loved. Ponder that for awhile.

As a side note, you will have noticed already that I have done some different things with the liturgy when I am there. The Sunday liturgy was never designed to do all the things all the time; rather it was designed in such a way that certain parts could be emphasized or left out, depending on the season or particular celebration. I will continue to explain and explore with you this idea during the time I am with you.

I continue to be surprised as I continue to read the book I just pulled off my shelf to fill some time. I hope that you will experience that same thing as we join together for worship Sunday after Sunday. May God continue to surprise us and bless us.

Pastor Stephen

### **Upcoming Worship Service Dates and Locations**

**May 31** - Pastor Stephen - Sanctuary - Holy Trinity - Communion - ELCIC Day of Action (Special Blessing during the service of these donations)

**June 7** - Pastor Stephen - Parish Hall - Communion - Service/Congregational Meeting re Congregational Mission Profile, Call Process, Parsonage Renovations, Financial and Membership trends etc. **You won't want to miss these updates, so please plan to attend.**

*Blessings Food Bank Sunday - Potluck meal after the service.*

**June 14** - Rick Deichert - Service of the Word - Children's Message (Laurie Erb) - Last

Kids' Club Sunday (Children and their drivers will leave for Erin and Jeff Thiel's farm right after the children's message)

**June 21** - Pastor Stephen - Cemetery Service with Communion (weather-permitting)

**June 28** - Pat O'Rourke - Sanctuary - Service of the Word

### **Upcoming Events:**

**Sunday, May 31** - ELCIC Day of Action - Donations of toiletry items for Blessings will be blessed during the service. Please have any toiletry items you wish to donate at the church no later than this date.

**Sunday, June 7** - Potluck and Congregational Meeting

**Tuesday, June 9** - Council Meeting

**Wednesday, June 17** - Men's Dinner at Hessenland

**Sunday, June 21** – Father's Day

### **Parish Hall Bookings**

Thursday, June 18 - Good Neighbours of Bluewater - Strawberry Social

Saturday, June 27 - Private family event

### **Communication from Council - June 2026**

Thank you to all who supported "A Day of Action" to celebrate 40 years of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC). We had a good collection of toiletry items to take to Blessings to be shared with those who need them. The wider church is always encouraging participation in its many worthwhile initiatives which you can read about through their regular newsletters and on their website.

There is a lot going on behind the scenes at St. Peter's. Meetings have taken place where we've considered our needs and goals moving forward. What are realistic expectations for us as we venture into the future? How can we complete our Congregational Mission Profile accurately, but also in a way that will entice a new pastor to serve our wonderful congregation. What is working for us? What is not? How do we invite others in our surrounding communities to join us in our mission to worship and serve others as a community of faith? There are so many things to consider at this important time in the life of St. Peter's.

Some of these topics are tough to discuss and weigh heavily on the heart and mind, but Pastor Stephen is leading us into these discussions with compassion, lived experience and a dose of reality that we need in order to make good choices for our people, our properties and the community we serve outside the walls of our church building.

Council and members of the Property Committee have had a walk-through of the parsonage. We were saddened to see the state in which the house and yard were left. We know this will be disappointing news for you to hear. Council members are willing to hear your reactions to this news as we begin to move forward. We know that it will take a lot of cleaning up and some contracted work, as well as money, in order to repair it and update it, some of which would have needed to be done regardless. Know that the bones of the house are good and no big structural changes will be required.

Please prayerfully consider how you can help us repair and restore the parsonage in order for it to be a comfortable and attractive home for a future pastor. Some projects will be costly, while others will require mostly physical labour. We are asking for any physical labour, and/or financial contributions you can offer, which we will detail once we have a complete list of the work that is required.

The parsonage is our asset and working together is one of the things that we have done well in the past and can be another way we demonstrate and enhance the congregation that we are. We are not excusing or trying to gloss over what has happened. Rather, we are accepting that this is the situation and focusing on how we move forward in order to build for our future.

On Sunday, June 7, during the service, Pastor Stephen and members of council will intertwine the issues we face as a congregation with the lessons and themes for the day. We hope to share where we are in the call process and our most recent financial and membership trends, discuss parsonage renovations and what this project will require of members, as well as share some of the realities at St. Peter's. We will enjoy a potluck meal after the service which will give us an opportunity to ask questions and talk about moving forward in a way that honours God, our history and our future together. Please plan to attend on June 7th.

Peace,

Laurie Erb  
Church Council Chairperson

## Our Precious Clock

First of all, I'd like to say a huge **THANKS**, on behalf of Council and the members of St. Peter's, to Tom McBride for all the work he does with our tower clock. At this time, he is the only person who is able to wind the clock and restart it if it has stopped.

Tom REALLY wants to teach someone else how to do this, so he is not the only person responsible for the clock. Ideally, we are looking for someone who is agile enough to climb into the space where the winding takes place, and learn from Tom what is required so they could spell him off his duties, possibly every other month. It needs to be someone who is a good communicator so Tom knows exactly when winding takes place so the clock doesn't stop. While Tom is able to restart the clock if it stops, it is a lot more work for him and is time-consuming.

Please reach out to a member of council if you think you, or someone else in our congregation, would be interested.

## 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](#)