



NEW CREATION NEWS

Nov. ~ Dec. 2024

St. Peter's United Church of Christ

1475 Orchard Park Rd., West Seneca, NY 14224

(716) 674-1233 • stpetersws@gmail.com • www.st-petersucc.org

PASTORAL PONDERINGS

There are times in all of our lives when we find it difficult to be thankful. It may be that someone you loved has moved away or died. It may be that age is catching up on you and you can't do the things you once were able to. It may be that how you used to trust God is different than how you do today. Whatever reason you have to find ways around being thankful, I encourage you to just sit and take a few deep breaths and think of all the ways you have been thankful in the past. It doesn't have to be huge ways or earth-shattering thoughts. It just needs to be something: the trees, the people in your life, a smile from someone you don't even know. November is a good time to think about being thankful. The mission work that we do as a church will again happen with food for Thanksgiving and then gifts for Christmas where some may not receive anything if they don't get it from us. It is always such a joyful time when we are able to care for those in need.

I know Christmas seems far away because we just had Halloween, but stores are filled with Christmas items already. The joy that comes with decorating helps us decorate the church after worship on December 1. Please consider coming and sharing in this tradition. We will share in its beauty as we welcome visitors for the Strike the Rock Christmas concert on December 8 at 7pm. The Advent wreath will be lit throughout the Advent season and together we will celebrate Christmas Eve with worship that ends by lighting candles and singing some favorite carols. That service is at 7pm as well. In the craziness of preparing for Christmas, we often forget that the birth of Jesus is the greatest gift of the season. I encourage you to invite someone to join you for the Christmas concert and for the Christmas Eve service. Perhaps you have a family member who has not decided what to do for Christmas and needs some inspiration, invite them. Or, a friend who seems in need of some joy, the concert may speak to them. Try to make these seasons of Thanksgiving and Christmas special and share with others here at St. Peter's this year. God has blessed us.

In Christ,
Pastor Paula



COUNCIL CORNER

Your Church Council meets monthly as a group to manage the overall spiritual and business matters of the church. Deacons and Elders also meet separately, to focus on specific matters. We have been quite busy, as we deal with the day-to-day issues, while still trying to plan for our future. Council will be spending time with a leader from the Western Area in November to think about long-term visioning ideas. The Deacons are looking at the budget issues for 2025 and will present that to the congregation in December, while the Elders continue to find ways to build our church spiritually. Sandy Fiegl and Paul Gannon attended a networking event with the West Seneca Chamber of Commerce, where they learned about other local businesses and spoke about St. Peter's.

One of our worship services recently highlighted World Communion Sunday, while another featured Rev. Gary Burdick talking about Dunkirk Camp & Conference Center. We plan to continue providing a variety of topics, and hope that you support these efforts through your prayerful attendance. Our monthly fellowship hours are also a great way to spend time with one another. A big "Thank You" goes out to all who attended the September Food & Wine Pairing fundraiser. We hope the October Meat Raffle was equally as successful and fun.

The joyous holiday season will soon be here, with Thanksgiving and Christmas observations. Please support our Mission projects during these times as we share the love of St. Peter's with others in our church family and local community. We look forward to decorating the sanctuary for Christmas on Dec. 1, the annual Strike the Rock Christmas Concert on Dec. 8, and our Christmas Eve worship service. May these events fill your heart with the joys of the season as we celebrate Christ's birth.

The Altar Flowers have been a beautiful presence every week. If you would like to participate, please use the sign up in the church entrance, then purchase the flowers and bring them in on the designated date. You can use your own vase or one of those available in church.

Upcoming Council meetings are scheduled for Nov. 18 and Dec. 16 at 7:00 pm (open forum until 7:15) at church, with our Annual Church Meeting in February. The Elders are asking for additional people to serve as greeters on Sunday mornings, and increased participation in hosting the monthly fellowship gatherings after worship. Please

sign up on the sheets in the church entrance if you are interested in any of these activities, or see a Council member if you have any questions. May the joys of the holiday season be with you and your loved ones!



ENCIRCLING IN OUR PRAYERS...

FOR GOD'S HEALING

Renae Johnson; Marge Applebach; Esther Woltz; John Sworen; Chuck and Irene Brooks; Tim and Sue Schrader; Milton and Elenore Keim; Janet Hunt; Audrey Seaman; Dorothy Probst; Esther Heppner; Rod Tolley; Prayers for those lost, injured and traumatized by the mass shootings across the U.S.; Continued prayers for the people of Ukraine, Sudan, and the Middle East.

FOR GOD'S PRESENCE

For those in the hospital and with medical problems known only to God and their loved ones.

For all victims of violence.

For all Gold Star parents – those who have lost sons or daughters in the military—may God be with them and comfort them in their time of loss.

FOR THOSE IN SERVICE TO OUR COUNTRY:

Earle C. Heusinger III ★★ ★ Army

Justin Hurlburt ★★ ★ Army National Guard

Jacob Kruwel ★★ ★ Army

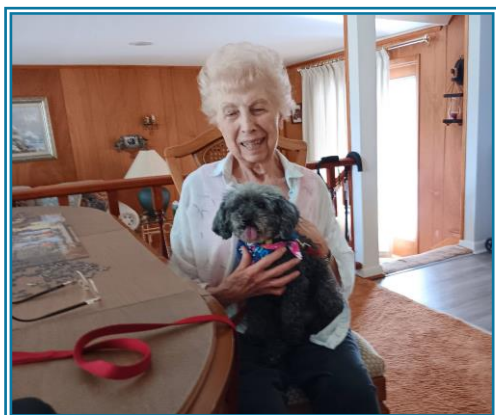
Kristin McDermott ★★ ★ Navy

Caleb Tolley ★★ ★ Air Force

Holly Tolley ★★ ★ Air Force

Jack Welsh ★★ ★ Marine Corps

And for all firefighters, EMTs, law enforcement & border officers.



Mary Jane Krantz enjoys a visit with Beau, Pastor Paula's dog

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS: *Please call ahead.

The church office hours are Monday - Thursday from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm. The office is closed on Fridays.

PASTOR OFFICE HOURS: *Please call ahead.

Rev. Paula will be in the office on Tuesdays from 10:00 am - 12:30 pm and Thursdays from 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm.

PASTORAL CARE

Rev. Paula Gustafson is available to provide pastoral care for members of St. Peter's congregation. Rev. Paula can be reached by phone at 716-476-9261 or by email at pastorpaula2021@gmail.com.

St. Peter's UCC...

Faith, Fellowship and Service

Faith in Christ,

Welcoming Fellowship

and Loving Service

FELLOWSHIP HOUR

We will continue to have Fellowship Hour once a month after worship service; on the third Sunday of each month.

Coffee, tea, and hot chocolate will be served during winter months while iced tea, lemonade, and cold drinks will be served during the warmer months.

All are welcome and we hope you will join us!



St. Peter's Council 2024

| | |
|---------------------------|-------------------|
| President/Deacon | Marina Heppner |
| Vice President/Elder | Sandy Fiegl |
| Treasurer/Deacon | Donna Albert |
| Financial Secretary/Elder | Sue Beier |
| Secretary/Deacon | Christel Kasprzak |
| Elder | Karen Buranich |
| Elder | Paul Gannon |
| Deacon | Kathy Reandeau |
| Trustees | Linda Richards |
| | Brian Welsh |



MISSION MUSINGS

Submitted by
Kathy Reandeau

Sharing Christ's love and peace with all!

The end to another year is here, the time when we share the abundant love of St. Peter's with others in our community through Thanksgiving, Christmas, and our end-of-year benevolence distributions. As I write, it is a bit early to have definite plans in place, but here is what I have so far:

Thanksgiving: Donations needed by November 24.

- Plymouth Crossroads: They would like to know what we are willing to do. Last year, we were able to provide a cooked and sliced turkey with stuffing and gravy, mashed potatoes, green bean salad, pies and beverages. It would be great if we could do that again, but they can find additional items from other church groups, if needed.
- I currently have four additional families on the list. One of them has requested a 10-12 pound turkey. More may be added.

Christmas Giving Tree: Donations needed by Dec. 18.

- Plymouth Crossroads: They will probably have 8-10 names for us this year. They don't have plans yet for Christmas dinner, but will gladly take desserts, pop, chips, dip, etc.
- There are currently two other families on the list. More may be added.

I have also reached out to Kevin Guest House, which was one of our Mission Moments earlier this year. I will let you know if they have any requests. Information will be sent out through e-mail and announced in church as more details are put in place. PLEASE LET ME KNOW if you are aware of any other needs in our community.

SIERRA LEONE/JERICHO ROAD GLOBAL OUTREACH:

Phebian Abdulai continues her medical mission at the Adama Martha Memorial Community Health Center in Sierra Leone. Thank you for supporting this life-transforming work by donating money through the bi-monthly envelopes and gently-used clothing to the clothing shed. Learn more at <https://www.jrchc.org> and visit the global work tab.

PLYMOUTH CROSSROADS: The dream of a new, permanent home has become a reality! An Open House was held in October to show off the new facilities. Plymouth also helped at Ebenezer UCC, filling trailers of donations for hurricane victims, and participated in

Project Homeless Connect 2024 at the Buffalo Convention Center.

They will hold a Bills Viewing Party Fundraising Event on Sunday, November 10 at the Ismailia Temple on Southwestern Blvd. Doors open at noon, with big screen viewing at 1:00 p.m. for the Bills vs. Colts game. A \$40/person donation includes two drink tickets, appetizers for the first half, a meal at halftime, and dessert for the second half. Event also includes a basket raffle and prize drawings. Tickets are available through Plymouth, or Linda Richards has some available in church. Visit www.plymouthcrossroads.org for more info.

CLOTHING SHED: The clothing shed collects and redistributes gently used clothing to organizations and people all over the world, and it continues to receive a great deal of donations every week. We use funds raised to support Phebian Abdulai's work in Sierra Leone. **DO NOT** put any household items, pillows, electronics, toys or books in the shed!

FOOD PANTRY: The food pantry helps address emergency food insecurity issues in our church or community, and will also fill in for any additional needs for the Thanksgiving dinners. Please put any donations in the barrel in the glass vestibule during church office hours, or contact Kathy Reandeau for a pick-up. Please contact me if you know of anyone in need of food.

NY/HELP HONDURAS: For information about mission work in Honduras, contact Ginger Comstock [gkcomstock@gmail.com], David Makepeace [dmake8@yahoo.com], or Judy Toner [jactoner45@twcny.rr.com]. Donations gratefully accepted at: NY/HELP, c/o Arcade UCC, PO Box 95, Arcade NY 14009. Make checks payable to NY/HELP.

CHURCHES IN ACTION (CIA): CIA is a Southtowns organization that was started to help local churches of different denominations work together to serve neighbors in need. In addition to international projects, they have helped furnish and settle around 20 homes for families right here in WNY. In November they will be selling shopping bags at the entry to Christmas in the Country at the Fairgrounds to support future mission projects. Checks made out to Churches in Action can also be mailed to 144 Long Ave, Hamburg NY 14075.



BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

- NOVEMBER** 10 Emma Heppner
- 14 Pam Rost
- 17 Jeffrey Mikula
- 20 Paul Dimmig
- 26 Susan Mikula
- DECEMBER** 3 Henry Heppner
- 28 Mary Jane Krantz

ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

- NOVEMBER** 28 Carl Paul & Deborah Dimmig
- DECEMBER** 30 Dave & Gloria Elersic

Join us every Sunday at 10:00 am
for in-person worship service.
All are welcome.

ST. PETER'S GIVING TREE



Our Giving Tree will be setup in the glass foyer right after Thanksgiving. Gifts will be given to families in need and the young men of Plymouth Crossroads. Anyone is welcome to take a tag, purchase the gift, and return the wrapped gift (with tag attached) to the Church Office by Wednesday, December 18th.



Tuesday, December 24

Christmas Eve service will be at 7:00 pm on Tuesday, December 24. This service will be filled with the musical sounds of the season and a candle lighting service. Please plan on joining us on Christmas Eve at 7:00 pm.



Merry Christmas

December 1, 2024
Annual Church Meeting
2025 Budget
right after worship

ADVENT DECORATING
Volunteers are needed to help decorate the Sanctuary on Sunday, December 1, right after the Budget Meeting. All are welcome to volunteer.



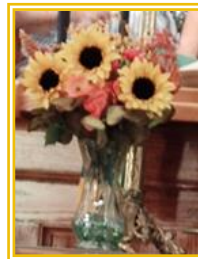
St. Peter's United Church of Christ
presents
A CHRISTMAS CONCERT
featuring
Strike The Rock
directed by Mark Kasprzak
December 8, 2024
7:00 p.m.
Free Admission
1475 Orchard Park Road, West Seneca

MEAT RAFFLE UPDATE

This year's Meat Raffle was a big success!! Thank you so much to Dan and Linda for being the moving powers behind the event, and to everyone who volunteered their time to make sure it was a success. And thank you, too, to all the guests who showed up determined to have fun and make it a great evening! We had a blast while raising funds for St. Peter's.



FALL SERMON THOUGHTS



Our will is involved in our Christian faith and practice. We need to make a decision to commit to Christ and allow our Christianity to show. Whatever happens, your faith is what strengthens you.

"What good is faith without deeds?" We need to make faith AND action a habit. Obey the law of pure love, and treat others as equally precious children in the eyes of God!

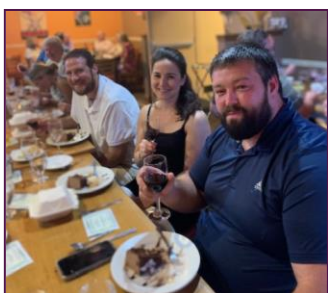
We need to set our minds on divine things, not human things. The challenge is to remain faithful through thought, actions and prayer. Prayer may not always change the outcome, but it can change us. "

We should exemplify the values of Jesus. Become like a child who is humble, open, willing to learn, and willing to serve. Vulnerability and weaknesses are okay, because we are all God's treasured children.

Think about Jesus' answer to the question of, "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" True wealth lies not in earthly possessions, but in spiritual wealth. If all we have really belongs to God in the first place, shouldn't we give Him everything, including our hearts?

FOOD & WINE PAIRING

Our Food & Wine Pairing fundraiser at Bravo Cafe & Catering on September 22 was another success! Guests enjoyed a four-course dinner with four excellent wines. What an evening of fellowship and fun! Thank you Bravo. We look forward to our next night with you in 2025.



UNITED CHURCH MANOR APARTMENT AVAILABLE

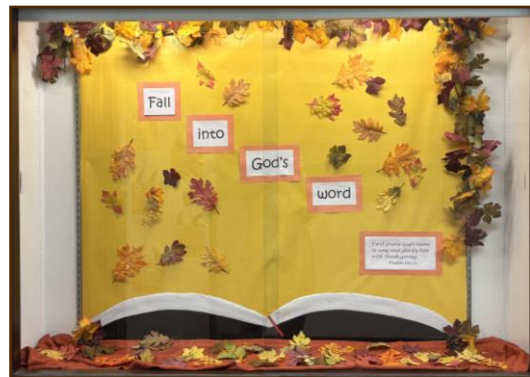
United Church Manor located at 50 North Ave in West Seneca will have a 1-bedroom apartment available December 1, 2024. The rent is \$950 a month which includes heat, electric, hot water, and cable. If you would like an application, please contact Sarah at 716-668-5804. Applicants must be 55 or older to qualify. Thank you!!

Sarah Bohnstadt,
Director of Housing



United Church Manor
50 North Ave
West Seneca, NY 14224
P 716.668.5804

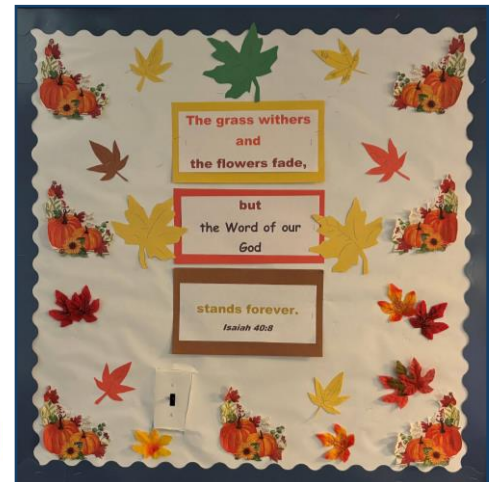
<https://www.ucmanor.org>



display by
Christel
Kasprzak



billboard by
Karen
Buranich



Scan this QR code for
St. Peter's events and
other information.





FAITH, FELLOWSHIP, SERVICE SNAPSHOTS



Game Night is Back!!



Looking for something fun to do on a Friday night? Once a month we get together to share a night of friendly fun and games. Grab your family and friends, then come join us for **GAME NIGHT!** The fun begins at 7:00 pm in the Fellowship Hall. **All are welcome!**

Bring your favorite games, snacks, and beverages to share.

November 15 | December 20



For the health and safety of all our beloved members of the congregation, please remember that if you are feeling ill you should stay home, rest, and join us for worship through our Facebook Live feed.

A circle of strength and love.
Our Family
Founded on Faith; Joined in Love