

OCTOBER 1, 2022- SEPTEMBER 30, 2023

St. Peter Annual Report

23

A Note from Pastor Ruth

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow.
Count your blessings, name them one by one.
Bless the Lord, oh my soul, worship God's holy name.*

As I look back on the 2022-2023 fiscal year, I see so many reasons to praise and bless God. They include but are not limited to:

- Welcoming visitors almost every Sunday.
- Embracing new folks (including several families with littler kids) who have decided to make St. Peter their church home.
- Working and fellowshiping together intergenerationally at our winter and spring socials.
- Continuing to be a vibrant online presence which enables us to share the good news and good things God is doing at and through St. Peter beyond the four walls of our building.
- Learning together how to be strong in God's power at a joy-filled Vacation Bible School.
- Celebrating together with Costco cake!
- Infusing traditions with new life (for instance, with the introduction of the Everybody Christmas Pageant).

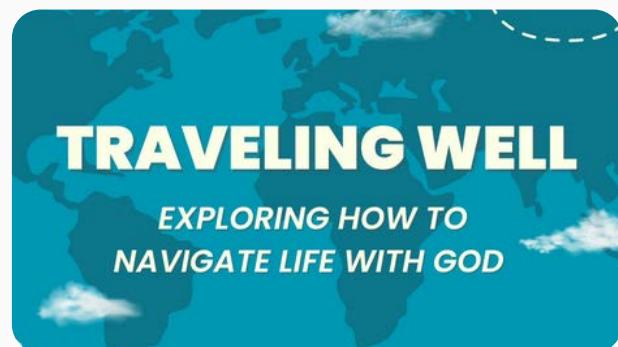
Certainly, life has mountains we have to climb as individuals and as a church. In particular, what people want from and how they are willing to contribute to their church communities has changed drastically over the last few years. We have to continue to learn how to adapt to new needs and create new models of ministry. But through the challenges ahead, we trust that God is with us, leading us with goodness and grace. When we are struggling to see God's faithfulness, may the Holy Spirit open our hearts and minds to see the blessings God has given us.

– Pastor Ruth

Worship Experiences

Sermon Series

2022-2023 sermon series helped us learn, grow, and delight in God's world.



Worship Participation

Online | Each week, an average of 118 people worshipped with us through our website and Facebook page. We reached almost 9,000 people through our online platforms and our Facebook page was visited more than 3,500 times. 37 new people "liked" our page.

In Building | We had a total of 1601 people worship in the building. Our average weekly attendance was 36.

New Communication Methods

Weekly Email | We updated our weekly email to be more visually appealing and to provide more information at a glance. Over 100 people receive the email each week.

Instagram | We joined Instagram as @stpeterunitedchurchofchrist to help us reach more people – especially younger folks who prefer this platform.

118

AVERAGE WEEKLY ONLINE
WORSHIP ATTENDANCE

9k

FACEBOOK "REACH"

3.5k

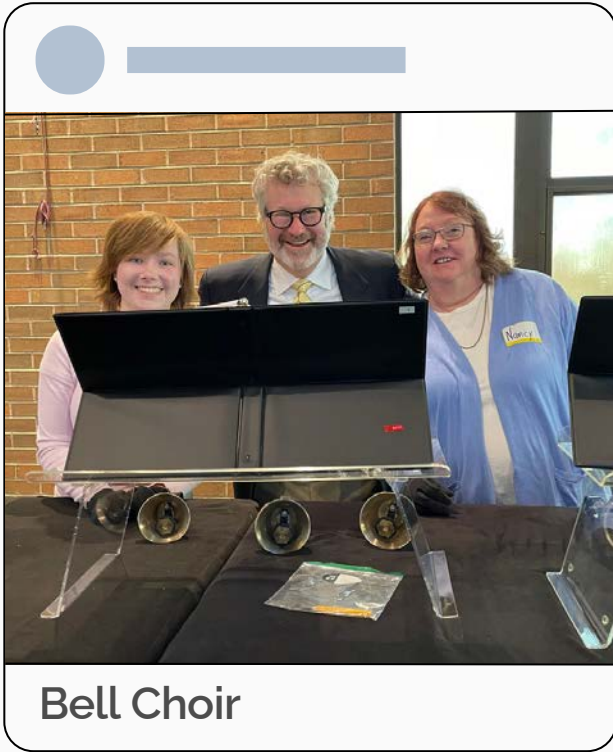
FACEBOOK VISITS

1601

TOTAL IN PERSON WORSHIP ATTENDANCE

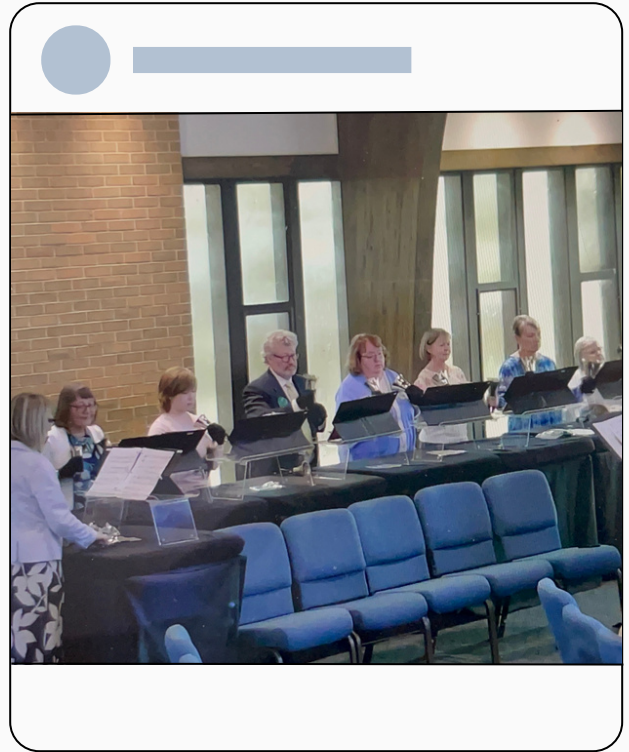
37

NEW PAGE FOLLOWS



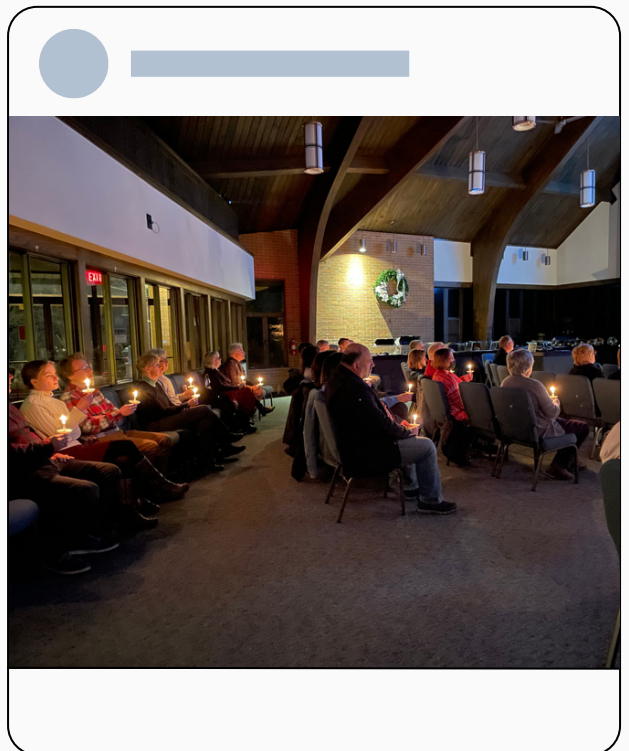
Bell Choir

Our bell choir continued under the direction of Alice Grubb. There were 14 ringers who played several times for worship services & special events.



Christmas Eve

We celebrated Jesus' birth with a candlelight Christmas Eve service.

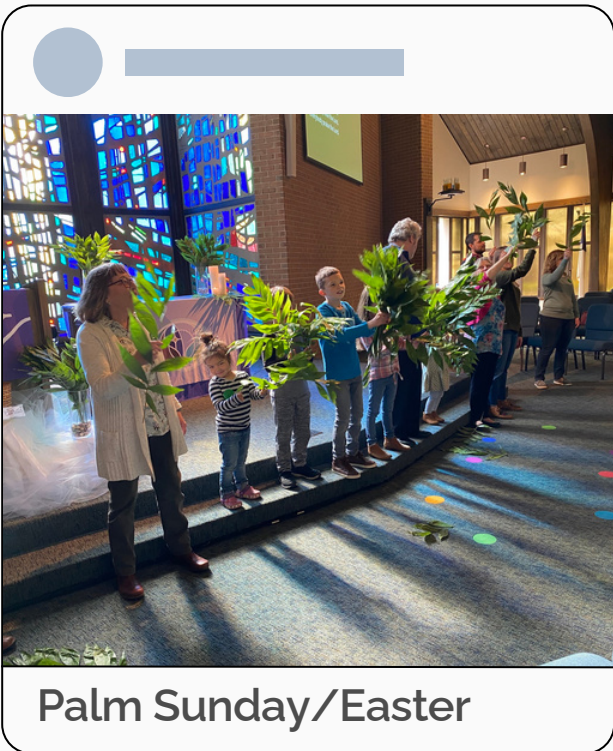




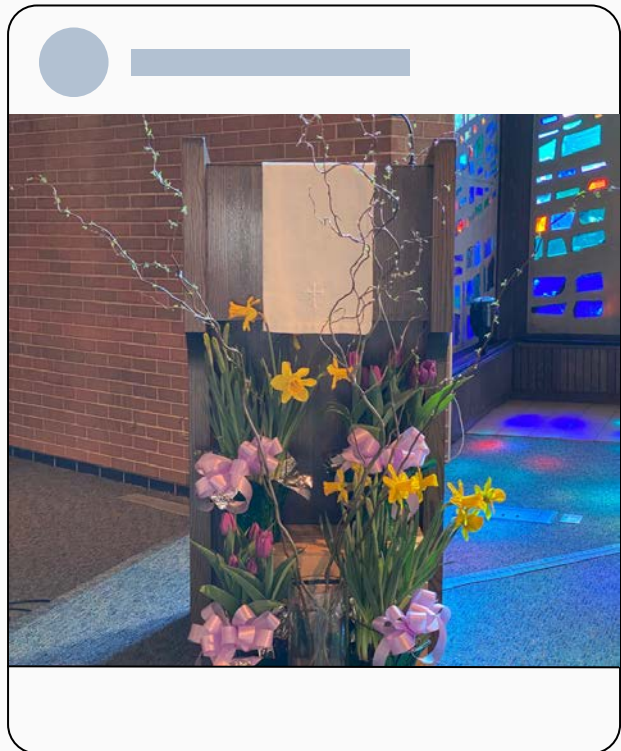
**The Everybody
Christmas Pageant**



We held our first Everybody Christmas Pageant. It was a big hit! All ages participated in telling the Christmas story – with props!



Palm Sunday/Easter



On Palm Sunday, our kids led a Palm Parade to welcome Jesus into our church. After a meaningful Lent with our Seeking series, Easter was a beautiful celebration.

Outdoor Worship

After COVID, we realized that having outdoor worship services was something we wanted to continue. In October, in tandem with our Fall Social, we worshipped outdoors and enjoyed fall flavored donut holes and apple cider. Our pets even got to join in the fun that day as they were blessed during the service! We met outside again the day of our Spring Social, worshipping in the beautiful weather before working together on cleanup & VBS prep tasks (and sharing food, of course)!



Belong

Everyone works to create a culture of oneness, unity, and togetherness.

01 **We each seek to make our church community a safe and inclusive place for all**

02 **We respect, learn from, support, and love each other unconditionally.**

03 **We continually nurture deeper relationships with each other.**

04 **We celebrate each other's gifts.**

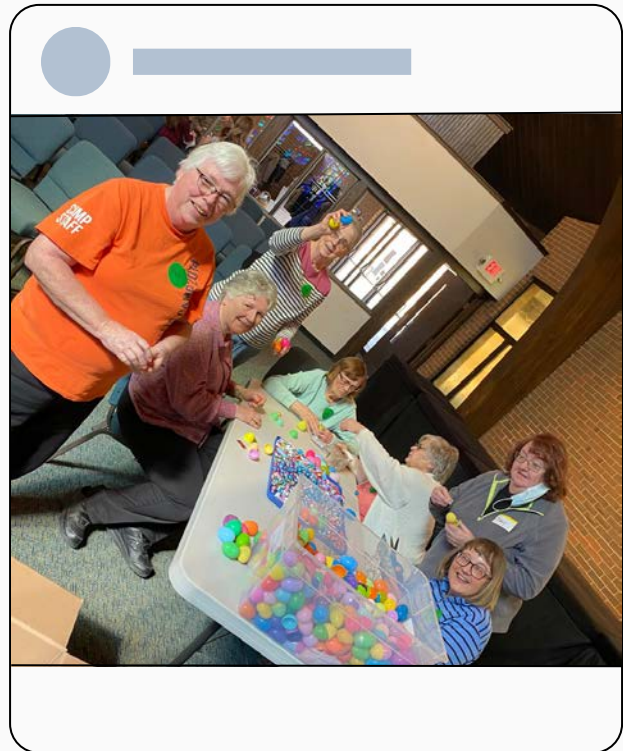
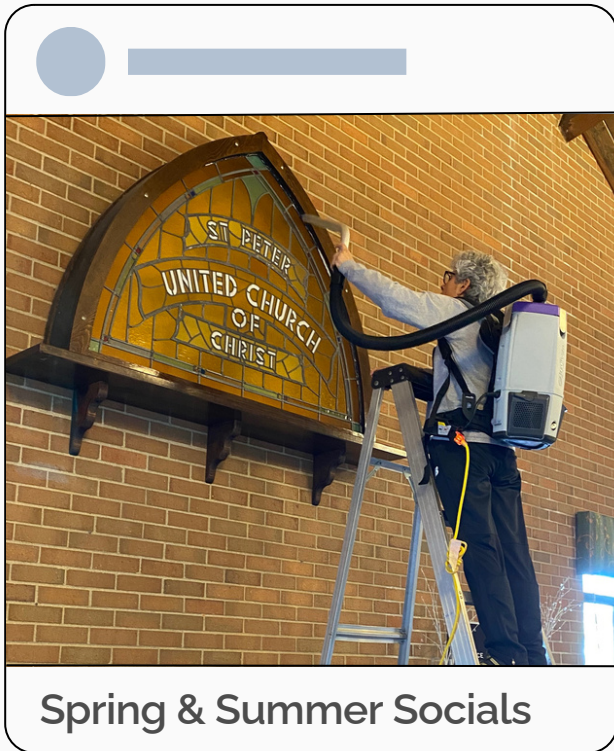
We realize this by:

01 **Offering an inclusive welcome to all (ages, orientations, genders, political/theological perspectives, etc).**

02 **Embracing those who are new to our community.**

03 **Having fun together.**

The Belong Team (led by Beverly Crumb) strove to live out these elements of our church's Vision this year by:



This spring, we gathered together to complete some indoor spruce up tasks (along with pizza & cake). Then this summer, we had an all-church ice cream social to celebrate summer, our new members, and our intern Maddie Moravek's last Sunday!

Women's Fellowship

Women's Fellowship met this year for book talks with the Ela Library, discussions about nature & faith by our own Laura Mills Danner, and gathered for luncheons. They continued their annual Terri Lynn Fruit & Nut sale as well.

Mother's & Father's Day

The Belong Team gifted chocolate to St. Peter moms on Mother's Day and donut holes to the dads to celebrate Father's Day.





Easter Egg Hunt



It was a beautiful day for hunting eggs! There were 337 plastic eggs and 10 eager children to find them all. We had cookies & juice – and prizes – for all children *and* adults. Seven helpers made sure everything was set up and running smoothly.

Visitation Team

Our Visitation Team regularly made phone calls, visited, and shared communion to those who were unable to come to Sunday services. Roughly 40 calls/visits were made this year.

Coffee Hour Team

The Coffee Hour Team (seven squads of people) continued to provide yummy goodies and beverages to promote chatting and relationship building after Sunday services.

Welcome Team

The Welcome Team greeted folks as they entered the building for worship services. As we've had many, many visitors this year, they were crucial in ensuring we were providing an extravagant welcome.

Engage

Everyone uses their gifts consistently to help our church thrive.

⁰¹ We rely on each other and, therefore, each one is needed to consistently contribute to the life of our church.

⁰² We strive to offer well-defined avenues for all (ages, orientations, genders, political/theological perspectives, etc) to be connected and involved.

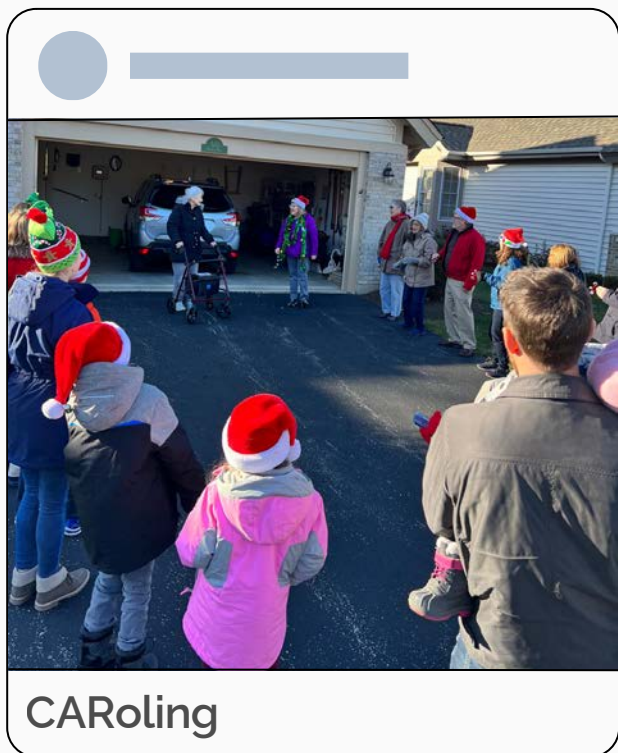
We realize this by:

⁰¹ Offering a range of times and ways in which people can participate in our life together.

⁰² Intentionally ensuring every generation is represented in our whole church decision-making.

⁰³ Supporting the next generation of leaders as they grow into their roles and encourage new ideas and creativity through the regular rotation of our leaders.

The Engage Team (led by Linda Davis) strove to live out these elements of our church's Vision this year by:



CARoling

Close to 20 merry-makers drove around spreading cheer and singing carols at the homes of three of our shut-ins!

Stewardship Campaign

The Engage team led a stewardship campaign. The campaign invited each member of our community to generously give of their time and energy – helping with essential church tasks – along with financial resources.

Assembly Leadership

The Engage team brainstormed and finalized the Assembly leadership slate for the 2023-2024 Fiscal Year.

Member List Update

The Engage team also updated church member information and the membership list, per the church Bylaws, bringing the membership rolls up-to-date after COVID.

Kitchen Cleanout

The Engage team gathered volunteers to clean and organize the church kitchen.



We had a lot of helpers decorate the church for the Christmas season – many even came in the week before to get a head start on decorating!

Prayer Gathering

The Tuesday Prayer Gathering grew this year with about 5 women coming to pray weekly over the emailed prayer list.



Act

Everyone gives of themselves in service to our neighborhood and beyond, inspired and energized to act by the love of God.

01 **We walk the talk of our faith not just at church events, but in everything we do.**

02 **We live the Gospel, encouraging all to love as Jesus loved.**

03 **We create a world of justice and hope for all.**

We realize this by:

01 **Graciously offering help to those in need.**

02 **Holding our world in prayer.**

The Act Team (led by Sandra Frampton) sponsored the following events to help our church serve our community and world:



Feed My Starving Children

The Women's Book Study group and friends served at Feed My Starving Children. With the help of the other volunteers in the session, FMSC will be able to feed 56 children for one year!

Meals on Wheels

We have continued to support Meals on Wheels, with 8 individuals/teams giving of their time delivering meals to around 8-10 seniors every four weeks.

Gift of Love

At Christmas, we delivered over 150 much-needed household items and over \$200 in gift cards to those staying at Lake County Haven.





Tommy Turkey

We delivered over 20 baskets of food to Joanie's Closet which were delivered to local families, including many Ukrainian refugees, to enjoy for Thanksgiving.



Girl Scout Program

Pastor Ruth led 10 Lake Zurich Girl Scouts (4 of whom are part of the St. Peter community) in faith-based activities during the My Faith, My Promise Workshop.



Piecemakers

The Piecemakers celebrated 10 years of quilting to support women and children fleeing domestic abuse. During their decade together, they have sewn almost 1,500 handmade quilts and too-many-to-count hand-tied fleece blankets and other handmade items.



VBS Mission Project

This year, VBS kids, their families, and members of the St. Peter community donated items to be shared with families facing natural disasters, violence, or grinding poverty. We collected enough items and monetary donations to make 47 hygiene kits – that's over 300 individual items!

5 for 5 Offerings

Every year, United Church of Christ congregations are encouraged to support the work of our denomination by participating in five special offerings. Thanks to all who gave for their generosity!

STRENGTHEN
THE CHURCH

\$232.50

NEIGHBORS
IN NEED

\$232.50

OUR CHURCH'S
WIDER MISSION

\$1175

ONE GREAT HOUR
OF SHARING

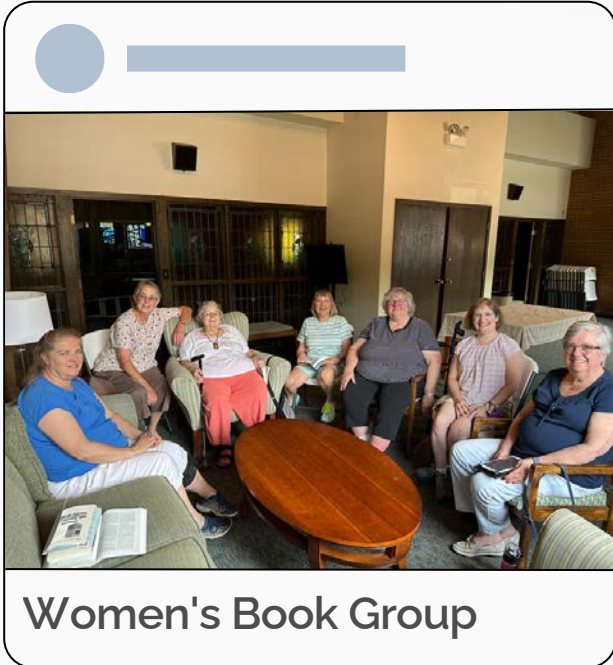
\$868

CHRISTMAS FUND

\$1155



Christian Education



The Women's Book group of about ten ladies continued to meet weekly. They discussed two more of the *Sensible Shoes* book series and *The Sacred Pulse* by April Fiet.

Our Daily Bread

Our Daily Bread quarterly devotionals were made available for personal quiet time.

Compassion Discussion Group

Many joined a January/February discussion group with conversation loosely based on *Living Compassion: Loving Like Jesus* by Andrew Dreitcer.

Listening Lab

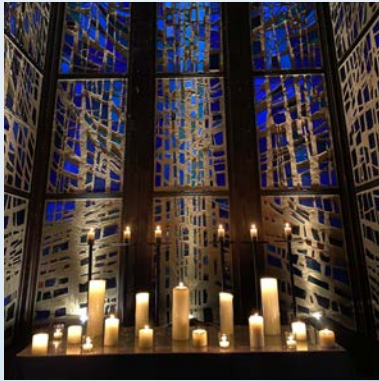
In the spring, many participated in Listening Lab, a 4-week program where participants from middle schoolers through adults learned a new listening skill each week and practiced it together in groups.



We had 21 kids join us as Knights of North Castle at VBS this summer. They learned how to armor up with truth, justice, peace, faith, and God's strength during our time together. We had lots of help from the congregation who purchased/let us borrow items; volunteers who helped decorate; and those who led our stations & groups each day. Seven teens and eight adults helped run VBS.

Kids' Sunday School

20 K-5th graders participated in Sunday School. We had 3 kids in Confirmation class (grades 6-8) and 3 second graders received Bibles through our SteppingStones program.



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