

A DECEMBER TO REMEMBER AT ST. PETER'S

Mother nature made herself known in December and St. Peter's had to pivot and re-schedule to make celebrating the birth of our Savior a memorable one for our church family and community. On Saturday, December 20, St. Peter's hosted a Christmas Celebration. Families came to hear the story of Jesus, make crafts, holiday shop and visit with a special visitor, Santa! An original and ornate chair from Miller and Rhoads was donated for our special guest and celebration.

We would like to thank all our St. Peter's family for donating your time and talents and making this celebration a joyous occasion for so many families.



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Thank you once again to all who participated in the Christmas Choir, St. Peter's Joyful Noise! I appreciate your time and dedication and also Pastor Gretchen's willingness to step in and direct. (Truly a godsend.) Preparing music together was so rewarding, I thought maybe we could do it again for Easter Sunday. Stay tuned for more information.

Also, could anyone interested in "resurrecting" the Chime Choir in time for Easter (pun intended) please email me? There are a handful of us left from the original group and, I believe, several new people interested in giving it a try. We'll need to spend some time assigning chimes and ramping up the new members, but I wanted to gauge interest first and then come up with a time we could all meet.

To anyone interested in sharing a music ministry during regular church services, outside of these groups, please also feel free to email me or stop by the piano after church. Solos, duets, groups, whatever music you feel moved to share in this new year. To my regulars, please reach out to me with new songs you're working on and let's get them on the calendar!

We are so blessed at St. Peter's to have so many willing to share their musical talents. Thank you all!

Harmonious regards,
Christy Gilman-Booker
christy.gilman@gmail.com



February Birthdays

Yeeva Chunnanond	2
Gavin Booker	7
Tyree Covington	15
Angela Tee	15
Mark Booker	16
Luc Gilman	21
Emma Gilman	21
Greg Vig	23
Jeff Stockwell	27

ST. PETERS UMC FINANCIAL INFORMATION	DECEMBER 2025	YEAR TO DATE
Donations to the Budget Account	47,407.00	301,907.00
Transferred from Savings	None	None
Budget Account expenses	13,487.00	241,308.00
Gain/Loss	33,920.00	60,599.00

ELDERBERRIES LUNCHEON

The Elderberries will meet on Friday, February 6 at 11:30 at Around the Table in Ashland. Sign up at church, call the church office or text Ruth Smith at 804-216-1260.
All are welcome!



Young Adults Small Group

Who: Open to anyone ages 17-30
Facilitated by Sarah & Noah Parks
What & Why? A regular gathering to make connections and grow in our spiritual lives
When: Tuesday nights, 7-8:30 pm
Where: Sarah & Noah's house
Bumpass, VA (text Sarah for address)
How to participate: text Sarah @ 434-282-8493 for information!

Men's Group News

Our next regular meeting is scheduled for 8am on February 14th at Kitchen 33 & Bakery. Join us for breakfast, fellowship, and a discussion on ongoing and new projects. These meetings are typically brief, focusing mainly on bonding with other Christian men.

Luncheon: We meet on the 3rd Friday of every other month. We had a great time at The Eagles Nest Restaurant last month. Watch for location of our luncheon in March.

Wheelchair Ramp Initiative: We have 6 ramps installed at this time. If you know someone who needs a temporary wheelchair ramp, please let us know.

Firewood Ministry: We've made several deliveries to WHEAT clients who needed firewood.

Ongoing Support: We handle small repairs and maintenance issues for those in need in our church and community. Please let us know if we can assist you or someone you know.

Donations: If you would like to make a monetary donation to our group, please make your check out to St. Peter's UMC and write "Men's Group" in the memo line; or visit the church website, click **GIVE** in the upper right hand corner, insert your amount, and select "**Men's Group**" from the drop-down list; or simply drop your donation in the offering plate with a note "**Men's Group**".

Subscribe: If you would like to be added to our mailing list, click below and stay in the loop! [Click here to subscribe](#)

We welcome you to join us at any of our meetings or projects. No special talents are required—just come for the fellowship! If you have any questions, please contact us at MenOfStPeters@stpetersumc.org or call Butch at 804-496-1399.

May God continue to bless us all!



PRAYER CONCERNS: **Missionaries:** Our covenant missionaries to the Congo: Gaston Nkulu Ntambo **Our Military:** Matt Chapman, Madison Siple, Ayden Carter **Children:** Taylor Macaulay, Gavin Yonce, Jackson Andrews, Teddy D.

Prayer Requests: Denny Waldrop, David Forlines, Bob Roberts, Patty Shortridge, Bernie Stanley, Cameron Smith, David Forlines, Chris McClain, Ellen Stanley, Ryan Spencer, Hayden Smith

Always in Our Prayers: Pastor Gretchen and family

MISSIONS AT ST. PETER'S

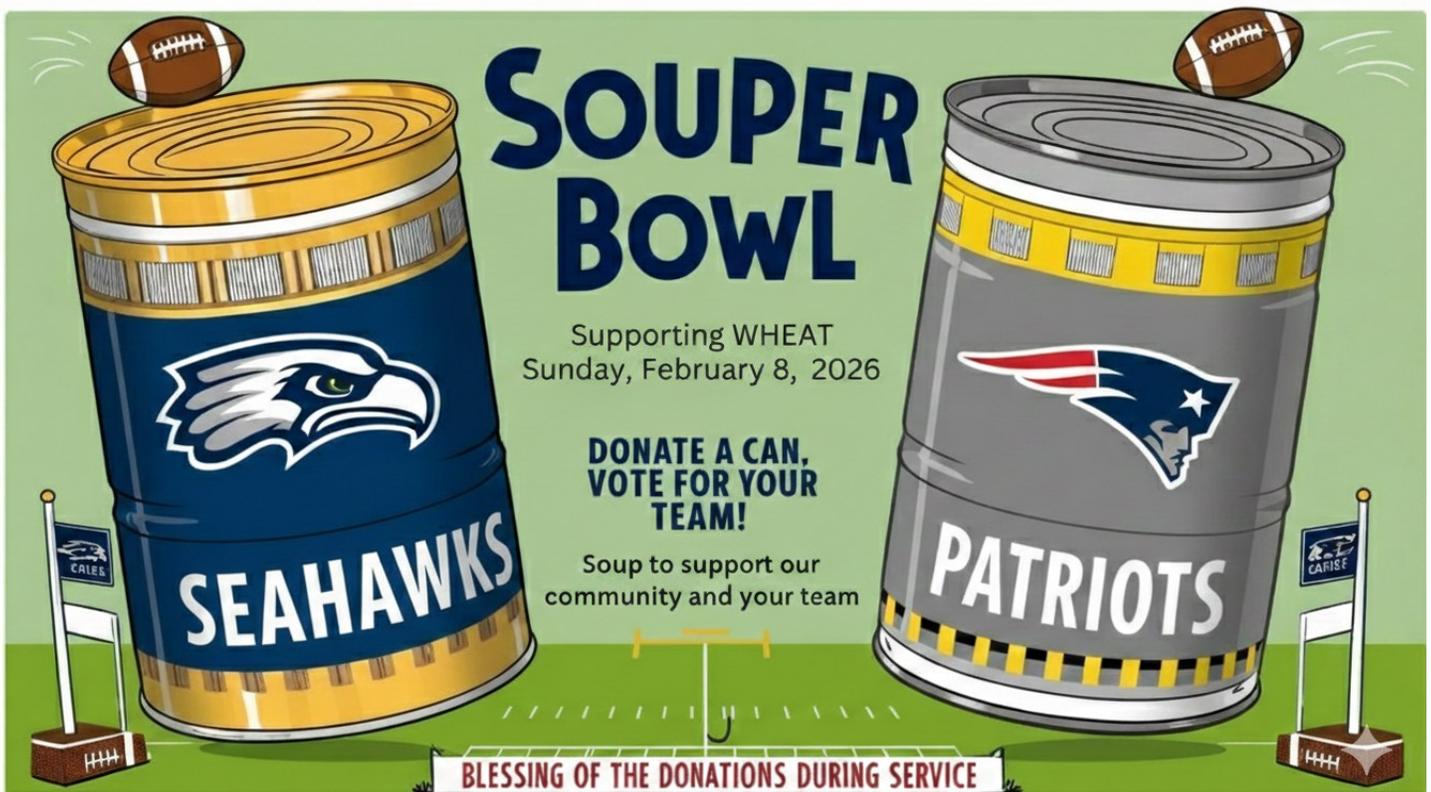
Join Us for Our "Souper Bowl" – February 8!

It's almost time for the *Souper Bowl*, and St. Peter's is once again turning friendly competition into faithful service! On Sunday, February 8, we invite everyone to bring canned soup donations to church and join in a fun and meaningful way to give back.

Before worship, place your soup on the altar in the box of the team you think will win — **New England or the Seattle Seahawks** — and help us see which side can collect the most. Bragging rights are on the line, but the real victory is supporting our neighbors in need.

All soup donations will benefit **Western Hanover Emergency Action Team (WHEAT)**, helping provide food and hope to families in our community. Be a "souper" good sport and help us fill these donation boxes!

So grab a few cans, pick your team, and let's make this Souper Bowl one that truly feeds others. Together, we can turn a little fun into a big impact! As we come together for this Souper Bowl, let's remember that true greatness isn't found in the score of a game, but in how we serve one another. Jesus taught us that when we give to those in need, we are serving Him (Matthew 25:40).



MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Join us on Sunday, May 3, for our annual Rise Against Hunger mission as we package meals. As we prepare for this event, we are raising funds to support this cause. If you would like to make a donation, please note on the memo line of your check or envelope, "Rise Against Hunger". If giving online, select "Donations for Missions". Please contact the church office if you have any questions at 804-883-5596.

Rise
AGAINST HUNGER

UPDATES FROM PASTOR GRETCHEN

Ash Wednesday - February 18th, 6:30 - 8 AM

Community Drive through Ashes at Montpelier Center with Beaverdam UMC. St. Peter's Sanctuary open for prayers from 9:30 AM - noon.

Begin your Lenten journey with a mark of prayerful commitment.

Sundays in Lent Feb 22 - March 29

Paul's Travels: Journey from Head to Heart

Explore Paul's travels alongside our Lenten faith journey.

Examine challenges faced by Paul and the early churches, to gain insight into the enduring power of Christ to transform lives and societies, even today. Travel Paul's journey from head to heart faith.

Lenten Bible Study — Wednesdays 12-1 PM — Feb 18 - April 1

Together we will spend time exploring scripture in prayer and conversation as we journey through this season of spiritual growth.

This will be offered as a Hybrid (in-person and Zoom). Bring a light lunch.

Join in on your lunch break from work.

Let the Church Office know of your interest.

Virginia General Assembly is in session. As people of faith we are called on to pray for our leaders in every aspect of community life. Let us practice praying for and with those elected, appointed, and support staff of our commonwealth. Pray for your representatives by name. Follow legislation, lifting up prayers for citizens impacted by decisions made. <https://vga.virginia.gov/engage/members-and-committees/>

Also consider participating with other United Methodists around this conference: UM Day at the General Assembly — February 12th <https://vaumc.org/umday/>

AUMC journey to Faithful Resistance DC — February 25

A Public Witness for Immigrant Justice

Join ecumenical and interfaith leaders (including United Methodists from Virginia) and communities in Washington, DC, for a public witness grounded in worship, moral courage, and solidarity with our neighbors.

Gathering. Worship. Peaceful Procession. Witness. Meet with legislators.

<https://faithful-resistance.squarespace.com/>

Watch for more information to come about local prayer services and events.

Resisting Racial Injustice Conference — February 28

On Saturday, February 28, the Racial Justice Network (RJN) is hosting the **Resisting Racial Injustice in the Way of Jesus Conference** at Belmont UMC in Richmond. The RJN is an informal group of persons from different churches and backgrounds building strong cross-racial relationships; working together to learn and address racial justice issues.

The keynote speaker for the conference is Rev. Ben Campbell,

In addition, three workshops will be offered:

- *Conversations as Resistance* with **Rev. Lan Wilson**, VAUMC Director of Belonging and Advocacy
- *Non-violent Direct Action as Resistance* with **Rev. Dr. Jim Melson**, Executive Director of Cornelius Corps
- *Spiritual Formation as Resistance* with **Rev. Tom Baynham**, Richmond Hill Director of Outreach and Spiritual Formation.

The registration link is available [here](#) and in the flyer at the button below.

Questions? Email racialjnetwork@gmail.com or call 804-521-1124.

Walk for Peace/Praying for peace

Weather permitting, the Town of Ashland is anticipating the Buddhist monks (who have been on a months-long walk for peace across this country) arriving to Randolph-Macon campus Monday, February 2nd. It is anticipated that a crowd will gather to welcome them to town and perhaps have time with them in the student athletic center. Hold this movement in your prayers each day.

PASTOR PONDERINGS

February. Hearts abound.

As I pack away our Christmas trimmings this month, I am setting out festive Valentines' ornaments. It is not a holiday I spend a lot of energy with as I believe love is best celebrated often, all year round. Thus it surprises me how many heart objects I have in my home. Only a few were actually obtained for observance of St. Valentine's Day.

This made me wonder how I have acquired so many hearts. Some were gifts from Mike, family, and church folk over the years. Love is after all a deeply rooted Christian theme, family expression, romantic image, and symbol for meaningful love shared with all of God's creation. Others I chose to celebrate God's steadfast love for all of us.

Looking around me I see the gift of a pottery tea light holder with cutout hearts which cast shadows when lit, a serving bowl I picked out from a dear favorite VA potter, a crystal candy dish from my mother, a heart shaped ladybug painted rock from a parishioner, and tea towels from a friend gift exchange years ago. All of these highlight different experiences of love I have shared throughout my life. They move around my home seasonally, but in January and February I cluster them in highly visible spaces to honor God's gifts of loving relationships in my life. I do this with purpose in this wintry season. These visual blessings point me to a deeply valuable love which they reflect - God's abundant, unconditional, never-failing, wondrous love.

Origins of St. Valentines' Day remind me what power one person has to reshape life's circumstances towards hope. My unintentional collection of hearts is a witness to divine love. A love Jesus taught and lived. A love he challenged us to bear when he said: "I give you a new commandment, Love one another as I have loved you." John 13:34, 15:12 Let all those hearts which emerge everywhere this month be a call to action to bear God's love into this world within every encounter and relationship.

"Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law." Romans 13:8:

"What can separate us from God's love? I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers nor things present, nor things to come...will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus." Romans 8:38-39

Love in Christ,
Pastor Gretchen



2026 St. Peter's Leadership

Church Council Members

Chair - Leon Stockwell
Secretary – Noah Parks
Lay Delegate to Annual Conference - TBA
SPR – Dani Stockwell
Finance - Mike Williams
Treasurer - Mike Williams
Asst Treasurer - Holli Forlines
Trustees - Tom Gilman
Worship Arts - Vacant - *Is God calling you to serve as Worship Arts' chair?*
Missions - Kendall Covington
Lay Leader - Brian Davis
Delegate to District Conference - Brian Davis
Children/Youth - TBA
Music - TBA
Scouts - Chuck Sullivan
Members at Large - Phyllis Wiggins, Shelley Horton
Men's Group - Butch Jackson
Youth Representative - Abby Davis
Pastor - Gretchen Nelson

SPR Committee

2026 – Jean Davis
2026 – Dani Stockwell (chair)
2027 – Bryan Nevius
2028 – Bobbie Tyree
2028 – Josh Covington
Lay Leader – Brian Davis
Lay Member to AC – TBA
Pastor Gretchen Nelson

Board of Trustees

2026 – Tom Gilman (chair)
2026 – Kenny Tyree
2026 – Johnny Gentry
2027 – Anna Williams
2028 – Greg Vig
2028 – Mark Booker

Committee on Nominations and Leadership Development

2026 – Anne Vig
2027 – Sarah Parks
2027 – Mike Williams
2028 – Judy Kimmel
2028 – Ruth Smith
Lay Leader - Brian Davis
Pastor - Gretchen Nelson (chair)

Committee on Finance

Mike Williams (chair)
Lay Member to AC - TBA
Council Chair - Leon Stockwell
SPR Chair – Dani Stockwell
Trustees Chair - Tom Gilman
Lay Leader - Brian Davis
Business Administrator - Amanda Bishoff
Assistant Treasurer - Holli Forlines
Chuck Sullivan
Anne Vig

Bundle up, because February is blowing in with chilly weather and LOTS of giggles! Before we dive into all the fun ahead, let's take a look at what we've been up to!

December was merry, bright, and full of excitement! Our Christmas party was a wonderful success and the **Children's Book Exchange** was such a fun way to share stories and encourage reading. We also exchanged delicious Christmas cookies. YUM!!

We extend a warm **thank you to our families for the thoughtful gifts** given to our staff. Your kindness and generosity truly warmed our hearts.

January brought a fresh start to a new year, along with lots of hands-on learning! This month we explored: Arctic animals and cold weather, Penguins, and dinosaurs



We also welcomed a new student to our classroom community — **the Woodcock Family**. We are so happy to have you with us!

February Fun Overload:

Dental Health (Say "CHEESE!" ☐)

Shadows (Peek-a-boo sunshine!)

Emotions (Happy, silly, sleepy, and everything in between!)

Presidents (Learning about leaders!)

Money Sorting (Coins go *clink!* Counting fun!)

CIRCUS TIME to end the month — get your popcorn ready! ☐☐♂

Save the Date!

♥ Our **Valentine's Day Party & Card Exchange** will be on **February 13 at 12:00** Get those valentines ready — it's going to be adorable!



Emilia sharing a snack from Columbia



Cookie Exchange was a delicious success!



Working on eye hand coordination



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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

OUR VISION STATEMENT

We envision our church welcoming all people, encouraging a journey of faith, and serving the world in the name of Christ.

