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### SPRING HAPPENINGS

As the warm weather arrives and trees and flowers start blooming, St. Peter's is blooming with many events and activities. We are excited to continue to share God's love with our St. Peter's family and community and look forward to the many fellowship opportunities in the coming weeks.

April 1 - We will hold a **community fellowship dinner** at 6:00 PM in the fellowship hall. Dinner includes spaghetti, salad, roll, and dessert. \$5.00 per person or \$20.00 per family.

April 2 - **Maundy Thursday** at 7:00 PM in the sanctuary. Journey with Jesus as six of his companions offer their reflections on life with him during this last week. Honor Jesus' with prayer and communion



### Holy Week & Easter

April 3 - **Good Friday Contemplative Service** at 7:00 PM in the sanctuary. Worship in prayerful contemplation together through stations of the cross. A Journey with Jesus through his final hours.

April 5 - **Sonrise Service** at St. Peter's Cemetery at 7:00 AM with breakfast immediately following in the fellowship hall. Gather and greet Jesus' six companions again as they experience the empty tomb and risen Lord.

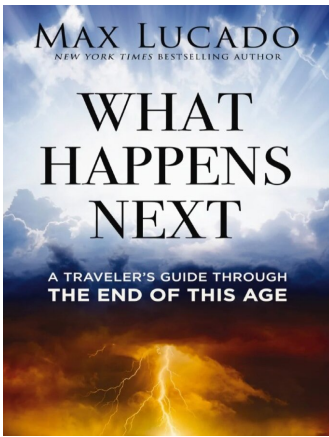
April 5 - Join us for a special **Resurrection Celebration Worship Service** at 10:00 AM (\* read about Easter Flowers on next page) With joyful alleluias come and praise God's greatest gift of new life, new hope. Bring all your friends and neighbors to celebrate.

April 17 - **Game Night!** Join us for a fun night of games, fellowship and friendly competition and laughter. 5:30-7:30 in the fellowship hall.

April 26 - **Scout Sunday** - Join us as we honor scouting in our community. Support all our local scouts in leadership. 10:00 AM

*\*\*Pastor Gretchen will be observing an extra Sabbath Rest Monday, April 6th and Colleague Retreat time Thursday, April 9th - Friday, April 10th.*





**LADIES BIBLE STUDY**

The Ladies' Bible Study is continuing to meet on Thursday mornings from 10:00-11:30 in the church parlor. The book we are studying is "What Happens Next" by Max Lucado. We will be meeting throughout May and April. Judy Kimmel will lead this study.

Please join us. All are welcome!

Sign up at church or text Ruth Smith @ 804-216-1260



**April Birthdays**

- Karen Siple 7
- Ginny Sirc 11
- Millie Simmers 13
- Sarah Parks 14
- Bryan Nevius 15
- Lee Gentry 22
- Katherine Stockwell 22
- Tara Forlines 23
- Aubrey Kahler 23
- George Eanes 24
- Bill Horton 27
- Leon Stockwell 30



**EASTER SUNDAY FLOWERS**

On Easter Sunday, April 5, we are going to create an Easter cross of flowers. We are asking if each family could bring a small bouquet of flowers/ stems which will be placed on the cross. If you have any questions, please reach out to the church office.

**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!

<b>ST. PETERS UMC FINANCIAL INFORMATION</b>	<b>FEBRUARY 2026</b>	<b>YEAR TO DATE</b>
Donations to the Budget Account	\$10,971.00	\$30,752.00
Transferred from Savings	None	None
Budget Account expenses	\$19,179.00	\$39,749.00
Gain/Loss	-\$8,208.00	-\$8,996.00

## **MEN'S GROUP NEWS**

**Next Meeting:** Our next Men's Group gathering will be on **Saturday, April 11th at 8am** at **Kitchen 33 & Bakery**. Join us for breakfast, fellowship, and a conversation about our ongoing and upcoming projects. These meetings are usually brief—just enough time to connect, encourage one another, and strengthen our bonds as Christian men.

**Easter Breakfast:** We will be preparing and serving breakfast in the fellowship hall immediately following the Sunrise Service. Come enjoy a warm meal and time together—our treat.

**Luncheon:** Our bi-monthly luncheon meets on the **third Friday of every other month**. The next one will be on **Friday, May 15th at 1pm**. Location to be determined. The fellowship is great.

**Wheelchair Ramp Ministry:** We currently have **five ramps installed**. If you know someone who needs a temporary wheelchair ramp, please reach out.

**Firewood Ministry:** We've made several deliveries to WHEAT clients in need of firewood. Our group also harvested multiple trees donated by church and community members and split a large amount of wood together, helping us rebuild our supply and continue serving families who rely on wood heat. Feel free to join us on April 18<sup>th</sup> for another Wood Splitting Party at The Church of Our Saviour wood yard. We start at 8am, but come when you like.

**Church Maintenance:** Our members have completed several maintenance projects around the church and assisted a WHEAT client with plumbing repairs.

**Ongoing Support:** We continue to help with small repairs and maintenance needs for individuals in our church and community. If you or someone you know needs assistance, please let us know.

**Donations:** If you'd like to support the Men's Group financially, you may:

- Write a check to **St. Peter's UMC** with "**Men's Group**" in the memo line
- Visit the church website, click **GIVE**, enter your amount, and select "**Men's Group**" from the drop-down menu

Place a donation in the offering plate with a note marked "**Men's Group**"

**Subscribe:** Want to stay informed? Join our mailing list by clicking [here to subscribe](#).

We'd love to have you join us for any meeting or project. No special skills required—just a willing heart for fellowship and service.

If you have questions, contact us at [MenOfStPeters@stpetersumc.org](mailto:MenOfStPeters@stpetersumc.org) or call **Butch at 804-496-1399**.

**May God continue to bless us all!**

## ST. PETER'S UNITED METHODIST CH\_\_CH

### What's missing? UR (YOU ARE)

We need YOU! After every church service or event, please remember that it is everyone's responsibility to ensure our building is cared for. This includes making sure doors are locked and firmly closed, lights are turned off, trash is disposed of properly, and spaces are left clean. Let's all do our part and work together to be good stewards of our beloved church.

Thank you!

Trustees Committee



**We are going to pack 20,000 meals to help feed the hungry!**

Please join us for a meaningful and fun meal-packaging experience at St Peter's UMC. All are welcome! Invite folks from work, your neighbors, classmates, and friends.

We look forward to seeing you and doing good with you! Be on the lookout for the fundraiser board outside the sanctuary to support this effort! Donations can be made by taking a Rise Against Hunger envelope from the missions fundraiser board and placing in the offering. Choose the colored envelope with the monetary amount you'd like to give, remove the small surprise inside the envelope to remind you of God's love, and then return the envelope with your designated donation amount by placing in the offering plate. Donations can also be made thru the church office, or online thru St Peters UMC website at <https://onrealm.org/StPetersUMC/-/form/give/now> and choosing Donations for Missions or Rise Against Hunger in the dropdown. Together we can reach \$8,000 to support communities across the globe fight hunger and pack 20,000 meals.

**When: Sunday, May 3, 2026 - Lunch and Packing Event Following the 10AM Service**

**Where: St Peter's UMC Fellowship Hall - 5599 Mountain Rd, Montpelier, Virginia 23192**

## A NOTE FROM PASTOR GRETCHEN

“April showers bring May flowers.”

When I was growing up mom said this on repeat throughout April every year. As a teen I wondered if it was from a poem. It is not. While it has been incorporated into many various poems over time, it is a stand alone proverb that originates from England. I am not sure what Mom found meaningful about that line and I never got a chance to ask. Still, every year her voice echoes through my thoughts.

I am amazed at what stays with us from our life experiences. How many generations was this one line, this spring chant, a proverb focused on hope, passed from parent to child? How many cultures and countries have something similar? This reflection on our natural world speaks to a truth we know from experience. Seasons change. There are ongoing cycles that we can count on. Rain, no matter what we feel about its persistent presence, nurtures beautiful flowering plants, waking creation to life after gray winters.

As followers of Jesus this phrase speaks to our trust in God's promises of new life, resurrection in Christ. As Western Hemisphere residents our celebration of Easter falls in Spring; just when trees and all sorts of plants are budding and bursting forth. Spring rains foster an array of blossoming life. All of which we lift up as witness to resurrection faith. We might compose another saying: “Cross and tomb bring life eternal.” Something horrible. Horrific external actors of state sanctioned torture, murder, execution, and a grave. Now presents an extraordinary, unexpected, mysterious, miraculous experience. Good news breaks forth from what was once expected finality. On Easter we proclaim a ridiculous truth. Death does not stay dead. By God's love, death is transformed, reconciled, restored to fullest life. We profess with glorious “Alleluias” that Jesus is a great man who taught great lessons and performed great acts of mercy and compassionate healing AND that Jesus, God incarnate, defeats our greatest trial, overcoming death itself. Like life returning to creation each Spring is a witness to God's faithfulness, Jesus rising from death not only gives witness to this truth, Christ embodies it for all generations to experience. My mother's repetition of this phrase became routine for me. So much that it is a part of my DNA which I pass on to you in this conversation. Some years it is memory. Some years it is background noise. Some years it is glorious praise. I do not always recognize its importance to me or its formation of me. Just as our faith and practice as followers of Jesus can be any and all of these, yet remains foundational to who we are in that relationship. Not every Easter feels the same. Different years and seasons bring their unique experiences to that unfolding just as every spring bloom emerges in variety. What remains steadfast is God's ongoing faithfulness, a promise in hope, for life, with each generation. We can trust that no matter what we face in any given year, Jesus is risen and raises us up to new life with him. Through all rainstorms we look to Jesus who is our pioneer and perfecter of faith; to plant and cultivate us to bloom and grow fruit of this new life, transforming this world by God's restorative love. Blessings for you this Spring blooming. Blessings for full Easter alleluias in your life.

“Now stay focused on Jesus, who designed and perfected our faith. He endured the cross and ignored the shame of that death because He focused on the joy that was set before Him; and now He is seated beside God on the throne, a place of honor.” — *Hebrews 12:2, The Voice Translation*

Pastor Gretchen



## Holy Humor Sunday

Sunday, April 12th come and worship with great joy as we celebrate Holy Humor Sunday. Celebrate the joy of the Lord together proclaiming and rejoicing that Jesus' resurrection, ascension, and gift of the Holy Spirit is God's Last laugh over death. An extension of Easter Joy, this day is also known as Hilarity Sunday, God's Laughter Sunday, Bright Sunday or Holy Fools Sunday.

This special worship has a long and rich history in many congregations around the world. Churches in 15th century Bavaria used to celebrate the Sunday after Easter as *Risus Paschalis* ('God's Joke,' or 'the Easter laugh'). "Priests would deliberately include amusing stories and jokes in their sermons in an attempt to make the faithful laugh. After the service, people would gather together to play practical jokes on one another and tell funny stories. It was their way of celebrating the resurrection of Christ – the supreme joke God played on the devil by raising Jesus from the dead." (The Joyful Noiseletter, 2010)

Join in worship with joy and laughter on Sunday, April 12th. Wear bright colors and silly hats. Put on a fun outfit. Dress backwards or inside out. Prepare all the days before:

- Practice smiling a lot (try looking in the mirror).
- Get those jokes and stories ready to tell.
- Begin rejoicing in God now (no need to wait).
- Try on a few good laughs.
- Invite someone who likes to laugh.

Invite someone who needs to laugh.

*"These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full."* (John 15:11)

*"Happy are you who weep now; you shall laugh."* (Luke 6:21)



**St. Peter's  
Game Night**

**Third Friday of each month  
in the Fellowship Hall**

**5:30 PM – 7:30 PM**

This event is open to people of all  
ages and game preferences

**If you would like to bring a  
game, great!  
This is not a requirement.**

Hope to see you there!

The poster features a dark blue background with various colorful board game pieces and cards scattered around the text.



**COMMUNITY  
FELLOWSHIP**  
Dinner

.....

Spaghetti, Salad, Rolls &  
Dessert

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1**  
6:00 PM  
FELLOWSHIP HALL

.....

 **\$5 per person**  
**\$20 per family**

The poster has a light grey background with yellow and orange decorative swirls. It features a photograph of a plate of spaghetti with meat sauce.

We had such a fun and busy March! The children loved celebrating Dr. Seuss by reading many silly and rhyming stories including *The Cat in the Hat*, *Fox in Socks*, and *Green Eggs and Ham*. We practiced listening for rhyming words through nursery rhymes and playful activities. Everyone enjoyed wearing **crazy socks**, **measuring their feet**, and bravely tasting **green eggs and ham**!

We explored our favorite **green foods** by creating a class graph and sharing our opinions. A mischievous leprechaun even visited our classroom and left behind **chocolate gold coins**! The children were full of wonder as they watched **Skittles turn into a rainbow**, which was a colorful and exciting surprise.

As Easter approached, we learned the meaning of Jesus death and resurrection. We ended the month with a very exciting **Easter egg hunt**, and the smiles on the children's faces said it all!

After Spring Break, we are excited to begin new learning adventures. We will explore **flower and vegetable gardens**, discovering how plants grow and how to care for them. The children will also learn about **bees and other pollinators** and why they are so important to our environment.

We will talk about ways we can help take care of our Earth through **recycling** and celebrate **Earth Day on April 22** with fun activities. Later in the month, we will **fly into a unit about birds**, learning about feathers, nests, and how birds live.

Thank you for being part of our preschool family. We are so proud of all the children and love seeing their excitement for learning each day. We are looking forward to a wonderful April together!



Team work at its finest!



Skittles Rainbow Science Experiment



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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.

He is  
not here,  
He has  
Risen!  
Luke 24:6