

The

Fisherman

St. Peter Evangelical Lutheran Church

3751 Estero Blvd.

E.L.C.A.

Fort Myers Beach, FL 33931

Phone: 239-463-4251



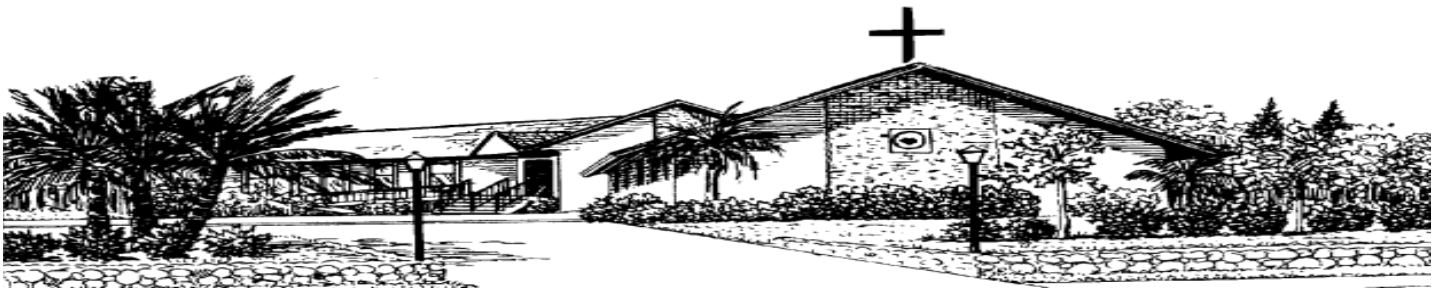
SUMMER  
2023

**Pastor – Rev. Sharon Taylor**

**St. Peter Lutheran Church ELCA**

**PO Box 07310**

**Fort Myers, FL 33919**



# **STAFF**

Pastor – Rev. Sharon Taylor

Office Administrator – Trudy Archer

Organist/Choir Director – Jim Kreger

Artist in Residence/Pianist – Shirley Roe

Digital Ministry Coordinator – Deacon Lisa Miller

**WEBSITE:** [www.stpeterfmb.com](http://www.stpeterfmb.com)

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**Facebook – [St. Peter Lutheran ELCA, Fort Myers Beach](#)**

**YouTube – [St Peter Lutheran Church Ft Myers Beach](#)**

**Go to the website and click the YouTube icon.**

**OFFICE INFORMATION Please keep us informed** if you move, change your phone number or email address! We want to let you know what's going on here, so being able to reach you is important!

EITHER E-MAIL OR SEND TO OUR PO BOX

[stpeterfmb@gmail.com](mailto:stpeterfmb@gmail.com)

St. Peter ELCA  
PO Box 07310  
Fort Myers, FL 33919

# Pastor Sharon's Sharings



Greetings, siblings in Christ. I would like to share my sermon from Saturday May 20, 2023. During the worship in which I preached this sermon, we were joined by our Presbyterian and United Methodist siblings, both their congregational council members and their denominational representatives. I believe our worship set the tone for the conversation which followed. There is growing energy from all three groups to explore a new and united way forward on Fort Myers Beach. During our meeting, we listened to each congregation's story, which was followed by sharing our hopes and dreams for the future. Although Beach United Methodist Church is closing at the end of May, the United Methodist Conference is still interested in partnering with us in some fashion. Please continue to pray for St. Peter, Chapel by the Sea, and the United Methodist Conference as we seek God's guidance and will in our unfolding witness to the love and grace of God.

I have a confession to make;  
I am an eavesdropper,  
Always have been.  
People fascinate me.  
Peoples' stories fascinate me.

My husband Tim knows when we are out to dinner,  
And I get that look on my face,  
That I am no longer listening to a thing he says.

But I CAN tell you exactly what is happening  
In the lives of the couple at the next table.

I am amazed at what people will say in public spaces.  
I'm always trying to figure out if they just don't care  
What other people think  
Or whether they just forget they are within ear-shot  
Of a room full of people.

When we first hear our text for this morning,  
It can easily feel like we are eavesdropping on Jesus.  
Listening in on an intimate moment between Father and Son.

And in some ways, we are.  
But the difference with Jesus is that he wants his disciples to hear.  
Jesus always has a clear intentionality to everything he says and  
does.

When he speaks, it has a clear purpose.  
When he remains silent, it also has purpose.  
Remember the times religious leaders try to entrap him with his own  
words?

He never spoke without thinking about the reason.  
When they pressed him to incriminate himself,  
He would come back with a question rather than an answer,  
With a teaching rather than a defensive response.

Today, we overhear Jesus in deep prayer with God the Father;  
But it is not because Jesus forgot where he was  
Or wasn't aware of the space around him.  
Jesus often "withdrew" to pray alone throughout his ministry.  
No, this prayer is intentional.  
It was meant to be heard.  
It was meant to encourage and address the current  
and future concerns of the disciples.

Jesus is amplifying the presence of God  
Already among them.

When chaplains and pastors first learn how to do hospital visits;  
There is a pressure to say and do the right thing.  
Most students have an unconscious assumption that  
Somehow the holy encounter, if it happens, depends on us.  
That we bring “God” into the room with us.

But we know, don't we,  
That God is already there.  
God is in the room.  
God is with the patient.  
Our conversation  
And even silence,  
Simply amplify the presence of God already heavy in the room.  
And if we pray,  
It is in response to God's prayer in us.  
It is in response to the eternal love that is always reaching out to us.

Yes, he is authentically speaking and responding  
To that love and intimate connection that he has with God;  
AND  
He is also inviting his disciples,  
Into the conversation,  
Into the presence of the Holy  
Into the eternal love that is already in the room with them.

Jesus is speaking to God AND he is teaching his disciples,  
Teaching us;  
About God and about ourselves as the body of Christ.

Really....what beautiful Holy Spirit Timing  
That the common lectionary gives us this text for today;

As we meet as Methodist, Presbyterian and Lutheran siblings in Christ.

What a strong reminder from our Lord Jesus  
That even though we have divided ourselves  
Into denominations and separate congregations,  
From God's perspective, have been, and always will be, ONE;  
Because we were created to be a reflection of the Godhead itself.  
**Jesus said, "Protect them in your name that you have given me,  
So that they may be one, as we are one."**

Today, our denominational representatives and congregational council members  
Will have an initial conversation to explore whether ministry partnership  
can be beneficial for our witness and service to Fort Myers Beach.

And today, Jesus, is once again praying for us (collectively)  
Praying for his disciples, his church, and for the world he so loves.

As we worship together and discern together,  
Jesus amplifies the presence of God in our midst.  
Jesus amplifies the wisdom of the Holy Spirit among us.

Hurricane Ian was, (And in many ways) still is devastating  
For us and for our faith communities,  
But **CANNOT GOD BRING OPPORTUNITY AND NEW LIFE**  
Even out of devastation and loss?  
Do we really believe in a God who brings life out of death?  
And not just life after physical death,  
But new life now?

If so,  
Then how can we embrace and "live into" that new life?  
Are we willing to be open to God's new opportunities?  
Are we able to sacrifice our own preferences and feelings of nostalgia

in order to “live into” Jesus’ prayer that our united witness be strong?  
Is God calling us to combine our resources for the sake of God’s  
Loving, saving mission?

Perhaps what we can learn from our gospel lesson  
Is that our unity is not dependent on our agreement ABOUT God;  
Our unity is dependent on our relationship WITH God,  
A relationship that is promised and sustained by God’s love and grace  
and faithfulness.

Thankfully with God we all don’t have to be exactly the same;  
Thankfully with God we can be diverse while simultaneously being  
united.

SO...I don’t know what God has in store for the congregations of  
FMB.

I don’t know the best path forward in our changing communal  
landscape.

But I am betting that whatever God intends for us,  
**It is somehow connected to the unity of the Body of Christ.**  
**And our faithful witness to God’s love and grace for all of creation.**

Folks, in this prayer, Jesus prayed for his present disciples,  
But he also prayed for all of his FUTURE disciples as well.  
Not just for us, but for every member of the body yet to be born,  
Yet to come .....

As the prayer continues past our little snippet for today,  
Jesus says:

**My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe  
in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father,  
just as you are in me and I am in you.**

The decisions we make in the coming months and years,  
Are not about us;

And not about our own preferences and comforts,

It is about the longevity of the witness to the God we profess to love.

May we worship be Spirit-filled.  
May our conversations be grounded in prayer.  
May our decisions amplify the presence of God  
May God's will be done! Amen

- *Pastor Sharon Taylor*

\* \* \* \* \*

# UPCOMING *Events*

*Saturday morning worship*

*St Peter worship 9:30 am at Peace Lutheran*

*Totes of Grace – June 21 10am -1 pm*

Contact the office if you would like to help

*Last Beach Worship*

June 25 8:30 am

*Soul Tending on the Beach*

Soul Tending is taking the summer off – See you in the fall!

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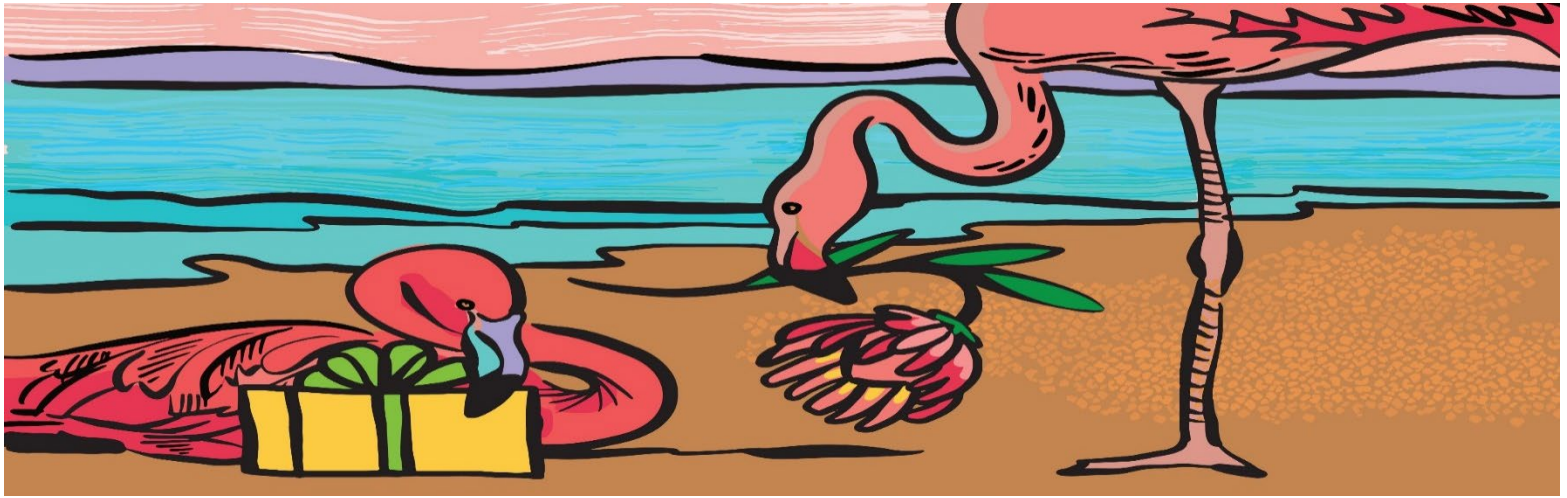
On Thursday, May 25, Publix delivered a truck full of supplies to Beach Baptist Church for them to distribute to folks in need through their continuing program of community outreach. As a way of saying thank you and welcome back to the Island to Publix, the Fort Myers Beach Ministerial Association purchased Publix gift cards for a total of \$5000.00. These cards were presented to Pastor Shawn Critser of Beach Baptist and Trudy Archer of St. Peter Lutheran by Denise Armstrong of Chapel by the Sea Presbyterian Church. The cards were purchased from the funds that have been collected as an offering at the Easter Sunrise Services held at the pier over the years.

The full circle of giving - from folks on the Beach at Easter worship through the churches on the Beach and purchased at the Publix on the Beach donated back to people in need on the Beach - has been achieved!

## **MARTIN LUTHER QUOTES**

“God does not need your good works,  
but your neighbor does.”

“They are trying to make me into a fixed star,  
I am an irregular planet.”



## SUMMER BIRTHDAYS

|         |                    |         |                    |
|---------|--------------------|---------|--------------------|
| June 1  | Ernie Garbade      | July 13 | Quent Clark        |
|         | Sherry Wellman     | July 15 | Bob Ehrenreich     |
| June 4  | Marilyn Housemeyer | July 16 | Jon Deming         |
| June 6  | Tim Horvatic       | July 17 | Robert Beane       |
| June 7  | Jack Butch         |         | Elaine Killelea    |
| June 8  | Karen Magley       | July 18 | Laura Bond         |
| June 9  | Maloa Palmer       | July 23 | Marsha Mann        |
| June 16 | Norma Wall         | July 25 | Elsie Sanford      |
|         | Savanna Crisp      | July 27 | Verner Drohan      |
| June 17 | Beverly Trone      |         | Dieter Nickel      |
|         | Pr. Rusty May      | Aug 2   | Linnea Olsen       |
| June 18 | Marie Burgess      | Aug 6   | Rita Hofmeister    |
|         | Brenda Miller      | Aug 8   | Trudy Archer       |
| June 19 | Liam Crisp         | Aug 9   | Glenn Dane         |
| June 20 | Joyce Burr         | Aug 11  | John Palmer        |
|         | Richard Wellman    |         | Carol Dagnall      |
| June 22 | Marcene Arendt     | Aug 12  | Terry Lucia        |
| June 27 | Larry Beck         | Aug 14  | Dwight Aitchison   |
| June 30 | Jim Kasmala        | Aug 15  | Myra Clark         |
| July 4  | John Schoenewald   | Aug 16  | Linda Eroh-Kasmala |
| July 10 | George Albert      | Aug 19  | Roy Dagnall        |

July 12 Louise Davis

Aug 20 Barbara Larson

Aug 21 Jim Markusen

## SUMMER ANNIVERSARIES

June 7 Richard & Sherry Wellman  
June 10 Jason & Jessica Kurtz  
June 14 Bob & Diane Baldrige  
June 21 Ron & Linnea Olsen  
June 22 Greg & Jackie Dawson  
June 25 Jim & Linda Kasmala  
June 27 Phil & Karen Magley  
Jim & Norma Wall  
July 15 Mark & Liz Venturin  
Aug 6 Quent & Myra Clark  
Aug 9 Jim & Donna Markusen  
Aug 19 Dieter & Pam Nickel  
Aug 21 George & Diane Phillips  
Aug 24 Fred & Ginney Keeton  
Jon & Barb Deming  
Aug 26 Jim & Carol Look  
Aug 29 John & Marilyn Torstveit  
Aug 30 Larry & Fran Nielsen

"Not how long, but how well you have lived  
is the main thing." — **Seneca**



W.E.L.C.A. Anne Myrtle Circle



W.E.L.C.A. will resume meeting in the fall.

God's Blessings, Marilyn Torstveit and Diane Allen



## POSSIBILITIES - A RESPONSE TO HURRICANE IAN

In response to the catastrophic damage wreaked by Hurricane Ian on their individual worship facilities, leadership from St. Peter Evangelical Lutheran Church, Chapel by the Sea Presbyterian Church, and the United Methodist Church met on May 20th to explore how we can best work together to meet the worship and spiritual needs of the residents and visitors of the beach community.



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We now have a QR code that you can use to get to our online payment option. Just use the QR reader app on your phone and it will take you to the online donations.





## ST PETER EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING

Thursday, April 20, 2023

Members Present: Jason Kurtz, Arlene Burm, Mark Venturin, Jim Look, Rhona Diamond, Lynn Larson by facetime, Jana Clevenger by phone, Pastor Sharon Taylor

Meeting called to order by Jason Kurtz, president at 5:27 p.m.

Opening Devotions and Prayer by Pastor Sharon Taylor

Motion made by Jim and seconded by Mark to accept the meeting agenda.  
Motion passed.

Motion made by Mark and seconded by Rhona to approve the March 16 council minutes.

Motion passed.

Motion made by Arlene and seconded by Lynn to accept the February and March treasurer's reports. Motion passed. Discussion about insurance money of \$701,000. Jana will investigate short term CD rates.

Committee Reports:

Social Ministry: WELCA will be donating \$400. toward blankets and \$300. toward peanut butter. Prayer shawls continue to be available. Next meeting of WELCA in the fall.

Lunch Bunch at Parrot Key on April 26 and at Flippers on May 31.

**Worship & Music:** There will be two more Sunday services in St. Peter parking lot in April and one on May 28 (Pentecost) and June 25. Jason will draft a letter to be sent to Chapel By the Sea and Beach Methodist to indicate our willingness to have conversation about a beach church and to invite them to join us in the services at St. Peter.

#### Old Business:

**Update on Keys Claims:** There appears to be more wind damage and water intrusion by the windows than Citizens estimated. Hired professionals estimating cost. **Update on Appraisal:** On March 31 by e-mail a motion was made by Jason and seconded by Jana to hire Don Griffin, a state certified appraiser, to do a formal appraisal of our buildings for \$1,000. Motion passed. Don has done his appraisal and submitted his report to us. His appraisal is much higher than the one that the town of Fort Myers Beach has determined.

**Roof quotes:** We got 2 quotes from Aspen Roofing and GSD. A motion was made by Rhona and seconded by Mark to hire GSD who agreed to furnish tarps for up to \$4500 for our buildings until we decide on the roofing materials. Motion passed.

**Resilient Lee** will be holding meetings in various locations during May. Trudy will send out an announcement to all St. Peter people to let them know that there will be a meeting on May 4 from 6-8 at Diamond Head Resort on the beach. Most council members will try to attend.

**Signage for Peace Lutheran:** The signage for the Sanibel concert series will be coming down so that there will be room for us to put up the St. Peter sign. Jim and Mark will take care of putting it up in the next week or so.

#### New Business:

**Pastor Housing Allowance:** Rhona made a motion and Jana seconded to approve an amount of \$30,000. for housing allowance which is part of pastor's salary. Motion carried.

40 Days of Prayer: Pastor El-Yateem suggested this discipline when he met with us in March. It was used by another church during Lent and involves daily prayer and meditation with small group meetings. It was decided to try this by using Google and sending out the prayer disciplines in blocks of ten so that people may use it daily at their convenience and make comments with possibly a couple of meetings over the 40 days. Pastor Sharon will work out the daily discipline to meet our needs.

Church Insurance: Our liability Church Mutual insurance has gone up to \$12,256 a year. We decided to pay it semi-annually with the first payment of \$6256 due in May and \$6000 due in November.

Pastor's Report:

On May 6, 2023 we will begin offering communion by intinction and having people come forward. Kits will still be available for those who prefer it. Tuesday and Thursday devotions will continue into the summer season. Soul tending is on hiatus for lack of participation.

Pastor, Trudy, and Jim Kreger will be attending the synod assembly June 8-10, 2023. Luthersprings Camp: week of May 22. Pastor will be providing diversity training for the camp staff during staff week. She will be staying 2 nights for personal respite time.

Come to the Well: June 26-28. This is the renewal retreat for clergy that Pastor Sharon designed and we hosted last year. She will be attending the event in Clearwater as a participant this time.

The meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Motion to adjourn was made at 7:32 p.m. by Jim and seconded by Rhona.  
Motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Arlene Burm, Secretary

The next meeting will be held on May 18, 2023 at the home of Jim Look.



## Update From Council President

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As we finish up “season” here on the beach and head into summer, I am reminded of a verse from the 3<sup>rd</sup> chapter of Ecclesiastes that tells us everything happens in God’s time. The first verse states “There is an appointed time for everything. And there is a time for every matter under heaven.” We should remember that every moment in our lives was preordained by God Himself. When times are tough and we find our faith buckling under the weight of life’s problems, remember that it is all part of God’s timing, not our own.

Your Council has been busy serving you as we navigate the future of St. Peter. We ask for your continued prayers and support. It is obvious that the landscape of Ft. Myers Beach is changing and so too will we need to be willing to change.

On Saturday May 20<sup>th</sup>, Council met with representatives from Chapel by the Sea and Beach Methodist. The discussion was facilitated by Rev. Khader El-Yateem, the Director for Evangelical Mission and Assistant to the Bishop (South Region) from the Florida-Bahamas Synod and focused on how best to respond to the catastrophic damage wreaked by Hurricane Ian on our individual worship facilities and work together to meet the worship and spiritual needs of residents and visitors of the beach community. It was decided to form a task force with representation from the three congregations to explore options.

We must continue to prayerfully consider what God has planned in God’s time while we continue. Progress is being made and some recent steps are as follows:

- Keys Claims Consultants, LLC, has completed their estimate of damages and this will be submitted to Citizen’s along with supporting documentation from experts and a signed Proof of Loss Letter.



- Final independent appraisal was completed and received from Don Griffin Appraisals, Inc- Building Valuation Consultants. This will assist us in moving forward with any possible repairs and ensure we remain under the 50% rule.
- The roof will be tarped very soon to protect building from further damage from rainy season.
- Additional quotes for electrical work are being obtained to get power hooked back up to the sanctuary.
- Council has met on site with a general contractor and architect and are awaiting preliminary repair costs.
- Sunday parking lot services were held in April, May and the last for the summer will be June 25.
- A worship survey was sent to the congregation. It was decided that worship will continue at Peace Lutheran on Saturdays at 9:30AM through the summer.
- Temporary signage has been erected at Peace Lutheran.

Please let us know if you have any questions.

In Christ,

Dr. Jason Kurtz, Council President

*“The best things in life are often waiting for you at the exit ramp of your comfort zone.”*

*– Karen Salmansohn*

*Patience and perseverance have a magical effect before which difficulties disappear and obstacles vanish.*

- John Quincy Adams

## Prayer for Discernment

Gracious God, source of all we are and all we have, we thank you for the ongoing mission and ministry of St. Peter, for those who dreamed and built and responded faithfully to your calls to be stewards of the resources and opportunities you placed before us. We again ask you to guide us into a future we don't yet see, trusting your Spirit to shape our emerging missions and ministries so they open new doorways for people to experience your abundant grace and love. Give us comfort when we are wearied by the changes and chances of this time, and grant us courage to move forward in faith, knowing we neither travel alone nor arrive without you.

Be with the leaders and people of St. Peter as we seek to be good stewards of the emerging opportunities you place before us, that we may embrace what serves you and release what does not.

We pray this in the one who commissions the church and shepherds our way, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



## **2023 – CHURCH OFFICERS & COUNCIL MEMBERS**

**PRESIDENT..... Dr. Jason Kurtz**

**VICE PRESIDENT.....Mark Venturin**

**SECRETARY .....Arlene Burm**

**Interim Treasurer.....Jana Clevenger**

### **MEMBERS:**

**Rhona Diamond - Lynn Larson -Jim Look**

### **A NOTE FROM THE OFFICE -**

Please make sure you notify your bank or financial advisor if you send your donations through them. We are already more than six months from Ian (??? Still seems like last week, doesn't it) and we can only get forwarding from our Beach address to our PO box for a year. Some of them are still using our old address and it takes forever for it to forward. In a short period of time, they will not forward at all.

**Also, please remember to keep us updated with your current address , phone number & e-mail address**