



St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church

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Intentional Interim Pastor: Rev. Gary Braeuer

May 2026

A Pastoral Letter: The Ancient Future

Greetings brothers and sisters in Christ,

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

As we stand at the threshold of a new chapter in our life together, my thoughts have turned toward the "Ancient-Future" nature of the Christian Church. We often feel caught between the weight of tradition and the frantic pace of the modern world. However, to look forward with confidence, we must look backward with clarity. The future of our congregation is not found in chasing the "spirit of the age," but in the eternal Spirit who speaks through the timeless confession of the Church. To navigate the days ahead, we must anchor ourselves in the rich theological heritage that defines us.

The Foundation: The Christ Who Fills All Things

Before we can discuss our mission or vision, we must be clear about the Object of our faith. Martin Chemnitz, in his masterful work *The Two Natures of Christ*, reminds us that our Savior is not a distant historical figure or a mere moral teacher. He is the God-Man in whom the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily. This is the ancient truth: that in the person of Jesus, the Divine and the Human are united for our salvation.

Because Christ is both God and Man, He is present with us now ... not just in memory, but in His Word and Sacraments. As we move into the future, let us not be distracted by substitutes for Jesus. Our identity is rooted in the One who, as Chemnitz argued, communicates His majesty to His human nature so that He might be truly present in our midst, forgiving our sins and sustaining our lives.

The Reality: A Will Bound and a Spirit Free

In our culture, we are told that we are the masters of our own destiny. Yet, Martin Luther's *The Bondage of the Will* offers a sobering, necessary correction. Luther teaches us that apart from the Holy Spirit, our wills are bound ... not in a way that makes us robots, but in a way that makes us incapable of choosing God on our own.

This is vital for our future. If we believe the growth of the Church depends on our cleverness, our "free will," or our marketing, we will eventually succumb to despair. But if we recognize, as Luther did, that salvation is 100% God's work, we find true freedom. The future of this church does not rest on our ability to decide for God, but on God's decision to claim us in Holy Baptism. Like the Loci (the commonplaces of faith) organized so clearly by Johann Gerhard in his *Loci Theologici*, our lives must be ordered around the objective truths of Scripture rather than the subjective whims of our emotions.

The Method: The Proper Distinction

How then do we speak to a world that is hurting and confused? We follow the path laid out by C.F.W. Walther in *The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel*. Walther reminds us that the Word of God speaks in two ways:

the Law, which shows us our sin and our need for a Savior, and the Gospel, which gives us that Savior as a gift of His grace.

Our future as a church depends on getting this right. If we preach only Law (rules and how-to lists), we produce either self-righteousness or hopelessness. If we preach only Gospel (mercy without repentance), we treat God's grace as "cheap." To be a healthy congregation, we must be a place where the Law is heard in its full severity to break the stony heart, and the Gospel is heard in its full sweetness to heal the broken heart.

The Confession: Standing Together

In the *Smalcald Articles*, Luther wrote that the article of Justification is the one upon which the Church stands or falls. We cannot compromise on this for the sake of unity or growth. The *Formula of Concord (Solid Declaration)* further reminds us that true concord ... true walking together ... is not found in ignoring our differences, but in a shared, robust confession of the truth.

Hermann Sasse, in his *Letters to Lutheran Pastors*, often lamented how the Church loses its way when it forgets its specific confession. He taught that the Church is not a social club, but the *ecclesia* ... the assembly of those called out by the Gospel. As we look to the future, we must resist the urge to blend into the religious landscape. Our strength lies in being "unapologetically us" ... a people who cling to the Real Presence of Christ in the bread and the wine of Holy Communion and the absolute authority of the Sacred Scriptures.

Our Path Forward

The "Ancient-Future" Church is one that does not fear the world, because it knows the One who has overcome the world. It is a church that looks to the *Loci* of Gerhard for stability, the Christology of Chemnitz for hope, and the distinctions of Walther for clarity.

Let us walk together, not in the anxiety of what we must do, but in the joy of what Christ has already done. May the Holy Spirit grant us the courage to be an ancient people in a modern world, carrying the light of the Gospel into a future that belongs entirely to Him.

Peace be with you all,

Interim Pastor Gary

From Maintenance to Mission: Discovering Our New Identity

Intentional Interim Ministry Developmental Task 2: Discovering a New Identity

A Season of Becoming

Change can feel a bit like rearranging a living room ... you know where the sofa used to be, but you aren't quite sure where it fits now. Here at St. Peter's, we are currently in a purposeful season of "rearranging" known as Intentional Interim Ministry (IIM).

Guided by our Interim Pastor, Rev. Gary Braeuer, and our Church Council, we are navigating five specific developmental tasks designed to prepare us for our next chapter. This isn't just "filling the gap" until a new pastor arrives; it is a specialized process to assess our current realities, facilitate healing, and strengthen our capacity for a vibrant future.

In our previous season together, we engaged in "holy remembering" ... looking back at our history to see where God was present in both our laughter and our laments. Now, we turn our gaze toward the present. If Task 1 was about

unburdening the past, Task 2 is about discerning our current heartbeat. Who is St. Peter’s Evangelical Lutheran Church today?

The New Creation Among Us

“So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!” (2 Corinthians 5:17).

In his writings on the nature of the church, N.T. Wright reminds us that the church is not a static monument to the past, but a "colony of heaven" planted in a specific location to reflect God’s future. For St. Peter’s, our earthly identity is not found in our building’s bricks or the names on our historical rosters. Our identity is to be found in our current calling to be a "new creation" in Winnipeg.

While our journey began by looking back at our history, we now shift our focus to Developmental Task 2: Discovering a New Identity. This task was intentionally postponed following the NALC Renewal training that took place in Calgary on April 17th. It is important that our identity work is grounded in our denominational roots. Five people from St Peter’s participated in this workshop. More information is available in Linda Lurvey’s report on all the activities that occurred during Canadian Mission Region’s Lutheran Week. This phase is about identifying the St. Peter’s core characteristics and competencies in 2026. We are not discarding our heritage. We are identifying our core values and strengths to see how they define our mission and ministry today.

The Shift: From Machine to Living Body

Congregations often fall into the trap of internal maintenance ... treating the church like property that just needs upkeep or a machine that needs to be regularly inspected. A machine exists to reduce human effort and do specific labour. A body exists to move, to touch, to serve, and to love.

Our key metric for this task is the **External-Focus Ratio**. Our goal is a **20% increase in outward-facing mission discussion that leads to action**. This is more than a budget line item. It measures our intention to move from survival mode to sacrificial living for today. When we spend more time talking about our neighbors in Winnipeg and the Prairie Mission District than we do about our own internal committees, we are beginning to discover our true identity in Christ.

To ensure our efforts are fruitful, Council has reviewed and accepted specific values and benefits we expect from congregation members participation in two upcoming workshops.

Task	Values	Benefits (Congregation & Mission District)
T2. Identity	Evidence-Based Discernment	Clarifies our purpose, strengthens our unity, and ensures we aren't just guessing at our future.
T3. Transition	Empowered Membership	Models a collaborative ministry where lay voices are elevated and the congregation is activated.
T4. Connection	Relational Alignment	Moves us from isolation to becoming a partner with the NALC and the mission district congregations.

Measuring Our Progress

How will we know we are achieving our desired outcomes? We are not simply looking at attendance. We are tracking specific indicators developed for this engagement:

- Narrative Consistency Index (Task 1): Our ability to tell St. Peter’s story ... the highs and lows ...with clarity and less emotional reaction.

- Leadership Diversification (Task 3): Increasing the percentage of new or "lay" voices in lead roles, reducing reliance on the "way things used to be."
- Engagement Rate (Task 4): Quantifying our move from isolation to connection through participation in regional and joint-ministry projects.
- Call Readiness Scorecard (Task 5): Ensuring our "ideal pastor" profile aligns with our new identity.

Looking Ahead

Soon it will be June and my time as your Intentional Interim Minister will end. Below is a table showing an updated timeline. Each task was selected and each step was designed to provide St Peter's with mission and ministry clarity ... the foundation for a successful pastoral call.

We are moving toward a Call Readiness Scorecard. This work requires us to be open and vulnerable. This is not a checklist for identifying a perfect pastor or the means to cover up past failures. We are a congregation in search of transformation. By doing this work now, we ensure that when we call our next pastor, we are standing on a foundation of clarity, unity, and mission-driven purpose. It is intended to lift the entire congregation and get us moving forward into a hopeful and joyful future.

	Task & Key Steps	Status
Jan 1 (Initiate)	Review 5 Tasks with Council.	Completed baseline data collection, research, and planning.
Feb (30 Days)	Task 1: Review history & narratives.	Completed listening and review.
Mar (60 Days)	Task 2: Survey core values and strengths.	Postponed NALC Renewal workshop part 1 to May 31 to follow the NALC Renewal training on April 17 th .
Apr (90 Days)	Task 3: Create a strategic transition plan.	Completed a roadmap for strategic change.
May (120 Days)	Task 4: Align with NALC/Mission District values.	Completed research and evaluation of the Canadian Mission Region and its four districts for integration into St Peter's strategic plan.
Jun (150 Days)	Task 5: Develop an ideal pastor profile.	Upcoming NALC Renewal workshop part 2, Our Future on June 7 th .
Jun 21 (180 Days)	Celebrate all that we have accomplished	Upcoming special worship service

Mark Your Calendars

- **Sunday May 31:** Renewal Workshop Part 1 - **Our Identity- lunch provided.** We will gather to discuss and document our characteristics and competencies.
- **Sunday June 7:** Renewal Workshop Part 2 - **Our Future – lunch provided.** We will gather to document our strengths and a vision for the future of St Peter's.
- **June 21: Celebration.** A special worship service where we will recognize all participants and celebrate the rebirth of our mission and ministry.

Reflection Questions for May

1. **The Mirror:** If someone in our neighborhood was asked, "What is St. Peter's known for?", what would they say? What should they say?
2. **The Shift:** In meetings or informal gatherings to talk about St Peter's are we spending more time on maintenance or on mission? How can we pivot toward the congregation's community?
3. **The Gift:** What is one unique strength God has provided our congregation that the city of Winnipeg desperately needs right now?

Peace be with you,
Rev. Gary Braeuer
Intentional Interim Minister

North American Lutheran Church
Canadian Mission Region
Lutheran Week Report
Submitted by Linda Lurvey

Dear St. Peter's members and friends,

Tom and I, along with Jerry and Helga Roehr and Pastor Gary Braeuer attended the NALC Lutheran Week in Alberta, April 14-18.

The week consisted of three parts: The Canadian Rockies Theological Conference at the Coast Hotel in Canmore April 14-16, RENEW workshop, and the Canadian Mission Region Convocation at Ascension Lutheran Church in Calgary April 17-18.

The Canadian Mission Region did a wonderful job hosting the Theological Conference in Canmore. About 80 pastors and lay people, mostly from Canada and some from the USA attended. The theme: "Old Wisdom for New Mission: Regrounding for Outreach Today".

Dr. Jukka Kääriäinen, the new president of the NALC Seminary in Pennsylvania, was one of the two featured speakers. His presentations focused on reading the Bible as Good News and pure promise. The cross alone is our theology. We have the best story to tell the world and telling that story is our calling. He talked about 2 Corinthians 5:17-21 as foundational.

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come. The old has gone, the new is here! All this is from God who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Dr. Jukka stated, "Without forgiveness there is no future. Relationships die, resentment grows." He told us a story about a man and his son in Spain who had been alienated for years. The father longed for reconciliation and put an advertisement in the paper which said "Dear Paco, All is forgiven, please meet me in the public square on Thursday at noon." When the day came, 400 Pacos came seeking forgiveness. People long for the gospel story of reconciliation.

Our other guest speaker was Dr. Michael Neibauer. He is ordained in the Anglican Church in North America. Dr. Michael talked about more practical matters of addressing mission and evangelism and how do we do it. One suggestion he had was to gather a small group and ask each person to think of three people not connected to the church and pray for them daily. Then look for opportunities to share our faith, encourage them to read the Gospel of John, and invite them to church in hope that they might come to faith in Christ.

Throughout the theological conference we had morning and evening worship with robust hymn singing. There were opportunities for fellowship and camaraderie over meals and a special evening which included the singing of Canadian Folk Songs enthusiastically led by Pastor Kevin Ree, the northern area Assistant to Bishop Dan Selbo. The closing event in Canmore was a Healing Service which included the Laying on of Hands and Anointing. We were encouraged to come forward if we were dealing with body, mind, spirit or relationship issues. It was very well received.

On Friday we drove to Ascension Lutheran Church in Calgary for a change of scenery and focus. Pastor Tom Brashears, Director of Leadership Development for the NALC, led the RENEW workshop. RENEW is part of a process to help a congregation discern together what God is calling them to do in their time and place. It is readily available and free online. We did a sample workshop with an imaginary church called St. Selbo! Of course we all added input from our own congregational experience during the process. RENEW helps congregations move from survival to intentional mission – invite, retain, disciple and send. Pastor Brashears said, “Renewed congregations don’t just survive, they *shine!*”

On Saturday we had the one-day Convocation of the Canadian Mission Region which is made up of approximately 35 congregations in B.C., Alberta and Manitoba. There were 38 registered delegates. Our church was well represented. Thank you church council for encouraging us to attend!

We used to belong to the Canadian Mission District. Now, with the new constitution just ratified by the Convocation, the Canadian Mission District is no more; it is now the Canadian Mission *Region*. We have been divided into four Districts. Our church is now part of the *Prairie Mission District*. It is made up of three congregations in Manitoba – St. Peter’s, Joy and Trinity in Dauphin, and three congregations in Saskatchewan – Outlook, Shellbrook and Canwood. Pastor Mac de Waal from Outlook is now the Dean of our smaller Prairie District instead of being Dean of the whole Canadian Mission Region. The idea of small mission districts is to develop ways of working and getting to know each other. A pulpit exchange involving Pastor and lay members visiting each other is in the works. Stay tuned. Ralf Oppitz is St. Peter’s lay representative.

Rev. Dr. Amy Little, General Secretary of the NALC was with us the entire Lutheran Week. She addressed the delegates and visitors on Saturday. The exciting news was that she was involved in interviewing five future Canadian seminarians during the week. Wow! There is great hope for the NALC. There are approximately 65 people actively working towards ordination, commission into the diaconate, or the “ordination under special circumstances” process to be ordained and serve their home church.

Rev. Kevin Ree, the Northern Area Assistant to the Bishop, is one of seven area assistants serving the 565 (and increasing) NALC congregations. He addressed the convocation with the very exciting news that several Oromo (Ethiopian) congregations in Vancouver, Victoria and Ottawa will soon be joining the Canadian Mission Region.

Earlier in the week I attended a presentation on the *Malawi Orphan Care Project*. Pastor Kevin and his wife Shelley have worked at this daytime orphanage which feeds 800 children six days a week. It also provides education

scholarships for local high school students. It was shocking to watch a video about girls (age 11-15) being sold by their parents to an older man for a goat or a chicken to become *child brides*. Plans are in the works to build a rescue centre and educate these girls.

The Orphan Care Project is located about two hours away from Kuwala Christian Girls School which our congregation supports. Kuwala is definitely making a difference in Malawi. The need is great. The good news is that the Lutheran Bishop in Malawi is getting on board with our two NALC mission partners.

Pastor Teresa Peters, NALC Director of Youth and Family Ministry, reported on the upcoming *Word and Witness* event for 21 Young Adults which will take place in Winnipeg. Our church will have opportunity to welcome the group on Pentecost Sunday, May 24th. They will lead the worship service to start their week in Winnipeg. A list of items for our congregation to collect for this project is on a box in the narthex and included in the May newsletter.

The Convocation ended with a Holy Communion Worship Service. A full and spirited Lutheran Week! Thanks be to God.

The NALC's Young Adults leading our service at the culmination of a weeks Mission Work in Winnipeg under the banner "Word and Witness"

Sunday, May 24th, 21 young adults from all over North America who are here for the week to do mission work, will be leading the Worship Service. After the service they will be having pizza and then a trolley ride starting at 2pm around Winnipeg. **St. Peter's Young Adults are invited to join them for pizza and the trolley ride.** Please let Pastor Teresa know if you are interested in attending by sending her an email: tpeters@thenalc.org.

How we can support this mission

Word and Witness is collecting items to hand out with the Bear Clan and give to Agape Table? Below is the list of items.

- Fruit cups
- Puddings
- Granola Bars
- Feminine hygiene – pads and panty liners
- Shampoo
- Toothpaste
- Toothbrushes
- New socks

NALC Youth event in 2026

NALC Continental Youth Gathering 2026 - July 7 - 10, 2026 at St. John Lutheran Church in Roanoke, Virginia.

Please see website below for more information and registration.
<https://thenalc.org/en-us/our-work/equipping-disciples/families/>

Anglicans at St. Peter's?

The happy sounds of children and their parents are heard every Saturday afternoon in the basement of our St. Peter's Lutheran Church. They come from families who are part of Immanuel Anglican Church, a brand new "church plant" (what we used to call a "mission congregation") started last year by Rev. Will Gray, an Anglican priest (we would say "pastor") as part of the Anglican Church of North America (ACNA). They have been renting space in our basement since last fall for weekly gatherings for children's and adults' education and informal worship and fellowship.

The ACNA is the Anglican equivalent of our North American Lutheran Church (NALC). They are clergy and lay people who were not happy with the direction the Anglican Church of Canada was taking and left to start new congregations and a new Anglican denomination. Presently they have about 100 congregations in Canada and 1000 in North America. The NALC has about 35 congregations in Canada and almost 600 across the continent. Traditional Anglican and Lutheran theology are very similar and historically we have had good relations with them.

We are delighted to host Immanuel Anglican Church and look forward to getting to know them and sharing fellowship and support in spreading the Gospel here in Winnipeg.

Submitted by Tom Lurvey



The next **St. Peter's Eaters** breakfast will be held in the church basement on Saturday, May 30, 2026 at 8AM. It's a men's breakfast group to which all men are invited for food and fellowship. If you plan on coming, please sign up on the bulletin board at the back of the church or contact the church office by phone (204.775.6477) or email stpetersoffice@mymts.net.

We are starting to plan this years' **Special Confirmation Anniversary Celebration** which will take place at St. Peter's either on Sept 20 or 27 (date to be confirmed closer to the time).

We will be celebrating confirmation anniversaries for those who were confirmed 25, 50, 60, 70, and 80 years ago, i.e., those confirmed in the years 2001, 1976, 1966, 1956, 1946. A list of those who were confirmed in these years at St. Peters appears on the bulletin board in the Narthex and was also emailed out. However, if you are currently attending St. Peter's and were confirmed in one of these years but do not appear on this list, we would like to also honour you that day. Please send me an email or call me so I can add you to our list (see contact details below).

Help needed: If you have contact information for anyone that appears on this list, please send it to me asap.

Contact details: email oellermann@gmail.com OR call me at 204-487 2175 (please leave a message if no one answers). Thank you to those who have already provided some information in this regard.

We are looking forward to seeing many of you at this event.



Submitted by Jerry Roehr

News from Kuwala indicates that the new large diesel generator has been installed and is hooked up, supplementing the solar panels and the unreliable Malawi electrical grid. The lawnmower we reported on a few months ago has arrived. You may remember that we contributed to the purchase, but the larger field tractor we

reported on was the first to arrive. The chicken chicks are growing in an enclosure, and the goats are running around. The farmland and all this activity help Kuwala to be more self-sufficient. The faint blue outline, in the aerial view photo, shows the Kuwala property, thirty acres of school property and one hundred acres of farm, land. The school campus is on the right side. (Disregard the red circuit.) With the construction of the two dorms and classrooms, enrollment will grow from 240 to 320 by fall.



John Longhurst. In his monthly e-mail to us, John raised the question about religious literacy education in the province. As it turns out, the province has an optional course that teachers can use to enable high school students to explore the diversity of religions and religious perspectives in Canada. But very few schools use it. John spoke to a teacher who is teaching it, and to several students about why they are taking the course. John's article has appeared on one of the last Free Press Saturday editions. It is noteworthy that in March, the Free Press published fourteen articles with religious content.

Submitted by Jerry Roehr



A message from Seminarian Paul Frederickson. I have finally had time to catch my breath and write out this email. I hope and pray everything is going well with you (Jerry Roehr) and the congregation. On April 9th, my wife, Taryn gave birth to Morgana Marie and Martin Lawrence. The two children are a true blessing to our family, and we thank you all for your prayers. Another answered prayer is that on April 17th, I met with the NALC candidacy committee and was approved for ordination. Again, thank you for your support and prayers throughout these many

years. God bless you all!

Mission Budget Update. At the recent Rocky Mountain Theological Conference (see separate article), two guest speakers stressed the importance of a congregation's Mission in today's world. Part of it is, of course, financial resources. Again, we are pleased to report that the support to our Mission "Budget" continues to be positive. Because of your donations (thank you), we will be able to fulfill two further commitments of support to the St. Aidan's Christian School and the North American Lutheran Church.

Submitted by Jerry Roehr



Save the Date

You are invited to our annual picnic
On Saturday June 14, 11 am
at Hyland Provincial Park
In East St. Paul at 3120 Henderson Hwy
We hope to see many of you there!

Special Birthday Celebrations for May 2026

For members at least 65

Erich Euteneier, May 2

Hedda Razik, May 26

Hans Luedtke, May 13

Maria Streu, May 27

Wolfgang Oppitz, May 16

Wishing you a very Happy Birthday and the Lord's continued Blessings!

The Power of Prayer

Please continue to pray for the four Afghani women - Taiba and her teenage daughters Hania and Oswa and friend Latifa who are waiting to come to Canada. They are waiting for the Canadian Visa Office in Pakistan to approve their applications to come to Winnipeg. Their situation as refugees in Pakistan is very precarious, as the Pakistan government is in the process of deporting thousands of Afghani refugees.

Here is a prayer written by Bruce Adamson one of the co-sponsors:

May they fall into the hands of government officials who will understand the urgency of their situation and help expedite approval and relocation so that all four may one day soon find themselves face to face with brothers and sisters who will walk closely with them on their journey to becoming Canadian citizens who flourish in their new surroundings and new found freedoms. AMEN.

Submitted by Linda Lurvey

IMPORTANT

Pastor Gary Braeuer will be leading two Renewal Workshops on Sunday May 31 (Our Identity) and June 7 (Our Future) after the service and YOU ARE INVITED! We thank our sponsors who generously offered to provide lunch both times. If you wish to be a part of St. Peter's future it is important that we get your input! These workshops will also help us identify the qualities we are looking for in a pastor St. Peters will call.

May 2026; *TC=Tai Chi; **HS=Healthy Start; ***Immanuel Anglican Church

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri 1	Sat 2 TC 10am IAC 3-6pm
3 11am Service In English	4	5 HS	6 TC 7pm	7	8	9 TC 10am IAC 3-6pm
10 11am Service In English w/ Communion	11	12 HS	13 TC 7pm	14	15	16 TC 10am IAC 3-6pm
17 11am Service In English	18 Council Mtg 7pm	19 HS	20 TC 7pm	21	22	23 TC 10am IAC 3-6pm
24 11am Service In English led By NALC YA w/Communion	25	26 HS	27 TC 7pm	28	29	30 Men's Breakf. 8am TC 10am IAC 3-6pm
31 11am Service In English & Renewal Workshop Part 1 Lunch provided			TC 7pm			

Any submissions for the June 2026 edition of the St. Peter's Newsletter should be made by noon Thur, May 28, 2026. Submissions should be sent to Ortrud Oellermann at stpetersnewsl@gmail.com