

Hope on the Hill



Newsletter

VOLUME 7 ISSUE 1

A Letter from Pastor

Hospitality Outreach Proclamation Education Helping Individuals Live in Love

“Let Me Put Manure on it”

Parable of the Barren Fig Tree-Luke 13:6-9
⁶Then he told this parable: “A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came looking for fruit on it and found none. ⁷So he said to the man working the vineyard, ‘See here! For three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and still I find none. Cut it down! Why should it be wasting the soil?’ ⁸He replied, ‘Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig around it and put manure on it. ⁹If it bears fruit next year, well and good, but if not, you can cut it down.’”

We have come to another “New Year” that we call 2026! Like many people, do you make “resolutions,” changes, that you would like to make in your life? Are they long lasting, or does time have a way of wasting away many good intentions. It’s interesting to me in my daily exercise at the River Plex the many people that seem to be “new year” exercisers that come for a while and then the numbers begin to wane. What happens? What is the desire or thought process? Determination or good intentions? Yes, I also have many other ideas for my life that are hard to keep and continue! Yet the

love and grace and forgiveness of God continues!

Read again the parable above. A fig tree planted with good intentions. But for three years it bore no fruit. The world may say, “cut it down.” But God in Christ says, let me dig around it and put manure on it. Each new year gives us another opportunity to bear fruit that as a gift God has given to each of us. Maybe at times we are like the fig tree, and we are unproductive or simply say, “oh well, another new year!” But because of God being born unto us in Bethlehem and bringing love and forgiveness that goes to the cross. We will not be cut down.

WE ARE FORGIVEN AND CAN BEGIN ANEW!

Mike Lutz put it this way: *As we end this year, let’s make the most of this second chance as we begin the next. Let it fill us with new hope. The new year is as bright as the promises of God. Praise God for the many chances and changes we have been given.*

Sometimes the new year is a path that may have obstacles and life problems and making resolutions are just not simple. Just know that hope is walking in our faith, knowing that God in Jesus walks with us. It

might be that this new year is not so much about resolutions but opening our hearts in prayer and hearing God speaking through His spirit. As the parable states, tending the fig tree is always another chance as you and I are aware of strength and bearing fruit, because we are never alone.

Let me end with another one of my favorite passages from Jeremiah. Jeremiah 29:11-13 ¹¹For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. ¹²Then when you call upon me and come and pray to me, I will hear you. ¹³When you search for me, you will find me; if you seek me with all your heart.

A prayer for you:

Direct us, Lord God, in all our doings with you most gracious favor, and extend to us your continual help; that in all our works begun, continued, and ended in you we may glorify your holy name; and finally, by your mercy, bring us to everlasting life; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

Blessings as we begin sharing together 2026!

Pastor Stephen Barnes

OUR SAVIOR LUTHERAN CHURCH
2223 SHERIDAN ROAD
PEKIN, IL 61554

www.oursaviorpekin.org

Pastor: Rev. Stephen Barnes

Email: barnes.stephen9@gmail.com

Church Secretary: Lori Frampton
Church Office: (309) 346-2600

Office Hours: 9:00 a.m.—12:00 p.m.
Monday—Friday

Sunday Worship Service 9:00 a.m.
Sunday Bible Study 10:15 a.m.



www.elca.org

Annual Reports from each
 Committee are due
January 9, 2026.

Please email your report to Lori at
oslcpekin1@gmail.com



Our Annual Congregational Meeting will be
Sunday, January 25, 2026,
 after the worship service

NEWS & EVENTS

Prayer Concerns

Family of Stephen Swanson (Sue Calvert's brother, passed away Dec. 20, 2025)

Family of Donna Fleming (Melanie's mother-in-law, passed away Nov. 29, 2025)

Family of Patricia Hagen (passed away Dec. 14, 2025)

Kim (Sue Barger's cousin, aggressive cancer)

Jim & Melissa Green (friends of Melanie, both diagnosed with cancer)

Lillian P., Mazie W., Garold & Deena B., Craig B.,

Chad W., Marithaza B., Chad Wahl, Sandy Brooks

Paul Sipka (health concerns)

Scott S. (Melanie's brother-in-law, health concerns)

Pete B. (Larry & Darlene's nephew, brain cancer)

Alta Daniels (Larry & Darlene's sister-in-law, health concerns)

Carolyn (Mike Barger's sister, health concerns)

Lil M. (Sue Barger's mother, health concerns)

Lily F. (OSLC College student)



Please contact Pastor or the Church Office with any additions, deletions, or updates



Celebrate Epiphany Sunday!

A coffee fellowship/party will be held after worship on January 11, 2026. We encourage you to bring a gift totaling 12 items of non-perishable food for *Pekin Outreach Initiative*. Examples include: peanut butter, macaroni and cheese, instant oatmeal (a box contains multiple items,) soups, canned tuna, paper goods (a package of toilet paper can be 4 items), granola bars, and canned vegetables and fruits.
-Outreach Committee



The Nominating Committee has met and will be talking to members about *serving on Council*. If you have been thinking about being a part of this ministry, please contact Tim Leitner or Mary Sorenson for more information. Thank you!

From Pastor's letter:

<https://youtu.be/vpmeW-c51W0>

My Life Flows on Endless Song
by Beyond the Walls Community of Christ

A **BIG** thank you from Barb Gresham for the wonderful birthday greetings on her poster-sized card from all of us at Our Savior.



thank you

Thank you to all who came to the Advent meals, helped put together bags for Lutheran Social Services, Pekin Outreach Initiative, and Lutheran World Relief, and attended the short devotional services.

Thank you to those who donated poinsettias for the sanctuary:

Larry & Darlene Daniels—Glory to God
Linda Tanner—All members unable to attend
Lee & Mary Sorenson—In memory of our parents
The Flemings—In honor and memory of loved ones
The Calverts—In memory of our parents
Vickie Rayburn—In honor of our parents and grandparents
Sue Hale—In memory of Roscoe
Donna Mathews—In memory of Jim
Leo & Roberta Stiles—In honor of our parents
Pastor & Judy Barnes—In memory of family
Elsa Keas—In memory of Bill Keas and Carolyn Murphy
Dennis & Sharon Eggemeyer—In memory of Bill Keas and
Delbert & Martha Eggemeyer



Poinsettias



Many thanks to Jill and Jim Rimington, and Lowell and Leslie Koons, for sharing their beautiful music with us on Christmas Eve!

MORE NEWS & INFORMATION



Men's Coffee/Breakfast Group

The next gathering will be
Thursday, Jan. 15
 Creve Coeur Family Restaurant
 620 S. Main, Creve Coeur
7:30 a.m.



PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY

The Prayer Shawl Ministry group
 will meet on **Tuesday, Jan. 13,**
 at **9:30 a.m.** at the church.



The Mary and Martha Circle's next
 meeting is **Wednesday, January 21,**
2026, 9:30 a.m. at the church.



Pastor Barnes leads the
Thursday Morning Bible
Study each week.

The group begins at **10:00 a.m.**
 and goes until **11:30 a.m.** You
 are welcome to come whenever you can—
 there is always room for more!



The **Adult Sunday Bible Study** is held on Sundays after the worship service in the
 Gathering Room. Everyone is welcome—the coffee is always on!

Women of Our Savior packed **snack packs for Pekin Outreach Initiative's** donation to low income school children. We packed **300** at Grace United Methodist Church in less than an hour! We started this thru Gloria Ranney at Grace United. Also included were some little flyers telling the recipients about the program. Thanks to Lori in our church office for creating and printing the flyers.



Also, the Mary & Martha Circle group sent seven *Christmas Surprise bags* to our OSLC shut-ins.

Villas of Holly Brook
Lillian Pinkston Room 39
 5301 W Everett Dirksen Pkwy
 Peoria, IL 61607



Lily Fleming
 318 N. Ninth Street
 Monmouth, IL 61462
 lfleming@monmouthcollege.edu
 OR lilyfleming05@gmail.com



Villas of Holly Brook
Barb Gresham #30
 2720 S. 14th Street
 Pekin, IL 61554

Mazie Wankel
 C/O Reflections Memory Care
 1717 N. Main St.
 Morton, IL 61550



Charlie Davis
 1637 Duncannon Dr.
 Normal, IL 61761

WORSHIP PARTICIPANTS FOR JANUARY

Please switch with someone as needed.

	LAY ASSISTANT	LAY READER	USHERS	TELLERS	COMMUNION Set up & Clean up	PARAMENT COLOR
January 04	Tim	Roberta	Leo	Meri & Valerie	Sue H. & Karen	Blue
January 11	Meri	Vickie	Bill	Leo & Roberta	Lee & Mary	White
January 18	Dennis	Sue B.	Mark	Meri & Valerie	Sue C. & Karen	Green
January 25	Meri	Larry	Larry	Leo & Roberta	Tim & Leslie	Green

JANUARY FLOWER CHART

January 04	
January 11	
January 18	The Flemings—Melanie's birthday
January 25	

You can call the office if you would like to sign up for flowers on a Sunday.

We continue to stay steady financially. **Thank you!!**
You may wish to mail your offerings to Our Savior if you cannot attend worship.



Please note: We only receive ONE vase of flowers; your cost will be \$30.00.

Scripture Keys to a Joyful New Year

Hold fast to your faith (Hebrews 4:14)
Assemble with the saints (Hebrews 10:25)
Pray earnestly every day (1 Thessalonians 5:17, 18)
Pray for great blessings (Malachi 3:10)
Yield not to temptation (1 Thessalonians 5:22)

Neglect not your talents and opportunities (Galatians 6:10)
Examine yourself daily (2 Corinthians 13:5)
Work diligently for the Lord (1 Corinthians 15:58)

Yield your members to righteousness (Romans 6:11,16)
Exercise yourself in godliness (1 Timothy 4:7)
Aim at sinless perfection (Hebrews 6:1)
Redeem the time (Ephesians 5:15, 16)
— Gus Nichols

from www.churchart.com



On December 28, 2025, we will celebrate the baptism of Amanda Seelye and her daughters Jade & Audrey Hackward



LOOKING AHEAD TO FEBRUARY

- February 8:** Deacon Jason Fisher at OSLC
- February 18:** Ash Wednesday



It's never too late to start reading your Bible! If you would like to start reading the Bible, there is a 365-Day Chronological Reading Plan available by the wheat cross.

More information is at www.thebiblerecap.com

Check out November's newsletter for more information!

Anniversaries & Birthdays

JANUARY ANNIVERSARIES

 ANNIVERSARIES	

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

Jan. 2—Courtney Dralle	Jan. 22—Leo Stiles
Jan. 6—Wayne Foss	Jan. 24—Sue Calvert
Jan. 20—Melanie Fleming	Jan. 31—Linda Tanner



PRAYER CHAIN AT OUR SAVIOR

► ***If someone needs prayers, is going into the hospital, or needs a visit—PLEASE LET PASTOR KNOW! His email is: barnes.stephen9@gmail.com. You may also call the church office: 346-2600***

Call the Church office with your prayer request: 346-2600 or email: oslcpekin1@gmail.com.

An email will be sent to all members when a prayer request is received. Members without an email address may ask that they be called when a prayer request is sent out.

► ***Please let Lori know if someone can go off the prayer list—call or email, or fill out one of the blue cards in the pews in the sanctuary. Thank you!***



We continue to pray for those in the Military:

Nick Marzinzik (Air National Guard, Mike & Sue Barger's nephew)

Josh Barger (Navy Reserves, Mike & Sue's son)

Greg Sorenson (Navy Reserves, Lee & Mary's son)

We continue to work on ideas for the 'Philip and Andrew—Come & See' initiative to work on the life and ministry of OSLC. Contact Pastor, or any council member, with an idea you would like to try!



CONTACT US AT:

(309) 346-2600

If you have a ministry need, please call the Church office.



Reminder: If your committee changes or cancels a meeting, or plans an event, or makes an appointment to bring someone in—please let Pastor know. And please include Pastor on all committee emails. Thank you!



Committee and Council minutes are posted by the church office. Check out all the hard work our members are doing!



If you are unable to print the newsletter at home and would like a copy, please contact the church office and one can be printed for you. ***If you would like a printed copy monthly, please let Leslie know.***

Newsletter DEADLINE

If you have information you want to be in the next 'Hope on the Hill', please email Leslie Leitner at leithaus@gmail.com by Sunday, Jan. 18 at leithaus@gmail.com. Thank you!

CHURCH COUNCIL 2025

President	Tim Leitner	Worship & Music, Finance, Mutual Ministry	tim.j.leitner@gmail.com
Vice President	Mary Sorenson	Outreach & Fellowship, Memorials & Gifts	msorenson75@gmail.com
Secretary	Valerie Gettys	Finance	swimmin@yahoo.com
	Mark McCarrell	Finance	markgmc1154@gmail.com
	Teresa Massey	Property	tam42@comcast.net
	Mary Sipka	Christian Education	sipka.mary@gmail.com
	Vickie Rayburn	Worship & Music	tabycat1128.vr@gmail.com
Treasurer	Sharon Eggemeyer	Finance	sjemh@yahoo.com
	Pastor Barnes		barnes.stephen9@gmail.com



Our Savior Lutheran Value Statement

We spread God's word – joining with Jesus to heal our broken world.

Our Savior Lutheran Guiding Principles

- We follow Jesus as Lord and Savior.
- We pray eagerly to strengthen our commitment and relationship with God.
- We act boldly based on an abundant picture of God's love.
- We listen to our neighbors to truly know their joys and sorrows.
- We work as God's hands – serving the needs of our community and the world.
- We love to tell the story of Jesus and His love.

Clip art in the newsletter is from www.churchart.com



Watch the livestream of our worship services! Our YouTube page is:

<https://www.youtube.com/@oursaviorlutheranpekin1287/streams>

The link to our live stream YouTube page can be found on our Facebook page and on our website. Our website is **www.oursaviorpekin.org**. The videos can also be viewed after the service. Please contact Tim Leitner if you would like to know more, or would like to get involved with this outreach.

LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS WE SUPPORT:



Center for Prevention of Abuse

The women & children who seek shelter and safety at House of Hope appreciate your support.

There is a collection crate by the coat rack for House of Hope.

Special needs include: cereal, canned fruit, bottled juice, peanut butter, canned tuna, canned soups, sugar, coffee, pancake mix, syrup



THE BLESSING ROOM/ PEKIN OUTREACH INITIATIVE

We are collecting non-perishable food items.



There are still some funds available for books for the library, so please let Leslie or Melanie know if you have a suggestion!

To check out materials, there is a clipboard for you to jot down your name, the title of the book, when you checked it out, and then when you returned it. Enjoy the new books!

"The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning." — *Lamentations 3:22-23*

As we step into 2026, we celebrate a fresh start and a faithful God. May this new year be filled with His hope, peace, and purpose.

JANUARY 2026 CALENDAR

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						
4 WORSHIP SERVICE 9:00 AM Sunday Bible Study 10:15 a.m.	5	6	7	8 10:00 AM Bible Study 6:00-7:00 PM Aerobics*	9	10
11 WORSHIP SERVICE 9:00 AM Epiphany Party & Coffee Fellowship 10:15 a.m.	12	13 9:30 AM Prayer Shawls 6:00-7:00 PM Aerobics*	14 6:00 p.m. Finance mtg 7:00 p.m. Committee meetings	15 7:30 AM Men's Breakfast 10:00 AM Bible Study 6:00-7:00 PM Aerobics*	16	17
18 WORSHIP SERVICE 9:00 AM Sunday Bible Study 10:15 a.m.	19 	20 6:00-7:00 PM Aerobics*	21 9:30 a.m. Mary/Martha Circle 7:00 p.m. Council	22 10:00 AM Bible Study 6:00-7:00 PM Aerobics*	23	24
25 WORSHIP SERVICE 9:00 AM ANNUAL MEETING 10:15 a.m.	26	27 6:00-7:00 PM Aerobics*	28	29 10:00 AM Bible Study 6:00-7:00 PM Aerobics*	30	31

February 2026						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

*Aerobics has a chat group—contact Teresa, Sue B., Sharon, Karen or Melanie for last minute cancelations.



OUR SAVIOR LUTHERAN CHURCH

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