

December 28, 2025

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Gathering Song Once in Royal David's City ELW 269 vv. 1-2

- 1 Once in royal David's city
 stood a lowly cattle shed,
 where a mother laid her baby
 in a manger for his bed:
 Mary was that mother mild,
 Jesus Christ, her little child.

- 2 He came down to earth from heaven
 who is God and Lord of all,
 and his shelter was a stable,
 and his cradle was a stall;
 with the poor and meek and lowly,
 lived on earth our Savior holy.

OPENING DIALOGUE

Come! Look upon the baby Jesus,
cradled in the arms of his mother.

**Seeing this wondrous sight,
may our hearts be comforted
and our spirits filled with peace.**

Come! Listen to choirs of angels
announcing good news to all people.

**Hearing this marvelous song, may we too sing:
Glory to God in the highest!**

Come! Receive this ancient story in your heart,
not as history but as a gift.

**Opening our hearts to this great mystery,
may Christ be born in us today.**

Greeting

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the
communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Glorious God,

Help us to hear when your chosen voices proclaim the work of your son, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns in this world and the next. **Amen.**

FIRST READING

LUKE 2:1-7

2 In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. **2** This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. **3** All went to their own towns to be registered. **4** Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. **5** He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. **6** While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. **7** And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no place in the guest room

Luther's reflections on the birth of Jesus

Behold Christ lying in the lap of his young mother. . . . What can be sweeter than the Babe, what more lovely than the mother! . . . Look at the Child, knowing nothing. Yet all that is belongs to him, that your conscience should not fear but take comfort in him. Doubt nothing. Watch him springing in the lap of the maiden. Laugh with him. Look upon this Lord of Peace and your spirit will be at peace. . . . You will see how great is the divine goodness, which seeks above all else that you should not despair. Trust him! Trust him! Here is the Child in whom is salvation. To me there is no greater consolation given to mankind than this, that Christ became man, a child, a babe, playing in the lap and at the breasts of his most gracious mother. Who is there whom this sight would not comfort? Now is overcome the power of sin, death, hell, conscience, and guilt, if you come to judge this gurgling Babe and believe that he is come, not to judge you, but to save. (*Martin Luther's Christmas Book*, p. 33)

CAROL INFANT HOLY, INFANT LOWLY ELW 276

1 Infant holy, infant lowly,
for his bed a cattle stall;
oxen lowing, little knowing
Christ the child is Lord of all.
Swiftly winging, angels singing,
bells are ringing, tidings bringing:
Christ the child is Lord of all!
Christ the child is Lord of all!

2 Flocks were sleeping, shepherds keeping
vigil till the morning new
saw the glory, heard the story,
tidings of a gospel true.
Thus rejoicing, free from sorrow,
praises voicing, greet the morrow:
Christ the child was born for you!
Christ the child was born for you!

SECOND READING**LUKE 2:8-16**

8 Now in that same region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. **9** Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. **10** But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid, for see, I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: **11** to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. **12** This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” **13** And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, **14** “Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace among those whom he favors!”

15 When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.” **16** So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph and the child lying in the manger.

Luther's reflections on the shepherds and angels

Look at the shepherds. They were watching their flocks by night, and an angel came and made them apostles, prophets, and children of God. . . . This is a great miracle that the shepherds should have believed this message. They might easily have thought to themselves, "Are we two shepherds worthy that the whole host of heaven should be marshaled for us and all the kings on the earth and the dwellers in Jerusalem be passed by?" I know I would have appealed to common sense and I would have said: "Who am I compared to God and angels and kings? It is an apparition." But the Holy Spirit, who preached through the angels, caused the shepherds to believe. They were so strong in the faith that they were worthy to be spoken to by angels and to hear every angel in heaven singing a cantata just for them. This is a pure wonder that enters not into the heart of man. Our God begins with angels and ends with shepherds. Why does he do such preposterous things? He puts a Babe in a crib. Our common sense revolts and says, "Could not God have saved the world some other way?" (*Martin Luther's Christmas Book*, pp. 36, 40)

CAROL IT CAME UPON THE MIDNIGHT CLEAR ELW 282

- 1 It came upon the midnight clear,
that glorious song of old,
from angels bending near the earth
to touch their harps of gold:
"Peace on the earth, good will to all,
from heav'n's all-gracious king."
The world in solemn stillness lay
to hear the angels sing.

- 2 Still through the cloven skies they come
with peaceful wings unfurled,
and still their heav'nly music floats
o'er all the weary world.
Above its sad and lowly plains
they bend on hov'ring wing,
and ever o'er its babel sounds
the blessed angels sing.

THIRD READING MATTHEW 2:1-12

2 In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, magi from the east came to Jerusalem, ² asking, “Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star in the east and have come to pay him homage.” ³ When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him, ⁴ and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. ⁵ They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it has been written by the prophet:

6 ‘And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
 are by no means least among the rulers of Judah,
for from you shall come a ruler
 who is to shepherd my people Israel.’ ”

7 Then Herod secretly called for the magi and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. ⁸ Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.” ⁹ When they had heard the king, they set out, and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen in the east, until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. ¹¹ On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. ¹² And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

Luther's reflections on Herod and the Magi

When the Wise Men received the divine revelation that the king of the Jews was born, they made straight for Jerusalem, for, of course, they expected to find him at the capital in a lordly castle and a golden chamber. Where else would common sense expect to find a king? But because they were so sure of themselves, the star left them. Then they were sorely tried, and had they relied solely on human wisdom, would surely have said: “Confound it! We

have come all this way for nothing. The star has deceived us. The devil has led us by an apparition. If a king had been born, would he not be in the capital and in a palace? But when we come, the star disappears and we find no one who knows anything about him. Can it be that we foreigners should be the first to have news of him in the royal city? Everyone is so cold and unfriendly that no one offers to go with us and show us the child. They do not believe themselves that to them a king is born, and shall we come and find him? How desolate for the birth of a king! If a puppy were born there would be some little stir, and here a king is supposed to be born and everything is so still. . . . Should not the people be singing, capering, lighting lamps and torches, bedecking the streets with roses and mayflowers? What a miserable king we are seeking! What fools we have been to let ourselves start on this quest!" Nature wants to feel and be certain before believing, but grace will believe before she feels. Faith steps gaily into the darkness, trusting simply in the Word.

But having come, they decided to inquire of the king before returning. At their report, Herod the king "was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him." Why was Herod terrified and all Jerusalem with him? *He* had good reason to be afraid because he had tyrannized over the Jews for thirty years. . . . Now Herod had a crafty plan. "The Jews," thought he, "will hide the truth from me, but I will find out the town where this king is to be born and also the time, and then if they hide him, I will catch him anyway. I will kill so many babies that he cannot escape." So he called the scribes to him and said, "Where is Christ to be born?" Then perhaps through fear, the scribes answered him that in the Prophet Micah it is written that He should be born in Bethlehem. (*Martin Luther's Christmas Book*, pp. 50-52)

CAROL**THE FIRST NOEL ELW 300**

1 The first Noel the angel did say
was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;
in fields where they lay, keeping their sheep,
on a cold winter's night that was so deep.

Refrain

Noel, Noel, Noel!
Born is the King of Israel.

2 They looked up and saw a star
shining in the east beyond them far;
and to the earth it gave great light,
and so it continued both day and night. *Refrain*

3 And by the light of that same star
three wise men came from country far;
to seek for a king was their intent,
and to follow the star wherever it went. *Refrain*

5 Then entered in those wise men three,
full rev'rently upon their knee,
and offered there in his presence
their gold, and myrrh, and frankincense. *Refrain*

FOURTH READING**JOHN 1:1-5, 14-18**

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God,
and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All
things came into being through him, and without him not one
thing came into being. What has come into being 4 in him was
life, and the life was the light of all people. 5 The light shines in the
darkness, and the darkness did not overtake it.

14 And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have
seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and
truth. 15 (John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of
whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because
he was before me.' ") 16 From his fullness we have all received,
grace upon grace. 17 The law indeed was given through Moses;
grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. 18 No one has ever
seen God. It is the only Son, himself God, who is close to the
Father's heart, who has made him known.

Luther's reflections on the Word made flesh

Let us, then, meditate upon the Nativity just as we see it happening in our own babies. I would not have you contemplate the deity of Christ, the majesty of Christ, but rather his flesh. Look upon the baby Jesus. Divinity may terrify man. Inexpressible majesty will crush him. That is why Christ took on our humanity, save for sin, that he should not terrify us but rather that with love and favor he should console and confirm.

This is the word of the prophet: “*Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given*” (Isaiah 9:6). This is for us the hardest point, not so much to believe that He is the son of the Virgin and God himself, as to believe that this Son of God is ours. That is where we wilt. . . . Truly it is marvelous in our eyes that God should place a little child in the lap of a virgin and that all our blessedness should lie in him. And this Child belongs to all mankind. God feeds the whole world through a Babe nursing at Mary’s breast. This must be our daily exercise: to be transformed into Christ, being nourished by this food. Then will the heart be suffused with all joy and will be strong and confident against every assault. (*Martin Luther's Christmas Book*, pp. 33, 16)

CAROL LOVE HAS COME ELW 292

- 1 Love has come—a light in the darkness!
Love shines forth in the Bethlehem skies.
See, all heaven has come to proclaim it;
hear how their song of joy arises:
Love! Love! Born unto you, a Savior!
Love! Love! Glory to God on high.

- 3 Love has come and never will leave us!
Love is life everlasting and free.
Love is Jesus within and among us.
Love is the peace our hearts are seeking.
Love! Love! Love is the gift of Christmas;
Love! Love! Praise to you, God on high!

Nicene Creed

We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God,
begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary
and became truly human.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;

he suffered death and was buried.

On the third day he rose again

in accordance with the scriptures;

he ascended into heaven

and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

We look for the resurrection of the dead,

and the life of the world to come. **Amen.**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION AND PEACE

Empowered by the news of Christ's birth, let us pray boldly for the church, creation, and all who are in need.

A brief silence.

God of grace, you forgive us not because we deserve it, but because your love never ends. Give us courage to go out into the world and show that same love to others. Bless our River Raisin Retired Pastors Rick Webb, Tim Lentner, Rich Rentner, Al Nelson, Emily Frank, Frank Paine, Gary Leking, David Vinciguerra; and our Bishops Yehiel (yah-HEEL) Curry and Donald Kreiss. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

God, you give us so much. The sun and moon praise you, and the stars sing about your love. When we hurt your world, help us bring healing to what is broken. God, you love what is good and gentle. When leaders do not do what is fair, you feel our pain too. Help those in charge see you in the faces of all the people they care for. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

God of life, you claim us as your own and care for us as Christ's siblings. Pour out your compassion in every place your people suffer, and hold them safe in the palm of your hand. We pray especially for **Please remember in prayer: Our Parishioners:** the family of JoAnn Capaul-Smallidge; Darlene Dull; Trudy Hill; Karen Hudson; Martha Leonard; Vicki Vagt; **Friends and Relatives:** Mindy Bieber; Heather Blanchard; Elmer Bowman; Jenner Bowman; Angie Cole; Bill Cole; Michael Cook; Scott DeBruin; Connie Eipperle; Nishi Ghai; Myles Gossiaux; Terry Heck; Brian Hoppert; Tim Jarvis; Janet Knight; Sara Nieswand; Pam Puhl; Cassie Roberts; Andy Scharer & Carly; Joseph Shock; Sherry Watters; family of Kaiden Wertenberger; all those who serve in our military, struggling Veterans, and their families. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

God of compassion, you nurture children as the apple of your eye. As you sheltered your son Jesus from Herod's grasp, shelter all children in danger. As you comforted Rachel, comfort all who have lost children to violence. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

God of love, you console those who weep for lost beloved ones. Thanks for those who have gone before us. We remember today, especially JoAnn Capaul-Smallidge and Kaiden Wertenberger. We entrust them to your everlasting care. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

With the joy of Christ's birth in our hearts, we commend our prayers to you, O God, trusting in your boundless mercy and eternal love; through Jesus Christ our Savior.

Amen.

PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always. **And also with you.**
The assembly greets one another with a sign of peace.

OFFERING AND OFFERING PRAYER

God of glory,
great are your wonders among us
and many are the blessings you bestow.
Use us and these your gifts for the needs of the world,
that all the ends of the earth may rejoice in your saving grace,
through Christ our Savior.

Amen.

HOLY COMMUNION

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

THE WORDS OF INSTITUTION

Gathered at the Lord's table, we remember with thanksgiving that:

In the night in which he was betrayed,
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
and gave it for all to drink, saying:
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me."

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.
**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in
heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us
our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against
us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from
evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the
glory, forever and ever. Amen.**

Distribution

This is Christ's table and Christ welcomes each and every single one of you.

All who desire the Lord's Supper are invited to come forward to receive Holy Communion. Following the usher's invitation, come forward along the center aisle. Receive the wafer of bread in your hands. You may also request a gluten-free wafer. Then take a small cup from the tray: white grape juice is in the center and red wine is around the edge. Deposit your cup in the basket when you are finished and return to your seat down the side aisle. We invite children and those not receiving the bread and wine to come forward to receive a blessing.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Incarnate God, you are among us at this table.
May we treasure this gift and ponder in our hearts
the mystery of your presence.
Move us to discover the wonders of your love
in the everyday moments of our lives,
through Christ born in us.

Amen.

BLESSING

May the Word that Mary brought to birth
carry you into new and abundant life.
May the Word that Joseph cradled in his arms
enfold you with love and strength.

May the Word that angels proclaimed in song
bring harmony to our world.
And the blessing of almighty God,
the Father, the + Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be upon you and remain with you always.
Amen.

Sending Song Good Christian Friends, Rejoice ELW 288

- 1 Good Christian friends, rejoice
with heart and soul and voice;
give ye heed to what we say:
Jesus Christ is born today;
ox and ass before him bow,
and he is in the manger now.
Christ is born today! Christ is born today!
- 2 Good Christian friends, rejoice
with heart and soul and voice;
now ye hear of endless bliss:
Jesus Christ was born for this!
He has opened heaven's door,
and we are blest forevermore.
Christ was born for this! Christ was born for this!
- 3 Good Christian friends, rejoice
with heart and soul and voice;
now ye need not fear the grave;
Jesus Christ was born to save!
Calls you one and calls you all
to gain the everlasting hall.
Christ was born to save! Christ was born to save!

DISMISSAL

Glory to God in the highest!
And peace to God's people on earth!
Go in peace. Share the gift of Jesus.
Thanks be to God.

New players are welcome and encouraged to join in the fun of **dartball**. Games are played on **Monday evenings** at 7:30 at the area churches and are on break and will **resume on January 05**. Contact Paul Ness for more info @ 734-770-6389 and a schedule.

Weekly Adult Bible Study resumes on Tues., **Jan. 06** at 9:30 AM. Pastor Aaron leads the study of the next Sunday's reading. Bring a friend.

It's our turn to help with God Works Soup kitchen at St. John's in Dundee on Wed., January 14. Our youth and their families are helping. Please sign up in the narthex.

The **new** issues of **Word in Season** are located on the board near the coatroom and are **free** of charge. Large print editions are also available.

It's that time of year again when the nominating committee is starting the process of looking for **candidates** that would be willing to run for a position on the **church council**. It's an exciting time at Prince of Peace, and we are looking for members that **share** that **excitement** and **want to help** our church continue to carry this forward. If you are interested in **learning more** about any of the available positions or would like to **volunteer** for one of them, please **contact** a member of the **Nominating Committee**, Tim Smith, Barb DeLand, Lynne Zabawa, Dave Lorenzo, Deena Salenbien, John Gerweck or Andy McCain. We are hoping to have candidates for all positions by the first full week of January.

Our Christian sympathy is extended to the family and friends of JoAnn-Capaul- Smallidge, who passed away on December 22. Visitation will be Friday, January 2 from 2-8 PM at Capaul Funeral Home. Visitation will also be at Prince of Peace on Saturday, January 03 from 10 AM until the funeral begins at 11 AM.

Your 2026 offering envelopes are available for pick up. Please, look at them and make sure that the number on the label matches the number on the envelopes in the box *and* that your name is correct. If you notice any problems or cannot find your envelopes contact the church office.

You may also direct deposit or scan to donate an offering:



Serving our congregation this morning:

Acolytes – Eva Lynn and Grace Dusa

Altar Guild – Barb DeLand, Kelsey Creguer, Cheryl Stotz

Fellowship Hour – Kim Cramer, Joy Fox w/donations from Kristi Johnson

Liturgical Ministers – Tim Smith and Kristi Johnson

Media – Kelsey Creguer

Organist – Ray Smith

Ushers – Tom Fruchey, Head Usher; Jan Fruchey, Ron & Lynne Zabawa

Schedule:

Today: Holy Communion – 9 AM

Fellowship Hour – 10 AM

Wednesday: New Years Eve – No Service Tonight

Thursday: New Years Day

No Pickleball

Saturday: Un-Decorate the Sanctuary – 9 AM

Drop off your undecorated, live Christmas tree
in the picnic shelter to use in *Journey to the Cross*

Coming Soon:

Jan 04 – “Un”-Decorate the Sanctuary

Jan 06 – Adult Bible Study Begins – 9:30 AM

Jan 08 – Pickleball Resumes – 6 PM

Jan 11 – Sunday School & Catechism Resume

Jan 14 – God Works Soup Kitchen

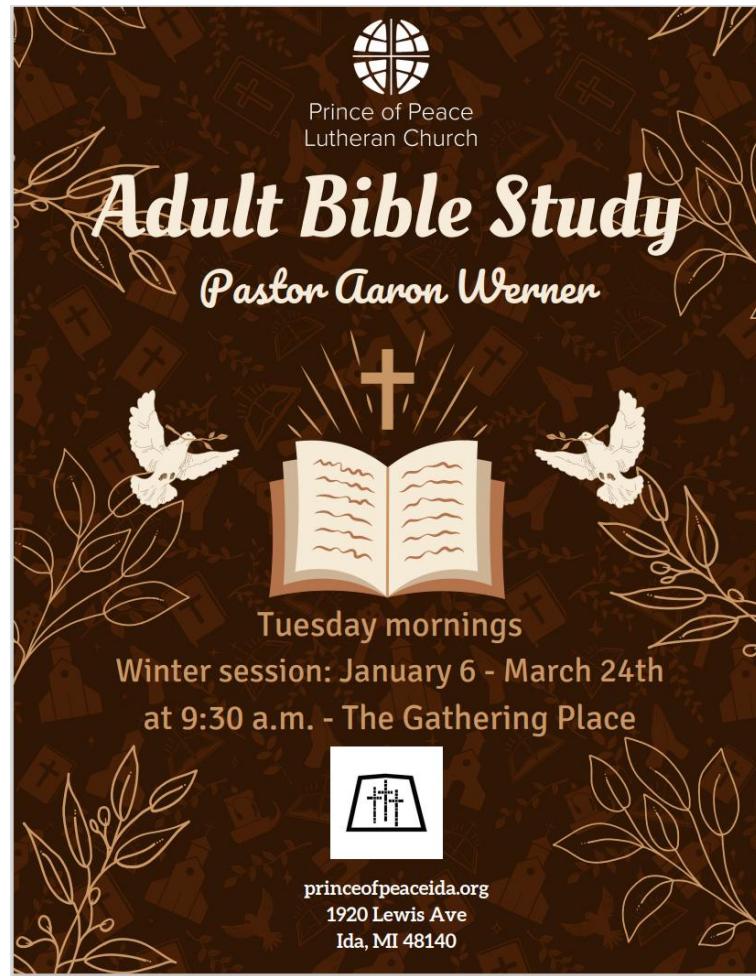
Jan 15 – JTTC Meeting – 7:00 PM

Jan. 18 – Grades 3-5 Prayer Milestone Class

Jan 18 – Youth Outing to Funagins

Jan 19 – Martin Luther King Day

Jan 25 – Annual Meeting & Potluck – 10 AM



You're invited to

Celebrate *

20
YEARS

Ray Smith

Prince of Peace Organist
Special Music Accompanist

26
YEARS

Kim Kibat

PoP Administrative Assistant
Parish Administrator

Sunday
January 18, 2026

Prelude to Worship and a Special Fellowship Hour
Come and say thank you for their
combined 46 years of dedication to Prince of Peace!



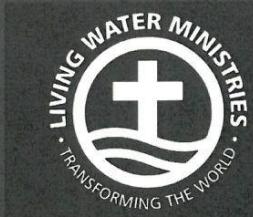
Grades 3-5

Prayer Milestone

SUN JAN 18 @ 10:15AM

**Parents, Grandparents,
Godparents and anyone wanting
to cultivate faith come along and
attend with their young people.**





SUMMER CAMP

2026



June
21-26

Stony Lake Camp
7898 W Stony Lake Rd.
New Era, MI 49446
231-861-4138



Register
Here

