

TÕE TERA / THE SOWER - MAY 2026

ST. PETER'S ESTONIAN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH OF TORONTO
EELK Toronto Peetri Kogudus



More Than a Song - The Quiet Strength of Hymns

A few years ago, I was sitting in a hospital waiting room, there to pick up a friend. While I waited, a cleaning woman entered, pulling a large bucket of soapy water with a mop in tow. She moved toward the washrooms and began her work. As she cleaned, she sang—softly at first, then more clearly—her voice carrying through the waiting area. There was a lightness to it, a kind of joy that seemed to fill the room.

I turned to the person beside me and said, "How lovely—now there's someone who truly enjoys her job." Her singing made me feel genuinely happy.

But the person next to me offered a different perspective. "Listen more closely," they said. "She's singing hymns. She's not happy—she's coping."

I listened again, this time paying attention to the words. They were indeed hymns—soulful, reverent, deeply expressive. And in that moment, I realized how quickly I had made an assumption. Her singing wasn't necessarily an expression of joy; it may have been her way to endure. Perhaps she was using those songs to carry herself through a difficult shift, transforming a hard moment into something more bearable—a brief mental and spiritual refuge.

What I had witnessed was not simple happiness, but resilience.

That moment brought back a memory from years earlier, when my grandmother was admitted to Sunnybrook Hospital. One evening, after we had gone home, she was moved to a different room. Disoriented and afraid, she convinced herself that we would never find her again.

The next morning, the nursing staff directed us to her new room. As we walked down the hallway, we heard it before we saw her—singing. We found her in her bed, crying and singing familiar Estonian Lutheran hymns.



Please donate to secure the future of St. Peter's with cash or cheques. E-mail transfers accepted at stpeterstoronto@rogers.com

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Kantselei Tunnid/Office Hours

Teisipäeval/Tues. 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Kolmapäeval/Wed. 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Neljapäeval/Thurs. 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Deacon Karl Paju

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Neljapäeval/Thurs. 12:00 – 3:00 p.m.

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In her fear and confusion, she had turned to the same source of comfort: music rooted in faith. She was soothing herself the only way she knew how.

These experiences led me to reflect more deeply on the act of singing during difficult moments. Singing—especially in times of stress, monotony, or distress—can be a powerful coping mechanism. It lifts the spirit, interrupts cycles of worry, and creates a sense of control in situations where little else feels certain.

Hymns, in particular, carry a unique comfort. They blend scripture, prayer, and emotion, offering reassurance and reminding the singer of something larger than their immediate circumstances. They allow space for both sorrow and hope to coexist.

This tradition is deeply rooted in scripture. In Acts 16:25, Paul and Silas hymns while imprisoned, finding comfort in worship despite their suffering. In Matthew 26:30, Jesus and his disciples sang together before heading to the Mount of Olives. And in Colossians 3:16, believers are encouraged to teach and uplift one another through “psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.”

Many well-loved hymns echo this enduring comfort. *Great Is Thy Faithfulness*, inspired by Lamentations 3:22–23, speaks of God’s unending mercy. *Abide With Me* is a quiet prayer for God’s presence in life’s darkest hours. *A Mighty Fortress Is Our God*, written by Martin Luther, proclaims God as a steadfast refuge. *What a Friend We Have in Jesus* reminds us of the peace found in bringing our burdens to God in prayer.

If you ever find yourself overwhelmed, discouraged, or simply worn down, try singing. It can act almost like active meditation—requiring focus, interrupting anxious thoughts, and offering a sense of calm. Hymns, especially, provide a way to express pain honestly while still holding onto hope. They remind us that we are not alone.

I learned something important that day in the waiting room. How limited my understanding had been—to assume that singing must come from happiness alone. Sometimes, it comes from struggle. Sometimes, it is the very thing that carries a person through.

Be kind to one another. We rarely know the burdens others are carrying—or the quiet ways they are finding the strength to endure. - *Tiiu Roiser* -

UUDISED / NEWS



Palm Sunday - March 29th

Palm Sunday at St. Peter's was commemorated with a processional led by Deacon Karl Paju. Tots, Sunday School students, parents and teachers followed waving palm branches. For almost all the children, this was their first time participating in celebrating the entry of Jesus to Jerusalem. The sermon focused on humility. Organ music by Erik Kreem. Scripture readings by Toomas Trei and Linda Laikve. Thank you to Guild chairwoman Aida Shelton for the refreshments at the fellowship following the service.



A mother is a person who seeing there are only four pieces of pie for five people, promptly announces she never did care for pie.

UUDISED / NEWS

Visiting Pastor

St. Peter's Board members were pleased to welcome Dean Katrin-Helena Melder to our church on March 31st. Dean Melder was in Toronto providing Easter services for Vana Andres congregation and was touring Toronto with VA member Anne Orunuk.



Dean Melder was ordained in 2003 and has been the minister at JÄRVA-JAANI Ristija Johannese congregation in Estonia since then. She became the Dean of Järva-Jaani in 2016.

Good Friday - April 3rd

The Good Friday English-language service was led by Deacon Karl Paju, with Erik Kreem serving as organist. Scripture readings were delivered by Kristina Leis and Tiiu Roiser. In his sermon, Deacon Paju reflected on Good Friday as the darkest day of the church year, exploring the true meaning of sin and suffering.



Easter Sunday - April 5th

Easter Sunday service with Holy Communion at Peetri Congregation was led by Pastor Ando Kass and Deacon Karl Paju, with Erik Kreem on organ and piano. The Peetri Kirik Church choir performed, and scripture readings were given by Toomas Trei and Susan Pruvli. An Easter meal followed in the large hall. Thanks were extended to the guild women, led by Aida Shelton, who prepared the lunch.





Hidden costs of Donations Through Third-Party Platforms Impact on Your Donation -

Did you know, that donating to St. Peters through a third-party platform is often less cost-effective than donating directly?

This is because of stacked administrative and transaction fees that reduce the total amount the church ultimately receives.

While these platforms offer convenience, it is important to remember that these organizations operate as businesses. They generate revenue through transaction fees, platform management charges, or optional tips from donors. If you choose to donate this way, be sure to review the fine print carefully. Third-party platforms typically charge fees ranging from 2% to over 8% per donation to cover processing, operations, and technology costs. For example, CanadaHelps charges 3.5% to 4.5% for one-time and monthly donations.

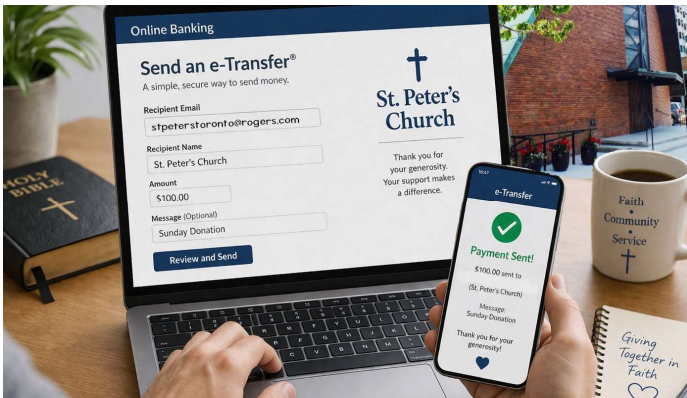
- *Reduced Net Donations:* A \$100 donation may result in only \$92-\$95 reaching the church after fees.
- *Delayed Access to Funds:* Third-party platforms may hold donations before transferring them, meaning the church receives funds more slowly than with direct giving.
- *Additional or Unclear Fees:* Some charges may not be clearly disclosed until the final step of the donation process.

How to Maximize Your Donation -

- *Donate Directly:* Contributing via cash, cheque, or e-transfer ensures St. Peter’s receives the full amount without deductions.
- *Cover the Fees:* Many platforms allow donors to add a small percentage to offset processing costs to ensure the church receives 100% of your intended gift.

With fees typically ranging from 2.0% to 4.5%, a \$100 donation could mean St. Peter’s receives only about \$95.50.

If your goal is to ensure the full value of your contribution supports St. Peters, please consider donating directly rather than using a third-party platform.



Calling All Green Thumbs (and Those Who Just Like Snacks & Sunshine!)

Do you enjoy fresh air, a bit of dirt under your nails, and the satisfaction of making something beautiful? Or are you just really good at supervising with a coffee in hand? Either way—we need YOU!

As we prepare our church to look its best for the summer season and for Doors Open Toronto on May 23 and 24, we are looking for volunteers. Join us for a cheerful courtyard makeover as we transform our church grounds into a blooming paradise. We'll be amending the soil, planting flowers, sprucing up planters, and possibly debating whether that plant is a weed or “just misunderstood” on...

Tuesday, May 19th, or in case of bad weather, **Wednesday, May 20th - 10:00 a.m.**

No experience necessary; Tools, plants, and good vibes provided; Bonus: bragging rights every time you walk past your handiwork.

Whether you have a certified green thumb, a slightly beige thumb, or no thumb-related skills at all, come lend a hand and share some laughs. Let’s dig in, grow together, and make our space as welcoming outside as it is inside! For more information please call the church office at 416-483-5847. Bring your own gardening gloves.



Hea Jumal,

Me palvetame tänutundes oma emade eest ja kõigi nende naiste eest, kes koos Sinuga on osalenud uue elu ilmale toomise imes. Sina, kes said inimeseks naise kaudu, anna kõigile emadele julgust, mida nad vajavad, et seista silmitsi ebakindla tulevikuga, mille lastega elu alati kaasa toob.

Anna neile jõudu elada ja olla vastuarmastatud – mitte täiuslikult, vaid inimlikult.

Anna neile ustav toetus abikaasalt, perelt ja sõpradelt, kui nad hoolitsevad oma laste füüsilise ja vaimse kasvu eest.

Anna neile rõõmu ja rõõmustamist oma lastest, et see kannaks neid läbi emaduse katsumuste. Kõige enam anna neile tarkust pöörduda Sinu poole abi saamiseks siis, kui nad seda kõige enam vajavad.

Xavier.edu - Eesti keelde tõlgitud



An Irish blessing

There is but one and only one,
Whose love will fail you never.
One who lives from sun to sun,
With constant fond endeavor.

There is but one and only one
On earth there is no other.
In heaven a noble work was done
When God gave us a Mother.

- Author Unknown; Source - Xavier.edu

Doors Open Toronto 2026

For 2026, Doors Open Toronto explores “The World in a City” looking at the people, places and stories that showcase the city’s global mosaic. St. Peter’s will once again be among the more than 150 buildings and sites as Doors Open Toronto considers the histories, cultures and nations that continue to shape the city.

With more than half of its population born overseas, Toronto is one of the most multicultural cities in the world. This year, the event looks at how diversity has been Toronto’s strength since its founding. Whether through architecture inspired from global cultures, histories that



reflect the many societies and traditions who call Toronto home, or the ways in which buildings act as community gathering spaces, this year’s event considers Toronto’s past and future - together.

We warmly invite all members and friends to come out, explore, and celebrate together. Let’s take this opportunity to showcase our rich Estonian heritage with pride and joy.

Saturday, May 23 -

- Toronto Men’s Choir at 11:00 a.m. and 12:00 noon.
- Meet stained glass artist Ernestine Tahedl at 2:00 p.m.

Sunday, May 24 -

- Salvation Army musical service at 10:00 a.m.
- Toronto Korean Open Church musical service at 2:30 p.m.
- A video introducing Estonia to our visitors will run in the Guild Room.

If you have an Estonian national costume, we encourage you to wear it — let’s showcase our culture in all its vibrancy!

In Loving Memory

Armas Maiste

March 9, 1929 -
March 26, 2026

*"And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and take you to be with me that you may also be where I am."
John 14:3*

*Our deepest sympathies to wife Margit Viia Maiste, and daughter Kristiina and son Jeffrey together with their families.
St. Peter's Board Members and Congregation*

Made with PhotoFidy.com

Our heartfelt condolences to St. Peter's long-time music and choir teacher, Margit Viia-Maiste, on the recent passing of her dear husband. Armas, an acclaimed classical and jazz pianist who passed away on March 26, 2026, in an Ottawa hospital shortly after celebrating his 97th birthday. Margit and her husband frequently collaborated throughout their musical careers.

Sulgunud on eluraamat, algab mälestuste tee - on tundeid, mis ei suuda iial surra, on mälestusi, mida aeg ei suuda murda.

Lord, we come before you with heavy hearts and ask that you comfort us as we continue to mourn the loss of our mothers and fathers. Help us to find peace in the knowledge that they are in your loving embrace, and that we will one day be reunited with them in heaven. We know that you have a plan for each of us, and we trust that you will help us find our way forward with strength and resilience.

Are you receiving our Emails?

Are you receiving emails from St. Peter's? If you've been missing our monthly *TõeTera* or *Sower*, please check your spam or junk folder.

If your email address has changed and you'd like to continue receiving church updates, be sure to send us your new contact information. We've noticed that some messages are being returned as "soft bounces," which can happen if your mailbox is full or if our email address has been blocked. Please check that your inbox has available storage and that our messages are not being filtered.

If you prefer not to receive these emails, you can unsubscribe at any time using the link at the bottom of our messages.

If you are celebrating a joyful occasion — such as a christening or wedding—or wish to commemorate or honour the passing of a loved one, please inform the office so the announcement can be included in our newsletter. Kindly note that these notices are not published automatically.



A Mother's Day Prayer



I said a Mother's Day prayer for you to thank the Lord above, for blessing me with a lifetime of your tenderhearted love. I thanked God for the caring you've shown me through the years, for the closeness we've enjoyed in time of laughter and of tears.

And so, I thank you from the heart for all you've done for me and I bless the Lord for giving me the best mother there could be!

- Author Unknown

My mother gave me the greatest gift anyone could give another person, she believed in me.

CHURCH SERVICES & EVENTS / JUMALATEENISTUSED & ÜRITUSED*

*New events may be added to the calendar—please check our church website for any additions. www.stpeterstorontoestonianchurch.ca/event-calendar

May 3 - (Sunday) Combined early Mother's Day Estonian-language service with Vana Andres congregation. Deacon Karl Paju, soloist Kristina Agur, organist Erik Kreem. A light luncheon for a voluntary \$20 minimum donation will be served in downstairs hall following the service. Please register your attendance with the church office at 416-483-5847.



May 6 - (Wednesday) Guild meeting at 12:00 noon.

May 17 - (Sunday) Service at Ehatare with Deacon Karl Paju. Everyone welcome.

May 19 - (Tuesday) Volunteer gardening day.

May 20th - (Wednesday) Alternate gardening day if rain on Tuesday.

May 23 & 24 (Saturday & Sunday) DOORS OPEN City of Toronto Event. See details on page 6.

* Note that Choir rehearsals are on summer break after Mother's Day.

Church Office Hours:

Tues. 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Wed. 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Thurs. 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Deacon Karl Paju's Office Hours:

Thursdays from
12:00 noon to 3:00 p.m.

To request prayers, please contact St. Peter's office.

*Eestpalved võib igal ajal kirjalikult esitada kiriku kontorisse:
stpeterstoronto@rogers.com*

If you have not already done so, please ensure that the church has your up-to-date contact information.

*Kui teie ei ole juba teinud, palun saatke oma kehtivad andmed (postiaadress, epost, ja telefoninumber) kiriku kantseleisse:
416-483-5847.*



TORONTO PEETRI- JA VANA ANDRESE ÜHINE

EMADEPÄEVA JUMALATEENISTUS

Pühapäeval 3. mail, 2026 kell 11:30 e.l.
Toronto Peetri Kirikus - 817 Mt. Pleasant Road

Diakon Karl Paju - Solist Kristina Agur
Organist Erik Kreem

Esineb Vana Andrese ja Peetri kiriku ühendkoor
Liina Purje Lepiku ja Erik Kreemi juhtimisel.

Järgneb kerge lõuna - vabatahtlik annetus
(soovitav minimum \$20)
Palume registreerida einelauaks
416-483-5847

A 98 year old mother was being interviewed about her long life and how she felt



about being a Mother all those years. "I feel just wonderful," was her reply. "For the first time since I became a mother, I no longer have to worry about my children." "How is that?" "They are both in nursing homes!"