

The Churchman

Sts. Peter and Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church

250 Woodside Road, Riverside, Illinois 60546 * (708) 442-5250

"Faith Active in Love"

www.stspeterandpaulriverside.org

Volume 42

January 2020

Issue 1

We are called together by the Holy Spirit around Word and sacraments to glorify God the Father, creator of all things, through our Lord Jesus Christ. We trust God to nurture lives of faith and hope, as we serve and give witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ for the salvation of the world.



Mission and Meal Sunday, January 26th, 2020

Liturgy of Holy Communion

10:15 a.m.

followed by the

Annual Congregational Meeting and Epiphany Luncheon

Chairpersons of all committees and organizations of the congregation are reminded to submit your annual reports to the church office no later than Sunday, January 5th.

Images of the Season for Epiphany

As we fumble our way out of bed on a winter morning that seems more like night, Isaiah's words "Arise, shine for your light has come!" may sound ironic... But then, we know that the prophet's words have no connection at all to the changing seasons. No, they come to us in the context of our Lord's revelation as the beacon of salvation for the whole world. In response to that, the Epiphany season calls us, entices us, *commands* us to rise up, to leap out of those places where we live in spiritual dimness. God calls us to polish our glasses, clean our windows to be able to see with clarity this new thing that has happened. Arise! Shine! We are invited to greet and welcome the light—a luminescence that shines with such magnitude that it melts the icy coldness of our hearts.

Epiphany is no wimpy one-candle-in-the-darkness deal, but rather a blast of brightness heretofore unseen. Get up and see it! Bask in its brightness! Behold the light that shines upon us, scattering the darkness of our minds so that we may walk as children of the light. The light is Christ. Any spiritual light that we have is his, shining in and through us. And indeed, so great is the grace that shines upon us that it seems that our faces, like Moses', should be glowing with reflected glory. At the very least, our way of living surely will catch

the light of Christ's love and shine it on those around us. Such is the extroverted, mission nature of this season.

And while the people are the church and thus will be the primary light-givers in this season, our centers of worship, too, should glow with the light. Don't let Epiphany be wimpy. Let everything associated with our worship shine in celebration that the light of our lives is living within us. Polish the metals in the worship center till they gleam. Light those candles. Let the light shine full blast. Our places of worship should be beacons, searchlights, calling out to all those who labor in spiritual darkness.

Epiphany begins at Bethlehem, but it deserves to be more than a half-baked rerun of Christmas—it has much to offer of its own. The magi followed an unmistakably bright star previously unknown, a luminous sign from God to pay attention. During the season of Epiphany we also celebrate the baptism of Jesus, introducing the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire. A liturgy that includes the affirmation of our baptism certainly has a place on that day. Let it be a time to celebrate the brightness of being a child of God. Be washed in the bright waters of baptism, burn again with the fire of the Holy Spirit.

And the brightness carries on through the season. At Cana, Jesus does the first of his signs, revealing his glory. The rabbi Jesus proclaims the recovery of sight for the blind. Jesus' is a light seemingly too intense for some in his hometown. He invites others into the circle of his light, inviting fisherfolk to pull in people. Christ is a light that shines where none has before, blessing the poor, the hungry, the sorrowful. And finally comes the dazzling light of the transfigured Lord.

This light is for all people: "a light to reveal you to the nations and the glory of your people Israel" in the words of Simeon. This light and fire of God shines like a therapeutic laser right into the places where it is most needed. This cleansing light sears away the scales on our eyes, cauterizes the seeping wounds of sin, and halts the gnawing darkness of anxiety. This is a healing light, a refining light, a burnishing light and a purifying light. This light is like no other. This light has the power to save.

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The Epiphany of Our Lord, January 6th

We Offer What We Have

We bring what we can. We offer what we have. We give our time, our skills, our resources. We give not out of a sense of duty or obligation but in response to the immeasurable gift we have received.

Together, the church is the body of Christ, a ragtag community of believers following a hunch and a star. Together, we offer what we have. We offer our songs, words, hopes, fears, and failings. We offer our prayers. We offer our ability to comfort and mourn, our willingness to be vulnerable. We give our gifts, whatever they are, and we give them joyfully. Some shiny and new, some worn and mended, some cracked but beloved. Gifts more precious than gold, rarer than frankincense or myrrh.

We journey down a long road, sometimes through the dark. Together, we face danger. We face uncertainty. We face temptation. When we come finally, joyfully to celebrate the arrival of the baby Jesus, the king in the humble manger, we rejoice. We pay homage. We offer our gifts in response to the God who has given us all that we see and know. We offer what we have because of what we have received. We bring what we can because the gift that God gives us in Christ is a gift beyond our ability to measure.

We can't always offer as much as we wish we could, but we offer what we have in the spirit that we can and find that together, our broken gifts make a beautiful whole. The gift we have received is the sure and certain truth that our gifts are enough. That we are enough. That we are created with care and redeemed to be love and light in the world.

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In the depths of winter...

In the depths of winter, I finally learned that within me there lay an invincible summer. —Albert Camus

Sometimes we suddenly see or sense opposite emotions within ourselves. The cold of winter presses in on us, and we may feel tested by its bite. Yet, when we think we cannot bear it a moment longer, we find a counterforce within, an inner reassurance that comes like a summer breeze and says we can do what we must. Perhaps it comes in a time of dark despair, and we realize that at least we've made it this far. We are pretty tough. In our deepest sadness about the loss of a love, we may find a more meaningful contact with our Higher Power.

The opposites in our lives may tempt us to fight them. One side may be very clear and obvious while the other side is hidden. When we are open, these extremes are spiritual teachers for us. As we think about life and our feelings today, what opposites do we find?

Today, I will remember that I have an invincible summer at the deepest part of winter in my life.

Quoted from the app Touchstones. Find recovery resources at Hazelden.

Thank You from *Lux Cantorum Chicago!*

Thank you for your support of *Lux Cantorum Chicago* during its "Joy!" concert season. Thank you for attending the concerts, for hosting the performance and reception at Sts. Peter and Paul on Sunday afternoon, December 8th. "Consider the lasting joy that can be experienced in music that focuses on the spiritual values of love, hope, and peace—the impetus of our joy-filled celebration!" Thank you to everyone who assisted with hosting the reception following the concert, especially coordinator Shirley Kostelny.—*djl*



Jan. 3: Gerald "J.T." Tarbox	Jan. 18: John Galdun
Jan. 4: Suzanna Skudrna	Jan. 19: Sheryl Hallmann
Jan. 6: Esther Meksto	Jan. 20: William Boor
Jan. 8: Samuel Lauritsen	Jan. 22: Trevor Jech
Jan. 9: Olga Zavodny	Kenneth Kostelancik
Jan. 10: Joyce Hodul	Mildred Riban
Jan. 14: Thomas Michaels	Jan. 25: Emily Kostial
Jan. 15: Sarah Gavac	Jan. 31: Leslie Byrne
	Rachel Decosola

Birthdays and Anniversaries

January 18, 2015: James and Kathi Zinsser
January 19, 2014: Eric and Gretchen Kostelny
January 21, 1996: Leslie and Matthew Byrne



Happenings

Congregation Council Meeting
Thursday, January 16th, 7:30 p.m.

Church Office Closed
December 26th, 31st and January 2nd

"Legends of the Game" Volleyball meets each Monday at 6:30 p.m. beginning January 6th through April 27th.

Overeaters Anonymous meets weekly on Tuesday evenings at 7 p.m.

Co-Dependents Anonymous meets weekly on Wednesday evenings at 6:30 p.m.

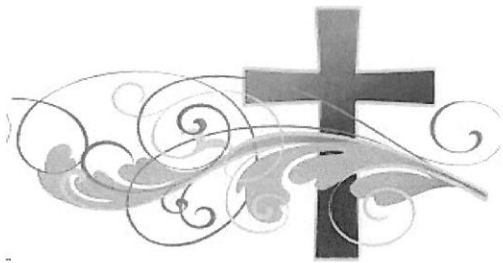
AA Big Book Study Group meets weekly on Saturday mornings at 11 a.m.

AA Group meets weekly on Saturday evenings at 7 p.m.

All groups meet in the lower level classroom adjacent to the dining hall.



Carrie Watkiss, Council President and daughter of the late Ramona and William Suffern, offers the welcome and inaugural address for the Ramona A. Suffern Annual Mission Dinner.



**Ramona A. Suffern
Annual Mission Dinner**
to benefit ELCA Sponsored
Missionaries
and Children's Programs at
Oak Leyden Developmental Services

Sunday, November 10th, 2019



Singers from the Youth Choir perform before the Dinner.



Mission Dinner Planning Group

—Photos by Emil Galdun.

JANUARY WORSHIP SERVERS

January 5th:

Greeters: Walter and Judith Cudecki
 Acolyte: Abby Tarbox
 Assisting Minister: Vicki Michaels
 Comm. Minister: Beverly Tarbox
 Lectors: Charles Matthies and Katie Melnyk
 Ushers: Gregg Valek and Walter Cudecki

January 12th:

Greeters: John and Juanita and Kristine Jakubec
 Acolyte: Ben Myers
 Assisting Minister: Carrie Watkiss
 Comm. Minister: John Broussard
 Lectors: Tom and Lavinia Myers
 Ushers: Janet Broussard and Gregg Valek

January 19th:

Greeters: John and Shirley Kostelny
 Acolyte: Sebastian Myers
 Assisting Minister: Tom Myers
 Comm. Minister: Martin Pennino
 Lectors: Tom and Vicki Michaels
 Ushers: Gregg Valek and John Kostelny

January 26th:

Greeters: Sandy Garvey and Karyn Bute
 Acolyte: Aidan Altavilla
 Assisting Minister: Charles Matthies
 Comm. Minister: Brandon Michaels
 Lectors: J. T. and Beverly Tarbox
 Ushers: Donald and Johnathan Haase

Sacristan and Altar Care:

Fred Kuzel



Worship and Music News

Thanks to everyone who attended or provided food and refreshments for the performance of "Joy!" by *Lux Cantorum Chicago* on Sunday, December 8th. We hope everyone enjoyed the concert and reception. Special thanks to Shirley Kostelny for coordinating the reception and everyone who provided food, set-up and clean-up. We thank *Lux Cantorum* for helping us to prepare for the Christmas season, and we look forward to future performances.

Thanks also to the Youth Choir and Adult Choir and their directors, violinist Kristine Boike, and the Confirmation students and young persons who served as lectors, choral readers and acolyte at the liturgy on December 22nd. We also thank our choirs for the performance of G. F. Handel's *The Messiah*, Part I offered during the Christmas Eve service. We ask God to bless those who helped in the celebrations of our Savior's birth. Finally, a special "thank you" goes out to Pastor Dennis and David Richards for coordinating the services and the music.

—Charles Matthies, Worship and Music Committee

FEBRUARY WORSHIP SERVERS

February 2nd:

Greeters: Larry Crachy and Karen Kubik
 Acolyte: Bryan Galdun
 Assisting Minister: Tom Michaels
 Comm. Minister: Tom Myers
 Lectors: Paul and Carrie Watkiss
 Ushers: Gregg Valek and Paul Watkiss

February 9th:

Greeters: Paul and Carrie Watkiss
 Acolyte: Abby Tarbox
 Assisting Minister: John Broussard
 Comm. Minister: Vicki Michaels
 Lectors: Keith Altavilla and Charles Matthies
 Ushers: Janet Broussard and Gregg Valek

February 16th:

Greeters: Ann Kmet and Vicki Michaels
 Acolyte: Ben Myers
 Assisting Minister: Brandon Michaels
 Comm. Minister: Carrie Watkiss
 Lectors: John and Shirley Kostelny
 Ushers: Walter Cudecki and Gregg Valek

February 23rd:

Greeters: Carole Pollitz and Carl Busch
 Acolyte: Sebastian Myers
 Assisting Minister: Vicki Michaels
 Comm. Minister: Paul Watkiss
 Lectors: John Broussard and George Valek
 Ushers: Gregg Valek and John Kostelny

Ash Wednesday, February 26th:

Greeters: John and Shirley Kostelny
 Acolyte: Aidan Altavilla
 Assisting Minister: Carrie Watkiss
 Comm. Minister: Charles Matthies
 Lectors: Robert Melnyk and Kristine Boike
 Usher: Fred Kuzel

Sacristan and Altar Care:

Janice Hapgood

We are in need of congregation members and friends to serve as greeters, lectors, and communion ministers. If interested, please speak with Pastor Dennis or a member of the Worship and Music Committee.

November 2019

Current, Benevolence and Freewill Offering

Budgeted Offering: \$2,597.00

Date	Offering
11/3	\$2,087.00
11/10	\$3,140.00
11/17	\$1,917.00
11/24	\$1,914.00

Congratulations...

...to Krystyna Nina Ritacco who graduated from Northern Illinois University on December 15th with a Bachelor of Science in Health Sciences degree, *summa cum laude*, with University Honors. Krystyna plans to continue her education in the fall, studying for a Master of Science in Nursing degree. While at Northern Illinois Krystyna was a member of *Alpha Phi Omega* and participated in community service projects including *Help My Starving Children*. She also volunteered in various shelters. Krystyna is the daughter of Dominick and Diane Ritacco, sister of Nickolas, and the granddaughter of the late Miro and Viola Mikulka.

Memorial Flowers

Dec. 8th: In memory of +Anna Slahor+ on the anniversary of her birth and twenty-eighth anniversary of her death by remembering children John and Joanne Slahor and Shirley and Donald Babyar.

In memory of dear husband +David Patula+ on the anniversary of our wedding on December 5th by remembering wife Charlene—I'll stand by you.

Dec. 15th: In loving memory of beloved mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother +Mary Riban+ on the 18th anniversary of her death on December 19th, 2001 by remembering children Mildred Riban and Mike Riban, Jr. and family.

We Give Thanks

Thank you to our *Lux Cantorum Chicago* concert reception hosts, especially coordinator Shirley Kostelny and everyone who provided food, set-up and clean-up for the LCC Christmas concert and reception on Sunday afternoon, December 8th.

Again this year the congregation generously participated in the annual gift-giving program of Lutheran Child and Family Services which includes the purchase of gifts and gift certificates as well as monetary donations for children in need throughout the Chicagoland region. Approximately twenty-three children were "adopted" by the congregation. Thank you to everyone who participated in this annual Christmas mission, especially Tom and Lavinia Myers for coordinating the effort again this year.

A special thanks to the Youth Choir and Adult Choir and their directors, violinist Kristine Boike, and the Confirmation students and young persons serving as lectors, choral readers and acolyte for the liturgy on Sunday, December 22nd. May we all experience the joy and wonder of a child as we celebrate the coming of Immanuel, God-with-us, in the Holy Child of Bethlehem.

Thanks also to the women of the Ladies Altar Guild for again hosting the *Štedrý Večer* on Thursday, December 12th. The annual event draws a grateful crowd to enjoy the traditional Christmas foods, songs and fellowship. Special thanks to Vera Borysek for coordinating this event along with our sisters in the Ladies Altar Guild. Thank you also to Ann Kmet and her kitchen company of *kucháry. Ďakujeme!*

News from Riverside Preschool at Sts. Peter and Paul

We will be starting off celebrating 2020 with number projects focusing on 20 along with winter hibernation and snow. We will end the month with a "Crazy Dazy Day" where we go crazy for preschool.

—Lisa Manganiello, Preschool Director

Memorials and Honorariums

❖ For the Church ❖

Anita Horak and Family, in memory of husband and father +Milan Horak+ and brother and uncle +George Duczman+.
Cota-Bandura, in memory of +Cristine Balas+, +Andrew Bandura+, +Anna Bandura+, and +Ann Beckius+.
Deb and Dave Bark, Ken and Pam Wood, Mike and Tam Wood, Sue and Larry Kusch and their families, in loving memory of +Shirley Wood+ for all the wonderful Christmas memories.
Vera Borysek, in thanks and praise to God for the safe delivery of grandson William Joseph Borysek.
Charlene Patula, in memory of husband +David+.
Lois Mika and Family, in memory of husband and father +Earl Mika, Sr.+ on the 20th anniversary of his passing on December 29, 1999.

❖ In memory of Steve Michael ❖

Ruth and Jim Lubawy, in memory of father.
Ellen Michael and Tom Walter, in memory of father.
Nancy and Jim Baty, in memory of father.
Elizabeth Mocek, in memory of brother.
Betty Ann Mocek and Adam Walker, in memory of uncle.
John and Pattye Mocek
Elizabeth and Aaron Hamner
John Robert Mocek and Nick Currie
Connie Mendyk
Todd Twickel
Chad and Allison Buecker and Family
Pam and Andy Tolve
Anne Gavac
John and Janet Broussard
Mark and Elizabeth Rouck
Laura Gabriel
Joyce Hajkovicz and Family
Betty Kany
Edward and Joanne Sefara
Olga Zavodny
Dolores Krc
Mildred Mendel
John and Shirley Kostelny
David and Paula Baty
Gerry and Gina Post
Pak Nicodemus
Carole Pollitz and Carl Busch
Frank and Ann Kmet
Clare and Ernie Froemel
Peter and Sandra Spilotro
Milan Oklepek

❖ Special Appeal for Replacements and Repairs ❖

Total donations received as of December 17th:
\$9,470.00

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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Riverside, IL 60546
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DATED MATERIAL

December Announcements

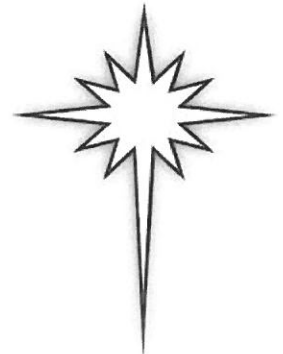
- ★ 2020 offering envelopes are now available for pick-up in the lower hallway adjacent to the dining hall. Please pick up envelopes for friends or relatives. If you would like to have your envelopes mailed to you, please contact Karen in the church office.
- ★ Financial donations made to the congregation must be received in the church office no later than December 27th in order to be included in your end of the year financial statement.
- ★ A reminder to the congregation, especially during the months of winter weather, that complimentary cab service is available on Sunday mornings for rides to and from worship services. Please contact Blue Village Cab Company at (708) 583-6900 as early as possible to make arrangements for pick up. When arranging your pick-up, please remind the dispatcher that the ride is to be billed to account number #101755.
- ★ If you will be leaving the Chicago area during the winter months for warmer climates, please notify the church office before then so the monthly newsletter can be forwarded to your temporary residence or cancelled until you return. The congregation incurs a fee for each newsletter that is undeliverable; stopped mail delivery to your permanent residence is considered “undeliverable” and returned to the church for a fee. Thank you for your assistance.
- ★ Remember that 12-Step groups meet at the church weekly and are here for you to participate in. Co-Dependents Anonymous meets weekly on Wednesday evenings at 6:30 p.m. and Overeaters Anonymous meets on Tuesday evenings at 7 p.m. Two AA groups meet weekly: a Big Book study group meets on Saturday mornings at 11 a.m. and a group meeting is held on Saturday evenings at 7 p.m. All meetings are held in the lower level classroom adjacent to the dining hall.

Sunday Worship Schedule	
9:15 a.m.	Confirmation Class
9:30 a.m.	Adult Choir Rehearsal
10:15 a.m.	Liturgy of Holy Communion
11:30 a.m.	Youth Choir Rehearsal
Choir Rehearsals	
Wednesdays, January 8 th , 15 th , 22 nd , and 29 th at 7:30 p.m.	

The Star Signal

(Matthew 2: 1-12)

Not every journey toward the Christ starts like the magi's in darkness, but there might come a time when, in the empty hours of an otherwise unremarkable night, you have happened to look up at the usual sky, and noticed, almost by accident, between passages of gray beasts of slow-moving cloud the bright bloom of a strange star flowering, and something begins to open a little somewhere beneath your skin, as if that new wedge of light in the sky had inserted itself into your soul, not enough to cause you any hurt, but just enough that you feel a pang, the twinge of something like longing, as if your eyes in the silence have become ears in the darkness, and you are hearing a holy summons, distant but ringing like a silver trumpet in the chambers of your listening heart, and you gaze at that star where it stands in the sky dropping dust on the night horizon, and you think it might be signaling a holy Presence in the world and a road you can take to meet it, and that such a road, lit with such promise, might lead to a great adventure, where life becomes challenged and changed and as new as the sky above a better world. And so you pack, and you leave on this journey, this journey where Christ is not only waiting but walking your road at your side, and you follow that light as it closes the distance, as it reaches deep within you, touching gifts you carry in your hand.



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