



# 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](http://www.stspeterandpaulriverside.org)

Volume 42

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Issue 6

*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.*



*Sunrise through the plum blossoms on the church grounds in May 2020. Photo by Jane Lauritsen.*

## Parsonage Life During a Pandemic

The vegetable garden is already planted in the boxes near the church patio with tomato and eggplant seedlings sprouting on the windowsill of the parsonage bathroom where I can easily encourage them. All of this has happened at least a month earlier than it has in previous years. Jane has planted her zinnias and cana bulbs while the bees have been busily buzzing through the plum trees outside the sun porch windows.

The days here are filled with lots of phone calling; email correspondence; card writing; sermon preparation, writing, recording and uploading to YouTube; preparing devotional materials; looking for

inspirational music and hymns; sending weekly worship email; praying for the congregation, the nation, and the peoples of the earth; learning virtual methods of communication and “meeting places”; wondering what congregational life and pastoral ministry will eventually look like; trying to keep track of the day of the week; and wandering around in the moonlight. Welcome to life and ministry during a pandemic.

As another pastor has written, reflective of my own experience and that of others during this time, “Our ministry has always been marked as one of personal interaction—whether visiting the sick, teaching classes, conducting last rites, preaching the Word or presiding at the altar and so many other ways—and that has been removed, leaving many of us feeling somewhat disjointed. For me, not being able to visit the nursing homes or the sick or to administer last rites in some cases, has been hard; in some sense I feel as though I have failed to do that which I have been called to do.”

Thank you so very much everyone for being constant in prayer, offering your abundant ministries to one another and those in need, and faithfully and generously continuing to support the congregation in its mission during this time when we have been worshiping in our homes. Let us continue to take heart by trusting that our modest efforts and small sacrifices are sparing so many others of the suffering, grief and hardship of the present darkness. I pray that the Holy Spirit would sustain and strengthen us with faith in the living God who always creates light from darkness, brings good from evil, initiates beginnings from endings, and raises life from death.

While St. Paul never had to deal with COVID-19, he knew something about being separated from the churches he had founded and shepherded, and so there is consolation in his words to the Colossians, “For though I am absent in body, yet I am with you in Spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and the firmness of your faith in Christ” (2:5). Jane and I remain deeply grateful for your personal and prayer support, and we long for the time when we can be together again to share one another’s joy and sorrows.

The peace, light and hope of our Lord’s cross and resurrection be with you and your household—and with all the peoples of the earth!—*djl*

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Keep in touch with us during this time of social distancing with sermons, devotions and prayers by visiting our website at [www.stspeterandpaulriverside.org](http://www.stspeterandpaulriverside.org).

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## Congratulations, 2020 Graduates!

The congregation at Sts. Peter and Paul looks forward to remembering in prayer and recognizing all those members and friends of the congregation who are completing courses of study and graduating this spring from grammar school, high school, trade-school, 2-year and 4-year degree college programs, graduate and professional schools, and other courses of study. We recognize and share with you the disappointment of not having the opportunity to participate in graduation ceremonies but hope that you will have a chance to celebrate with your family and friends sometime this summer.

At this time we cannot designate a specific Sunday for graduate recognition but would like to have a complete list of the names of our graduates, the schools from which you are graduating, and a little about your future plans—all of which could be included in the Summer Issue of the congregational newsletter so that members can extend their congratulations and well wishes. We hope eventually to select a date when we can acknowledge our graduates' accomplishments and offer prayers of gratitude and Godspeed as a congregation with as many of our graduates present as is possible.

Please return the Graduate Information Form sent by email by June 10<sup>th</sup> via [djlauritsen57@gmail.com](mailto:djlauritsen57@gmail.com), fax: 708.442.5264, or USPS: Pastor Dennis Lauritsen, Sts. Peter and Paul Lutheran Church, 250 Woodside Road, Riverside, IL 60546.

Congratulations on your achievements and the Lord bless your future and keep you in his grace.

## From the Stewardship Committee: Offerings During Closure

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As in-person church services continue to be suspended and for those of us who rely on putting our tithe into the offering plates on Sundays..., the Stewardship Committee would like to suggest that you mail your contribution to the church office.

Karen and the other church staff will continue to be working during this hiatus and can get your checks to the right place. Continuous financial support of the church is critical as bills, salaries, and other expenses need to be met regardless of the current situation. If you donate cash, we do not recommend that you mail it. Rather, either use a check instead, or feel free to come by the church and drop off your contribution.

Large gatherings are discouraged but meeting with the pastor or visiting the church individually is easily arranged.

Thank you for remembering the church at this time. Please continue to pray for all of our members, especially those most vulnerable to this virus.

—Members of the Stewardship Committee

A very strong proof of this destruction of death and its conquest by the cross is supplied by a present fact, namely this. All the disciples of Christ despise death; they take the offensive against it and, instead of fearing it, by the sign of the cross and by faith in Christ trample on it as on something dead (St. Athanasius, fourth century).

## I Believe

*I believe in the sun,  
even when it is not shining.  
I believe in love,  
even when there's no one there.  
I believe in God,  
even when he is silent.*

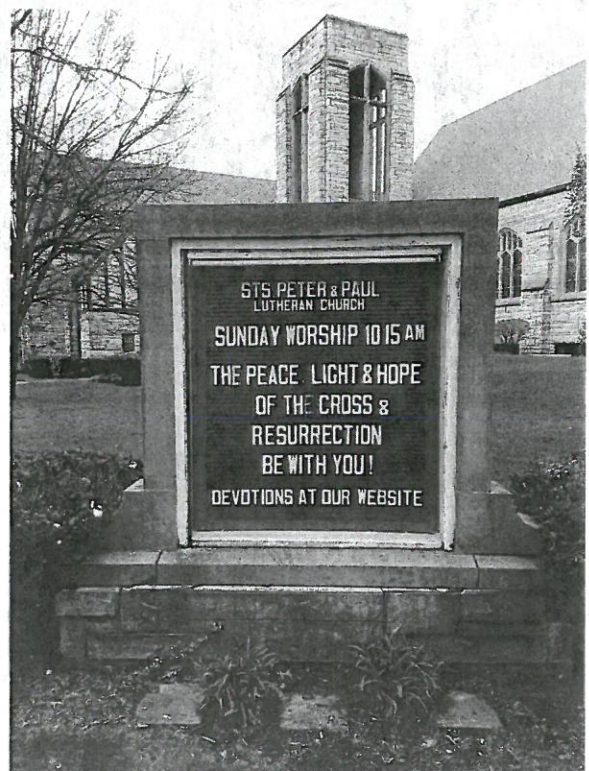
*[I believe through any trial,  
there is always a way  
But sometimes in this suffering  
and hopeless despair  
My heart cries for shelter,  
to know someone's there.  
But a voice rises within me, saying hold on  
my child, I'll give you strength,  
I'll give you hope. Just stay a little while.]*

*I believe in the sun,  
even when it is not shining.  
I believe in love,  
even when there's no one there.  
I believe in God,  
even when he is silent.  
[I believe through any trial  
there is always a way.*

*May there someday be sunshine.  
May there someday be happiness.  
May there someday be love.  
May there someday be peace...."]*

—author unknown

The text was found in a concentration camp after World War II.



## Uncertainty in Our Uncertainty

By Amy White and Professor Dr. Carol Bechtel.

From the Ministerial Certification Agency of the Reformed Church in America.

Submitted by Pastor Marge Vander Wagen of St. Peter and St. Paul Lutheran Church, Blue Island.

### Lament—Second Week of May, 2020

The storm surges around us, but what is the storm? **Almighty God, have mercy.**

We fear the unknown; we allow paranoia to steal our peace. **Almighty God, have mercy.**

We disagree, squabble; ears attuned to what we wish to criticize, hearing what we want. **Have mercy.**

We disagree, squabble; our ears filtering out beneficial and encouraging words. **Have mercy.**

We disagree, squabble; our mouths spout “better ways” and our language reeks of critique. Frustration, fear, anger and anxiety shove our friends’ “reason and trust” out the door. **Have mercy.**

Lord God Almighty, we are a stubborn, hard-headed and fearful people. **Have mercy on us and do not abandon us to our foolishness.**

We hurt, we cry, we wonder and lament. Some family and friends are gone. No talking, no laughing, no reaching out, no hugging, no mourning with others. **Only grieving... alone.**

We hurt, we cry, we wonder and lament. Some have lost resources, finances, jobs, housing, stability and futures. Some have lost hope. We grieve, but with whom do we grieve? Fear pushes against our walls of trust—the walls start to weaken. **Worry becomes our friend... reason becomes unfamiliar.**

Yet... we lift our eyes to the mountains; from whom comes our help? Our help comes from the Maker of heaven and earth. **We need Your help.**

We want everything to be over. **We await you.**

We need wisdom. **True wisdom comes only from the Creator and Sustainer of the universe.**

We feel anxious, and sometimes angry. **Our help comes from the One who is compassionate and slow to anger.**

We grieve alone. **We are Your image bearers, bearing Your character. You grieve with us.**

Yet... we feel abandoned; **where are You, God of the universe?**

Oh, there You are, speaking to us through the flowers that stand tall, and proud. They don't fear, and their differences and colored clothing must reflect Your glory and creativity. **To God be the glory.**

Oh, there You are, speaking to us through the springtime birth of birdlets who cry out for food. They patiently await provision. **To God be the glory.**

Oh, there You are, speaking to us through the singing and joyful song of assorted birds who rest in the rhythm of one day at a time. **To God be the glory.**

Oh, there You are, speaking to us through the little plant that thrives after breaking through the concrete surrounding it. **To God be the glory.**

Oh, there You are speaking to us through the births of newborns who have come into this world knowing nothing of this disjointed atmosphere. They are human reflections and images of your beauty, glory and compassion. **To God be the glory.**

**To God be the glory forever and ever. Amen.**

*Because of Your great love, Lord God, we are not consumed, for Your compassion never fails (Lamentations 3:22).*

# June

June 2: Ann Kasper	June 20: Jessica Barajas
June 5: Peyton Murray	Clare Ruska
June 6: Abby Tarbox	June 21: Lana Papadatos
June 7: Paul Drahos	June 22: Jillian Collins
Mary Sordel	June 24: Johnathan Haase
June 8: Linda Painter	June 25: Judith Cudecki
June 10: Betty Buffa	June 30: Rowan Smith
David McShane	
June 18: Krystyna Ritacco	

## Anniversaries

June 6, 1983: Betty Ann Mocek and Adam Walker
June 7, 2014: Ashish and Kristina Patel
June 13, 1992: Paul and Carrie Watkiss
June 16, 1984: Paul and Pat Gavac
June 20, 1987: Martin and Ann Pennino
June 21, 1980: Philip and Linda Painter
June 24, 1973: Anita and Lester Henley
June 25, 1988: Thomas and Vicki Michaels
June 28, 1958: Ann and Frank Kmet

Anyone else's car  
getting 3 weeks to the  
gallon at the moment?

## JULY WORSHIP SERVERS

(Tentatively Scheduled)

### July 5<sup>th</sup>:

Greeters: Edward and Joanne Sefara  
Acolyte: Aidan Altavilla  
Assisting Minister: Charles Matthies  
Comm. Minister: Tom Myers  
Lectors: Matt Decosola and Keith Altavilla  
Ushers: Rafael Martinez and John Kostelny

### July 12<sup>th</sup>:

Greeters: Walter and Judith Cudecki  
Acolyte: Abby Tarbox  
Assisting Minister: Vicki Michaels  
Comm. Minister: Beverly Tarbox  
Lectors: Jane Lauritsen and Kristine Boike  
Ushers: Walter Cudecki and Rafael Martinez

### July 19<sup>th</sup>:

Greeters: Larry Crachy and Karen Kubik  
Acolyte: Ben Myers  
Assisting Minister: Brandon Michaels  
Comm. Minister: Tom Michaels  
Lectors: Tom and Lavinia Myers  
Ushers: Donald Haase and Johnathan Haase

### July 26<sup>th</sup>:

Greeters: Charles Matthies and Fred Kuzel  
Acolyte: Bryan Galdun  
Assisting Minister: Carrie Watkiss  
Comm. Minister: Paul Watkiss  
Lectors: John Broussard and George Valek  
Ushers: Rafael Martinez and Janet Broussard

#### Sacristan and Altar Care:

Fred Kuzel and John and Janet Broussard

### April 2020

#### Current, Benevolence and Freewill Offering

*Budgeted Offering: \$2,597.00*

<u>Date</u>	<u>Offering</u>
4/5	\$1,290.00
4/12	\$3,600.00
4/19	\$7,471.00
4/26	\$1,650.00

## Memorials and Honorariums

### ✙ For the Church ✙

Ken and Pam Wood, Debbie and Dave Bark, Mike and Tamara Wood,  
in memory of mother +Shirley Wood+ on Mother's Day.

Adolf and Ellen Heimann, in celebration of their 56<sup>th</sup> wedding  
anniversary on May 9<sup>th</sup>.

Esther Meksto, in memory of husband Ed on his birthday.

Louis and Barbara Roppo

## AUGUST WORSHIP SERVERS

(Tentatively Scheduled)

### August 2<sup>nd</sup>:

Greeters: Larry Crachy and Karen Kubik  
Acolyte: Bryan Galdun  
Assisting Minister: Vicki Michaels  
Comm. Minister: Brandon Michaels  
Lectors: Paul and Carrie Watkiss  
Usher: Rafael Martinez and Charles Matthies

### August 9<sup>th</sup>:

Greeters: Carole Pollitz and Carl Busch  
Acolyte: Sebastian Myers  
Assisting Minister: Tom Myers  
Comm. Minister: Beverly Tarbox  
Lectors: Robert Melnyk and Brandon Michaels  
Ushers: Rafael Martinez and Walter Cudecki

### August 16<sup>th</sup>:

Greeters: Sandy Garvey and Karyn Bute  
Acolyte: Ben Myers  
Assisting Minister: Tom Michaels  
Comm. Minister: Paul Watkiss  
Lectors: John and Shirley Kostelny  
Ushers: Rafael Martinez and John Kostelny

### August 23<sup>rd</sup>:

Greeters: Paul and Carrie Watkiss  
Acolyte: Aidan Altavilla  
Assisting Minister: John Broussard  
Comm. Minister: Martin Pennino  
Lectors: Charles Matthies and Joanne Sefara  
Ushers: Janet Broussard and Rafael Martinez

### August 30<sup>th</sup>:

Greeters: Carole Pollitz and Carl Busch  
Acolyte: Sebastian Myers  
Assisting Minister: Tom Myers  
Comm. Minister: Charles Matthies  
Lectors: Robert Melnyk and Brandon Michaels  
Ushers: Rafael Martinez and John Kostelny

#### Sacristan and Altar Care:

Ruth Bakalich

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

## Directory Changes...

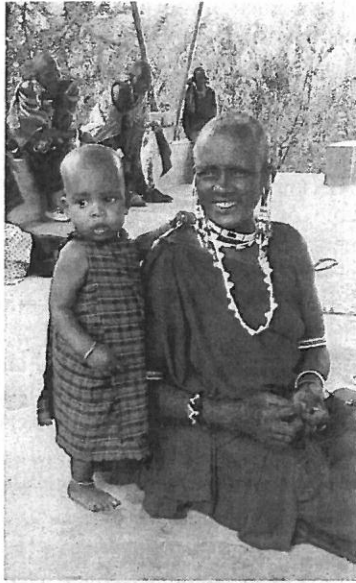
Alexandra and Thomas Miller  
901 W. Madison Street, Unit 514  
Chicago, IL 60607-3371

## From Our Missionaries in Tanzania: The Friberg's, May 2020

*Salaam* and Greetings from Tanzania,

Steve, Bethany and Shalai are thankful to be together in Ketumbeine over the next few months. Shalai is finishing her senior year online because all schools are closed. We hear the pandemic has now hit several urban centers in Tanzania. Corona virus will be quite different here because our population is so young. 50% of our population is less than 15 years of age and elders greater than 55 years make up only 5% of the population. Some predict that half of our infections will be asymptomatic.

Currently there is no lock-down but people in urban areas are wearing masks, observing social distancing where possible, and washing hands before going into any building or store. Our church is meeting outside where it is easy to spread out. Borders are closed and international flights have been suspended. Tanzania relies heavily on tourism. Now that this industry has shut down, the wider economy is suffering. Local travel and food supply chains are still intact.



*Naapok artisan and grandson.*

Tanzania has opted not to close local agriculture and commerce.

Though Naapok has stopped production of beadwork for now, the 55 artisans continue to be paid. Your generous purchases in the past allowed us to build up a reserve which now sustains the project during the pandemic. Thank you!

Over the past 20 years, Steve has become more and more convinced that small health centers can have the greatest impact on public health. Children are immunized against 12 deadly diseases. Two of the immunizations will eliminate future cancers caused by hepatitis B and HPV. Women receive prenatal care and choose to deliver at our small centers. Because of antiretroviral treatment, HIV infection remains low at about 5%. Effective treatments for malaria, tuberculosis, and other tropical illnesses are offered.

With all the economic, social and medical uncertainties, we know that God is in control. The Maasai expression *Etii Enkai*—"God Is" encourages us to call on God during good times and hard times. Every dry season stresses the cattle and people call on God. When the rains come and the danger passes, they rejoice in God's Presence. We are currently enjoying the longest sustained rains in two decades. Maasai attribute this to God's Presence.

The Tanzanian church has heard that each of you individually and as church communities are also experiencing turmoil and uncertainties. Be assured that your brothers and sisters here are in regular prayer for you.

*Etii Enkai.*

With you in the same storm,  
Steve and Bethany

## For Sale

Woodlawn Cemetery, Graves 1 and 2, Acacia Garden  
3 Section, Lot No. 49, Unit B in Part 10.

Currently worth \$9,900.00  
(plus legal paperwork and transfer of deed).

WELCOME BEST OFFER!  
Inquiries: Contact Ed and Joyce Svancara  
(636) 448-8255.

## From the writings of Thomas Merton

*O Lord God,  
I have no idea where I am going,  
I do not see the road ahead of me,  
I cannot know for certain where it will end.  
Nor do I really know myself,  
And that fact that I think  
I am following Your will  
Does not mean that I am actually doing so.  
But I believe  
That the desire to please You  
Does in fact please You.  
And I hope I have that desire  
In all that I am doing.  
I hope that I will never do anything  
Apart from that desire to please You.  
And I know that if I do this  
You will lead me by the right road,  
Though I may know nothing about it.  
Therefore I will trust You always  
Though I may seem to be lost  
And in the shadow of death.  
I will not fear,  
For You are ever with me,  
And You will never leave me  
To make my journey alone.*

—Thomas Merton, *Pax Christi*, Benet Press, Erie, Pennsylvania

God of all troubled hearts, help us to believe in you when we feel worried, upset, lost, and cannot seem to find you. Jesus, remind us each day that through your words and actions you point us to God. May we point others to you, Lord, through the work you have given to us today. Through the Holy Spirit help us make room for you in our homes and our hearts, and to know that wherever we dwell, you are there living in us. Amen.

## Father's Day Prayer

*God our Father,  
in your wisdom and love you made all things.  
Bless these men,  
that they may be strengthened as Christian fathers.  
Let the example of their faith and love shine forth.  
Grant that we, their sons and daughters,  
may honor them always  
with a spirit of profound respect.  
Grant this through Christ our Lord. Amen*

**DATED MATERIAL**

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**From *Sadhana: A Way to God*  
by Anthony DeMello**

**Exercise 6: God in My Breath**

In the last chapter I told you I would offer you some exercises that are more explicitly religious in tone and yet contain many of the benefits of the awareness exercises. Here is one:

Close your eyes and practice the awareness of body sensations for a while...

Then come to the awareness of your breathing as described in the previous exercise and stay with this awareness for a few minutes...

I want you to reflect now that this air that you are breathing in is charged with the power and the presence of God... Think of the air as of an immense ocean that surrounds you... an ocean heavily colored with God's presence and God's being... While you draw the air into your lungs you are drawing God in...

Be aware that you are drawing in the power and presence of God each time you breathe in... Stay in this awareness as long as you can...

Notice what you feel when you become conscious that you are drawing God in with each breath you take...

There is a variation to this exercise. Another reflection, this one borrowed from the mentality of the Hebrews as we find them in the Bible. For them a man's breath was his life. When a man died God took his breath away; that is what made him die. If a man lived, it was because God kept putting his breath, his "spirit," into this man. It was the presence of this Spirit of God that kept the man alive.

While you breathe in, be conscious of God's Spirit coming into you... Fill your lungs with the divine energy he brings with him...

While you breathe out, imagine you are breathing out all your impurities... your fears... your negative feelings...

Imagine you see your whole body becoming radiant and alive through this process of breathing in God's life-giving Spirit and breathing out all your impurities...

Stay with this awareness as long as you can without distractions...

**Exercise 7: Breath Communication with God**

Earlier I made a distinction between prayer and contemplation. There is another way of expressing that distinction—by speaking of two types of prayer, the devotional and the intuitional.

Intuitional prayer would coincide roughly with what I called contemplation, devotional prayer with what I called prayer. Both forms of prayer lead to union with God. Each of them is more suited to some people than to others. Or the same people will find one form of prayer more suitable to their needs at one time rather than at another.

Devotional prayer too is geared to the heart, for any prayer that limits itself to the thinking mind alone is not prayer really but, at best, a preparation for prayer. Even among men there is no genuine personal communication that isn't at least in some small degree heart communication, that does not contain some small degree of emotion in it.

If a communication, a sharing of *thoughts*, is entirely and totally devoid of all emotion, you can be sure the intimate, personal dimension is lacking. There is no communion leading to intimacy.

I want to give you now a variation of the previous exercise that will make the exercise more devotional than intuitional. You will notice, however, that the amount of thought content in the prayer is minimal, and so the exercise will easily move from the devotional to the intuitional, from the heart to the Heart. It will become, in fact, a good combination of the devotional and the intuitional.

Become aware of your breathing for a while...

Now reflect on the presence of God in the atmosphere all around you... Reflect on his presence in the air you are breathing... Be conscious of his presence in the air as you breathe in and out... Notice what you feel when you become conscious of his presence in the air you are breathing in and out...

I want you now to express yourself to God. But I want you to do this nonverbally. Frequently, expressing a sentiment through a look or a gesture makes the expression much more powerful than expressing it through words. I want you to express various sentiments to God not through words but through your breathing.

Express, first of all, a great yearning for him. Without using any words, even mentally, say to him, "*My God, I long for you...*" "just by the way you breathe. Perhaps you will express this by breathing in deeply, by deepening your inhalation...

Now express another attitude or sentiment: one of trust and surrender. Without any words, just through the way you breathe, say to him, "My God, I surrender myself entirely to you..."

You may want to do this by emphasizing your exhalation, by breathing out each time as if you were sighing deeply. Each time you breathe out, feel yourself letting the whole of yourself go in God's hands...

Now take up other attitudes before God and express these through your breathing. Love... Closeness and Intimacy... Adoration... Gratitude... Praise...

If you tire of doing this, return to the beginning of this exercise and just rest peacefully in the awareness of God all around you and in the air you are breathing in and out... Then, if you tend to get distracted, fall back on the second part of the exercise and express yourself to God nonverbally once more...