



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 43

December 2021

Issue 12

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.



Seedlings in Autumn and Advent

*The Evening of the
Twenty-First Sunday after Pentecost
October 16th, 2021*

Dear Church Family at Sts. Peter and Paul,

For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience (Romans 8:24, 25).

A few weeks ago, I wrote to you with some reflections on the experience of grief throughout the pandemic as well as that which has been recently experienced by so many of our parish households since early March of this year. Together with these thoughts were some grief-sharing resources. On this crisp, clear autumn evening I would like to call your attention to just a few of the more visible seedlings (even though it is autumn!) which have begun to emerge from the ashes of our experience.

Since late spring and early summer we have witnessed the return of a number of households which had not been able to pray at public, in-person worship since mid-March 2020. We also have welcomed many visiting households throughout the summer, some of whom may have an interest in formally affiliating with the congregation by registering their membership here. Two baptisms were celebrated outdoors in the church gardens during the third week in September. Just today we hosted an amended version of the Annual Fall Festival (thank you Vera and so many more!). The choir has recently resumed rehearsals on Sunday mornings, albeit with singer masks, adequate ventilation, and distancing in the sanctuary. Relationships old and new have received the growth of the Holy Spirit even though our life together has changed dramatically. Throughout these many months we have grown—often very strenuously and surely less than gracefully—in so many ways through the gifts of various forms of technology which have enabled us, to some extent, to remain a community of faith and fellowship gathered around Word and Sacraments. The generous, sustained outpouring of various sorts of support from the congregation and those related to us has been so inspiring and encouraging. Thank you all!

The challenge of regeneration now stands before us, appearing to be another long, challenging journey. One of the areas most in need

of our attention at this time is our program of Christian formation, nurture and education of children, youth and adults. We will need to begin organizing this soon as we have a new generation of children appearing among us. Please let me know if you would be interested in contributing in any way to the redevelopment of this crucial ministry.

[Jesus] also said, "The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground, and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how. The earth produces of itself, first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head" (Mark 4:26-28).

Even though it is autumn [and now Advent], there continues to be springtime with seedlings reaching through the ashes toward the light, peace and hope of the cross and resurrection of our Lord Jesus. I hope and pray that we will continue to be faithful in tending and nurturing these emerging seeds which have begun to grow among us.

To God alone be the glory! Thanks be to God! I am

Your brother in Christ,
Pastor Dennis

You might say grief is the price you pay for loving some thing or someone, but it is also a privilege, because it is what allows authentic beauty—which isn't always pretty but is always truthful—to find its way through you (Toko-pa Turner).

Images for the Season of Advent

A vision from the prophet Isaiah places natural enemies of the animal world next to each other in a peaceable kingdom. This vision has been rendered by artists and proclaimed by preachers. Hurting and destroying others is forbidden. The weak and powerless, the poor and sorrowful will have God as their advocate and deliverer. For at least the four weeks of Advent, the church sets this hopeful vision and divine promise next to stories of war and conflict, demands for privilege, and muffled cries of the poor and powerless.

The prophetic readings from Isaiah during Advent speak strongly about peace to our world. Peace is not simply the absence of war, but the intentional act of beating swords into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks. God does not want us to learn the trade of war any more. Advent tunes our ears to God's dangerous call to serve as peacemakers. The psalmist's centuries-old prayer is still relevant

—continued on the next page...

today: "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem" (Psalm 122:6). We enlarge the psalmist's vision and pray for the peace of the whole world.

In the second readings proclaimed this season, God's alarm clock wakes us to the urgency of repentance. God's promised coming offers hope amidst all the alarming news of the world. Romans 15:13 serves as a type of benediction for the Sundays in Advent as we celebrate the hopes and fears of all the ages in the coming of Jesus Christ. Sometimes it seems as though God's coming is delayed or ineffective, but we are counseled to be patient and wait on God's promises in hopeful expectation. In this season we do not pretend that Jesus has not yet come. We already claim the promises that are ours in the power of Christ's death and resurrection. We watch in confidence for the one who came, who comes among us each time we gather around Word and Sacrament, and who draws us into God's final coming to make all things new.

In the gospel readings, hopeful people are urged to be ready for God's unexpected appearances according to God's own time. A surprising voice in the wilderness again calls all people to a new appraisal of their lives and openness to the Holy One who will baptize with the Holy Spirit and a cleansing fire. John, the whistle-blower on unholy lives, is jailed for pointing to Jesus as the one who brings good news to all people. It is good news that will become the song of the angels and that will be on the lips and in the hearts of those forgiven and healed by this Savior. All of this points to the Christ who is Emmanuel, God with us. We know him as the promised one who came among us, who continues to be with us, and who opens up all of God's future as a promise in which we can hope.

It is an eye-opening experience to be in Israel during Advent. There are no Christmas decorations or the pressure to buy presents. One has only the great promises of Advent. Perhaps this suggests that we should avoid muting the strong, sober messages of Advent with cultural Christmas decorations. The Advent readings talk about peace challenging our war-making. The Biblical message points us to the great needs of the poor, disadvantaged, and powerless who need more than once-a-year Christmas caroling or a few coins in the Salvation Army kettles. Advent points us to radical repentance and realistic hope that transform our expectations and the way we live in the world. Starting with the Advent readings, how might we express this season artistically? Advent might look very different from many of the commercial decorations that are commonplace during December. How might our visual images speak as surprising and challenging voices in the wilderness? How might we picture hope opening up a promising future?

All these readings stir up a new vision of a world in which God comes among us. Will we allow our imaginations to lead us toward a vision for what all this means for our congregation and our life in the community and world? During these December days, the world tries to define Christmas in a way that mutes the Advent message. The church has both the opportunity and the responsibility to proclaim that Advent is not a wet blanket on festivity, but rather a house-cleaning that prepares us to celebrate what God has given the world in Jesus Christ. That is what gives hope and joy to the world.

Reprinted from Words for Worship, copyright 2004 Augsburg Fortress. Used by permission of Augsburg Fortress.



There are homes where fires burn and there is bread, lamps are lit and prayers are said. Though people falter through the dark and nations grope, with God Himself back of these little homes, we still can hope.—Grace Noll Crowell (American poet, October 31, 1877–March 31, 1969).

“Holiday Blessings”

Sunday afternoon, December 5th, 4 p.m.



Lux Cantorum in concert at Sts. Peter and Paul during the Advent season of 2015.

Lux Cantorum Chicago will present its Christmas concert entitled “Holiday Blessings,” featuring favorite choral music of the season, at Sts. Peter and Paul on Sunday afternoon, December 5th at 4 p.m. For more information, visit luxcantorum.org. Sts. Peter and Paul members Brandon Michaels, Jane Lauritsen and Pastor Dennis sing with *Lux Cantorum*.

Christmas Worship Schedule



“Holiday Blessings”
Lux Cantorum Choral Concert
December 5th, 4:00 p.m.

Christmas Eve
7:15 p.m., Festival Liturgy of
Holy Communion with Candlelight

First Sunday of Christmas, December 26th
10:15 a.m., Liturgy of Holy Communion

Søren Aabye Kierkegaard, teacher, died 1855

Kierkegaard was a Danish theologian whose writings also gave rise to the modern philosophy of existentialism. He frequently attacked the complacency of the state church of his day, as well as its desire to be accepted by polite society rather than be a stumbling block.

Kierkegaard admitted that he was an intellectual “aristocrat.” His father was one of the wealthiest men in Denmark, so his inheritance meant that he never worked but instead could pour his short life entirely into writing. But every day he grabbed his favorite walking stick or umbrella and took a walk in Copenhagen for what he called his “people bath.” Paradoxically, although he was totally inaccessible to people when he was at home writing, on these walks Kierkegaard earned a well-deserved reputation as a virtuoso of the casual encounter with common people. In a journal entry from 1849 he described how “indescribably satisfying [it is] to me to be friendly and kind and attentive and sympathetic to precisely that social class which is all too neglected in the so-called Christian state.” To meet and greet these people gave him unfeigned joy. One person who recalled his frequent stays at the Mail Coach Inn in Hørsholm in northern Zealand commented how Kierkegaard loved to linger with the laborers in the barns or with the “stone breakers” at the road side, so much so that the “stone breakers” would inquire about his next visit. Thus did Kierkegaard understand himself as a street philosopher who disdained the snobby and aloof affectations of Important People. Instead, he wanted “quite literally, to make ordinary daily life into one's stage, to go out and teach in the streets” (source unknown).—*djl*



Disturb Us

Disturb us, Lord, when
We are too well pleased with ourselves,
When our dreams have come true
Because we have dreamed too little,
When we arrived safely
Because we sailed too close to the shore.

Disturb us, Lord, when
With the abundance of things we possess
We have lost our thirst
For the waters of life;
Having fallen in love with life,
We have ceased to dream of eternity
And in our efforts to build a new earth,
We have allowed our vision
Of the new Heaven to dim.

Disturb us, Lord, to dare more boldly,
To venture on wider seas
Where storms will show your mastery;
Where losing sight of land,
We shall find the stars.

We ask You to push back
The horizons of our hopes;
And to push into the future
In strength, courage, hope, and love.

—*ascribed to Sir Francis Drake (1577)*

DECEMBER

Dec. 1: Ludmilla Kovalsky	Dec. 14: Ruth Bakalich
Dec. 2: Elaine Haase	Audrey Bucz
Dec. 3: Lavinia Myers	Ann Pennino
Dec. 4: Eric Kostelny	Dec. 15: Steven Waldman
Dec. 5: Carrie Boike	Dec. 16: Robert Barcik
Walter Cudecki	Steven Melka
Ann Head	Nickolas Ritacco
Dec. 6: Fred Kuzel	Dec. 17: Ann Kmet
Dec. 10: Edward Sefara	Mary Jo Meyers
Dec. 11: Kristian Kubo	Dec. 19: Martin Tornil
Claire Watkiss	Dec. 26: Shirley Kostelny
Dec. 12: Betty Force	Mary Sasuta
Dec. 13: Caden Blaha	Dec. 27: Steven Mendel
Vera Borysek	Dec. 28: Walter Kessler
	Dec. 29: Darina Miko
	Dec. 31: Grace Tapak

Birthdays and Anniversaries

December 4, 2004: Lee and Emily Drahos
December 19, 2016: Samuel and Kristi Alonzo
December 28, 2002: Gerald and Beverly Tarbox

Happenings

Congregation Council Meeting
Thursday, December 15th, 7:30 p.m.

Memorial Flowers

Nov. 7th: In celebration of Celia Martinez on her 99th birthday on November 3rd by loving son Rafael Martinez.

In memory of dear wife +Lupe Martinez+ on the anniversary of her birth on November 4th by remembering husband Rafael Martinez.

Nov. 14th: In memory of dear husband +Robert Skudrna+ on the 50th anniversary of our marriage on November 13th, 1971 by remembering wife Sue.

Nov. 28th: In memory of loving father and grandfather +William Boor+ on the 103rd anniversary of his birth on November 22nd by remembering sons William R. and Richard T. and his family.

In loving memory of beloved mother and grandmother +Anna Stastny+ on the anniversary of her death by remembering daughter Audrey Bucz and her family and granddaughter Adrienne Gana.

If you would like to order a poinsettia to help decorate the chancel of the sanctuary for the Christmas liturgies, a sign-up sheet will be posted in the dining hall beginning Sunday, November 28th. You may also contact the church office to place your order. The cost per plant is \$17. The deadline for payment and sign-up is Wednesday, December 15th.



RETURN SERVICE REQUEST
Sts. Peter and Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church
250 Woodside Road
Riverside, IL 60546
Postage Guaranteed

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
Riverside, IL
Permit No. 37

DATED MATERIAL



LUX CANTORUM

Chicago's premier sacred choral music ensemble
presents

"Holiday Blessings"

A return to LIVE - Safe* performance, & an invitation to
experience divine presence in a profound way

Sunday, December 5 • 4:00 pm
Sts, Peter & Paul Lutheran Church

Advance \$20 tickets required at www.LuxCantorum.org;
Free admission for children 10 and under.

*COVID vaccine proof & indoor safety mitigations required



Lux Cantorum Chicago is supported in part by a grant from the Illinois Arts Council.

DECEMBER WORSHIP SERVERS

December 5th:

Greeter: Carole Pollitz
 Assisting Minister: John Broussard
 Lector: Jane Lauritsen
 Usher: Janet Broussard

December 12th:

Greeters: John and Shirley Kostelny
 Assisting Minister: Carrie Watkiss
 Lector: Beverly Tarbox
 Usher: John Kostelny

December 19th:

Greeters: Larry Crachy and Karen Kubik
 Assisting Minister: Charles Matthies
 Lector: Brandon Michaels
 Usher: Rafael Martinez

Christmas Eve:

Greeters: Philip and Linda Painter
 Assisting Minister: Vicki Michaels
 Lector: Carrie Watkiss
 Usher: Fred Kuzel

December 26th:

Greeters: Walter and Judith Cudecki
 Assisting Minister: Brandon Michaels
 Lector: Tom Michaels
 Usher: Walter Cudecki

Sacristan and Altar Care:

Jane Lauritsen and Fred Kuzel

JANUARY WORSHIP SERVERS

January 2nd:

Greeters: Edward and Joanne Sefara
 Assisting Minister: Vicki Michaels
 Lector: Joanne Sefara
 Usher: Fred Kuzel

January 9th:

Greeters: Walter and Judith Cudecki
 Assisting Minister: John Broussard
 Lector: J. T. Tarbox
 Usher: Walter Cudecki

January 16th:

Greeters: Larry Crachy and Karen Kubik
 Assisting Minister: Carrie Watkiss
 Lector: Charles Matthies
 Usher: John Kostelny

January 23rd:

Greeters: John and Shirley Kostelny
 Assisting Minister: Charles Matthies
 Lector: John Kostelny
 Usher: Rafael Martinez

January 30th:

Greeter: Carole Pollitz
 Assisting Minister: Brandon Michaels
 Lector: John Broussard
 Usher: Janet Broussard

Sacristan and Altar Care:

Fred Kuzel

Memorials and Honorariums

✦ For the Church ✦

Ann Kmet and Family, in memory of husband, father, and grandfather +Frank Kmet+.

In loving memory of beloved mother and grandmother +Anna Stastny+ on the 36th anniversary of her death by remembering daughter Audrey Bucz and her family and granddaughter Adrienne Gana.

In loving memory of beloved mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother +Mary Riban+ on the 20th anniversary of her death on December 19th, 2001 by remembering children Mildred Riban and Mike Riban, Jr. and family.

Edward and Joanne Sefara, in memory of +Ralph Thompson+.

In memory of +Diane Schmidt+, by sister and brother-in-law Linda and Richard Epich and cousin Wayne Rauschenberg.

John and Janet Broussard, in memory of +Ralph Thompson+.

Milan Oklepek, in memory of +Dr. Craig Reckard+.

Adolf and Ellen Heimann, in memory of +Diane Schmidt+.

Betty Jane Licko-Keel, in memory of mother +Marie Michalic Licko+, husband +William Jerry Keel+, and father +Stephen Licko+, on their November passing and birthdays.

William Boor, in memory of +Sheryl Hallmann+.

John Galdun and Bryan Galdun, in memory of +Sheryl Hallmann+.

Emil and Helena Galdun, in memory of +Sheryl Hallmann+.

October 2021	
Current, Benevolence and Freewill Offering	
Budgeted Offering: \$2,500.00	
Date	Offering
10/3	\$2,071.00
10/10	\$3,577.00
10/17	\$1,682.00
10/24	\$1,996.00
10/31	\$2,059.00



News from Riverside Preschool at Sts. Peter and Paul

We will be busy in December making gifts and projects. It is a busy but joyful month in the Preschool.

Merry Christmas!

—Lisa Manganiello, Preschool Director

December Announcements

- ★ Offering envelopes for 2022 are delayed and expected to be delivered in late December. When these arrive they will be available in the lower hallway adjacent to the dining hall for those attending in-person worship. Envelopes may also be delivered directly to your home if you are not able to pick them up due to on-going virus conditions. If you or your relatives 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 30th 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.



Give us courage, O God, to face the fears and insecurities with which we build walls between ourselves and others. Give us the wisdom and patience to work at better understanding the people whom you surround us with. Let our words and actions incarnate your love.



Glory to God in the Highest by He Qi.

Directory changes...

Donna and Robert Tuider
1S048 Rhoads Way
Winfield, IL 60190
(630) 473-0810

Chris and Laura Teter
85 N. Gilbert Avenue
LaGrange, IL 60525



Pastor Dennis, Karen Rouleau, David Richards and the members of the Congregation Council of Sts. Peter and Paul wish everyone a very blessed Christmas and a joyous, peaceful, and healthy New Year.



Gift-giving through...



Lutheran Child and
Family Services of Illinois

Due to the continuing pandemic, Lutheran Child and Family Services is again this year hosting a financial drive in lieu of a toy drive. The goal is to provide gifts for approximately 1,750 children who are currently served by LCFS. The Congregation Council at Sts. Peter and Paul has pledged a \$500 contribution to this effort. During this Advent season, you are invited to make a financial offering toward this commitment through your envelopes by designating this gift in the "Other" box or by sending a gift to the church office using the memo line on your check or including a note. "Mark the season of Advent by loving and serving others with God's own love and concern" (St. Theresa of Calcutta). Thank you!—*djl*

