

JANUARY 2023

The Announcer

**St. Peter's United Church of Christ
8013 Laramie Ave.; Skokie, IL 60077**

From the Minister's Desk

By Reverend Richard Lanford

I'm pretty sure it was when Beth Sterba was sharing some of her thoughts about the Advent Candle theme of Joy when I realized something. As someone who struggles with the concept of joy in real-life terms, taking emotions out of its definition for most part, I realized that I experience joy when I am leading worship, and particularly when preaching.

That brings me back to a theme that is very topical in November, but is always in season, and that is gratitude. I don't get to preach in the pulpit at St. Peter's United Church of Christ in a major suburb of a major American city by my own will, talents, treasure or charm. Ordination gives me a 'license' to preach, but not to be heard. That needs to be earned, and in addition to earning the authorization to preach and celebrate the sacraments through ordination, one earns it by the permission, trust, and call, of a local congregation. In other words, I am grateful for St. Peter's for calling me to be its Pastor and Teacher, and I'm grateful not just because preaching gives me joy. There is a lot to be grateful for in the pastoral ministry, and for serving in this congregation.

I recently said in a sermon that when I start to get depressed, caught up in my own mental drama, or otherwise not in a good place inside (and sometimes 'outside!'), I've learned to start thinking of things I'm grateful for. I start out with simple things that others have taught me not to take for granted: I'm alive. I'm breathing easily. I have a loving wife, I know Jesus who also knows me, I have a job, a roof over our heads, food in the refrigerator, clothing, a good education, my late parents, and more. I'm grateful for the beautiful blue sky when it graces us overhead, and for coffee, health insurance and healthy cats, the people in this congregation, colleagues, old friends, good neighbors, and of course, first and foremost, salvation. In the sermon, I said that working towards gratitude, although not always willingly at the start, always works to lift my spirits and my posture towards the day.

I bring up gratitude because entering a new year means entering into the future, with times of transition, of uncertainty, maybe serious health issues, relationship issues, financial strains, etcetera. I bring up gratitude because keeping an attitude of gratitude close always can help us, and our church, navigate the waters of 2023 in a healthier manner than we might if we were not thankful for all that we've got. To God be the glory!

Keep the faith, Pastor Richard Lanford



WORSHIP & LIVESTREAM:
Sundays at 10 AM
on YouTube & in
person worship.

COOKIES AND COCOA BAG N TAG – January 8th
after worship

ANNUAL REPORTS
due JANUARY 9TH

FLAGPOLE MEETING January
12th at 7 PM Zoom

SAVERS CLOTHING DRIVE:
All January

2022 ANNUAL MEETING –
January 29th after
worship

UPCOMING EVENTS

JANUARY SAVERS CLOTHING DRIVE IS BACK –

All of January we'll be collecting soft goods such as clothing, socks, shoes, hats, belts, purses, bedding, linens, stuffed toys and more. *Bring your items on or near the stage in the gym* or outside the offices. Savers pays us by the pound so give us all you've got! It's a great time to clean out your storage and closets to make room for all those Christmas presents you received! This collection will run to the end of January, so don't delay!

COOKIES, COCOA AND MORE FOR THE NIGHT

MINISTRY: We are continuing our annual drive for cookies, winter hats, hot cocoa mix, gloves, and scarves for the Night Ministry. The Micah 6:8 Committee which oversees mission projects of St. Peter's like this, moved this collection from December to January to ease up on the many-pronged pressures upon us during Advent. In December some of the winter supplies and store-bought Oreo cookies have been brought in and ***we have until Sunday, January 8th*** to bring contributions in. That is the Sunday all interested and available persons are asked to be bagging, and boxing of these items to bring to the Night Ministry. One benefit to this later date is because there might be sales going on to lower prices for store-bought gloves, hats or scarves. Please note in advance, that the Night Ministry told us that Dark Colors are preferred for hats, scarves and gloves. We will also benefit from donated cardboard boxes in which to load and deliver all these, too! Thank you! Pastor and the Micah 6:8 committee.

2022 ANNUAL MEETING AND REPORTS DUE -

The Annual Meeting of St. Peter's United Church of Christ is expected to be held after worship ***on SUNDAY, JANUARY 29th, 2023***. All reports due to the church office no later than **JANUARY 9th**, typed, but via email if possible. We know that financial reports must come in later. So, if you head up a Board, Committee, Guild, ministry,

please prepare a report to hand in on or before January 9th! Like the last four years, this way we will have at least the non-financial reports available for our members who attend by Sunday, January 22nd. This gives folks a fair chance to read the reports before the meeting. Thank you.

Flag Meeting January 12 at 7pm on Zoom - We have a lovely new Flagpole (see Church News for more)- now we need to figure a few things out! What do we fly, when do we fly it, and who knows how to operate it! We will hold this first meeting over Zoom, and if we need to do another one we will. The intention is to get some decisions made before the Annual Meeting! Zoom link to be sent in an email next week. If you can't make the January 12th meeting, send your thoughts and notes to Jen Schneider beforehand.

LOOKING AHEAD TO FEBRUARY:

A ♥ for the Veterans Collection - Veterans transitioning from homelessness to homes need everyday household supplies to help them succeed. A detailed list of supplies needed will be in the February Announcer and February bulletins. We are so excited to be able to support Military Outreach USA this year. This loving collection will start Sun Feb 5 thru the end of February. Also something new this year we will be including our Community ***for an Outreach Drive by Collection for our Veterans on Feb 11 & 12***. The times & more information will be coming soon. So please mark your calendar and let your friends & family help us to have the BEST COLLECTION EVER. Thank you in advance- Ginger

ASH WEDNESDAY IS FEBRUARY 22ND! The Lenten season begins early this year, so don't let it sneak up on you! We'll have a full calendar of study and service leading up to the most important week of the year, Holy Week. Join us as we begin the journey on February 22nd for our Ash Wednesday services.

CHURCH NEWS & THANKS

HOSTING CLUSTER 1 - On Thursday, February 4th, Pastor Richard and St. Peter's will take our turn in the rotation to host the clergy and members-in-discernment of CMA's Cluster 1 from 9:30 to 11:30 AM. We now hold hybrid meetings (via Zoom) whenever possible. Thankfully, Beth Lanford has agreed to help our Pastor prepare for this hybrid event, using the big TV suspended in the Memorial Room.

	<u>Nov Actual</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>YTD Actual</u>	<u>YTD Budget</u>
Operating Contributions	\$11,991	\$11,667	\$154,830	\$128,333
Operating Expense	\$11,578	\$14,044	\$149,490	\$154,485
Gain/(Loss)	\$413	(\$2,377)	\$5,339	(\$26,152)

These numbers exclude line items for any income transfer, roof repair and directed gifts.
The November Operating Contributions includes an IRS Refund of \$2,254.26

NEW FLAGPOLE - If you've driven past us on Oakton, perhaps you noticed our new addition - our flagpole and proud American flag, flying since Veterans Day. The pole and its installation were donated by Bill Todd, our nephew, through his company "All American Flag Company" to honor his late parents, Bill and Sally Todd, former members of St. Peter's. Bill also gave us a new American flag, but we are flying a personal American flag - this time, on my side of the family. This flag draped the casket of my stepbrother, William Olson, who was killed in action in World War II at the age of 21. His father, my stepfather, was a veteran of World War I, and my husband Jim and his brother Bill were both Korean veterans. Jim was in Korea for almost 2 years. The backdrop for this memorable flag is our Educational Building, built in 1956 as the behest and inspiration of Rev Kenneth Taylor, who also served in WWII in China. And there are, no doubt, many in our congregation, past and present, who service our country in many wars - this flag, flying today, honors them all. God bless them, and God bless America. - spoken aloud in a Sunday service by Barbara Todd.

HOLIDAY MEAL DONATIONS THANKS!
Thanks to all your donations to the Jewel at Village Crossing in Niles, on Dec. 21st we were able to distribute 196 Holiday dinners to District 69, UCAN and folks that come to our doors for assistance. We also distributed 96 Thanksgiving Dinners in November. We are so grateful to Phil at the Jewel for always thinking of us, so please patronize them all year!

THANKS TO DISTRICT 69 we are doing much better with donations to our mini-pantry. They put boxes in all the schools to collect food and items for folks to take from our mini-pantry and those boxes are getting filled constantly! Also thanks to Maria A. for stepping up to pick up these donations, it has already become too overwhelming for Laura!

KITCHEN THANKS - Thank you to everyone who donated to the cost of the meal we served mid-day on December 31st! Thank you to the volunteers who represented St. Peter's UCC in serving there at that time. This is a big step forward for us, and the Kitchen, serving persons in-person in the dining area (as well as curbside carry-out, which is what the Staff did during COVID). We had not served there in-person since early 2020. So thanks to those who chimed in to say we at the church are still UP for this ministry / mission, even if we return to cooking Sloppy Joes at home and bringing them to the church again (and need 8-10 servers regularly again). Again, thank you!
Our next date to serve is Saturday, April 29th.

SUNDAY SCHOOL MISSION THANKS - This year we surpassed our "Items for Baby Jesus" goals thanks to District 69 getting in on the collection when they put in collection boxes in their schools for our mini pantry. While we don't have totals yet, we know the Niles Township Food Pantry will be getting a very large donation of diapers, wipes, baby lotions, formula and food. Thank you so much for your support and donations!!

OUR PEOPLE

WOMEN'S GUILD NEWS: St. Peter's Women's Guild celebrated the Christmas season with a luncheon and game session on Wed. December 14 at 11:30 a.m. The Board provided the delicious luncheon, featuring a chicken and stuffing casserole by Sue and Barb Bailey and including a green salad, a Jello salad, rolls, pumpkin bread and a variety of cookies from the Board. Following the luncheon was a Devotional by Marlene Russell on interesting historical facts about our familiar Christmas traditions. A short business meeting included a BIG Thank You to all the ladies who pitched in on the recent events: the Holiday Craft Show and Bake Sale - the special Coffee Hour for Ben and Charlie - the WONDERFUL Reception following the Holiday Concert on Dec. 4th. Ginger reported that she had sent Christmas cards to all our homebound members and Pastor did tell us that former member Louise Hrynkow had passed away, that member Jane Abramchik is primarily homebound, and that Helen Mauer was doing much better in her assisted-living home in Glenview. We will not have a meeting in January, but we will participate in various collections: Savers (soft goods) and The Night Ministry (hats, gloves, cocoa mix, and cookies) in January - and the Veterans Collection in February. Following the meeting, we all enjoyed a round of clever games, created and presented by our expert gamester, Carol Iannotti! She even provided prizes and we thank you, Carol! Everyone have a Healthy, Happy New Year! See you in February!

Barbara Todd, Pres.

IN SYMPATHY - We learned about the recent death of a former member, Louise M. HRYNKOW. She left this life on December 7th, at the age of 103. She was the widow of the late (also one-time member) Wallace G. Hrynkow, and the mother of Barbara Abt, Linda Sherman, and late Laura Fitzgerald. She leaves behind 7 grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren. Her service at Haben Funeral Home & Crematory was Monday, December 12th, and her interment was private at Memorial Park Cemetery. Ricky HERVIG, 64, only brother to Wendy (Hervig) Svenson, died at home of natural causes on December 15th. He is survived not only by Wendy and her husband Roy, but also by wife Denise, daughters Tiffany (Kara) Otis, Bianca Hervig, and grandson Rylen Otis. The late Arthur and Evelyn Hervig, long-time members of St. Peter's along with Wendy and Roy, were his parents. He also leaves behind nephews Eric and Peter Svenson, their families, and other extended family. Rick and Denise were last at St. Peter's for the Nov. 19th Holiday Craft Sale. His career was in the commercial printing industry; his hobbies were fishing and hunting, and his love for his family was great. Rev. Lanford officiated at his service at the Haben Funeral Home on Tuesday, December 20th and burial was at St. Peter's U.C.C. Cemetery.

LECTOR & NURSERY SCHEDULE FOR JANUARY

Jan 1 st	Lector:	Andre/Marcia
	Nursery:	Heidi Tarzian
Jan 8 th	Lector:	Beth Sterba
	Nursery:	Annie Noorts
Jan 15 th	Lector:	Carolyn Van Til
	Nursery:	Laurie Mitchell
Jan 22 nd	Lector:	Rich Schneider
	Nursery:	Kathy Zipperer
Jan 29 th	Lector:	Annie Noorts
	Nursery:	Mike Ryan
Feb 5 th	Lector:	Olivia Altmayer
	Nursery:	Annie Noorts

HAPPY 100TH BIRTHDAY! Annemarie Gloeckner, mother to Andre and Marcia, turned 100 on December 17th. We wish her continued good health and good times to come!

UPCOMING BAPTISM - During worship on Sunday, January 8, we will celebrate the sacrament of baptism of Finch Declan Bernat, infant son of Heather Kipper and Kenny Bernat. Heather, who works as School Director of One River School of Art + Design in Evanston, approached Rev. Lanford last fall about pursuing baptism here. She explained in an email, "While I was working at Elmhurst University, I was introduced to the U.C.C. and found it to align with our families' personal beliefs of diversity, inclusion, and acceptance. We would like our son to be baptized in a church that practices our core values and will always be welcoming to him through his journey of life." I hope you will be able to be there and be part of this on January 8th!

OFFERING ENVELOPES - Our offering envelopes took much longer to receive this year - a victim of the shipping issues we've heard about, the package arrived late on December 23rd. Normally the process is finished before Pastor does his home communion visits to bring those at home their envelopes. This time we hope to have the envelopes ready to take home within the first couple weeks of January, and those who'll attend the Annual Meeting can pick up theirs as well. Should you need us to mail you yours, contact the office and thank you so much for your patience!

CALENDARS - We still have some! The 2023 Wall Calendars provided by the Haben Funeral Home are available for pick-up in the church office. We already have them out for the taking on Sundays (look by the Office Manager/Laura's office, in the Narthex, and by the Coffee Hour serving tables).

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

1/1 - *Jim Todd*
John Karol
 1/6 - *Alec Ryan*
 1/7 - *Jennifer Mau Gemignani*
 1/9 - *Usha Rajbhandari*
 1/10 - *Jenn Schneider*
 1/15 - *Beth Brzozowski*
 1/16 - *David Iannotti*
 1/18 - *Andre Gloeckner*
Karen Christianson
Harry Kuras
 1/21 - *Alane (Schaller) Swiderski*
 1/24 - *Ricky Riley*
Richard W.A. Schaller
 1/25 - *Layla Costello*
 1/27 - *Ethan Michael Caras*

JANUARY ANNIVERSARIES

1/17 - *Pat and Roy Erdman*
 1/21 - *Annie and Gerry Noorts*

PRAYER REQUESTS: Ingrid Anderson, Guy and Traudel Cline, Pat Mauer Erdman, Linda Haig, Ken Itter, Helen Mauer, Jim Todd, Roy Svenson & Cristy Lopez.

If you see your name listed and would like it removed, or, someone you know should be added, please contact the office.