

JANUARY 2022

The Announcer

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

From the Minister's Desk

By Reverend Richard Lanford

We have just come out of Advent, and shortly Christmastide. During Advent, for the first time since early April, when COVID-19 (and later its variants) came out hard, I began home Communion visits to our shut-ins. I did visit the Burmeisters in October, but that was all. Even last summer I was not totally comfortable making those calls. But that's now why I'm writing.

There are several privileges in the calling of serving as pastor of a local church, and one of them is making such calls. I've written and spoken before about one particularly unique one: While partaking of the elements with our member, I felt no sense of God's presence, and mentioned that to God, like a silent "where are you, Jesus?" Then I got the nudge and silent words saying, "I'm right here," as I looked up at the face of the man whom I was visiting, Leonard Ahrens. Yes, of course: God is with often with us through other people. Another time I went to the home of Harold Ruesch right after I'd gotten the good report of my first PSA test months after my brachytherapy. When I said, for both Harold and I, "Take and eat the body of Christ, it is the bread of life," I really felt like I had my life back, thanks to medicine and God.

Whether something like that happens during Communion or not, and moments like those are not common, I always know this: Especially in people's homes, rehab centers or hospitals, I am reminded what this is about, what the center of our faith is. Jesus gave His life for us on the Cross, forgiving our sins, heading to the tomb and then resurrection life. The focus is there. My mind and heart are there. I value the re-grounding. I value the intimacy of those small gatherings, too. Although during Advent and Lent the visits add extra tasks for me, they are also privileges and help me get through those challenging seasons as pastor.

Are there moments in your lives when you get your own kind of experience of the Spirit, or even of deep joyful remembering? These are things we can thank God for, even during a pandemic, national divisions, poor health and questions about the future. Remember the old saying, "We don't know what the future holds, but we know Who holds the future."

Keep and share the faith, Rev. Richard Lanford



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

SOFT GOODS FUNDRAISE: Ends
Jan. 9th. Help
needed Jan 15th.

VILLAGE INN FUNDRAISER DAY:
Jan. 16th 1 PM to
11 PM

ANNUAL MEETING: Sunday,
January 30th, 2022
Reports due Jan. 9th to the office.

OUTREACH OPEN HOUSE UPDATE:

POSTPONED -We have made the difficult decision to postpone the Outreach Open House scheduled for January 22. St. Peter's UCC's foundational belief is that we are a safe place for people to be together (in worship, in fellowship, in community, or at any time). We are deeply concerned that a large indoor gathering cannot be kept safe enough while Covid is surging to make us feel comfortable. We will be rescheduling the event sometime in the spring, God willing – the groups involved were so excited when asked to participate we feel this is something needed and something we can do to nurture our community and the organizations that support it. We'll let you know as soon as we have a new date, thanks so much for all your support!

WE NEED YOUR SOFT GOODS! Have you gone through those collections of old things in your closets, garage and storage yet? ***You have from now through January 9th.*** About mid-December we were almost halfway to our goal, so we need more soft goods! This includes gently used clothing, bedding, linens, stuffed toys, accessories like purses, hats, gloves, shoes, belts, etc. ***We'll also need a volunteer to drive a U-Haul truck and need help starting at 9 AM on January 15th loading the truck.*** If we have a lot of folks it will go very quickly, so come give us a hand and thanks so much!!

VILLAGE INN FOOD FUNDRAISER! We took December off but we are having another Village Inn fundraiser day on ***Sunday, January 16th.*** What a great day to plan to order carryout, delivery or dine-in (just don't forget your vaccination card for dining in) and enjoy a meal with friends, great game or show on TV and not have to cook and clean. The best part is *we get 20% of whatever you spend.* That's the largest percentage any restaurant or chain will do. Plus, they have a wide variety of amazing food, something for everyone! Mark your calendars, help us and help you, too! You'll be glad you did



A JUST HARVEST KITCHEN SERVICE IS THIS MONTH

– Since January has 5 Saturdays, this means it is our turn to “serve” at the Community Kitchen of A Just Harvest! Since The Virus hit, the food has been distributed curbside to prevent infection and not have a large group indoors at the same time dining. The Kitchen staff has been using money we collect and send (over \$500 per event) to buy the groceries, cook the sloppy joes, prepare the rest of the meal we would be responsible for, and do the serving. *Due to generosity left over from our October appeal, we are asking for donations for this ministry but we do not need the full \$500.* Please contribute what the Spirit prompts you, sometime before it gets late in January. Thank you in advance for your participation in this mission!

2022 ANNUAL MEETING - The Annual Meeting of St. Peter's United Church of Christ is expected to be held after worship on ***SUNDAY, JANUARY 30th, 2022.*** *We are asking that all reports be handed in to the church office no later than **JANUARY 9th**, via email is preferred, but can be typed and brought in.* If you head up a Board, Committee, Guild, ministry, or are the Pastor, please prepare a report to hand in on or before the 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 23rd. This gives folks a fair chance to read the reports before the meeting. Thank you.

WOMEN'S GUILD MEETINGS 2021 - 2022

There will be NO MEETING in January!

Submitted by Sue Bailey

HOSTING CLUSTER 1 - On ***Thursday, February 3rd***, 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 9:45 to 11:30 AM. We now hold hybrid meetings (via Zoom) whenever possible. ***Can anyone help our Pastor prepare for this, using the big TV suspended in the Memorial Room?*** He can provide the camera and tripod, but beyond this is unsure of computer setup, how to use the TV, and so on. Any advice or assistance will be helpful.

COVID CONCERNS - Your Church Council wants to let you know that every time we meet, because of the pandemic and now the omicron variant, we discuss whether or not we should maintain our current status of hybrid worship, with both in-person and on-line live-stream worship. Is there some piece of it we need to change, like reduce the number of people to allow in, as we once did; or anything else?

CALENDARS - We still have them! The 2022 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 Laura's office, the Lobby, in the Narthex, or Memorial Room).

GUEST PREACHER - On Sunday, January 2nd, our Guest Preacher/Communion Celebrant will be the Rev. Blair Ann Hull. She is a colleague of our Pastor going back to when she was called to serve The Congregational Church of Deerfield (UCC) and they were (and now are again) in CMA Cluster 1. This is not her first visit; please continue to give her a warm Saint Peter's welcome!

MAX OLSON UPDATE - I want to thank everyone in the congregation for stepping up to help pay the vet bills for Max. With the generosity of so many of you, we were able to cover all of the vet bills and to give Laura enough money to pay for the next few months of his medication and food. This is so much more than I ever expected to be able to raise. I am once again amazed by the generosity and kindness of this congregation. It is a joy to be part of such a wonderful church family. Thanks to all of you! --Annie Noorts

DONATIONS TO THE MINI FOOD PANTRY – Thanks to everyone who's been donating we're getting stocked up! Please don't stop; remember during the winter folks need it the most and our pantry has been visited almost daily these days. Canned food veggies, fruit, meat like tuna, chicken, etc. are great items. Fun and unusual things are also great. We currently do not need more mac and cheese or peas for now, lol! Bring your items Sundays or during office hours, we have shelves under the mailboxes by the stairs for all the food.

PASTORAL VACATION ENDS - Tuesday the 4th, though it's not an office day for him, Pastor will be available for emergencies and check the church VM for messages a few times during the day after Laura has left for the day.

MAX IS DOING GREAT, AND SO IS LAURA - I cannot fully express my gratitude for the overwhelming love and huge support we received during the most horrendous time in my life that I can remember. Your generosity in supporting Max's healthcare bills made it possible for him to be here with me today, and I don't know if I'd be here if he'd not made it on top of everything else I was going through. He's been my very best friend and companion for 15 years, and rarely had health issues. He was my running partner for many years, and trainer for the Chicago marathon - we learned to run together! Thanks to all of you, we now have more time. For those that might not know, Max was diagnosed with chronic Bronchitis, Anemia and Kidney failure. Without care he wouldn't be here, and it was completely out of my budget especially due to recent life changes beyond my control. But everyone stepped up and donated, though many of you also have budget concerns... I'm so beyond grateful for your help. Thank you will never be enough. Max is now much more active, his cough is much less, the anemia is gone and with meds and special food his Kidney failure can be managed. He's so happy and so appreciative to be feeling better!! Also, your prayers, thoughts and help with me and my unexpected life changes has given me the strength to look forward to a better, stronger future. Thank you so very much everyone, and to those who sacrificed your time to call, message and talk, or help with various things I was going through and needing help with. I am indebted to each and every one of you. I hope I can do the same for all of you one day.

Sending so much love, Laura and Max



Our People

LECTOR & NURSERY SCHEDULE FOR January

Lector: Nursery:

- Jan. 2nd. Marcia H./Laurie M.
- Jan. 9th Beth S. / Annie N.
- Jan. 16th Katy S./Mike R.
- Jan. 23rd Dan G. / Beth L.
- Jan. 30th Carolyn V./ Heidi T.
- Feb. 6th Rich S./ Carolyn V.

NIGHT MINISTRY REPORT – Dec 5th we bagged and tagged cookies, cocoa, winter hats, scarves, hat-and-scarf combos, and more. Here is our final count: **Cookies: 1,317** 439 baggies 110 dozen. Scarves: 42. Scarf / Hat Combos: 12. Hats: 62. Cocoa: 2 cans (1.73 lbs.), 1 can (4.78 lbs.), 4 tubs (2.6 lbs. each), 2 boxes of cocoa & marshmallow packets. Gloves: 10 pair. Socks: 10 pair. Undergarments: 1 Men’s base layer top, 1 Men’s base layer bottom. Thank you very much to all who contributed, and who helped put everything together! Beth Lanford drove everything down to the new Night Ministry offices, and they were very impressed and happy over the exterior labeling of the boxes, identifying how many and what’s in each box.

SUNDAY SCHOOL BABY ITEMS COLLECTION – You are such a generous congregation! We collected **886 diapers**: Size 1-258, 2-66, 3-168, 4-177, 5-51, 6-166 and N-42 for a total of 18 various sized boxes and packages. 78 pull ups, 4 packages for size 3T-4T. 1,992 wipes; 14 various sized packages. 3 cans of Enfamil powder, 1 4 pk of ready to drink Enfamil, 1 sample sized & 1 large baby shampoo, 1 sample sized & 1 regular sized baby lotion and 2 tubes of A&D ointment. All will be delivered soon to our Niles Township Food Pantry! Thank you so much!

HOLIDAY DINNERS FROM THE JEWEL – Thanks once again to everyone who donated; the totals for December were **144 dinners**. 69 went to District 69; 62 went to UCAN, 3 went to Pastor Cranford’s ministries and 9 are going to our needy folks. The numbers for our recipients are down because several folks cancelled their pickup both at last Thanksgiving and last Christmas and this Thanksgiving, after we had the dinners in hand and were not called. This is fine because of the lower total we were able to help more needy families with UCAN and District 69, so it works out! Next year we’ll try to include a sign-up sheet in the mini-pantry to reach others that may be in need that do not know of this program.

From the Board of Finance

Budget at a Glance for November and the Year to Date:

	November	YTD
Income	\$13,760.33	\$162,920.92
Expense	\$16,239.78	\$149,283.29
Gain/Loss	(\$2,479.45)	\$13,637.63

Our operating contributions failed to cover our operating expenses. If not for the forgiven PPP loan of \$21,765.00 and the onetime donation of \$5,000.00, our YTD Loss would be \$<13,127.37>

Please donate if you are able!!



Christmas Eve at St. Peter’s UCC



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

1/18 – Andre Gloeckner

Karen Christianson

1/21 – Alane (Schaller) Swiderski

1/24 – 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

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

2/2 – Madeleine Reese Todd

2/5 – Daniel (Mau) Gemignani

2/8 – Susan Leshner

2/16 – Sue (Burmeister) Speicher

2/19 – Hunter Medaglia; Lois Jarmuth

Richard Schaller

2/27 – Eric Svenson; Lincoln Svenson

FEBURARY ANNIVERSARIES

2/2- Karen and Ken Christianson



HAPPY NEW YEAR ST. PETER'S UCC FAMILY! HERE'S TO A BLESSED 2022!

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.



Clean out your closets for St Peters United Church of Christ-Skokie!

FUNDrive® Coordinator

Laura Olson
(847) 673-8166
office@stpeteruccskokie.com

Our Goal: \$1000

278 Tall Kitchen Bags + Large Yard
Bags

Fundraiser Dates:

12/01/2021 - 01/09/2022

We are a small church raising money for our general fund which covers everything from paying bills to community outreach.

Donations can be dropped off weekdays when the office is open, 10 am - 2 pm.

We Are Collecting

Clothes

men's, women's and children's clothes, coats, shoes, scarves, handbags, wallets, fashion accessories, ties, belts, backpacks, etc.

