



# The ANNOUNCER

## Quick Upcoming

A publication of St. Peter's UCC in Skokie

- 12/3 Cookies Bag & Tag
- 12/3 Holiday Concert/Jingle Mingle 3PM
- 12/5 Poinsettia Orders Due
- 12/13 Women's Guild Meeting
- 12/17 Church Council
- 12/18 Announcer Deadline
- 12/24 Christmas Eve Worship
- 12/25 Christmas Day (office closed)
- 12/26-12/31 Pastor on vacation
- 12/27-12/29 Laura on vacation
- 12/30 A Just Harvest Service

## Worship with us on CHRISTMAS EVE

Christmas Eve is on a Sunday this year, which means we will celebrate the *Fourth Sunday of Advent in the 10 AM service on December 24th*. There will be the lighting of the Candle of Joy, but the service will be without Holy Communion. We will celebrate the birth of Jesus at the evening service, which will include the Lord's Supper, along with lessons, carols, an Anthem, a homily, and

closing candlelight. For those who have not joined us for worship recently and may be wondering, pews are not currently roped off in any part of the sanctuary. Masks are always recommended but not required; you might be more likely to wear one if Christmas Eve worship might bring a larger gathering. Oh, and the time? **7:00 PM is our only Christmas Eve service**. Both morning and evening services will be live streamed as has been the case in previous years. But come in person!

## SUNDAY SCHOOL ADVENT MISSION PROJECT

This year, as in years past, your Board for Christian Education and the Sunday School invite your participation in its Advent Mission Project to collect new items for newborns and things their parents could use for them. These important items, gathered as if part of a "baby shower for baby Jesus," will go to the Niles Township Food Pantry, which distributes a lot more than food these days! There are specific items that

the Township is asking for: *Baby food, formula, lotion, shampoo, Cheerios, diapers, fruit cups, fruit snacks, juice/milk boxes, pudding cups, wipes. No clothes or blankets*. The donations may be placed under the Christmas tree. We will end collection at the end of December. Thank you; we know diapers are very expensive, but the leader of the Township confirms that they are very much needed and appreciated!

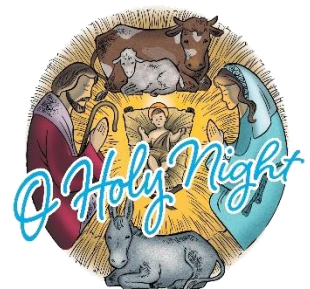


### FUNDrive Coming!

In January we will be doing our annual FUNDrive. This is when we collect soft goods to take to Savers. We receive \$0.20/pound for these items. In the past few years, we have raised anywhere from \$700 - \$1,000 with this effort. We will be collecting items in the gym throughout the month of January. Soft goods include all clothing, linens, belts, shoes, and purses. *They will be loaded up and taken over to Savers on February 10th at 10am*. Please mark your calendar to come out and help load the truck.

## COMING THIS MONTH

Is an offering plate near you! That is, if you come in person to worship. It has been decided to return to passing the offering plate during worship, an act of worship that is part of our joy and our identity as people following Jesus Christ through His church. We will begin this return on **Sunday, December 3rd**.



**FROM THE MINISTER'S DESK**

In the readings from Isaiah in this season of Advent, Israel is waiting for Messiah, to deliver them – from exile in Babylon, from this corrupt and unfaithful world, and to a new realm where God reigns supreme and so will Israel, like they did when David ruled. So, one of the major themes of this time in the Christian year is waiting, hoping, reviving our anticipation for deliverance, and changing our lives' directions so we are ready and facing the Deliverer when the Deliverer arrives at last.

What does deliverance look like for you this Advent? From what or whom do you desire an escape? Where does our ultimate Deliverer, Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ of God, the Light of the world, fit into this deliverance? How is Christ the Deliverer that you need, that we need?

*Don't you love it when I pepper you with questions, be it in a sermon or in this space?*

*How is Jesus 'deliverer' for you? He can deliver us from, or deliver us to, or for.*

For me one of the ways Jesus is my Deliverer is that He delivers my life from what could be meaninglessness. In Christ's service and in following Him is where my life gets purpose and meaning. When I once felt that God's call on me was a cruel joke, that meant that my life had become instantly a joke too. I felt crucified. Thank God that did not last! But if you have ever felt that way, or are feeling that way, do not be discouraged. Feelings are not facts; emotions are not necessarily truth. God does not play jokes on us; the deliverance we really need can be very real, even though we often must be patient through painful times. It can come in a variety of people and ways, and we may not always be aware that it is the Lord who is delivering us! It is Christ who is saving us, who is giving us a new life in which to go and thrive.

But first, the baby had to be born and placed in a manger. This birth we eagerly celebrate and know that our Deliverer has come.

*Keep and share the miraculous faith,  
Rev. Richard Lanford*

**IT'S KITCHEN MONTH!**

There are 5 Saturdays in the month of December, and that means it is St. Peter's turn to raise the \$500 for, shop and get the groceries for, deliver them to the Kitchen a day or two earlier for, and serve the lunchtime meal at the Community Kitchen of A Just Harvest! This is one of our key ministries / mission partners going back over 32 years. The date is

**Saturday, December 30th.**

So, please, if you can, we ask folks to donate towards the \$500 needed to buy the groceries for the lunch meal (prepared by Kitchen staff), and / or be willing to serve at the Kitchen (**11:30 AM – 2:30 PM**), and / or to help in other ways we need. We do need to have at least 4 to 5 people to volunteer to serve. Please see Chad McCoy if you want to help, or if you have questions.

**SPECIAL NEW YEAR'S EVE WORSHIP**

With Rev. Lanford on vacation, he knows it's tough to get guest preachers at that time of year. In place of a service with a sermon, he and Ben, with helpers, will prepare an alternate worship experience called **"A Service of Christmas Music, Scriptures and Readings" on December 31<sup>st</sup> at 10AM.** They have already looked at some good

resources, and Ben will serve as leader of the service as a whole. We'll need some of you to help make it happen, so please say "Yes!" if asked to help in some part of the worship. There will be prayers as well in this service. Come and enjoy a song-filled service to go out of this calendar year with hope in your heart and joy on your lips!

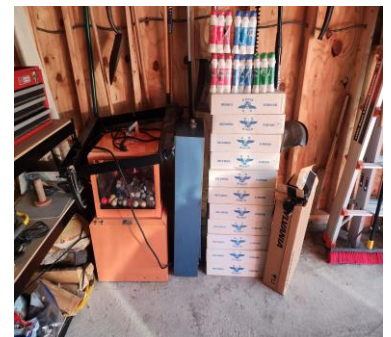
**OFFERING ENVELOPES & CALENDARS**

Due to the increase in online giving, we are downsizing our offering envelopes starting with the 2024 offering envelopes. If you've been using your envelopes, you will still continue to receive them and the number will be changed due to the downsize. We will have a limited number of extra boxes in the event you would like them and didn't get them, or for newer folks. For specific holidays like Lent, Easter,

Thanksgiving and Christmas we will provide special envelopes in the pews for those who do not already have them in your offering envelopes. Envelopes will be available by 12/15 in the Narthex, we will update you when they have arrived. Please speak to anyone on the Board of Finance with questions. 2024 Calendars are out now, and available in the Memorial Room and outside Laura's office.

**BINGO, ANYONE?**

We received a donation of a bingo machine (the cool kind that blows the balls around) along with disposable bingo cards with daubers and reusable cards with chips. The question is, should keep these to use at church or try to sell them online/at the rummage sale? Is anyone interested in hosting a bingo event on a regular basis? Please contact Annie (847) 772-2717 if you are. Otherwise, we will try to sell everything. These items are currently being stored on the north side of the stage if you want to see them before committing.



## WOMEN'S GUILD CHRISTMAS MEETING, COOKIE WALK & PARTY

The Women's Guild will hold its annual Christmas meeting! Bring your best baked cookies if you'd like to participate in the cookie walk, and join us **December 13<sup>th</sup> at 11:30 AM** for a Christmas Party! Games, food and fun are the plan, and all women of the church are invited.

Totals from 2023 Rummage Sale	
Attendees	704
Boutique	\$ 5,264.50
Gym/Memorial Room	\$ 9,767.18
Bake Sale	\$ 1,016.00
Savers	\$ 736.90
Online Before Sale	\$ 1,236.00
Donations	100
	\$ 18,120.58

## 2023 ANNUAL MEETING REPORTS

The Annual Meeting of St. Peter's United Church of Christ is expected to be held after worship on **SUNDAY, JANUARY 28<sup>th</sup>, 2024**. We are asking that all reports be handed in to the church office *no later than JANUARY 8<sup>th</sup>*, typed or via email if possible. We know that financial reports have to come in later. So if

you head up a Board, Committee, Guild, ministry, please prepare a report to hand in on or before the 8<sup>th</sup>! Like the last several years, this way we will have the reports available for our members who attend by Sunday, January 21<sup>st</sup>. This gives folks a fair chance to read the reports before the meeting.

## TOTENFEST

On Sunday, November 26<sup>th</sup>, we held Totenfest. For those of you reading this who aren't familiar with Totenfest, it is from St. Peter's UCC's historic heritage in the German Lutheranism of the founders. It is the equivalent of All Saints Day. We

specifically honored late member Helen Mauer and former member William James Todd, Jr. Others gathered remembered family and friends who have died and lit candles up front for them, and there was also the Candle for Others.

## DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- 12/2 – Sandy Guenther
- 12/4 – Louie Lopez
- 12/5 – Peggy Reins McCoy
- 12/7 – Mary Ann Kuehn
- 12/8 – Drew Ryan
- 12/10 – Erik Christianson
- 12/11 – Jon Mau Gemignani
- 12/16 – Judy Paige
- 12/20 – Calder Lundeen  
Cordelia Lundeen
- 12/24 – Payton McDonald
- 12/26 – Carol Iannotti
- 12/27 – Carol Hook  
Laura Olson
- 12/28 – Beverly Mau
- 12/30 – Maurice Lord
- 12/31 – Ben Westphal

## DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

- 12/3 – Nancy & Phillip Lindroth
- 12/6 – Judy and Jim Williford
- 12/8 – Dianna and Larry Haun

Budget at a Glance, October 2023

	October Actual	Monthly Budget	YTD Actual	YTD Budget
Operating Contributions	11,634	13,342	131,727	133,417
Operating Expense	11,076	15,493	143,270	154,930
Gain/(Loss)	559	(2,151)	(11,543)	(21,513)

These numbers exclude line items for directed contribution, directed gifts, interest/investment income and the Clara Melone estate gift.

## HOSPITALIZED

Pat Mauer Erdman is at home continuing her recovery from hip replacement surgery at the beginning of November, after a short stay at Glenview Terrace for P/T. Ron Schuhrke remains in hospice at Libertyville Manor, 610 Peterson Rd, Rm 484, Libertyville, IL 60048. Diane O'Connor will have a full knee surgery on December 15<sup>th</sup> at Good Shepherd in Barrington, IL and says, "prayers are always welcome."

## ONE OF OUR MEMBERS GOT MARRIED LAST MONTH

Congratulations and best wishes to Olivia Altmayer and her new husband Michael Schwalen! They united in matrimony in a ceremony at City Hall in Chicago on Friday, November 3<sup>rd</sup> of this year. May they enjoy many, many decades of life together in health and happiness.

## INK CARTRIDGE RECYCLING

Just a reminder that we collect ink cartridges and cell phones for reuse/recycling. The collection bin is in the corner of the lobby. This includes all inkjet and laser cartridges along with any old cell phones. We receive money in return for collecting these items, and it keeps them out of the landfills.

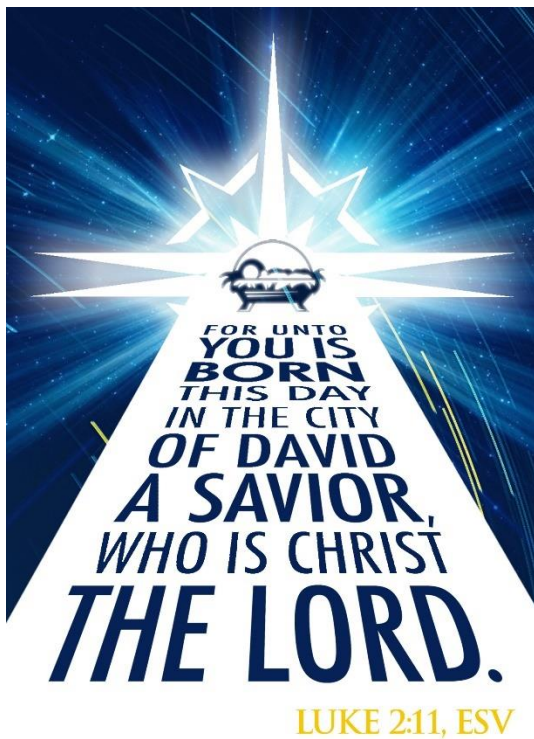
First Std  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
City, ST  
Permit # 000

Lector/Nursery for December	
Dec 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Lector: David I. Nursery: Kathy Z.
Dec 10 <sup>th</sup>	Lector: Peter S. Nursery: Laurie M.
Dec 17 <sup>th</sup>	Lector: Jenn S. Nursery: Annie N.
Dec 24 <sup>th</sup>	Lector: OPEN Nursery: Heidi T. (10AM)



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The MESSENGER DECEMBER 2023



### 2023 Christmas Fund of the Veterans of the Cross

The theme? “Grace upon Grace (From Christ’s fullness we have all received, grace upon grace,” John 1:16). *December 17, 2023*  
The Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross is an annual UCC offering that expresses our thanks to active and retired UCC pastors and lay church workers and their families facing financial need, providing direct assistance to supplement pensions, help with the cost of medical insurance, a thank-you gift at Christmas, and funds to meet emergency needs. United Church of Christ congregations and members have blessed the Christmas Fund with their generosity for many years. This year, your care and compassion will be especially appreciated by those servants of the church who are facing a time of need. Please join our Pastor in giving generously if you are able for those who have given so much to us and our churches. You’ll hear stories about those who have benefited in the past, during upcoming December worship services, and our focus collection date is December 17th, though contributions are gladly received throughout the month of December. Gifts to the Christmas Fund make an immediate impact on those who have so faithfully served us over the years. Thanks to the generosity of UCC members and congregations, no request goes unfulfilled. Thank you in advance!