

DECEMBER 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

When I was a seminary student, I admitted to a small table of fellow students that I had a problem with Advent. Why were we in the church getting ready to mark an event that happened almost two thousand years ago? Are we going through motions, pretending it has not happened yet? What's the point of 'getting ready' for the arrival of Jesus, which is in the past? Maybe you have had similar thoughts. After expressing mine, though, friend Bruce Robinson said to me, "If you have that attitude, you're going to have problems in the parish."

I have learned that getting ready and preparing for the Incarnation of the Word is a worthwhile spiritual journey. Sure, Jesus was born centuries upon centuries ago, but what His coming means (for us personally, for our families, our systems, for the world) is always ripe for reflection, exploration, and action. I learned in seminary, for example, that Advent, like Lent, was originally a season of repentance and self-inventory, working on turning away from our sins so that we are more cleansed, more disciplined, more selflessly loving and therefore more prepared to meet the Lord of Love.

Some of you who were here around 20 years ago will remember the mother and daughters Askharia; they wore lace upon their heads as a symbol of repentance. It was a time of fasting, like Lent. Advent features John the Baptist, for crying out loud, and that was one of his main messages! Get ready for the One who is coming who is mightier than he, who will baptize with fire and the Spirit, by changing the orientation of your spirit and life towards God.

We have seen nativity scenes with Santa Claus kneeling before the manger along with the shepherds or magi. Why not? For this season is when we are asked to come to grips with the faith-fact that Jesus came, even for us. Who are we that God should freely go to such lengths as to send the Son who would be the Light of the world, the Shepherd of the Sheep, and the Lamb of God who (painfully) takes away the sin of the world? Such humility is surely appropriate for Advent, as we do some of that self-examination and aspire to come closer to the God who has already drawn so near to us.

We should not need a church season to emphasize this, among other beautiful aspects of Advent. But Jesus knew that we need to be reminded: "Do this in remembrance of me." If we do not get reminded, and go through some programs of spiritual growth again, we humans will forget. Jesus did not come to be forgotten, but to save the world by the power of truth and grace. That makes Advent not a problem but a blessing. May your Advent be a season of generous spiritual discovery and peace!

Keep the faith, Pastor Richard Lanford



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

HOLIDAY CONCERT/JINGLE MINGLE –
December 4th

VILLAGE INN FOOD FUNDRAISER: Dec
11th from 11AM to 11PM

CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP –
December 24th at 7:00 PM

CHRISTMAS DAY WORSHIP –
December 25th at 10AM

UPCOMING EVENTS

ADVENT HOLIDAY MUSIC NIGHT! For the first time in years, we will have a Concert in our Sanctuary featuring "The Harmonaires", a women's singing group from the northern suburbs. They will favor us with a program of Christmas holiday music at 4PM and Santa Claus just may appear! Following the Concert will be a Reception at 5PM. A donation of \$10 is suggested, \$5 for kids under 12 (under 3 free), and reservations were requested by Nov 25th but you are still welcome if you did not make them. This event is in place of our traditional Advent Dinner, which is not possible this year, but our Reception will feature hors' d'oeuvres, sweets, and liquid refreshment. Celebrate the opening of the Christmas season at St. Peter's by joining us on **Sunday, December 4 at 4:00 PM** for beautiful music and amazing goodies!

VILLAGE INN FOOD FUNDRAISER WILL BE DECEMBER 11TH FROM 11 AM TO 11 PM. End your weekend off right and help support St. Peter's UCC! On this day eat in, carryout or have delivered food from Village Inn on Lincoln Avenue in Skokie, *let your server know you are ordering for St. Peter's UCC fundraiser*, and we'll get 20% of whatever you spend!! You'll get a great meal you won't have to cook, it's a win-win! Mark your calendars!

Please Help Support our Sunday school Advent Mission Project – Gifts for Baby Jesus. Once again our Sunday school families have voted to support the Niles Center Food Pantry by contributing necessities for babies and toddlers. Contributions from the greater congregation have always assured the success of the project. Please help us again this Advent season. Contributions may include diapers, formula, baby food and baby toiletries. They do NOT accept clothing or toys. Donations may be placed under the Christmas tree in the sanctuary, or brought to a designated area outside the church office. **We will begin to accept the baby gifts on Sunday, November 27th, and will conclude contributions on Sunday, January 1st, 2023.** Please help us again this Advent season! St. Peter's Sunday school.

CHRISTMAS EVE - Is on a Saturday this year. The plan at this date is to continue our hybrid-worship, offering the live-stream version of our service seen on our church's YouTube channel (and which is available to see as a recording after the original live-stream is over), and persons coming in person. Pews will continue to be roped-off as lately, so every other pew is open. Join us **December 24th at 7:00 PM.** Communion will of course be celebrated, as we rejoice in anticipation of the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

CHRISTMAS IS ON A SUNDAY – Though we typically have a Christmas Eve worship only, because Christmas Day falls on Sunday there will be a worship service. What a Christmas blessing! Join us **December 25th at 10 AM.** There will be a continued celebration of Jesus' birth in worship at the usual 10 AM time; Pastor Lanford will be leading it and preaching. We will celebrate the Lord's Supper, too, as we continue to glorify God upon the birth of the Christ-child! This will perhaps be a welcome change to our usual calendar, for some may be unavailable on Christmas Eve but are available on Christmas Day. We'll be ready for you!

IT'S OUR KITCHEN TIME NEW YEAR'S EVE DAY! We are humbly asking for the \$500 to pay for the meal we serve, AND for 8 volunteers to serve it as lunch at the Kitchen on **Sat., Dec. 31st from 11:30 AM to 2:30 PM!** Those are the hours volunteers are needed to be there. Let Pastor, Maria or Peggy know if you can help serve.

NIGHT MINISTRY HATS, COOKIES, ETC. - We are again holding our annual drive for cookies, winter hats, hot cocoa mix, gloves and scarves for the Night Ministry. **Sunday, January 8th** we'll be bagging & counting. *Also please note they are telling us that dark colors are preferred for hats, scarves and gloves.* We will benefit from donated cardboard boxes in which to load and deliver all these, too! Thank you in advance, Pastor and the Micah 6:8 committee.

CHURCH NEWS

HOLIDAY MEAL COLLECTING AT THE JEWEL IN THE VILLAGE CROSSING SHOPPING CENTER IS ON! If you are able, PLEASE go there and donate to their holiday meal collection within the first two weeks of December to make an impact on our charities. This is the program where we receive dinners for Thanksgiving and Christmas to distribute to needy folks in our community, including school district 69. Your donations will provide a full Christmas dinner including a full ham and sides to a needy family. We're so happy to be continuing this wonderful program that started with Carol Iannotti suggesting us as a recipient. Thanks so much for your help!

CALENDARS - The 2023 Wall Calendars provided by the Haben Funeral Home are now 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).

OFFERING ENVELOPES - Our offering envelopes will be a little late this year and may not be available until after the Christmas holiday. Check your bulletins and Weekly emails for updates, and please take yours when they arrive. Even if you pay online, you can still put your offering envelope in the collection plate on Sundays. As Roy Svenson once wisely noted, it encourages others to give!

TOTENFEST - On Sunday, November 20th, we held a Thanksgiving Sunday, Trans Remembrance Sunday, and Totenfest remembrance Sunday in worship. 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 members Carol and Ralph Burmeister, and Clara Melone. Others gathered remembered family and friends who have died and lit candles up front for them, and there was also the Candle for Others.

2022 ANNUAL MEETING REPORTS - The Annual Meeting of St. Peter's United Church of Christ is expected to be held after worship on **SUNDAY, JANUARY 29th, 2023**. *We are asking that all reports be handed in to the church office no later than JANUARY 8th*, 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, or are the Pastor, please prepare a report to hand in on or before the 9th! Like the last several 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.

PASTORAL VACATION - For Pastor Richard Lanford has been Council-approved for Monday, Dec. 26th through Wednesday, Dec. 28th.

The OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED Dec. 26th and January 1st for Christmas and New Year's Day observance. Laura will also be taking the last of her vacation on Dec. 27th and will be back in the office on Dec. 28th.

WE NEED YOU TO SERVE AS AN OFFICER OR BOARD MEMBER!! There are several spots being vacated including President and secretary as their terms have expired. Your commitment will be as minimal as we can make it, or as involved as you can be, so take a chance and sign up for one of our open spots! Contact Maria Altmayer or the office for more information!

HOLIDAY BAZAAR UPDATE: Holiday Bazaar Update: A Big thank you for all who helped, baked and came to the Holiday Bazaar. Also Thank You to Laura & Jenn for all your help with the advertising! Some of the proceeds will be used to purchase a new 100 cup coffee maker. This will replace the one that broke. Here's the breakdown:

\$1740 - Table Sales

\$ 547 - Bake Sale

\$ 382 - Raffle

\$ 45 - Popcorn, chips etc

\$2714 - Total

Wendy Svenson & Beth Lanford

OUR PEOPLE

WOMEN'S GUILD UPDATE: St. Peter's Women's Guild Meeting 11/9/22. The Women's Guild met on Wed. Nov. 9 and enjoyed our annual Cookie Walk. 11 members attended and all brought delicious home-made cookies. Special guest was Annie Noorts' new puppy, Sadie. Hostesses were Marlene Russell and Barb Todd, who provided brownies, banana bread and fruit. Devotions were given by Sue Bailey, who presented a lovely Thanksgiving Prayer. Everyone collected some of the array of cookies and munched with their coffee and tea, as discussions were held on upcoming events: Holiday Craft Show and Bake Sale on Nov. 19 - 10-3 p.m. All are urged to bake cookies, breads, brownies, etc. for the Bake Sale. Barb Todd will be in church on Fri. 11/18 from 3 to 5 p.m. to receive baked goods. Everyone is urged to do their Christmas shopping at this wonderful event! Ben & Charlie's Coffee Hour - in honor of our Music Director's wedding, there will be a fancy Coffee Hour on Sun. Nov. 27, following our church service. Marlene is organizing this and suggested that only monetary gifts be given to the couple. Besides a celebration cake, members may help with cookies, fruit, etc. Check with Marlene. Christmas Concert - Sun. Dec. 4 at 4 p.m. Presented in our Sanctuary by The Harmonaires, a singing group from the north suburbs. Concert will include holiday music, a Sing-Along, and a visit from Santa! Following the concert will be a Reception in our gym, featuring an array of hot and cold hors' d'oeuvres sweets, punch, coffee, etc. So, our ladies will be asked to help, under the guidance of Chef Richard Schneider. Donation is \$10 for adults and \$5 for children and reservations may be made to the Office or to Barb Todd. Because

of our low Treasury, we may not be able to contribute to our usual Christmas charities, but we will give Christmas to our church staff. Hopefully, we can have a fund-raiser in the Spring and replenish our Treasury! There will be no meeting in January, but we will participate in a collection for the Night Ministry and a Clothes Drive for Savers. In Feb., we will sponsor a Collection for Veterans. Our next meeting will be a **Christmas Luncheon on Wed. Dec. 14 at 11:30.** Carol Iannotti will conduct some special games!! All are invited to come and enjoy! Barbara Todd, Pres.

POINSETTIA ORDERS ARE DUE

DECEMBER 4TH! Please get those into the office!

HOSPITALIZATION - *Chad McCoy* continues his recovery from his subarachnoid brain hemorrhage which happened on Sunday, October 30th. He has been at home, continues to have doctor and test appointments, has good cognitive and speech abilities and moves around the home without assistance, but there are still some bad days sprinkled in with the day-by-day positive progress. *Jennifer Schneider* has already run the November 20th Church Council meeting after her November 17th knee replacement surgery! Granted it was via Zoom and everyone was at their homes, but all the same. She continues to recover at home, with physical therapy starting by the time you read this.

LECTOR & NURSERY SCHEDULE FOR DECEMBER

Dec 4 th	Lector:	Rich Schneider
	Nursery:	Heidi Tarzian
Dec 11 th	Lector:	Annie Noorts
	Nursery:	Laurie Mitchell
Dec 18 th	Lector:	Beth Lanford
	Nursery:	Carolyn Van Til
Dec 25 th	Lector:	Olivia Altmayer
	Nursery:	Kathy Zipperer

The 2022 Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund theme is: Overwhelmed with joy!" -

Matthew 2:10. Suggested offering date:

December 18, 2022 The Christmas Fund has been caring for active and retired clergy and lay employees of the United Church of Christ for over 100 years, providing emergency grants, supplementation of small annuities and health premiums, and Christmas "Thank You" gift checks each December to our lower-income retirees. 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. In 2021, gifts to the Christmas Fund enabled:

- Monthly pension supplementation for 231 retired clergy and lay employees (\$1,104,479);
- Health benefits supplementation for 87 retired clergy and laypersons (\$177,600);
- Emergency grants for 53 individuals and families (\$150,338);
- Christmas "Thank You" Gift checks to 509 clergy family and lay employees (\$254,000).

These numbers have gone down over recent years for a variety of reasons, but the number of our retired pastors and their spouses have increased, as those born after 1946 are retiring more and more. 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 18th, though contributions are gladly received throughout the month of December. Thank you!

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*

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.



Holiday Concert

**The HARMONAIRES
IN CONCERT
FEATURING MUSIC AND A SING-A-LONG**

4TH DECEMBER 2022

4PM - 5PM

Suggested donation \$10 Adults \$5 kids over 3

**8013 LARAMIE, SKOKIE, IL
www.stpeteruccskokie.org**



Reservations
requested:
(847)
673-8166

Santa Meet
and Greet



Jingle Mingle to follow featuring beverages
and savory & sweet hors' d'oeuvres