

FEBRUARY 2023

God is Love

The Announcer

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

From the Minister's Desk

By Reverend Richard Lanford

In the recent sermon of January 22nd, 2023, I touched on the post-pandemic future for churches, living in a new reality than what the pre-pandemic world was. Churches abound where the wish is for a return to those 'normal' days when there were a few more folks in the pews, more church social gatherings and mission-oriented events, and perhaps increased financial giving. I commented in January that such expectations are not realistic, given the dimensions of change that were happening already before COVID and would be negatively impacting houses of worship; I also commented (not for the first time) on the new need for digital ministry platforms. We have not ignored that! But, even in the heart of the pandemic, before any vaccine was very available to most of us, I gave a few examples of what kinds of pre-pandemic "normal" that Jesus' disciples should NOT want to return. Here is an excerpt from that other, 2021, sermon:

"Returning to the way things were for you, me and St. Peter's before the pandemic has its appeal. Jobs come back; uncertainties recede; plans for going away can be made for later in the year; and people will stop dying from it as the vaccines spread and the mutations are eventually successfully contained. More people, it is hoped, return to church once it is possible to really open up. Our missions that had to be suspended or amended can pick up again.

However, as sure as I am about us having heard folks pine for a return of normalcy, or what life was like a little over a year ago, I am also sure that you've heard we do not want to go back to the way things were. We do not want to turn the clock back to the days when a police officer nonchalantly kneels on the neck of a black man crying for air until he dies.

We do not want to turn back to the days, including these current days, when white supremacy is assumed to be the proper lens through which to experience the world and is not critiqued or overturned; when 6 Asian women are murdered like in Georgia; when LGBTQ+ persons' lives and livelihoods are still at risk so we need things like Trans Remembrance Day; when voting rights are under siege; and when systemic injustices against people of color continue to hold those communities as a whole back in terms of equality and equity. We do not want to go back to when we do not care to face what it has been like over the centuries to be a person of color, a woman, an immigrant, a person of any color whose been the victim of poverty or crime." Amen?

In the upcoming season of Lent, there is a good time for folks who engaged in such beliefs and practices to repent of them, and face the transformative mercy and calling of Christ Jesus. Love is the higher road, the path of discipleship, following Jesus, on which we tread.

Keep the faith, Rev. Richard Lanford

(In service to transparency, most of this is excerpted from a sermon I preached at St. Peter's on March 21, 2021).



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

SOFTGOODS LOADING TRUCK
February 4th 10AM

♥ **FOR VETERANS COLLECTION**
Feb 5th – 28th
OUTREACH DRIVE
February 11 & 12th

VILLAGE INN –
February 19th 11AM TO 11PM

ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICES February 22nd 11:30AM & 7PM

UPCOMING EVENTS

A ♥ for the Veterans Collection - Veterans transitioning from homelessness to homes need everyday household supplies to help them succeed. Give a gift to a Veteran! A detailed list of supplies needed are on the flyer at the end of this newsletter, in February bulletins and on our website. We are so excited to be able to support Military Outreach USA this year. This loving collection will start **Sun Feb 5th thru the end of February**. Also, this year we'll be having **an Outreach Drive-by Collection for our Veterans on Feb 11th from 9AM to 12PM and Feb 12th from 12PM to 3PM**. So please mark your calendar and let your friends & family help us to have the BEST COLLECTION EVER.

SAVERS PACKING AND LOADING FEBRUARY 4TH AT 10AM – So much thanks to everyone who donated to our Soft Goods Fundraiser! Now we'll need some strong hands to help move bags and load them onto a truck. Please come for any amount of time you have and help us get these items to Savers where they pay us by the pound.

THE ANNUAL INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS AND BOARD MEMBERS will be **Sunday, February 5th** this year. Given that we're having hybrid worship, it's preferred to be present in person during worship in the sanctuary, but someone elected could be installed from home. If you are being installed remotely, remember to follow along with your e-bulletin and answer the questions posed in the service as if you were in the sanctuary in the group on the chancel steps!

WOMEN'S GUILD MEETS IN FEBRUARY – Join us **Wednesday, February 8th at 11:30 AM** for a LOVELy meeting with the ladies of St. Peter's UCC! Fun company and delicious refreshments provided, and all women of St. Peter's are welcome!

VILLAGE INN FUNDRAISER FEBRUARY 19TH from 11AM to 11PM! Dine in, carryout or have delivered Village Inn food on this day, mention St. Peter's UCC to your server and we get 20% of whatever you spend. You get a meal you didn't have to cook, and a Sunday of relaxing. Thanks so much for your continued support!

ASH WEDNESDAY WORSHIP AND LENTEN STUDY - Ash Wednesday is coming; it will be **Wednesday, February 22nd!** *The tentative plan right now is for services at 11:30 AM and 7:00 PM.* The Pastor will explore the attendance number at the last year we had in-person worship for the morning Ash Wednesday service, and perhaps change that plan to evening only. Watch your Sunday bulletins and the Office's "This Week at St. Peter's" as well as the church web site to find out for sure! **The Lenten Bible Study will begin the Wednesday evening after that, March 1st.** The plan is to meet in person, with the previous Soup-n-Study format of gathering and eating from 6:30 to 7:00 PM, then going over our chapter from 7 to 8 PM. If there is substantial resistance to meeting in person or rotating "soup responsibilities," we will adjust! The study as it comes to us will be of the first part of the Gospel according to John (Chapters 1 through 5:18). The Booklet actually is of 10 studies, but we will stop after 5 to stay within Lenten parameters (ending Wednesday, March 29th). Limiting the study to 5 Wednesdays in a 10-chapter booklet lets us do the next Lenten Study on the remaining 5 chapters in Part One of this study of John's Gospel. Right now the booklet is only available to download at a cost of less than \$6 each. We are exploring any legally protected abilities to print some hard copies for people who do not or cannot download material. Please let Pastor know if you are interested and have not already been contacted, and at the same time let him know if you can receive and make use of a downloadable study booklet!

MORE UPCOMING AND CHURCH NEWS

NAMI COMING TO ST. PETER'S UCC IN MARCH: NAMI Family-to-Family is a class for families, significant others and friends of people with mental health conditions. Designated as an evidence-based program by SAMHSA, it facilitates a better understanding of mental health conditions, increases coping skills and empowers participants to become advocates for their family members. If you or someone you know can benefit from the services NAMI provides, please check it out!

Event Details:

- In-person
- **Saturday / March 4, 2023 - April 29, 2023**
- 10:00 AM - Noon
- St. Peter's United Church of Christ 8013 Laramie Avenue, Skokie, IL
- (847) 716-2252
- Registration - FREE

Do You Have A Loved One Living With Mental Illness? The NAMI Family-To-Family Education Program is a FREE 8-week course for families and close friends of adults with mental illness. This course is taught by trained teachers who are also family members and know what it is like to have a loved one living with mental illness, such as major depression, bipolar disorder, anxiety disorders, schizophrenia, and other disorders. REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED. Please call 847-716-2252, click "Register" or Email: admin@namiccns.org

	Dec. Actual	Budget	YTD Actual	YTD Budget
Operating Contributions	\$47,886	\$11,667	\$202,715	\$140,000
Operating Expense	\$20,172	\$14,044	\$169,662	\$168,529
Gain/(Loss)	\$27,714	(\$2,377)	\$33,053	(\$28,529)

These numbers exclude line items for any income transfer, roof repair and directed gifts. The December Operating Contributions includes an IRS Refund of \$14,367.67 and \$15,805.00 in Year End Christmas gifts.

A WORD OF GRATITUDE- Beth and I thank everyone who graced us with gifts and / or cards this past Christmas and New Year's season. Thank you for your love and thoughtfulness! – Pastor Lanford

MUCH APPRECIATION – Thank you so much to everyone who thought of me at Christmastime and my birthday, they really made my holidays special and means the world to me to be so cared for. – Laura Olson

NIGHT MINISTRY NUMBERS - Our total of donations and home-baked cookies as counted and boxed / bagged on Sunday, January 8th were : 10 cans of hot cocoa mix (including 2 boxes of instant cocoa packets); 10 winter scarves; 8 adult gloves or mittens; 10 winter hats; 27 homemade (and beautiful) headbands; and 189 bags of 3 cookies each (567 cookies).

BIBLE PRESENTATION - The Board for Christian Education, represented by Barb Todd, will present Felix Roy Svenson his first Bible now that he is in 3rd grade. It was originally scheduled for last October, but his mom Christine came down with COVID, so we rescheduled it for during worship on Sunday, February 12th.

OUR PEOPLE

IN MEMORIAM - Over the Saturday night, Sunday morning stretch linking January 21st to 22nd, long-time member Helen Mauer died in her sleep at Emerald Place in Glenview. She was 96. Our former church secretary leaves behind her two surviving daughters Pat Erdman (Ray) and Nancy (Phil) Lindroth, having been preceded in death by her husband Fred and daughter Laurie Leider. A graduate of Beloit College, she taught school in Des Plaines, and also worked at several other places while raising her family, and after they left home. In 1991 she became the new church secretary at St. Peter's, where she had belonged since 1965. She was often the first person you'd meet if you came into the building at Laramie Avenue and she was in the office. She served in this capacity for 19 years and was a great help to our Pastor; perhaps you remember her retirement coffee hour. Helen loved music, and enjoyed singing (former Choir member), to go up to the North woods, visit with family and friends, to read, do Word Search puzzles and watch "Dancing with the Stars." Her daughters were also her friends, and vice versa, and she had a lot of fun with them, and with some of you! She helped at the Dinner Theaters of the past, taught the teenaged Sunday morning Sunday School off-site, and pitched in where she could. She was also a member of the former American Legion Women's Auxiliary Skokie Post 320. She was an avid pet-lover, especially dogs, of which the family had many over the years. God was thanked for her life in her church funeral on January 26th, in which Carol Iannotti spoke as well as Rev. Lanford.

LECTOR & NURSERY SCHEDULE FOR FEBRUARY

Feb 5 th	Lector:	Olivia Altmayer
	Nursery:	Annie Noorts
Feb 12 th	Lector:	Beth Lanford
	Nursery:	Heidi Tarzian
Feb 19 th	Lector:	Peter Svenson
	Nursery:	Laurie Mitchell
Feb 26 th	Lector:	Jenn Schneider
	Nursery:	Annie Noorts
Mar 5 th	Lector:	Judy Paige
	Nursery:	Kathy Zipperer

WHO ARE SOME OF THOSE PEOPLE IN THE PASTORAL PRAYER?

- Sometimes persons in need of recurring prayers for healing, by name, are only explained or described once in worship, and if you missed that service in person or on YouTube, you're left wondering, who are they and what's the situation? One person for whom we have prayed on and off over the years has been George Sparks, husband of Sue Sparks (more below). He left this life on Wednesday, January 18th, with a funeral on January 30th, may he rest in peace. Here are some of those you might wonder about: Hilary Verheggen is a young woman whom Pastor Richard and Beth know from their time at St. Nicolai. She was a Sunday School student, her parents were among Pastor and Beth's first friends in Chicago, and many years ago she moved to the Pacific NW for college and career. She is still in Washington State, in her 30s, and suffering from serious brain cancer. Rev. Blair Hull is a clergy colleague and friend, who preached and led parts of worship here when I was on vacation in 2021. She has been diagnosed with early-stage pancreatic cancer and is having 'Whipple' surgery late in January. Her prognosis is good, but prayers continue. Ron is member Ron Schuhrke, now living in Grayslake, battling not only the MS which he's had for many years, but also prostate cancer. (cont.)

(continued from page 4) Eric (Keiser) is the partner of Beth Lanford's younger brother Dan Chamberlain. He is suffering from a number of weaknesses and afflictions, starting with COPD, a weakened heart, many spinal fractures, an inability to hardly walk these days (wheelchair- bound for the most part) and seemed close to death in a Texas hospital in mid-January but has improved. He's in his mid-60s. Paula is a good friend of Marlene Russell whose eyesight is weakening. She is blind in one eye already, and the other seems to steadily be getting harder to see through, too. Richard and Carol Hook are the parents of member Anna Riley; up in years their health is frail and Carol has had a few tough bone-breaking falls in the past few years. Josie Meyer is the daughter of one of Pastor's old high school friends and co-workers, and she too is fighting brain cancer. She just started high school, is active in their church and a lot of things; she started out with a tough prognosis but so far, the tests on tumor regrowth are encouraging. Jackie Johnson is a member of St. Peter's whose most recent foot surgery went well but the recovery and therapy were delayed, so it remains hard for her to get out, and she is not driving yet, it is believed. Sam Sparks is the grandson of one of Sue Bailey's great friends Sue Sparks (for whom we have also prayed in the past). He had open heart surgery, but has also suffered a leaking heart valve, MERSA twice, been on dialysis, and several hospitalizations and rehab stints, in his mid-20s. If there is someone you want added to our prayers for healing, contact me via email (better than texting for me to remember).

Pastor Richard Lanford

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

2/2 – Madeleine Reese Todd
 2/5 – Daniel (Mau) Gemignani
 2/8 – Susan Leshner
 2/16 – Sue (Burmeister) Speicher
 2/18 – Atlas Fink
 2/22 – Autumn Fink
 2/19 – Hunter Medaglia; Lois Jarmuth
 Richard Schaller
 2/27 – Eric Svenson; Lincoln Svenson

FEBURARY ANNIVERSARIES

2/2- Karen and Ken Christianson

MARCH BIRTHDAYS

3/2 – Grace Castillo; Joshua Castillo
 3/4 – Tyler O'Hara
 3/5 – Britta Christianson
 3/6 – Phil Lindroth
 3/7 – John Gruze; Rich Schneider
 3/10 – Don Kahn; Jamie Iannotti
 Jeff Loach
 3/11 – Lana Kahn; Ray Erdman
 3/12 – Adrianna Paige; Tracy (Paige)
 Puckett
 3/13 – Roy Svenson
 3/16 – William Hoellerich
 3/18 – Maria Altmayer
 3/19 - Angela Washek Kuras; Matthew
 Riley
 3/23 – Haley Kahn
 3/24 – Jason Iannotti; John Balling
 3/28 – Sue Bailey

MARCH ANNIVERSARIES

3/1 - Carol and Richard Hook
 3/16- Alice and Bill Schaller

A for the Veterans

Move-in Essentials Collection

GIVE A GIFT TO VETERANS EXITING HOMELESSNESS

Personal Hygiene:

Bath Soap ★ Hand Soap
Toothbrush ★ Toothpaste
Deodorant
Shaving Cream
Hairbrush ★ Comb
Nail Clippers

Kitchen & Cleaning:

Dishwashing Liquid
Paper Towels ★ Windex
Kitchen Trash Can
Garbage Bags ★ Dish Cloth
Mop & Bucket ★ Sponge
Broom & Dustpan

Bathroom:

Toilet Brush ★ Plunger
Toilet Bowl Cleaner
Bath Towels ★ Wash Cloth
Shower Curtain
Toilet Paper

Miscellaneous:

Flashlight ★ Light Bulbs
Sandwich Bags
Laundry Detergent
Hamper ★ Laundry Basket
Aluminum Foil
Pot Holders

VISIT STPETERUCCSKOKIE.ORG FOR MORE INFO

Feb 11th 9-12_{pm}
Feb 12th 12-3_{pm}

St Peter's UCC
8013 Laramie

Open to All!