

# The Churchman

Sts. Peter and Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church  
250 Woodside Road, Riverside, IL 60546 708-442-5250

*"Together in Worship and Serving in Faith"*

Rev. Dennis J. Lauritsen, Pastor  
[www.stspeterandpaulriverside.org](http://www.stspeterandpaulriverside.org)

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Issues 12

*"We are called together by the Holy Spirit around Word and sacraments to glorify God the Father, creator of all things, through our Lord Jesus Christ. We trust God to nurture lives of faith and hope, as we serve and give witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ for the salvation of the world."*

## Holiday Schedule

### **Advent Vespers, December 11<sup>th</sup>**

4:00 p.m., Vespers with Advent Devotions followed by a festive reception.

### **Fourth Sunday in Advent, December 18<sup>th</sup>**

9:00 a.m., Sunday School Pageant Rehearsal  
10:15 a.m., Liturgy of Holy Communion with Sunday School Christmas Pageant  
*No 8:15 a.m. service*

### **Christmas Eve, Saturday, December 24<sup>th</sup>**

7:00 p.m., Festival Liturgy of Holy Communion with Candlelight and Bach Christmas Cantata "To Us a Child is Born" featuring choir, soloists and instrumentalists.

### **Christmas Day, Sunday, December 25<sup>th</sup>**

10:15 a.m., Liturgy of Holy Communion  
*No 8:15 a.m. service*

would be if all the credit offers we've accepted were to come due on the same day. Think of the offers advertised on TV. Buy rooms full of furniture, no payments until June of 2006. Throw in some new carpet and window treatments. Buy now; pay later. Low-interest student loan. Repayment deferred until you get that big-paying job after graduation. A zero-interest new car loan. There will never be a deal like this again. It's a steal. You need it now. Do you feel a blues song coming on? "I took it on credit. I lived without a care. I had coins in my pocket, money to spare. But now all those loans have come due. What am I gonna do?" So will be the day of reckoning when the Son of Man comes with the clouds. What are we gonna do?

This whole analogy is built on the notion that it is God who extends us credit. Indeed, we are indebted to God, but not because God has given us "credit" for sinning. Credit is essentially what faith is. The Latin word is credo. It means "I believe." From credo we get both creed and credit. Someone extends credit to us based on that person's faith in us that we will pay up.

In the Advent 2002 "Crossings" newsletter, Todd Murken adopted the language of the marketplace to talk about Jesus' IPO, his initial public offering of resurrection. Based on that IPO, Murken says, we have extended credit to Jesus. We have placed our faith in him. We have his word that he will make good on his promise. He also knows us, how our willingness to extend credit might depend on something tangible, so he gives us baptism and eucharist as promissory notes. Paul talks about them as down payments, some earnest money that Jesus will fulfill his promise. So, when this Son of Man comes with the clouds, "stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near" (Luke 21:28).

## IMAGES AND WORDS OF THE SEASON—ADVENT

You can tell it is Advent when it is blue in church. Dressing the altar, pulpit, and the pastor's neck in green would be as big a fashion faux pas as wearing yellow seersucker in a Minnesota winter. We begin the year not with New Year's resolutions or talk of a fresh start disconnected from the past. We begin the year by talking about endings. So in Advent not only do we wear blue, but we also sing the blues. The blues are about endings. Bobby "Blue" Bland sings, "Without a warning, you broke my heart. You took it, shook it; you tore it apart. You left me sitting in the dark crying. You said your love for me was dying." The blues are about endings.

The Advent blues are about an ending: a big implosion to match the big bang by which the creation began. That theme sounds in the Advent readings. It is also a day of reckoning when the Son of Man comes with the clouds to settle all accounts. It is a day such as the day

### **Sunday Worship Schedule**

8:15 a.m. - Service of the Word (in Slovak)  
9:00 a.m. - Sunday School and Children's Choirs  
Confirmation Instruction, High School Class  
9:30 a.m. - Adult Choir Rehearsal (in English)  
9:15 a.m. - Liturgy of Holy Communion

### **Choir Rehearsals**

Wednesdays, December 7<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>, 7:30 p.m.

The Advent blues are about endings. They are also about hope. Bobby Bland changes key and from "your love for me was dying" he launches into a song of hopeful yearning: "Turn on your light. Turn on your love light. Let it shine, shine, shine on me." The Advent blues are about endings and hopeful yearning. When the Son of Man comes with the clouds, stand up, lift up your heads, your redemption is at hand.

On that day we either rise from the grave or push open our screen door and step out on our front porch to meet him, depending on what time of year he makes his advent. That we begin a new year talking about endings provides a clue about our attitude toward the end. We are looking at an ending that is a new beginning. In this new creation all our losses are made good: the loss of those we love, the time that is closing in on us, the loss that comes with illness--you name it, whatever is behind the empty feeling that comes upon you that has you singing the blues.

Jesus' crucifixion, that ending, is the winnowing in which the stuff of our lives is lifted by the harvester's pitchfork so that the wind might blow away the chaff and the grain fall back to the ground to be saved. Jesus' crucifixion is the refiner's fire burning away the dross of our lives. His crucifixion is the farmer's harrow breaking up the hard soil of our hearts to make them hospitable places for Jesus. He makes us fitting dance partners so we follow his lead into the new creation.

Singing the Advent blues moves us to dance the Advent two-step of yearning and hope. They orient us toward the coming kingdom of God. Practice the rhythm we hear in sacred story, baptism, and eucharist. Stick with your dance partners in the community of faith. And do your part to help one another stay in step with the new creation dance. Dance it in the midst of a world bent on other rhythms, mostly of destruction. Show them new possibilities, the new creation promise. Lead them to make the investment, and extend the credit that is faith in Jesus, who at his advent makes good on all our losses.

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## The Waiting Place

*A sermon preached at Sts. Peter and Paul on the First Sunday of Advent 2007. The texts for this Sunday included Isaiah 2:1-5 and Matthew 24:36-44.*

*Congratulations!  
Today is your day.  
You're off to Great Places!  
You're off and away! . . .*

*. . . You can get so confused  
that you'll start in to race  
down long wiggled roads at a break-necking pace  
and grind on for miles across weirdish wild space,  
headed, I fear, toward a most useless place. The Waiting Place . . .*

*. . . for people just waiting.  
Waiting for a train to go  
or a bus to come, or a plane to go  
or the mail to come, or the rain to go  
or the phone to ring, or the snow to snow  
or waiting around for a Yes or a No  
or waiting for their hair to grow.  
Everyone is just waiting.*

*Waiting for the fish to bite  
or waiting for wind to fly a kite  
or waiting around for Friday night  
or waiting, perhaps, for their Uncle Jake  
or a pot to boil, or a Better Break  
or a string of pearls, or a pair of pants  
or a wig with curls, or Another Chance.  
Everyone is just waiting.*

(from *Oh, the Places You'll Go!* By Dr. Seuss)

It's Advent, and it's a waiting place. Most of us would probably agree with Dr. Seuss that in Advent we are "headed . . . toward a most useless place. The Waiting Place . . ." In a culture that keeps telling us to "Get going! Do something! Shop til you drop! Make something of yourself! Don't just sit there! What are you waiting for?" well, in a culture that keeps telling us these things, most of us think of waiting as a waste of time, ". . . a most useless place. The Waiting Place . . ." So, let's get up and decorate that Waiting Place for Christmas even before the leftover turkey from Thanksgiving is consumed. But I heard it's Advent.

I suppose most of us, even in the Church, consider this season, these precious few weeks before Christmas, to be a waste of time especially when we're ". . . off to Great Places! . . . off and away," especially when we have so much to do, so many preparations to make, so much shopping to finish, so many parties to attend, so much money to spend. Well, maybe not this year.

Who has time for The Waiting Place which is Advent, "a most useless place." And yet, when you think about it, our whole life is spent, in one way or another, in The Waiting Place, waiting, waiting, waiting for something. Our order hasn't come yet. The elevator must be stuck. Our spouse is late--again. Will the rain ever stop? Will the paint ever dry? Will I ever get well? And I wonder if anyone will ever understand me. I wonder if I will ever be able to change. I wonder if there is anyone to help me.

*"...When you think about it, our whole life is spent, in one way or another, in The Waiting Place."*



Life is a series of waiting places in which we yearn for “days to come,” in the words of Isaiah, for “salvation . . . is nearer to us now than when we became believers,” as Paul puts it to the Romans, for “that day and hour,” not known to anyone but the Father, of which our gospel speaks. So the season of Advent invites us to understand with a new patience that very difficult state of being called The Waiting Place.

“Waiting patiently in expectation is the foundation of the spiritual life,” writes the French author Simon Weil. Patience. The word comes from the Latin word *patior* which can mean “to suffer” or “to endure.” What seems a hindrance eventually becomes a way; what seems an obstacle becomes a door; what seems a misfit becomes a cornerstone.

It impresses me that all the figures who appear on the first pages of the gospels are people who are waiting: John the Baptist, Zechariah and Elizabeth, Mary and Joseph, Anna and Simeon, the Wise Men, maybe even Herod. The whole opening scene of the good news is filled with people-in-waiting. The psalms are filled with waiting, waiting, waiting for the Lord: “*Wait for the LORD; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the LORD!*” “Be still before the LORD, and *wait* patiently for him . . . .” “*Wait for the LORD, and keep to his way . . .*” And finally, “*I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, and in his word I hope; my soul waits for the Lord more than those who watch for the morning, more than those who watch for the morning.*”

*People who are willing to wait have received a promise that allows them to wait, something already at work in them, like a seed that has started to grow within them.*

So we wait in the blue dawn of Advent, more than those who watch for the morning. We wait for the first rays of the dawn of the Lord’s presence; but make no mistake, this waiting is anything but passive, as we might imagine waiting to be, this waiting is with a sense of promise, and preparation, and prayer, prayer and more prayer. People who are willing to wait have received a promise that allows them to wait, something already at work in them, like a seed that

has started to grow within them. Advent calls upon us to wait for the growth of the Word planted in our being and to wrestle with the question of how today is shaped by the Lord’s promise for tomorrow when “heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.”

You see, the church provides these few precious weeks of Advent to sit still and *watch eagerly and wait actively* for the “comings” of God in our midst: clearing the channels and getting rid of the clutter, tuning the senses and being still for quiet reflection, engaging in works of mercy and tending to those in need. Yes, amid the flurry of activity leading up to Christmas, you do need the quiet of a darkened sanctuary, *watching eagerly and waiting actively* for the “comings” of God in our midst, being truly near those in the family of faith. What you don’t need is more strength-depleting, soul-depriving noise and activity, for “They who wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength.”

In his *Screwtape Letters*, C. S. Lewis declares that it is easy to avoid God in our time and place if we will only fill our lives with noise and activity: “Avoid silence, avoid solitude, avoid any train of thought that leads off the beaten track. Concentrate on money, sex, status, health and [above all] on your own grievances. Keep the radio [and television] on. Live in a crowd. Use plenty of sedation. ...All of space and time in hell has been occupied by noise... noise which alone defends us from silly qualms, despairing scruples, and impossible desires.

“We will make the whole universe a noise in the end.” Isn’t that what our world is about? Noise. Activity.

“For as the days of Noah were, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage... and they knew nothing until the flood came and swept them all away... .”

“No,” says the church in Advent, it need not be that way, “be still, and know that I am God.” Get a hold of what enters your mind and heart and mouth. You don’t need all the garbage of advertizing which so characterizes these days. Instead, “...let us live honorably as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.”

You may remember that South African President Nelson Mandela spent twenty-seven years as a political prisoner in that country which is almost ten thousand days of waiting and wondering, ten thousand nights of loneliness and separation, ten thousand days of deprivation and humiliation. Yet in that Waiting Place of a prison, the revolution was shaping, discontent with apartheid was brewing. In that Waiting Place, strength and focus, vision and determination were forged so that when apartheid finally fell, Mandela emerged to preside over a free nation.

Yes, Advent is The Waiting Place, but by no means “a most useless place.” Not at all! Advent is like the hush in a theater just before the curtain rises, so that you don’t miss the very opening line of the overture. Advent is like a hazy ring around the winter moon that means the coming of snow which will turn the night into silver. So, we wait, not in fear but in faith, shaped by the One for whom we wait, the One who is already “God with us,” present with us in tough times and for the long haul, even before he comes again in glory. For he has promised us, “Lo, I am with you always.”

*The church provides these few precious weeks of Advent to sit still and watch eagerly and wait actively for the “comings” of God in our midst: clearing the channels and getting rid of the clutter, tuning the senses and being still for quiet reflection, engaging in works of mercy and tending to those in need.*

*We confess, O God, that we are not very good at waiting. Yet your eternal message to us is to wait and to watch and to hope with anticipation. And so, O God, even as we wait for your appearance among us, open us to your presence already among us in your quiet unseen Spirit that dwells constantly in our midst, seeking to break through our panic with your peace, trying to convince us that the true joy of the season is found ultimately in our faith and in the lives of those with whom we share that faith. So inspire us by your Spirit in this Advent season, we pray, to sense anew in the signs and in the sounds of the Christmas celebration your special word of hope for our world. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

—DJL

**The deadline for articles for the January, 2012 issue of the congregational newsletter is Sunday, December 4<sup>th</sup>. Thank you for being prompt!**

If you would like to order a poinsettia to help decorate the chancel of the sanctuary for our Christmas liturgies, a sign up sheet will be available in the dining hall beginning Sunday, November 20<sup>th</sup>. You may also contact the church office to place your order. The cost per plant is \$15.00. The deadline for payment and sign-up is Thursday, December 15<sup>th</sup>.



### *December Happenings*

**Meeting of the Western Conference of the Slovak Zion Synod**

Thursday, December 8<sup>th</sup>, 9 a.m.

**Ladies Altar Guild Stedraky**

Thursday, December 8<sup>th</sup>, 12 noon

**Young Musicians of Riverside Recital**

Saturday, December 10<sup>th</sup>, 2 p.m.

**Advent Vespers Service**

Sunday, December 11<sup>th</sup>, 4 p.m.

**Preschool Christmas Program**

Tuesday, December 13<sup>th</sup>, 7 p.m.

**Church Office Closed**

December 26<sup>th</sup> and January 2<sup>nd</sup>

**Finance Committee Meeting**

Tuesday, December 27<sup>th</sup>, 7:15 p.m.

**Co-Dependents Anonymous** meets weekly on Wednesday evenings

at 6:30 p.m. in the Friendship Room.

**AA Group** meets weekly on Saturday evenings at 7 p.m. in the Friendship Room.

**RCA (Recovering Couples Anonymous)** meets weekly on Friday evenings at 7 p.m. in the Friendship Room.

### *Preschool News...*

Dear Friends,

Merry Christmas from the preschool. We have been extremely busy the last couple of months preparing for the holidays. On Tuesday, December 13<sup>th</sup> at 7 p.m., we will have our Preschool Christmas Program along with an appetizer/dessert reception. Thank you to David Richards for helping us out.

During the holiday season please continue to save your Campbell soup labels. Also, thank you for saving your aluminum cans for us. Both are greatly appreciated!

Patty and I wish everyone a blessed holiday season. Make sure you enjoy one of God's greatest treasures this holiday - your children.

-Donna Tuider, Preschool Director

Over the years the congregation of Sts. Peter and Paul has been generously purchasing gifts and donating funds for gift certificates in order to make Christmas a happier occasion for many needy local children. Again this year, the congregation will "adopt" approximately twenty-five children through Lutheran Child and Family Services. A tree with ornaments containing a child's gender, age and suggested gift is available downstairs in the dining hall. Gifts should be unwrapped, labeled with the information provided on the ornament, and placed in a box near the tree. Gift cards, certificates, and cash donations are also welcome. Wrapping paper donations will also be appreciated by LCFS. The deadline for gift drop-off is Sunday, December 4<sup>th</sup> for delivery to LCFS on December 10<sup>th</sup>.

—Lavinia Myers, Coordinator



As we celebrate our Lord's birth during the upcoming joyous Christmas season, the Community Life Committee asks that you please remember all of God's creatures in your Christmas giving plans. Please open your hearts (and your wallets) and help the Hinsdale Humane Society to care for the homeless dogs and cats who need food and medical help not only during the Christmas season but year round. Look for the CLC/HHS tree in the dining hall. There are envelopes on the tree in which you can place your check payable to the Hinsdale Humane Society (or cash) and drop the envelope in the box next to the tree. We will be accepting donations through December 18<sup>th</sup>. If you have any questions, please contact CLC co-chairs, Ann or Marty Pennino. For more information on the fine work of the HHS, please visit [www.hinsdalehumanesociety.org](http://www.hinsdalehumanesociety.org).

-Ann Pennino, CLC-Co-chair



### *December announcements...*

- ★ *Oplatky* (traditional Slovak wafers used at Christmastime) will be available beginning the First Sunday in Advent, November 27<sup>th</sup>. A donation of \$1.50 per package (½ dozen) is requested. The *oplatky* will be available through the ushers on Sundays or the church office during the week.
- ★ The 2012 offering envelopes will be available for pick up in the downstairs hallway off the dining hall beginning December 4<sup>th</sup>. Please pick up envelopes for friends or relatives. If you would like to have your envelopes mailed to you, please contact Karen in the church office.
- ★ Financial donations made to the church must be received in the church office no later than December 30<sup>th</sup> in order to be included in your end of the year financial statement.

Young Musicians of Riverside  
Voice and Violin Recital

Saturday, December 10<sup>th</sup>, 2011  
2:00 p.m. in the sanctuary.

A small reception follows the recital  
in the Friendship Room.

## *The Bride of Christ*

*A Sermon for the Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost  
and the Baptism of Rowen Lee Smith, October 9<sup>th</sup>, 2011  
Isaiah 25:1-9; Matthew 22:1-14*

“On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine, of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined. And he will swallow up on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death forever; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces... .”

“Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, our rock and our redeemer.”

I really like the way this parable begins. I’m not so sure I like the way it ends.

So it begins: There was this king, and presumably his wife, who were planning a big wedding bash for their son and his bride. Of course, there have to be lots of guests for this wedding, so they send their couriers to call those who had been summoned to the wedding reception. That’s why I like the way this parable begins.

Most of us like weddings. And most of the time we’re honored to get a wedding invitation, so for weeks some of us can hardly wait for the party to begin, especially for that moment when the waiters begin to serve up the “oxen and fatted calves.” My mouth is already beginning to water. But before this happens, something in the parable goes quickly awry, terribly wrong. And by the time we get to the end of the story, some guy is getting bounced out of the reception hall, apparently because he didn’t come dressed to party; evidently because his heart just wasn’t into celebrating; maybe because he simply didn’t want to be there. But the result is that he royally disrespects, even dishonors, even shames his hosts by the heart that has dressed him (or not) for the occasion.

*But maybe all Jesus is trying to tell us is that to distance one’s self from the wedding celebration; to dishonor our Host with an absent heart; to exclude one’s self from other guests; well, all can potentially have some very dark, devastating and lonely consequences.*

disrespected, dishonored and shamed because nobody wanted to come to his kid’s wedding, well, it’s no surprise that this king reacts the way he does: “Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and grinding of teeth.”

*And the man doesn’t really need anyone to bounce him, to “bind him hand and foot,” because he’s already excluded himself, already “voted himself off the island”. . . .*

By the way, this is not the story of Cinderella. There’s nothing here to suggest that the man could not afford wedding clothes, or even that wedding clothes in that day would be expensive. Who knows, he might have even been dressed better than anyone else in the hall. The point is, he deliberately dishonored his host by setting himself apart from everybody else at the reception. And the man doesn’t really need anyone to bounce him, to “bind him hand and foot,” because he’s already excluded himself, already “voted himself off the island,” as they say on Survivor, not that I’ve ever gone near it. But for a host who has already been royally

This sounds a bit like overkill to us. So, I’m not so sure I like the way the parable ends. And, gee, I was thinking this week, what kind of a story is this for little Rowen’s baptismal day? It’s almost enough to frighten him, with his parents, his godparents, his grandparents, and just everybody else right “into the outer darkness.” But maybe all Jesus is trying to tell us is that to distance one’s self from the wedding celebration; to dishonor our Host with an absent heart; to exclude one’s self from other guests; well, all can potentially have some very dark, devastating and lonely consequences. Jesus seems to be saying that to be estranged from God and others is to land ourselves in the outer darkness like Cain of old who became “a fugitive and wanderer on earth” for shedding the blood of his brother Abel.

We can show up at this wedding with no intention of honoring the One who invited us, no intention of singing and dancing, eating and drinking, lighting candles and placing flowers, lifting voices and offering gifts. We can show up with no wedding clothes. We can show up with no heart for the Host. So,

*We can show up at this wedding with no intention of honoring the One who invited us, no intention of singing and dancing, eating and drinking, lighting candles and placing flowers, lifting voices and offering gifts. We can show up with no wedding clothes. We can show up with no heart for the Host.*

the LORD laments through Isaiah, “...This people draw near with their mouth and honor me with their lips while their hearts are far from me... .” And just ahead of this guy are all those invited guests who didn’t even bother to show up, who ignored the king’s wedding invitation, not just once, but twice; and the second time they even make fun of it, while some end up killing the king’s couriers.

For an ancient society based upon honor and shame, nothing could bring more honor to one’s self and one’s family than to be invited to a wedding, especially the royal wedding of the king’s own son. And nothing can bring more shame than to be left off the guest list when everybody else you know received an invitation. To get an invitation like the one in this parable would mean that you and your family were really something—really somebodies. So, circle the date. Be there at all costs. And... dress up in something that will honor your host and tell everybody that you’re ready to have the time of your life, because nobody goes to a wedding, at least not in Chicago, dressed for a Packers game.

This parable makes the outrageous claim that when the invitations went out, those who were summoned started making all kinds of excuses as to why they couldn’t attend. Jesus puts it simply, and maybe a bit sadly: “They didn’t ‘wanna come. They even made a joke of it.”

“I cannot come to the banquet, don’t bother me now. / I have married a wife, I have bought me a cow. / I have fields and commitments that cost a pretty sum. / Pray, hold me excused, I cannot come.” But why? Why in the world would anyone refuse such an invitation, literally, a summons to the wedding table? Why would people hold this king in contempt? And what sort of king is this who is ignored, even snubbed by everybody he invited? Are his parties really so terribly boring? Is he known for being a real cheapskate? Is his approval rating that dreadfully low? Or, is the real problem with the man’s kid? With his son?

You see, this king is facing terrific shame that, especially by ancient standards, he is going to have to address in some way. He has to save face. So, he practically gets on his hands and knees begging people to get washed up, put on some good clothes, and come to the

wedding table: "It's 'gonna be a great time, I tell you." The king really wants to be with us; I mean, these people in the church; I mean, the wedding hall where there will be joyous singing and quiet conversation, a glass of wine and freshly baked bread, newly cut flowers and generous wedding gifts, candles lit and a fine table cloth, maybe even some dancing.

"But we, I mean, they ignored him." And now, the king has had enough. And when the dust has finally settled from his outburst, he again sends couriers to fill the reception hall with whomever they can bring in off the streets, "both good and bad," doesn't matter, "wheat and weeds," doesn't matter, because "the rule of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and gathered fish of every kind."

The king just doesn't give up: "Many are called but few say 'yes.'" The invitations keep going out. The couriers continue to summons with their sermons. And the wedding feast will go on... and on... and on. And the table extends from here to eternity, because this is the marriage of the Father's Son to His bride the Church. And we are here for no other reason than by the Holy Spirit's invitation, summons, call that we show up to experience the joy of this wedding of heaven and earth.

When we gathered at the font for pre-baptismal conversation the other evening, I remarked to Rowen's parents and all the godparents about how their baptismal party, wonderfully large as it is, reminded me of a bridal party. And when I thought about it, that's exactly the image that Scripture often uses for baptism. When you get married, you know, it's joint ownership (most of the time): the house, the car, the checking account. Scripture says that we even become one flesh, one body. And what was once mine becomes hers, and hers becomes mine.

Through the covenant of Baptism, as in a marriage, we share all things together with Christ. What is Christ's becomes ours, and what is ours becomes Christ's. "For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit." As in marriage, so in baptism, we receive a new name: the name is Christ; we are literally "Christened." And, in a world which persistently tells us that we are "nobodies," in baptism we are told that we are "somebodies." We are "little Christs" to others.

So, in a few minutes, we're going to have another "little Christ" born among us. "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ," Paul says to the Galatians. Again, in Ephesians, "You were taught to put away your former way of life, your old self... and to clothe yourselves with the new self, created according to the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

"As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience," says Colossians, "... Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony." In Baptism, we "put on" the Lord Jesus, and the Lord Jesus "puts on" us—today, and again tomorrow, and again the day after tomorrow, and everyday for the rest of our lives.

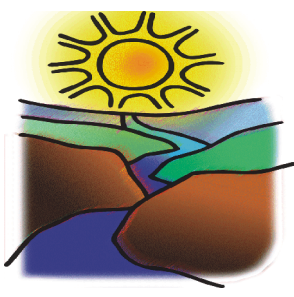
Luther liked to call baptism a "joyful exchange": "By the wedding ring of faith [Christ] shares in the sins, death and pains... which are his bride's. As a matter of fact, he makes them his own and acts as if they were his own and as if he himself had sinned; he suffered, died, and descended [to the dead] that he might overcome them all. ...For his righteousness is greater than the sins of all [humanity], his life stronger than death, his salvation more invincible than hell."

Today, Rowen Lee becomes a "little Christ," dressed in the wedding clothes of our risen Lord Jesus Christ, prepared to walk into the eternal wedding feast with us. Dear parents, dear godparents, dear church, allow Christ to clothe Rowen every day in these robes of righteousness, that he will live in Christ, and Christ will live in him.

"... Live with him among God's faithful people, bring him to the Word of God and the Lord's Supper, teach him the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and the Ten Commandments, place in his hands the Holy Scriptures, and nurture him in faith and prayer... ."

And one day, he will pray with us: "You prepare a table before me / in the presence of my enemies; / you anoint my head with oil; / my cup overflows. / Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me / all the days of my life, / and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD / forever.

"And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."



**ADVENT VESPERS**  
**on the Third Sunday in**  
**Advent**  
**Gaudete Sunday**  
December 11<sup>th</sup> in the  
sanctuary.

4:00 p.m., Vespers with  
Advent Devotions  
followed by a festive reception.

Sing the beautiful  
Holden Setting of Evening Prayer  
with Lessons and Carols for the Season of Advent  
followed by a festive reception.

You are invited to bring holiday food  
to share at the reception.

### *Dorcas Society News. . .*

Dear Friends,

Yes, indeed, we had a successful Craft Fair and our thanks to all who helped with the Fair and all who came to the Fair. Every year we ask for additional help and bakery donations, and you responded overwhelmingly.

Special thanks to our Rose Tornil for her many canning items and also to Bill Boor who has stepped up not only in the canning department but also handled so many other duties for us. Thank you both so much.

Our regular meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 29<sup>th</sup> at 12 noon.

A blessed Thanksgiving to everyone.

*Emily Kostelancik*



## “Passing the Plate”

A recent book, *Passing the Plate*, by Christian Smith, Michael Emerson, and Patricia Snell (Oxford University Press, 2008) suggests that we North American Christians could do a great deal better in being obedient to Jesus’ demand that we look after the “least of these.” *Passing the Plate* is a study of our stewardship practices which indicates that *more than one out of four American Protestants give away no money at all*—“not even a token \$5 per year,” say the authors. Of all Christian groups, evangelical Protestants score the best: only 10 percent give nothing away. Evangelicals tend to be the most generous Christians, but their giving is not all that great. Thirty-six percent report that they give away less than two percent of their income. Only about 27 percent tithe.

If we responded in our giving as we have been commanded, we could make a huge impact. *Passing the Plate’s* researchers say committed American Christians—those who say their faith is very important to them and those who attend church at least twice a month—earn more than \$2.5 trillion dollars every year. If we active Christians gave away 10 percent of our after-tax earnings, we would add another \$46 billion to ministry around the world.

Actually, it’s not even true to say that American Christians give only a small portion of our money toward religious endeavors. Looking closer, the picture is more disturbing. As already noted, a quarter of us give away no money at all. The average, regularly attending churchgoer gives 6 percent of after-tax income, but that’s a mean skewed by a handful of very generous givers. *The median annual giving for an American Christian is actually \$200, just over half a percent of after-tax income. About 5 percent of American Christians provide 60 percent of the money churches and religious groups use to operate.* I expect that holds true for our congregation as well. A small group of generous givers is funding the church for everyone else.

You probably already know that America’s biggest givers—as a percentage of their income —are its lowest income earners. The “least of these” among us, in regard to income, give the highest percentage of income to the church. “Americans who earn less than \$10,000 gave 2.3 percent of their income to religious organizations,” Smith, Emerson, and Snell write, “whereas those who earn \$70,000 or more gave only 1.2 percent.”

Why do people not give to the church? *Passing the Plate’s* authors say that a major reason Christians don’t give more is because many can’t. Fixed costs in households have increased from 54 percent to 75 percent of family budgets since the early 1970s. Second, researchers found that some would-be donors don’t trust how churches and religious organizations would use their donations. Only 9 percent of church-attending Christians say this is an important reason for their lack of giving—but majorities in several church families (Lutherans, Presbyterians, Baptists, and Catholics) say they don’t have high levels of trust in their denomination’s management and allocation of funds.

A larger problem isn’t that the parishioners distrust their churches; it’s that they are acting just like them. American families are repeating their churches’ examples. “Relatively little donation money actually moves much of a distance away from the contributors,” Smith, Emerson, and Snell write. *The money given by the people in the pews, it turns out, is largely spent on the people in the pews. Only about 3 percent of money donated to churches and ministries went to aiding or ministering to non-Christians.*

Meanwhile, the study found that a major reason Christians do not give is because they are not asked to. Americans know that nearly all denominations teach that Christians should give away 10 percent of their incomes. But this teaching is rarely reinforced. Pastors are reluctant to bring it up because the issue is so closely tied to their own salaries. And the study found that pastors themselves are often not great models of financial giving, which can exacerbate their reluctance to preach on it.

*... A major reason Christians do not give is because they are not asked to. Americans know that nearly all denominations teach that Christians should give away 10 percent of their incomes. But this teaching is rarely*

*Summary by Rev. Dr. William H. Willimon who has been a Bishop of The United Methodist Church since 2004. He currently leads the 157,000 Methodists and 792 pastors in North Alabama. For twenty years he was Dean of the Chapel and Professor of Christian Ministry at Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.*



## DECEMBER

|         |                   |         |                    |
|---------|-------------------|---------|--------------------|
| Dec. 1  | Ludmilla Kovalsky | Dec. 15 | Steven Waldman     |
| Dec. 3  | Lavinia Myers     | Dec. 16 | Michael Kowalewicz |
| Dec. 4  | Eric Kostelny     |         | Steven Melka       |
| Dec. 5  | Carrie Boike      |         | Nickolas Ritacco   |
|         | Walter Cudecki    | Dec. 17 | Ann Kmet           |
|         | Ann Head          |         | Mary Jo Meyers     |
| Dec. 6  | Fred Kuzel        |         | Nicholas Sasuta    |
| Dec. 7  | Larry Bakalich    | Dec. 19 | Martin Tornil      |
| Dec. 8  | Milina Blahut     | Dec. 21 | Aaron Mitchell     |
| Dec. 10 | Edward Sefara     | Dec. 24 | Jan Hapgood        |
| Dec. 11 | Betty Kany        | Dec. 26 | Shirley Kostelny   |
|         | Kristian Kubo     |         | Mary Sasuta        |
|         | Carrie Watkiss    | Dec. 27 | Steven Mendel      |
| Dec. 12 | Betty Force       | Dec. 28 | Raymond Bittner    |
| Dec. 13 | Vera Borysek      |         | Walter Kessler     |
| Dec. 14 | Ruth Bakalich     |         | Megan Keyes        |
|         | Audrey Bucz       | Dec. 29 | Darina Mika        |
|         | Martin Pennino    |         |                    |

## BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

December 5, 2004: Lee and Emily Drahos  
December 28, 1967: Rose and Fred Tornil

### Directory changes...

Lottie Licko  
906 Karin Drive  
Normal, IL 61761

*December Scripture Readings*

1. Isaiah 40:1-11 - Here is your God
2. Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13 - Restoration
3. 2 Peter 3:8-15a - Wait patiently
4. **Mark 1:1-8 - Second Sunday of Advent**
5. Isaiah 26:7-15 - One true God
6. Isaiah 4:2-6 - Cleansed by God
7. Malachi 2:10—3:1 - Being faithful
8. Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11 - Blessing and responsibility
9. Psalm 126 - Joy in the Lord
10. 1 Thessalonians 5:15-24 - The importance of prayer
11. **John 1:6-8, 19-28 - Third Sunday of Advent**
12. 1 Kings 18:1-18 - A faithful servant
13. 2 Kings 2:9-22 - Inherited spirit
14. Malachi 3:16—4:6 - Parents and children
15. 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16 - An everlasting throne
16. Luke 1:46-55 - Magnifying the Lord
17. Romans 16:25-27 - Divine strength
18. **Luke 1:26-38 - Fourth Sunday of Advent**
19. Hebrews 9:1-14 - Unintentional sins
20. 1 Samuel 1:19-28 - Starting the morning right
21. Isaiah 9:2-7 - How long?
22. Psalm 96 - Singing with the trees
23. Luke 2:1-7 - Family ties
24. Luke 2:8-20 - Christmas Eve
25. **John 1:1-14 - Christmas Day**
26. Acts 6:8-15, 7:51-60 - Stephen Deacon and Martyr
27. 1 John 1:1-9 - John, Apostle and Evangelist
28. Matthew 2:13-18 - The Holy Innocents
29. Isaiah 61:10—62:3 - What's in a name?
30. Psalm 148 - Praise the Lord!
31. John 8:12-19 - Light for the darkness

*Altar Flowers*

- Oct. 23<sup>rd</sup>:* In loving memory of beloved father and grandfather +William Stastny+ on the anniversary of his death by remembering daughter Audrey Bucz and her family and granddaughter Adrienna Gana.
- Oct. 30<sup>th</sup>:* In celebration of Joan Triska's 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday on October 29<sup>th</sup> by loving children, Carol, Jim, and Jeff and Lisa Triska.
- In loving memory of mother +Anne Small+ on the anniversary of her birth on October 18<sup>th</sup>, 1908 from Ken and Shirley Wood.
- Nov. 6<sup>th</sup>:* In loving memory of beloved father, grandfather and great-grandfather +Michael Riban+ on the 16<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death on November 6<sup>th</sup>, 1995 by remembering children Mildred Riban and Michael Riban, Jr. and family.
- Nov. 13<sup>th</sup>:* In celebration of Milan and Olga Zavodny's 64<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary on November 15<sup>th</sup>.
- In celebration of Bob and Sue Skudrna's 40<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary on November 13<sup>th</sup>.
- In memory of +Wayne Oklepek+ of Boise, Idaho who died suddenly of a heart attack on November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2011 by remembering uncle, Milan Oklepek.
- In memory of parents +Stephen+ and +Elizabeth Michalicka, sister +Bess Vachoot+ on the anniversaries of their birth and Lois Michaels on her birthday by Betty Bosh.



The congregational staff: Pastor Lauritsen, Karen, Donna, David, Patty, Brian, and the Members of the Church Council of Sts. Peter and Paul would like to wish everyone a very blessed Christmas and a joyous and healthy New Year.

Just a reminder. . .

If you will be leaving the Chicago area during the winter months for warmer climates, please notify the church office before then so the monthly newsletter can be forwarded to your temporary residence or cancelled until you return. The congregation incurs a fee for each newsletter that is undeliverable; stopped mail delivery to your permanent residence is considered undeliverable and returned to the church. Thank

**DO YOU KNOW YOUR HYMNS?**

Dentist's Hymn  
*Crown Him with Many Crowns*

Contractor's Hymn  
*The Church is One Foundation*

Weatherman's Hymn  
*There Shall Be Showers of Blessings*

Electrician's Hymn  
*Send the Light*

Realtor's Hymn  
*I've Got a Mansion Just Over the Hilltop*

Massage Therapist's Hymn  
*He Touched Me*

-Submitted by Sandi Spilotro

## DECEMBER WORSHIP SCHEDULE

### December 4<sup>th</sup>:

Greeters: William Boor and Irene Boor  
Acolytes: Nina Ritacco and Sara Watkiss  
Assisting Minister: John Broussard  
Comm. Minister: Anne Otjepka  
Lectors: Tom and Vicki Michaels  
Nursery Attendant: Hannah Boike  
Ushers: Wally Kessler and Janet Broussard

### December 11<sup>th</sup>:

Greeters: Ann Kmet and Fred Kuzel  
Acolytes: Jonathon Meyers and Amanda Meyers  
Assisting Minister: Lois Mika  
Comm. Minister: Charles Matthies  
Lectors: Tom and Lavinia Myers  
Nursery Attendant: Kristine Boike  
Ushers: Wally Kessler and Joan Triska

### December 18<sup>th</sup>:

Greeters: Ramona Suffern and Susan Martinek  
Acolytes: Charles Haase and Johnathan Haase  
Assisting Minister: Vicki Michaels  
Comm. Ministers: Martin Pennino, Jan Hapgood and John Broussard  
Lectors: Sarah Watkiss and Rachel Michaels  
Nursery Attendant: *No Nursery Coverage*  
Ushers: Wally Kessler and Joan Triska

### Christmas Eve, December 24<sup>th</sup>:

Greeters: Philip and Linda Painter  
Acolytes: Katie Melnyk and Rachel Michaels  
Assisting Minister: Tom Michaels  
Comm. Ministers: Joan Triska, Carrie Watkiss and Vicki Michaels  
Lectors: Martin and Ann Pennino  
Nursery Attendant: *No Nursery Coverage*  
Ushers: Wally Kessler and Paul Watkiss

### Christmas Day, December 25<sup>th</sup>:

Greeters: Milan and Anita Horak  
Acolytes: Charles Haase and Jacob Czerak  
Assisting Minister: Jan Hapgood  
Comm. Minister: Tom Myers  
Lectors: Jane Lauritsen and Olivia Lauritsen  
Nursery Attendant: *No Nursery Coverage*  
Usher: Wally Kessler

Sacristan and Altar Care:  
*Anne Otjepka*

### Remember

If you are unable to keep your scheduled date, please arrange for a replacement and call the church office with the change. Thank you.

## JANUARY WORSHIP SCHEDULE

### New Years Day, January 1<sup>st</sup>:

Greeters: Mildred Melka and Steve Michael  
Acolytes: Abby Collins and Jake Collins  
Assisting Minister: Charles Matthies  
Comm. Minister: Anne Otjepka  
Lectors: Paul and Carrie Watkiss  
Nursery Attendant: *No Nursery Coverage*  
Usher: Wally Kessler

### January 8<sup>th</sup>:

Greeters: Steve and Beverly Podzamsky  
Acolytes: Nina Ritacco and Sara Watkiss  
Assisting Minister: Carrie Watkiss  
Comm. Minister: Joan Triska  
Lectors: Gary and Jocelyn Drahos  
Nursery Attendant: Carrie Boike  
Ushers: Wally Kessler and Paul Watkiss

### January 15<sup>th</sup>:

Greeters: Edward and Joanne Sefara  
Acolytes: Isabelle Boike and Carrie Boike  
Assisting Minister: Kristin Klade  
Comm. Minister: Charles Matthies  
Lectors: Joanne Sefara and Sheryl Hallmann  
Nursery Attendant: Olivia Lauritsen  
Ushers: Wally Kessler and Joan Triska

### January 22<sup>nd</sup>:

Greeters: John and Shirley Kostelny  
Acolytes: Jonathon Meyers and Amanda Meyers  
Assisting Minister: Brandon Michaels  
Comm. Minister: Tom Michaels  
Lectors: Charles Matthies and Emily Kostelancik  
Nursery Attendant: Hannah Boike  
Ushers: Wally Kessler and Joan Triska

### January 29<sup>th</sup>:

Greeters: John Broussard and Fred Kuzel  
Acolytes: Charles Haase and Johnathan Haase  
Assisting Minister: Tom Myers  
Comm. Minister: Martin Pennino  
Lectors: John and Shirley Kostelny  
Nursery Attendant: Kristine Boike  
Ushers: Wally Kessler and Ann Pennino

Sacristan and Altar Care:  
*Anne Otjepka*

We are in need of congregation members to serve as communion ministers. If interested, please speak with Pastor Lauritsen or a member of the Worship and Music Committee. Thank you.



## MEMORIALS AND HONORARIUMS

### FOR THE CHURCH

Steve and Bev Podzamsky, in memory of +Thomas Keasler, Jr.+  
In loving memory of beloved mother, grandmother and great-grandmother +Mary Riban+ on the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of her death on December 18<sup>th</sup>, 2001 by remembering children Mildred Riban and Mike and Riban, Jr. and family.  
Tom and Vicki Michaels, in gratitude to God for daughter Rachel's Confirmation.  
Lottie Licko, in memory of +Betty Mikulina+  
Mildred Melka, in memory of +Emily Samel+

### Current, Benevolence and Freewill Offering Recap

*Budgeted Offering: \$3,219.00*

### October, 2011

| <u>Date</u> | <u>Weekly Attendance</u> | <u>Offering Received</u> |
|-------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 10/2        | 99                       | \$3,450.00               |
| 10/9        | 121                      | \$2,327.00               |
| 10/16       | 80                       | \$2,766.00               |
| 10/23       | 79                       | \$2,782.95               |
| 10/30       | 99                       | \$1,777.10               |

October, 2011 average attendance: 96  
October, 2010 average attendance: 93

### Council Meeting Highlights. . .

- G The Treasurer reported that our electrical bill has decreased by over 60% in the last few months due partly by disconnecting the old light dimmer system in the sanctuary.
- G Council and Stewardship Committee are working on a "wish list" of capital improvement projects; an appeal commemorating the 110<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the congregation will be forthcoming to fund some of these needed projects.
- G Council approved donating eight place settings from our kitchen dishes as part of the effort to help furnish an apartment for a refugee family through Refugee One.
- G Council approved allowing the softball team "Legends of the Game" use our gym for volleyball games twice per month during the winter months. This group of current and former members of our congregation and others have enjoyed using the gym for over 25 years.

*-Submitted by Fred Kuzel, Secretary*



### OUR LEGACY: SEASON OF FAITH

Carols and candles, drifts of snow;  
Tinsel and holly; Yule logs aglow.  
Legends of shepherds wakened at night,  
Awe'd by splendorous radiant starlight.

Gifts of the Magi of long ago;  
Precious above all, they could bestow:  
Gold and incense and coveted myrrh,  
Measuring meaning, in the night's stir.

Balthasar, Casper, Melchior, three;  
Kings of the Orient beyond the sea.  
Oh Holy Infant of "Silent Night!"  
May God ever bless Thy Gleaming Light:

Bring all mankind to know Thy Peace,  
Where joy shall conquer; strife shall cease.  
This is the legacy for which we yearn.  
This is the legacy we all must earn.

Lead on, great light of that distant star!  
Make bright the way, wherever we are.  
O Season of Faith: Greatest gift of all!  
Let no ill fate, thy blessing forestall.

*....Gilbert H. Hill*



Adult choir rehearsals are held weekly on Wednesday evenings at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday mornings at 9:30 a.m. in the choir room (lower level). Please come and add

### VOLUNTEER AT THE BRITISH HOME

The British Home is looking for compassionate, cheerful, dependable volunteers. Whether it's helping with arts and crafts, friendly visiting, sharing a special talent, or any kindness that might brighten someone's day, there are many opportunities to share the special gift of volunteerism. Call (708)387-8366 or e-mail [george.columbus@thebritishhome.org](mailto:george.columbus@thebritishhome.org) for details.

All members of Sts. Peter and Paul are invited to serve on the Congregational Council. Elections will be held at the Annual Congregational Meeting on Sunday, January 29<sup>th</sup>. Please contact any member of the Council if you have questions or if you are

**Missions and Outreach News...**

The Missions and Outreach Committee will be collecting food for the Riverside Township Food Pantry which serves the communities of North Riverside, Brookfield, Lyons and Riverside. Grocery bags are available on the tables in the long hallway off the dining room for donations of non-perishable and unexpired food items to be returned to church by Sunday, December 4<sup>th</sup>.

Thanks to the congregation for donating the kitchen items needed to assist with the resettlement of a refugee family through an agency based in Chicago called "Refugee One." We delivered furnishings and prepared the apartment for the family's arrival from Malaysia on Thursday, November 3<sup>rd</sup>. Thank you to Dale Hawes and Dan Tornil for their assistance in delivery of the furniture to the third floor apartment. When everything was organized, the apartment looked very inviting for our new guests—a heart-warming experience.

*Ramona Suffern*  
Missions and Outreach Committee



**AWAITING THEIR ARRIVAL**



**THE REFUGEE FAMILY'S SAFE BUT EXHAUSTED ARRIVAL AT THE AIRPORT**



**Sts. Peter and Paul Lutheran Church**  
 250 Woodside Road, Riverside, IL 60546  
 708-442-5250 708-442-5264 (fax)  
[www.stspeterandpaulriverside.org](http://www.stspeterandpaulriverside.org)

Rev. Dennis J. Lauritsen Church 708 442-5250  
 email: [djlauritsen@sbcglobal.net](mailto:djlauritsen@sbcglobal.net)

**Council Officers**

|                     |                  |
|---------------------|------------------|
| President           | John Broussard   |
| Vice President      | Thomas Myers     |
| Secretary           | Fred Kuzel       |
| Treasurer           | William Boor     |
| Financial Secretary | Charles Matthies |

**Council Members**

|                 |                  |
|-----------------|------------------|
| Kristine Boike  | John Kostelny    |
| Iveta Boyanchek | Charles Matthies |
| John Broussard  | Susan Martinek   |
| Ivan Durkovic   | Carol Melnyk     |
| Charles Haase   | Thomas Michaels  |
| Sheryl Hallmann | Thomas Myers     |

**Organizations/Committee Chairpersons**

|                               |                                  |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Community Life Committee      | Martin and Ann Pennino           |
| Dorcas Society                | Emily Kostelancik                |
| Finance Committee             | John Kostelny                    |
| Ladies' Altar Guild           | Susan Hrusik/Vera Borysek        |
| Long Range Planning           | Jan Hapgood                      |
| Maintenance                   | Jim Boyanchek                    |
| Missions and Outreach         | Dan Tornil/Ramona Suffern        |
| Mutual Ministry/Staff Support | Gary Drahos                      |
| Nominating Committee          | Fred Kuzel                       |
| Social Ministry               | Nick Sasuta/Joanne Sefara        |
| Stewardship                   | Thomas Michaels and Thomas Myers |
| Sunday School                 | Sheryl Hallmann                  |
| Worship and Music             | Charles Matthies                 |

**Staff**

|                      |                |
|----------------------|----------------|
| Administrative Asst. | Karen Rouleau  |
| Parish Musician      | David Richards |
| Preschool Director   | Donna Tuider   |



### IMITATE CHRIST IN GIVING

As we prepare for the coming of Christ during Advent, the Church points us both backward to his coming in humility as Messiah and forward to his coming in glory to judge. When he came as Messiah, he inaugurated the Kingdom of God among us. As judge, he will ask us to account for the life he gave us, how freely we shared this life with those around us. Look He will also ask us how we treated the ones he calls "the least of these my brethren" [ Matthew 25:40 ], those people around the world whose suffering and needs are greater than ours. Did we afford them the same dignity and respect we would give our friends or family? Did we look upon their hurts with compassion and try to alleviate their suffering? Did we recognize them as our brothers and sisters, equal heirs with us of the kingdom heaven?

Throughout the world, organizations are committed to helping the victims of economic, natural or political disasters. As we ponder Jesus' concern for the least of his brethren, we may consider whether we wish to help people in emergency conditions like these. Of course, the Church needs our money if it is to do God's holy work of ministering His love to His people. But as great as this need is, we have a prior and greater need, and that is to use rightly all that God has entrusted to us. We have a great need to give lovingly, with thanksgiving to God.



### Santa Claus

Santa Claus had an ancestor. Of this we can be sure, for the Dutch immigrants brought St. Nicholas with them when they came from the old world to Pennsylvania.

Nicholas lived at the beginning of the fourth century. He was Bishop of Myra, a coast town of Lycia, a country which now forms a part of Turkey. He was known throughout the ancient world as a most generous man, which easily accounts for the modern custom of Santa's gifts.

In the old world, St. Nicholas wore flowing robes, for after all, he was a Bishop. But soon after he made the voyage across the water he was transformed. Instead of being tall and stately, he became fat and jolly. A new red suit matched ruddy cheeks, contrasting directly with the plain, loosely hung vestments he used to wear. And trading his white horse for "eight tiny reindeer," he now visited the homes of children on Christmas Eve, instead of December 6<sup>th</sup>. In large measure, credit for this transformation goes to Washington Irving, whose imaginative pen described the new, jolly Santa we know so well today.

### RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Sts. Peter and Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church  
250 Woodside Road  
Riverside, IL 60546  
Postage Guaranteed

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Org.  
U.S. Postage

DATED MATERIAL