

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

Volume 33

November 2011

Issue 11

"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."

My Messy House

A Sermon for the Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost,
September 25th, 2011

(Ezekiel 18:1-32; Philippians 2:1-13; Matthew 21:23-32)

"A new heart I will give you," the Lord GOD says to Israel through Ezekiel, "A new heart I will give you and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will remove from your body the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh."

Jesus has just cleaned house in Jerusalem. In one of the most graphic and memorable scenes from the gospel stories, Jesus has come whirling into the temple, "driving out all who were selling and buying, overturning the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves. . . [And] he said to them, 'It is written, "My house shall be called a house of prayer"; but you are making it a den of robbers.'"

While Jesus is cleaning that house in Jerusalem, the blind and lame come to him and are healed, just as Isaiah had said long ago about the Servant, the Light to the nations. The children are crying, "Hosanna to the Son of David," a sure clue that Messiah is in the house. But then, Jesus starts house-cleaning. Of all the offenses that he has committed anywhere, the cleansing of the temple is by far the most offensive to the housekeepers: "They were indignant. . . angry," Matthew tells us.

The next day, when Jesus returns to that temple, he's got some answering to do: "By what sort of authority are you doing these things, and who is it that gave you this authority?" There are really only two possible answers: either Jesus' authority comes from humans,

or it comes from heaven; either his authority is a matter of raw power, or it has to do with God's truth. But instead of giving them an answer, as so often happens with Jesus, he answers one question with another:

Outsiders are going ahead of insiders. Jesus does not say outsiders are going instead of insiders, they're just going before them. Jesus had announced it, "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the royal rule of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven."

"You tell me, did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?" They're stumped, "Um... We don't know."

Then comes another question together with a story: "What do you think? A man had two kids. . . . Now, I want you to think really hard. Which one of the two kids in the story did what the father wanted? Tell me which one behaved in a way that honored Dad's authority?" And everybody gets it right this time. It was the first one, that one who answered, "I don't want to go, and I won't go to work in that vineyard"; but he later changed what he cared most about, namely, himself, and went to work.

Then Jesus stuns the housekeepers: "I'm telling you the truth, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the royal rule of God ahead of you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you didn't believe him, but the tax-collectors and the prostitutes believed him; and even after you saw it, you didn't change what you care most about and believe him." And furthermore, "You hypocrites! Isaiah prophesied rightly about you when he said: 'This people honors me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. . . .'"

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—continued on the next page. . .

Sunday Worship Schedule

8:15 a.m. - Service of the Word (in Slovak)

9:00 a.m. - Sunday School, Children's Choirs,

Confirmation Instruction, High School Class

9:45 a.m. - Adult Choir Rehearsal

10:15 a.m. - Liturgy of Holy Communion (in English)

Choir Rehearsals

Wednesdays, November 2nd, 9th, 16th, and 30th

Service of the Word and Prayers of Thanksgiving

“. . . Be doers of the word,” the Letter of James urges us, “and not merely hearers who deceive themselves. For if any are hearers of the word and not doers, they are like those who look at themselves in a mirror; for they look at themselves and, on going away, immediately forget what they were like.”

It’s been said that “the truth of your commitment lives in your heart; and what you do is the measure of what lives in your heart.”

“There was a man who had two kids. . . .” Both were bad boys in their own way. Both were wrong in their own way to dishonor Dad’s authority. In antiquity, a son who publicly says “no” to his father shames that parent and dishonors his family, as in: “George, what kind of a kid have you raised who insults you to your face in public?” Both sons have insulted the father, one by saying “No, I won’t go. . . .” but then goes; and the other by saying “Yes, sir, I’ll go. . . .” but goes nowhere and does nothing.

In being forced to choose, Dad has to decide between one who appears to be *outside the family* (“I won’t go. . . .”) and one who appears to be *inside the family* (“I’ll go, sir. . . .”). The outsiders are going ahead of the insiders.

“Not everyone *who says* to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the royal rule of heaven, but only the one *who does* the will of my Father in heaven.” You see, you can say all the right words but not do anything about them.

“For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you didn’t believe him, but the tax collectors and prostitutes believed him; and even after you saw, you didn’t regret it, you didn’t change what you were most concerned about.” Remember, on the first page of Mark’s Gospel, in his very first recorded words, Jesus proclaims, “The time has come. The rule of God is near. *Repent* and believe the good news!”

“Repent and live!” thunders the prophet Ezekiel, “. . . Cast away from you all the transgressions which you have committed against me, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! Why will you die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of any one, says the Lord GOD; so turn, and live.” But I suppose that in a culture which has forgotten how to blush, and that counsels us to “never apologize and never explain and never incriminate ourselves,” then the words of the Baptist, the prophet, and Jesus sound worn out, old school, irrelevant, ridiculous, maybe even harmful to one’s self. Yet, each one promises that repentance is life-giving rather than death-dealing: “Turn, and live.”

The very first of Martin Luther’s Ninety-Five Theses reads, “When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ said ‘repent,’ he called for *the entire life* of believers to be one of repentance.”

The house of humanity is a mess. The house of the Lord is a mess. I often hear people, inside and outside the church, complaining about what a terrible bunch of people we are in the church; how cruel we are to each other; how we ought to be, oh, so much better than others; what horrible hypocrites we are; how wrong we’ve gotten everything. I guess I heard it earlier: “You hypocrites! . . . ‘This people honors me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. . . .’” And I answer, “Everything you say is true. The house is a big mess: crawling with tax collectors and harlots, chief priests and elders. You decide which one you are. The Lord’s house is a big

mess. It’s almost enough to make you think that Jesus likes a messy house with the likes of you and me hanging around it.”

“On Christ the solid rock I stand, all other ground is sinking sand” But I’m not sure we believe the hymn as we sing it. Often we seem to believe that we’re doing such a smash-up job with our lives; and part of that really smash-up job is showing up here on Sundays: “Oh, yes, sir, I’ll go. . . .” But, we don’t go—not really. Our hearts are far, far from here.

Often we seem fairly content with our comfortable lives, believing we’re doing a pretty good job in comparison to others, and we just don’t need God messing up the house by sending us to work in the vineyard. “No, I don’t want to go, and I won’t go. . . .”

Maybe we don’t even want God messing up our church by welcoming the wrong kind of people into our clean, cozy, comfortable house where we all pretend to be such fine, obedient, dutiful sons and daughters. “Yes, sir, I’ll go. . . .”

I don’t know for sure, but I happen to think Jesus is rather happy with a messy house that includes both chief priests and elders, tax collectors and prostitutes, eating together side-by-side at his table. I know that Table always looks so nice and tidy, but those of us who gather there are anything but nice and tidy. We’re not. We’re a mess. Jesus did say on one of the many occasions when he was criticized for hanging out with sinners, “I have not come to call the righteous, [you who are doing such a smash-up job], but sinners to change what they care most about. . . . Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick.”

In other words, if you’re already basking in your own goodness, what goodness could Jesus possibly give you? “Let the one who brags,” Paul wrote the bragging Corinthians, “brag in the Lord.”

In the parable, the first son changes what he cares about. He places the father’s authority above his own authority. We sometimes call it “humility.” We sometimes say, as in the first of the Twelve Steps, “My life had become unmanageable.” Or we say, “I was wrong,” or “I needed to go in a new direction,” or “I needed to be saved,” or “I couldn’t do it on my own.”

That early hymn (or creed) which Paul quotes or composes in Philippians confesses that Jesus *exercised authority* by emptying himself, not counting equality with God a thing to be grasped, taking the form of a slave: “And being found in human form, he *humbled* himself. . . .”

“Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in *humility* regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus”

Kathleen Norris writes about a little boy who wrote a poem called “The Monster Who Was Sorry.” In the poem the boy explodes about how he hated it when his father yelled at him. In anger the boy threw his sister down the stairs, turned his room into a complete wreck, and then destroyed an entire town. The boy’s poem concludes: “Then I sit in *my messy house* and say to myself, ‘I shouldn’t have done all that.’”

Commenting on the boy’s poem, Norris writes, “‘My messy house’ says it all; with more honesty than most adults could have mustered, the boy made a metaphor for himself that admitted the depth of his rage and also gave him a way out. If that boy had been a novice in a fourth century monastic desert,” Norris writes, “his elders might have told him that he was well on the way toward

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repentance, not such a monster after all, but only human.

The truth of your commitment lives in your heart; and what you do is the measure of what lives in your heart.

“A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will remove from your body the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.”

The Rite of Confirmation will be celebrated for

Johnathan Haase
Rachel Michaels
Sara Watkiss

on Reformation Sunday, October 30th
with the Observance of the 110th Anniversary of
Sts. Peter and Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church
(organized October 20th, 1901)
at the 10:15 a.m.
Liturgy of Holy Communion
(no 8:15 a.m. service on this day)

with special choral and instrumental music:
“Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Thy Word”
by Dietrich Buxtehude (1637-1707)
(sung at the Centennial of the Congregation in 2001)

Prayers for the People

In all the changes of our life, O Lord, our hearts return to You. You who enlighten, show us the way! You who uplift, give us strength to rise from every fall, wisdom to choose in each perplexity, courage to go forward where You call, though all the road [except] just before our feet be hidden in darkness. When we reach the turning points of life and remember all that we have missed through our own foolishness and neglect, help us with resolute and faithful love to make a new beginning. For continuance in Your way grant us the abiding help and counsel of Your Holy Spirit. May we not love familiar paths too much, or dread our changes, as though You had permitted them to be Your children's final loss of good. In all experience be our guide and keep our hearts in peace through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.—*Isaac Ogden Rankin*

Teach us, good Lord, to serve Thee as Thou deservest; to give and not to count the cost; to fight and not to heed the wounds; to toil and not to ask for rest; to labour and not to ask for any reward, save that of knowing that we do Thy will. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.—*Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556)*

Blessed Reward

All Saints Sunday, November 6th

Rewards are not gifts. You have to *do* something to earn a reward. When Jesus speaks of a heavenly reward in this day's gospel, it seems to imply that those who receive it have done something to earn it—something exceptional. What? The reward recipients have been “poor in spirit,” “persecuted for righteousness' sake” and have undergone the indignities of being reviled and slandered on Jesus' account. In other words, it sounds as if they have been miserable. Is the reward a payback? Is it compensation for the suffering that seems to accompany being a follower of Christ?

Hardly! In this gospel Jesus paints a portrait of saints whose lives do not appear to exemplify what the world considers states of blessedness. The poor, the mourners, the meek, the persecuted—these do not fit the world's mold of success. They simply don't fit in. The First Letter of John says it well: The reason the world does not know us—children of God that we are—is because the world did not know God (1 John 3:1).

To be a saint is to follow Jesus on a path of hidden mission in the world. Despised, rejected, a failure on the world's scales of achievement, Jesus shows a new way of being a “success.” It is the way of humble obedience, servanthood, seeing your life as a gift to be spent on others. Following Jesus on this path, we arrive with him at the destination of resurrection glory. Through suffering, through death, through a cross and open tomb, we will arrive with all God's saints at the surprising end of all our earthly stories, a joyful and gladsome reward waiting for us in God's eternal home.

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The Congregation of Sts. Peter and Paul will remember the following persons who have passed to their eternal rest since All Saints Sunday, 2010 (listed in chronological order of their death dates):

+Elizabeth Yurik+ (March 13)
+Arlene Antonovits+ (May 28)
+Victoria Mazur+ (July 11)
+Emily Samel+ (October 20)



Join us on...

Thanksgiving Day

November 24th, 2011
at 10:00 a.m.

Service of the Word and Prayers of Thanksgiving

**Thanks to the Women of the
Dorcas Society
and everyone who contributed
in any way
toward making the
Annual Craft and Pantry
Fair
another fine event for
community outreach and**

Dorcas Society News. . .

Dear Members and Friends,

Once again, after months of preparation, and the weather on our side, the Annual Craft Fair was a success because of our members, members of the congregation, families and friends. We also wish to acknowledge Ann Kmet and Company with special thanks and gratitude for handling the kitchen for us. We truly appreciate your help. To everyone who worked on the Fair, and everyone who came out and supported us, sincere thanks. A complete report on the Fair will follow in the December newsletter. Our next regular meeting will be Tuesday, October 25th at 12 noon.

—Emily Kostelancik

My sincere thanks to all the members of the Dorcas Society, our members of the congregation, and friends near and far, who bought and sold raffle books. Thank you also to everyone who made or solicited donations for the raffle. Your hard work and dedication helped make our fair a success.

—Annie “O” Otjepka, Raffle Chairperson

The deadline for articles for the December, 2011 issue of the congregational newsletter is Sunday,

Thank you...

Thanks to all the members and friends at Sts. Peter and Paul for your support to the 2011 CROP Walk Hunger Appeal held on October 16th. It was a beautiful day for the CROP walk, and thank you to the walkers from Sts. Peter and Paul: Vera Borysek, Ann Kmet, Ruth Bakalich, Fred Kuzel, Dennis and Jane Lauritsen, Katarina Šoltésová and Ramona Suffern. We greatly appreciate your generous donations which totaled \$1,169.00—another super year. Thank you.

“We Walk because They Walk.”

—Ramona Suffern, CROP Walk Recruiter



You are invited to
join us for the

Ladies Altar Guild

**Annual Stedraký
Slovak Christmas Luncheon**

Thursday, December 8th, 2011
12 noon

Please make your reservations
on or before Sunday, December 4th.

Tickets are \$12.00 and matching funds
will be provided by the National Slovak Society.

Tickets may be purchased from
any member of the Ladies Altar Guild.

For more information, contact
Vera Borysek

Official Pastoral Rites. . .

Baptism:

Rowen Lee, son of Vincent and Valerie Smith, was baptized on October 9th. Rowen’s sponsors are Gina Schmitt, Natalie Gibbs, Alex Smith and Geno Smith.



LIFT UP YOUR HEART IN THANKSGIVING

True thanksgiving begins with being genuinely thankful to God, the giver of every gift; and that describes and includes all we are and possess – they are gifts! This is a fine beginning, but it is only a beginning. *The true fruit of genuine gratitude and thanksgiving is how we use and what we do with what God has given us and blessed us with.* It’s inescapable—genuine thankfulness and good stewardship are inseparably related. You cannot lift up your heart in thanksgiving and not use what God has given you in his service and to his glory. What a hollow ring it must sound in the ears of God, the Giver, when we express our thanksgiving to him, and then proceed to hoard, store-up to self-indulge his gifts and blessings. God blesses and showers us with an abundance of good gifts from above not just to make us thankful but to make us useful. By any other name, what we express to God about what he has given us is called “thanksgiving.” What we do with all of it is called “stewardship”.

—submitted by Jan Hapgood

November Happenings

Slovak Athletic Association Meeting

Wednesday, November 9th, 1-3 p.m.

Missions and Outreach Committee Meeting

Tuesday, November 15th, 7 p.m.

Myjavsky Group Meeting

Thursday, November 17th, 12-3 p.m.

Church Council Meeting

Thursday, November 17th, 7:30 p.m.

Thanksgiving Day Worship

Thursday, November 24th, 10 a.m.

Church Office Closed

November 25th and 28th

Dorcas Society Meeting

Tuesday, November 29th, 12 noon

Finance Committee Meeting

Tuesday, November 29th, 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.

November Scripture Readings

1. 1 Thessalonians 2:9-13 - PBPWMGINFWMY
2. Matthew 23:1-12 - Business cards
3. Revelation 7:9-17 - Worship
4. Psalm 34:1-10, 22 - Answer to prayer?
5. 1 John 3:1-3 - My purpose?
6. **Matthew 5:1-12 - All Saints Sunday**
7. Amos 5:18-24 - Comfort and fear
8. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 - Tick tock
9. Matthew 25:1-13 - Don't waste the gift
10. Zephaniah 1:7, 12-18 - Hope for the hopeless
11. Psalm 90:1-12 - Blown by the wind
12. 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11 - Created to be saved
13. **Matthew 25:14-30 - Twenty-second Sunday after Pentecost**
14. Zechariah 1:7-17 - True peace
15. Zechariah 2:1-5, 5:1-4 - Rebuilding the church
16. Matthew 24:45-51 - Making the most of time
17. Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24 - Blessing in times of distress
18. Psalm 95:1-7a - The hand of God in every blessing
19. Ephesians 1:15-23 - Words do make a difference
20. **Matthew 25:31-46 - Christ the King Sunday**
21. Esther 2:1-18 - A reversal of fortunes
22. Esther 8:3-17 - A courageous heroine
23. 1 Timothy 2:1-7 - Teach us to pray
24. Matthew 6:25-33 - Thanksgiving Day, USA
25. Isaiah 64:1-9 - The Son comes shining through
26. Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19 - Thank God it's Sunday!
27. **Mark 13:24-37 - First Sunday of Advent**
28. Revelation 15:1-8 - Songs of thankfulness and praise
29. Revelation 18:1-10 - Turning our backs on Babylon
30. John 1:35-42 - Andrew, Apostle



NOVEMBER

Nov. 5	Jessica Drahos	Nov. 15	Kelly Jones
	Collin Sender	Nov. 19	Abby Collins
Nov. 7	Dean Shrofe	Nov. 23	Milan Horak
Nov. 8	Frances Burian		Kris Skudrna
	Philip Painter	Nov. 25	Milan Zavodny
Nov. 9	Jennifer Smith	Nov. 26	Martin Bzduch
Nov. 10	John Vercimak	Nov. 29	Mildred Londak
Nov. 13	Ivan Durkovic		Alexandra Trekas
	Mary Anne Waychunas	Nov. 30	Jacob Czerak
Nov. 14	Gino Decosola		
	Dale Hawes		

Altar Flowers. . .

Oct. 2nd: In celebration of Larry and Ruth Bakalich's 57th Wedding Anniversary on October 2nd.

Oct. 9th: In memory of +Susan Sukupcak+ on the 104th anniversary of her birth by her children Rosalyn Simmons, Bob and Betty Babyar and Don and Shirley Babyar.

In memory of +Mildred Predny Kessler+ on the anniversary of her birth on October 12th.



November 7, 2003: Edward and Kristen Kovack
 November 7, 1992: Vladimir and Agnieszka Vercimak
 November 13, 1971: Robert and Suzanna Skudrna
 November 15, 1947: Milan and Olga Zavodny
 November 18, 1984: Richard and Ruth Hurbanis

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 20th. 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 15th.

NOVEMBER WORSHIP SCHEDULE

November 6th:

Greeters: Ed and Joanne Sefara
Acolytes: Jonathon Meyers and Amanda Meyers
Assisting Minister: Jan Hapgood
Comm. Minister: Anne Otjepka
Lectors: Jan and Janice Hapgood
Nursery Attendant: Hannah Boike
Ushers: Wally Kessler and Johnathan Haase

November 13th:

Greeters: Charles Matthies and John Kostelny
Acolytes: Charles Haase and Johnathan Haase
Assisting Minister: Tom Michaels
Comm. Minister: Vicki Michaels
Lectors: Robert Melnyk and Katie Melnyk
Nursery Attendant: Kristine Boike
Ushers: Wally Kessler and Joan Triska

November 20th:

Greeters: Emil and Helena Galdun
Acolytes: Abby Collins and Jake Collins
Assisting Minister: Carrie Watkiss
Comm. Minister: Martin Pennino
Lectors: Karyn Bute and Phil Painter
Nursery Attendant: Carrie Boike
Ushers: Wally Kessler and Ann Pennino

Thanksgiving Day, November 24th:

Greeters: Rose Tornil and Dan Tornil
Assisting Minister: Tom Myers
Lectors: Keith Altavilla and John Broussard
Nursery Attendant: No Nursery Coverage
Usher: Wally Kessler

November 27th:

Greeters: Tom and Vicki Michaels
Acolytes: Isabelle Boike and Carrie Boike
Assisting Minister: Brandon Michaels
Comm. Minister: Joan Triska
Lectors: Kristine Boike and Carrie Boike
Nursery Attendant: Olivia Lauritsen
Ushers: Wally Kessler and John Broussard

Sacristan and Altar Care:
Joan Triska

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.

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 your

DECEMBER WORSHIP SCHEDULE

December 4th:

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 11th:

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 18th:

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 24th:

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 25th:

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

Holy Communion in Slovak

All Saints Sunday, November 6th and
The First Sunday in Advent, November 27th



Church Council Meeting Highlights. . .

- ❑ Beginning this month the Council will provide the Congregation with three or four brief bullet points highlighting discussions and actions taken at our monthly meeting. If you have questions about any of these items, please speak to any Council member; and, of course, everyone is invited to attend one of our Council meetings anytime.
- ❑ *Financial Situation:* We want to alert all members to the dire situation of our current finances. We have been posting the weekly offerings received against the weekly budgeted offerings each month in the Sunday bulletins and monthly newsletters. As was evident over the summer, our expenditures far exceeded our income, and the paying of some bills had to be postponed. The Council is looking at ways to address this situation, and is always looking for ideas from the Congregation.
- ❑ *Sanctuary Heat:* We have hired a contractor to make the necessary repairs to the heating system that will allow the heat to properly reach the sanctuary so it will no longer be cold on winter days. Work should be completed by the end of October.
- ❑ *Apartment Repairs:* The heat in the apartment has been fixed and temporary repairs were made to the bathroom in the apartment for Katarina Soltesova's stay with us during her studies at LSTC until mid-December.

—submitted by Fred Kuzel, Council Secretary

A THANKFUL HEART

Take nothing for granted, for whenever you do
The "joy of enjoying" is lessened for you -
For we rob our own lives much more than we know
When we fail to respond or in any way show
Our thanks for the blessings that daily are ours...
The warmth of the sun, the fragrance of flowers,
The beauty of twilight, the freshness of dawn,
The coolness of dew or a green velvet lawn,
The kind little deeds so thoughtfully done,
The favors of friends and the love that someone
Unselfishly gives us in a myriad of ways,
Expecting no payment and no words of praise -
Oh, great is our loss when we no longer find
A thankful response to things of this kind,
For the *joy of enjoying* and the *fullness of living*
Are found in the heart that is filled with
thanksgiving.

—Helen Steiner Rice



Directory changes. . .

Betty Ann Force
2451 Belleview Avenue
Westchester, IL 60154

Mary Slieпка
c/o Mr. and Mrs. Robert Melnyk
10S312 Hampshire Lane E
Willowbrook, IL 60527



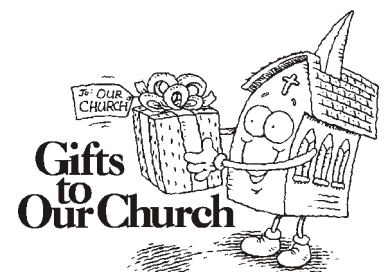
MEMORIALS AND HONORARIUMS

FOR THE CHURCH

- Betty Buffa and Joan Mikulina, in loving memory of husband and brother-in-law +Sal Buffa+
- Joan Mikulina and Betty Buffa, in loving memory of mother +Betty Mikulina+
- Ann Kasper and Nancy Mathis, in loving memory of +John Kasper+ on the 80th anniversary of his birth.
- Ann Kasper, in memory of dear friend +Sonia (Skaritka) Teter+ of Broomfield, Colorado.
- Charlene Patula, in memory of parents +Emil+ and +Mae Terem+
- 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 Adrienne Gana.
- Edward and Ann Borsuk, in loving memory of dear parents +John+ and +Zuzanna Kubecka+
- In loving memory of beloved father, grandfather, and great-grandfather +Michael Riban+ on the 16th anniversary of his death on November 6, 1995 by remembering children Mildred Riban and Mike Riban, Jr. and family.
- Rosalyn Simmons, Robert and Betty Babyar, and Don and Shirley Babyar in memory of mother +Susan Sukupcak+ on the 104th anniversary of her birth.
- Betty Hrodny, in celebration of Nick and Mary Sasuta's 60th Wedding Anniversary.
- Bernice Macht, in celebration of Nick and Mary Sasuta's 60th Wedding Anniversary.
- In memory of husband and father +Ivan Durkovic+ and parents and grandparents +Jan+ and +Judita Bzdusek+ and +Ivan+ and +Vlastimil Bzdusek+
- William and Audrey Ducay, in memory of +Elizabeth Yurik+

IN MEMORY OF JOSEPH KMET

Mary Kmet and family, in memory of husband and father
Frank and Ann Kmet, in memory of brother and brother-in-law
John and Emily Kostelancik
Anne Gavac
Mildred Melka
Mildred Riban
Emily Sivak



The End of Envy

A Sermon for the Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost,
September 18th, 2011
Jonah 3:10-4:11; Matt 20:1-16

“But God said to Jonah, ‘Do you do well to be angry for the plant?’ And he said, ‘Yes, I do well to be angry, angry enough to die.’ And the Lord said, ‘You pity the plant, for which you did not labor, nor did you make it grow, which came into being in a night and perished in a night. And should not I pity Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than 120,000 persons who do not know their right hand from their left. . . .’”

In the ways of the world, the first are first and the last are last. But today we hear Jesus say that in God’s rule, things are quite different. Jesus tells a story about a businessman who had his own bizarre way of paying his employees. And just to make sure we understand his point, Jesus repeats the punch line verbatim several times: “So the last will be first, and the first last.”

A man owned a vineyard. It must have been quite the vineyard; and it must have been quite the crop that particular autumn. One morning, maybe about this time of year, the boss gets up early, hops in his pick-up truck, and heads to town looking for people out of work (day laborers). The problem is that every other grower in town is also looking for help, so the boss has to pay “the usual daily wage” to get the workers he needs. He loads the crew into that pick-up truck and heads back to the vines. But the harvest is so good, and the grapes are so ripe, that about 9 o’clock in morning the boss to go back to town to find more day labor, not just once, but several times: again at noon, at 3:00, and at 5:00 in the afternoon. (This is no wimpy eight-hour work day.)

Finally, an hour before quittin’ time, the boss sees that the job just isn’t gonna get done with all the workers he’s picked-up throughout the day; so one last time about 5:00 in the afternoon the boss goes back to town looking for a few more workers to get the grapes in. And the text doesn’t say this, but I’ll fill-in between the lines. Late that afternoon, when the boss finally gets back to town, the only ones left are those who showed up too late in the day for anybody else to hire.

“Nobody hired us,” they gripe.

“No wonder,” the boss thinks to himself, “Ya’ll look like you just got out of bed, maybe even with a bit of a hangover.”

“Well, what the heck,” the boss says, “let’s go to work.”

“What the heck,” they think, “it’s just an hour before dark. Maybe we’ll make enough to get some ‘sliders’ later on tonight.” (How’s that for filling in between the lines?)

At the end of the day, the boss is evidently feeling pretty good that he’s got the grapes harvested just in the nick of time. In fact, he’s so happy that he pays-off everybody right on the spot, beginning with that bunch of sleepy-heads who were the last to go to work. And now the clock strikes midnight.

If you’ve been listening closely to this Gospel throughout the summer months you know that it’s a story filled with stern demands, and lists of judgments, and the gavel coming down hard in the great court of the Almighty. For Matthew, “you get what you got comin’ to you,” and sometimes worse—lots of that “outer darkness. . . [and]

weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

“You made your bed, now you lie in it.”

“You reap what you sow.”

We kind of like those sayings, don’t we? We like it when somebody really “gets what they got comin’ to ‘em.” But listen: the ones who came last, the workers who had “stood there all day long doing nothing,” and who worked for just an hour in the cool of the evening; well, they got the same money as those who had worked all day in the scorching heat.

Now, how do you like that? I’ll bet you don’t like it one bit because you’re responsible, hard-working, dependable people who were out there early in the morning ready to go to work. In our world, the first are first and the last are last. So, the laborers who had worked all day rightly thought that they would make more than those who stood around all day long doing nothing. We understand that. The story says that “they grumbled against the landowner.” Of course they grumbled; we would too. This is unfair: “Why should they get the same as we get? . . . I had to work for mine. Why shouldn’t they have to work for theirs? . . . The first are first, and the last are last.” So, for the third time, Jesus has to say it, “the last will be first, and the first will be last.”

Jonah didn’t like God’s ways either. In that story, the people of Ninevah don’t get what they’ve got coming to them, so Jonah walks away in a snit and pouts about the fact that God “changed his mind” about the calamity that God was going to bring upon Ninevah. Jonah would rather die than deal with a God who is “gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and ready to relent from punishing.”

Why is it that, like Jonah and the laborers, we so often prefer divine judgment when it comes to others rather than God’s goodness?

“Friend, I’m doing you no wrong,” says the boss, “did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage? Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? . . . with what is mine? Can I not do as I like? Or, is your eye evil because I am good? Why should you pout about my generosity?”

There’s nothing wrong with the workers expecting to receive their daily wage. That’s exactly what they get. They get what they were promised. The problem is envy; and envy is what destroys. We see that another person has something which we think we deserve more than he deserves, and we look upon him with the “evil, envious eye.” Dante defined this as “love of one’s own good perverted to a desire to deprive other people of their own good.” Thomas Aquinas described envy as “sorrow about another’s good.”

Aesop had a fable about two eagles. One of the eagles was envious of the other because the other could soar higher and more gracefully than he could, so the envious eagle would pluck his strongest feathers from his own body and shoot them as arrows, trying to wound or kill the soaring eagle. Of course, this was the envious eagle’s own undoing. He was not able to hit the high flying eagle, and he was eventually grounded by his loss of feathers. Envy destroyed that eagle.

Envy destroys us. It destroys the unique grace and goodness that God has wrought in each of us. In trying to destroy the other, we destroy ourselves! In trying to get what the other has, we lose what we have been given.

Envy destroys us. It destroys the unique grace and goodness that God has wrought in each of us. In trying to destroy the other, we destroy ourselves! In trying to get what the other has, we lose what we have been given.

Studs Terkel says that the typical American attitude is, "I've got it made because I deserve it. And if you don't have it made, you don't deserve it." Then he says, "When things don't work that way, as has been the case for lots of Americans these days, a kind of meanness sets in."

Meanness. Grumbling. Meanness and grumbling set in because we think we're not getting what we rightfully deserve, what we have earned, what others do not deserve. But what if the Bible is right, and it appears that it is, when it says that God ". . . makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust." Sometimes we forget that God is still God, and ". . . God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength." Sometimes we forget that God

refuses to be pushed around by us. We forget that God doesn't make decisions based upon what we think we deserve, and what we think others deserve. Sometimes we forget that God is still God, that God is the landowner, and we are only the laborers.

Somehow, we with our roots in European colonialism, have come to believe that we own the land, that it is ours, and that others are there to be our laborers. When you think about this story, it is we who are the laborers who came at

Somehow, we with our roots in European colonialism, have come to believe that we own the land, that it is ours, and that others are there to be our laborers.

the end of the day to work when the sun had almost set. We are the Gentiles, the nations. It was Israel, the Jewish people, who slaved throughout the long heat of sacred history. So, we reap what we did not plant. We Gentiles came in at the last minute and got the same wages.

Finally, at the end of the day, finally our only hope, whenever we got here, in whatever condition we arrived, at whatever hour of the day, our only hope is that Jesus will continue to eat and drink with the likes of us.

"For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."—*DJL*

In response to some of the thoughts that were posed during our brief conversation after church service on Sunday, I would hope that I would not have been envious of those who received more money per hour worked than me. In my working career, I was not controlled by the so called forty hour week but, instead, I worked what ever hours were needed to complete the task. Also, when assigned a task, I was not interested nor guided by what my fellow workers did or received. Sure, like everyone else there are times when I noted that I worked sixty hours, whereas a fellow manager worked only forty, but I also had to evaluate whether he or I was working smart or dumb. In talking with my son, it all boils down to God loves us equally, whether we're new converts or old, established believers. Lastly, if we had more generous employers like the landowner, there would be less unemployment.—*L.A.M.B*

Christmas Giving. . .

The Congregation of Sts. Peter and Paul has been very generous over the years by purchasing gifts and donating money for gift certificates in order to make Christmas a much happier occasion for many needy local children. Due to your past generosity, the congregation will again sponsor children in need of toys and clothing during the 2011 Christmas season by "adopting" approximately twenty-five children identified by Lutheran Child and Family Services. A tree will be set up in the dining hall prior to the Thanksgiving holiday for congregational members and friends to select a child identified by the first name, age and gift suggestions. More information regarding the dates will be published in the Sunday bulletin as soon as it is available. Thank you in advance for your participation in helping these children experience the spirit of Christmas.



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 for details.



Current, Benevolence and Freewill Offering Recap

Budgeted Offering: \$3,219.00

September, 2011

Date	Weekly Attendance	Offering Received
9/4	54	\$2,464.00
9/11	104	\$2,692.00
9/18	91	\$3,977.00
9/25	87	\$2,654.00

September, 2011 average attendance: 84
September, 2010 average attendance: 95



IMAGES OF THE SEASON: NOVEMBER

November is a deeply evocative time of the year. Beginning with All Saints Day and continuing through the festival of Christ the King, we are led into a contemplation of last things. That reflection encompasses remembrances of past loved ones and our own inevitable death as well as the end of all things when the entire cosmos is reconciled through Christ to its creator. This season, with its religious and cultural observances relating to death and (in the Northern Hemisphere) its ever-shortening days, has the power to bring such thoughts of death to the fore.

It is a blessing, then, that in the church we have a framework for such musings, one that guides us in helpful ways past mere morbid sentiment to a more hopeful anticipation. Yes, there is melancholy in recalling the great spirits who have died and who are dearly missed. And many of us have a sense that our own lives are moving much too quickly toward their end. But we who follow Christ also possess the assurance that all of our lives are in the Lord's keeping. This does not remove the desire to contemplate last things, but rather puts them in perspective.

One of the collects for Prayer at the Close of the Day deals with just this sort of meditation:

O Lord, support us all the day long of this troubled life, until the shadows lengthen and the evening comes and the busy world is hushed, the fever of life is over, and our work is done. Then, Lord, in your mercy, grant us a safe lodging, and a holy rest, and peace at the last; through Jesus Christ our Lord. (LBW, p. 158)

Peace at the last—that is the reason for focusing on death and its attendant issues during this month. Yes, we could ignore the near certainty of death. (“Near” only because there is always the chance that our Lord will return before then!) We could simply barge full steam ahead with life until death forces us to stop. But what such an approach lacks is purpose and completion. We are not to live aimlessly but with direction—from God and toward God. Our learning, our work, our relationships—all of these potentially point beyond themselves and even beyond ourselves to the one by whose grace they are accomplished, God our creator and redeemer. That means that they have meaning beyond their significance for our transitory earthly life. These accomplishments, meager though they may seem, are celebrated around the heavenly banquet table.

Yet what about those things that often seem to outweigh our accomplishments—our shortcomings, faults, sins? Many people, nearing the end of their life, are haunted by thoughts of the wrongs they have committed. More than anything else, those thoughts rob them of longed-for peace. Even if they recognize that salvation comes only through the grace of God in Christ Jesus, still the regrets linger. Such is the insinuating power of sin.

In some societies, the notion that ghosts haunt the living is, in part, a way of acknowledging how sin can block the path to peace at the last. It is important to bring the haunting of guilt and sin into the light, for in our modern society, we can easily delude ourselves into believing that we are too sophisticated to worry about sin and other spiritual intangibles. Once the truth of sin is acknowledged, however, the door is opened to the light of Christ shining from that safe lodging spoken of in the prayer. His life and death gained the victory over all the forces that torment us. Our sins are taken up with him on the cross and there put to death. Sin's power to condemn us, to haunt us, is ended. Now we who have been baptized into Christ's death are freed of all chains and are lifted up with him into the new resurrection life. “Peace at the last” is, indeed, attainable through our Savior.

So we, in the presence of all the departed faithful, move beyond mere remembrance. There is that, but there is also thanksgiving, and supplication, and mission. And at the end, as our Lord reigns, so shall we. The feast of which we now have merely taste, the banquet of companionship, gladness, and participation in the fullness of God's presence, that banquet will envelop us completely, and we will be home.

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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



When we notice in ourselves eager desires for something in the future, and when we see that our temperament carries us too intensely to all that must be done, let us try to restrain ourselves from hurry, and ask our Lord to stop the haste in our hearts and the agitation of our behavior, since God has said Himself that His Spirit does not dwell in confusion. Let us take care not to participate too much in all that is said and done, and not to absorb too much of it, because this task that presents itself, let us keep to that, and separate from all the rest. Thus we shall always keep the depths of our souls free and balanced, and we shall cut off entirely the host of unnecessary things which burden our hearts, and which prevent them from turning easily toward God. We must often raise the heart toward God; He will purify it, enlighten it, direct it. This was the daily practice of the holy prophet David. “I had always,” he said, “the Lord before my eyes.” Let us often say these beautiful words of David, “Whom should I seek in heaven and on earth, save Thee, O my God? Thou art the God of my heart, and my portion forever.”

Christian Perfection by Francois de Salignac Fenelon (1651-1715)



REFLECTIONS ON NOVEMBER

At this closing of the liturgical year, endings are revealed as beginnings, and we find that as the Christian community we live simultaneously in past, present, and future. Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

What seemed dead lives on, and what seemed purely memory is present, what was longed for is actually at hand. Time and its distinctions stretch and blur at this closing of the year, and the church finds itself living in the future for which it so earnestly petitions. The day of the Lord is at hand. The new age has begun.

The shadows are approaching. The night is lengthened. The grasses fade. Then from the shadows emerges light. From the night comes hope and the memory of saints. From the chaff comes new beginnings and the constant, sure presence of the risen Christ, transforming these days into a new beginning, a new day. The implications are startling! The reign of God is at hand. Newness has already dawned. A new day arises that is gloriously present.

Albert Einstein once set himself this thought experiment: if I were to sit astride a beam of light, traveling at the speed of light, how would time appear? Einstein concluded from his imaginative vigil that past and future would gradually thin until one existed in an ever-widening, ever-expanding present now. C. G. Jung said that communion is the opening of a window into eternity, the fuller reality. For Orthodox Christians, the eucharist is nothing less than heaven on earth, the light of God breaking in and making of the past, present, and future one ever-expanding moment. At this transition time in the church's year, we are reminded of the breaking in of God's reign into this earth.

So we remember in these waning days the saints, those whose stories and lives have shaped our lives and the collective life of the church: human moments of an expanding now who have lived the future of God's reign; who bore the harvest of the Spirit's talents as willing and open participants and who are eternally present in memory and expanding time by the pervading light of God through Christ and the Spirit. "To those unwise they seem to have died, but, lo, they shine like stars . . ." (Wis. 3:2a, 7; paraphrase).

The lives of the saints are a part of the church's inheritance, and their gifts of hymns, writings, windows, and quiet acts of mercy shape the present in which we live. They are a link of rich memory to the holy story that shapes the church's life and our individual lives here, now. They are rays of light, the lux aeterna (eternal light) breaking into our days. "Look to [God], and be radiant" sings the psalmist (Ps. 34:5). Like the saints we are cajoled to live as children of light, radiant with God's presence in an ever-greater melding and blurring of past, present, and future. When we eat of this bread and drink of this cup, we remember the Lord's death until he comes.

Surrounding the memory of the saints in these days are what seem to be dark and worrisome texts of scripture, full of clouds and thick darkness. God declares to us: You are redeemed. Live as redeemed people! You are loved. Live as beloved people! The day of the Lord has already dawned with the radiant face of the risen Christ, and as baptized people, that is the day in which we live.

So the gospel writer Matthew reminds the church to live out the fruits of the Spirit, to use the rich talents and inheritance of the new dawn, and not to cower in fear and hoarding. We are to live lives of compassion, lovingkindness, truth, creativity, wisdom, mercy, and justice. To live without compassion, to live in fear, to live hoarding away gifts and the steadfast love of God is to live as if the eternal day of the risen Christ had never dawned. It is to live outside the dawning of God's day, in the place of darkness and gloom, in the day of clouds and thick darkness. These days of ending are a beginning, and what seems past is present, and the longed-for future is at hand. Redeemed and radiant and beloved, how shall we live in these ending days that are a beginning? We are beckoned to live as children of the light, radiant in the dawn of the

risen Christ, whose festival closes out these days of the church: the Sunday of fulfillment or Christ the King.

"I will seek out my sheep," says God. "I will rescue them from all the places to which they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness" (Ezek. 34:12). God is always calling us to be radiant and fearless, coaxing us out of darkness into the new day, bidding us into the glorious dawn of the day of the risen Christ, who was, who is, and who is to come. This is the day that God has made, the eternal, ever-widening present of life in God, radiant with Christ, gifted by the Holy Spirit poured out into our hearts. What seems past is here, and what seems yet to come is at hand, in the eternal, gloriously redeemed moment of the day of God.

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Daylight Savings Time ends on Sunday, November 6th. Don't forget to turn your clocks back on Saturday evening.



LOOKING AHEAD...

Advent Vespers
on the 3rd Sunday of Advent
Sunday, December 11th, 4 p.m.

Preschool Christmas Program
Tuesday, December 13th, 7 p.m.

Christmas Pageant
Sunday, December 18th, 10:15 a.m.
(No 8:15 a.m. service)

Christmas Eve
Saturday, December 24th, 7 p.m.

Christmas Day
Sunday, December 25th, 10:15 a.m.
(No 8:15 a.m. service)

Details to follow in the Sunday bulletins
and December newsletter.



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