

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

September 2011

Issue 9

"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."

A View of the Church in Europe Sarah Hinlicky Wilson

Greetings from Strasbourg, France—and from the three members of Sts. Peter and Paul that you've never actually met! I'm a pastor of the Slovak Zion Synod but moved to Strasbourg three years ago to take a call as Assistant Research Professor at the Institute for Ecumenical Research, a small outfit that does the scholarly side of the work for the ecumenical dialogues that the Lutheran World Federation is involved in. (The LWF is a communion of about 95% of the world's Lutherans; the ELCA is a member of it.) Even though we live across the pond, we wanted to keep our membership in an American Lutheran congregation, so Pr. Lauritsen graciously allowed us to transfer our membership to Sts. Peter and Paul. (It probably helped that I'm a cousin of Jane's!) My husband Andrew and our son Zeke live here with me too.

One of the first things we learned after moving here is how different church life is in Europe from America. It's been maybe our biggest culture shock. To begin with, most of Europe has state or folk churches. This means that the government either actively supports the churches with tax money or collects people's "church tax" along with their regular income tax for the church. You have to pay your church tax if you want to get services from the church, from baptism to marriage to burial. So people end up giving a consistent amount across the board when they pay their bills, but the offering is not an important part of the service and there aren't any "Stewardship Sundays." You might think this is a great way to keep a church financially afloat, but it has strange results. On the one hand, these folk churches are indeed a lot wealthier than any American church. It allows them to be extremely generous in charity and development work in poorer parts of the world, and European Lutherans have virtually bankrolled the entire ecumenical movement through their support of the World Council of Churches and other such organizations. On the other hand, it has meant less involvement from Christians on the local level. Church is part of the state and the national culture. It's there when you need it, it's not going anywhere because it's all paid for, so your personal investment in it is a lot lower. Some small percentage of people withdraw from the church as a matter of principle, stop paying the church tax, and stop getting services from the church. But most are content to pay, even if they hardly ever darken the door of the church. They want it to be there, but they don't want to have to be involved personally.

This isn't the only reason for low church attendance in Europe, though. Another reason is the memory of religious violence. It's hard

for us short-memoried Americans to believe it, but Europeans still somehow feel the scars of the religious wars that followed the Reformation and only really ended in the mid-1600s (at least on a continental level; there continued to be religious violence within individual countries long after that). That contributed to a desire to remove religion from public space altogether. In most of France, for example, it's actually illegal to talk about religious convictions in certain public media and no politician would ever say "God bless France." (The part of France we live in, Alsace, still has the religious laws from the time when it belonged to Germany. That means clergy are state employees—and make a whole lot more money than their congregationally-sponsored counterparts in the rest of France. It also means there's been a huge recent debate whether Muslim imams should also be state-funded.)

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—continued on next page. . .

Sunday Summer Worship Schedule through Sept. 4th

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

9:15 a.m. - Liturgy of Holy Communion (in English)

Regular Sunday Worship Schedule returns Sept. 18th

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

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

Choir Rehearsals

Wednesdays, September 7th, 14th, 21st, and 28th

Sunday, September 11th

10:15 a.m. Outdoor Liturgy of Holy Communion

In other countries, religion is still part of the public conversation, but there seems to be a disconnect between what the church officially says and how much people identify with it. However, the memory of religious violence means that people take ecumenism very seriously. Without ecumenism, the violence might come back. By contrast, I find that in America, ecumenism is looked at from a free-market point of view: if I say that my church is the same as your church, then I'll lose my edge in our competition for members. Ecumenism is less loved in America as a result.

There is also a stronger feeling of loyalty to church in Europe, even among people who don't go that often. In America, it's pretty common to convert or at least shift around between denominations, depending on how well you like the preaching or music or other people. In Europe, people have a much stronger sense that "I am a Lutheran" or "I am a Catholic" and change is out of the question. A lot of ecumenical attention in Europe has been given to "mixed marriages" between Catholics and Protestants for exactly this reason—neither partner will want to change to the other's church, and they'll both want to hand their heritage on to their children. At the same time, we've found that this attitude has been a bit stifling for mission. People are assumed to have already made their religious commitments, so there's no point in inviting them to church or even welcoming visitors. The church is already an established and completed community. It's very hard to integrate new believers or foreigners.

For this reason, a strange new reality has arisen in Europe: while the beautiful old church buildings are virtually empty on Sundays, there are still lots of people gathering to worship—but in homes, stores, or public halls. And that's the immigrant communities. The Africans, Asians, and Middle Easterners who stream into Europe for work bring their faith with them, but don't often find open arms at the established churches, so they simply form their own communities of faith, in their own languages, and with their own worship styles. That is where the really vibrant Christianity is to be found anymore. It'll be interesting to see whether they will be able to bring their energy into the quietly dying old churches of Europe.

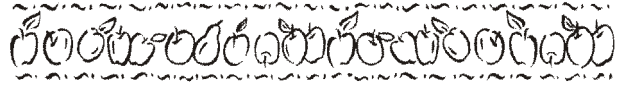
Sarah Hinlicky Wilson is Assistant Research Professor at the Institute for Ecumenical Research in Strasbourg, France and the Editor of The Lutheran Forum magazine. She and her husband Andrew and son Zeke are members of Sts. Peter and Paul.

... [A] strange new reality has arisen in Europe: while the beautiful old church buildings are virtually empty on Sundays, there are still lots of people gathering to worship—but in homes, stores, or public halls. And that's the immigrant communities. The Africans, Asians, and Middle Easterners who stream into Europe for work bring their faith with them. . .

“WORSHIP ON THE LAWN”

Outdoor Worship, Opening Day of Sunday School, and Community/Congregational Picnic, September 11th

The congregation invites you to join us on Sunday, September 11th for the Annual Outdoor Worship Service and Community/Congregational Picnic which marks the first day of the Sunday school year and the opening of our preschool year. The Liturgy of Holy Communion is celebrated at 10:15 a.m. (note the beginning of the regular Sunday worship, education and choir rehearsals schedule), followed by the picnic where there will be plenty of food, beverages, games, music and fellowship. Bring your lawn chairs and enjoy the day.



Thanks from Our Pastor. . .

Thank you to everyone for attending the worship service and picnic on Sunday, July 17th, celebrating the 10th Anniversary of our mutual ministry together at Sts. Peter and Paul which began at Christmastide 2000. Jane and I were overwhelmed by the outpouring of your love, appreciation and gratitude for these abundant years that we have experienced together as congregation and pastor in our life and mission in Jesus' name. Thank you so much for setting aside the time to be together and to make preparations for this celebration; for your careful attention to the meaningful greeting cards; and for every generous sign of your appreciation. It is an unspeakably wonderful privilege to serve among you as your pastor and to experience Christian community in your midst. And thank you also for the well-wishes on the Silver Anniversary of our marriage on July 19th.

—Dennis and Jane Lauritsen and family



Vacation Bible School Thanks. . .

Many thanks to everyone who volunteered their time and energies toward another very successful Vacation Bible School (VBS) held the week of June 26-30th sponsored by the Riverside and North Riverside Covenant of Churches at Riverside Presbyterian Church. Eighty-one children attended VBS this year with a host of leaders and volunteers from many of the Covenant congregations.

INDIVIDUAL IN NEED OF SHORT-TERM ROOM TO RENT

If you have a room or space to rent during August and September, or if you know of someone who does, please contact the church office at (708) 442-5250 with this information.

The deadline for articles for the October, 2011 issue of the congregational newsletter is Sunday, September 4th. Thank you for being prompt!

Dear Members and Friends,

I hope everyone is enjoying their summer and at the same time keeping cool from the heat!

Please keep the date Saturday, October 15th free from 9 am to 3 pm to join us at the Fair with your family and friends. White elephant items for the Fair are being accepted through Sunday, September 11th. Items need to be clean and in good working condition. We ask that no clothing computers, TVs or software be donated. Items may be brought to the church on Sunday mornings or during the week when the church office is open. Please do not leave donations in the parking lot. Luncheon tickets will be available from Dorcas members, or can be purchased at the Fair. We will have craft items, bakery, canned items, taffy apples, toys and white elephant articles. Once again, we ask you for your delicious bakery. Set up for the Fair will be October 11-13th. As in the past, we ask you for your help on Saturday, October 15th. If you can help, please contact me.

Our meetings in September will be Tuesdays, September 13th and 27th at noon.

See you at the Fair.

Emily Kostelancik
President



Sts. Peter and Paul Lutheran Church
31st St. & Desplaines Avenue
Riverside, Illinois
708-442-5250

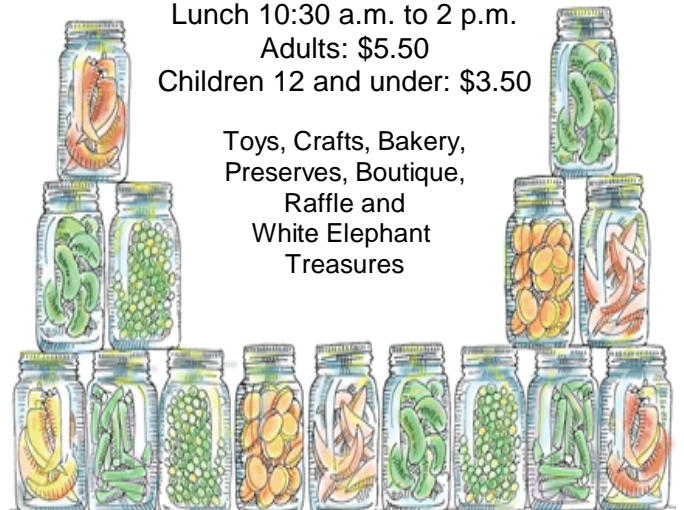
**Dorcas Society
Craft & Pantry Fair**

Saturday, October 15, 2011
9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Free admission

Lunch 10:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Adults: \$5.50
Children 12 and under: \$3.50

Toys, Crafts, Bakery,
Preserves, Boutique,
Raffle and
White Elephant
Treasures



Taste of Riverside Churches

**Sunday, September 25th, 2011
1:00 to 3:00 p.m.**

**Join Riverside and North Riverside residents
in a Trolley Car Tour of four of the
community's churches:
Ascension Lutheran - Christ Community
Presbyterian - Riverside United Methodist -
St. Mary's Catholic Church**

**Sponsored by the Riverside/North Riverside
Covenant of Churches
(The other four churches will be included in
a similar tour next year.)**

**Leaders of the four churches will be
available to talk about their churches and
answer questions.**

**Tickets for the Trolley Car will be \$10.00
and should be reserved ahead of time by
contacting Marjorie Lewe at 708-447-0064.**

Preschool News. . .

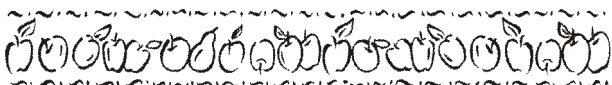
With yet another summer camp behind me, I have been busy getting the classroom ready and looking forward to the start of my 14th year of preschool. The opening day of preschool is Wednesday, September 7th. Keep saving Campbell soup labels for our preschool.

-Donna Tuider, Preschool Director/Teacher

BLESSING OF TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

Almighty God, you give wisdom and knowledge. Grant teachers the gift of joy and insight, and students the gift of diligence and openness, that all may grow in what is good and honest and true. Support all who teach and all who learn, that together we may know and follow your ways; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

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September Happenings

Preschool Begins

Wednesday, September 7th, 9 a.m.

Ladies Altar Guild Meeting

Thursday, September 8th, 12 noon

Dorcas Society Craft Fair Planning Meeting

Tuesday, September 13th, 12 noon

Slovak Athletic Association Meeting

Wednesday, September 14th, 1-3 p.m.

Myjavsky Group Meeting

Thursday, September 15th, 12-3 p.m.

Church Council Meeting

Thursday, September 15th, 7:30 p.m.

Dorcas Society Meeting

Tuesday, September 27th, 12 noon

Finance Committee Meeting

Tuesday, September 27th, 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.

Top Ten Reasons to Become A Pastor

(Presented by Paul Watkiss at Pr. Dennis Lauritsen's 10th Anniversary Celebration with Sts. Peter and Paul on Sunday, July 17th.)

10. Lifetime membership in a Private Club.
9. Don't have to worry what you are going to wear to church on Sunday.
8. Participation in all Church Council meetings.
7. Only have to work weekends.
6. A chance to work for the "Big" boss.
5. Unlimited funds available for all ministries.
4. Zero stress.
3. Short commute to work.
2. Free housing.
1. The week after Easter off!

September Scripture Readings

1. Ezekiel 33:7-11 - A sentinel
2. Psalm 119:33-40 - Give me life
3. Romans 13:8-14 - For the neighbor
4. **Matthew 18:15-20 - Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost**
5. 1 Peter 2:11-17 - Fear (respect) God
6. Romans 13:1-7 - Good citizens, good government
7. Matthew 21:18-22 - Pray, trust, and watch
8. Genesis 50:15-21 - God's good purpose
9. Psalm 103:[1-7] 8-13 - Steadfast love
10. Romans 14:1-12 - Mercy and tolerance
11. **Matthew 18:21-35 - Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost**
12. Romans 14:13—15:2 - Mutual edification, mutual ministry
13. Mark 11:20-25 - Believe, imagine, and pray
14. 1 Corinthians 1:18-24 - Holy Cross Day
15. Jonah 3:10—4:11 - The wideness of God's love
16. Psalm 145:1-8 - Declaring God's works
17. Philippians 1:21-30 - Suffering
18. **Matthew 20:1-16 - Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost**
19. Romans 16:1-16 - Entrusting
20. Romans 16:17-20 - Foolishness
21. Matthew 9:9-13 - Matthew, Apostle and Evangelist
22. Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32 - God's will
23. Psalm 25:1-9 - Trust
24. Philippians 2:1-13 - Pride
25. **Matthew 21:23-32 - Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost**
26. Judges 16:1-22 - Broken
27. Judges 16:23-31 - Heroes
28. Isaiah 5:1-7 - Truth
29. Revelation 12:7-12 - Michael and All Angels
30. Psalm 80:7-15 - Restoration



Sts. Peter and Paul Lutheran Church

invites you to join us on

Sunday, September 11th, 2011, 10:15 a.m.

for the Annual
Outdoor Worship Service and Church Picnic

along with the

First Day of Sunday School

Liturgy of Holy Communion
at 10:15 a.m., followed by the Picnic

Bring your lawn chairs and enjoy . . .

Food Games Fellowship



SEPTEMBER

Sept 1	John Kozik	Sept 17	Benjamin Smith
	Emily Samel	Sept 18	Alyssa Farnham
	Milan Viskup		Isabella Myers
Sept 2	Emma Kovack		Sebastian Myers
Sept 3	Alfred Kovalsky	Sept 19	Branislav Smetana
	Martin Pennino	Sept 22	Angeline Gomez
Sept 5	Ezekiel Wilson	Sept 23	Gerald Decosola
Sept 7	Nathan Byrne	Sept 24	Betty Bagel
Sept 10	John Jakubec		John Broussard
Sept 11	Jan Decosola	Sept 27	James Gaydusek
	Jon Hapgood		Charles Matthies
	Dennis Horacek	Sept 30	Mildred Cipar
Sept 15	Joanne Gunderson		Beverly Podzamsky
	Deborah Jech		
Sept 16	Linda McShane		

We receive thanks. . .

July 5, 2011

Dennis J. Lauritsen
Sts. Peter and Paul Church
250 Woodside Road
Riverside, IL 60546

Dear Pr. Lauritsen,

On behalf of hundreds of American servicemen and women, Operation Support Our Troops – America, Inc (OSOT-America) want to thank you for your generous donation of \$1,000.00. At this time we are sending an average of one hundred packages a week and this contribution will help us continue with our mission. The boxes we send go a long way to brighten the day of those serving in Iraq and Afghanistan.

We will have thousands of members of the armed forces in very difficult and dangerous living conditions. They need to know that we have not forgotten them. On our website, www.osotamerica.org you can read some of the responses from our package recipients, expressing their gratitude and telling us how these packages have lifted their morale. It is not only the contents of the package but the love that is enclosed from people who care and make it possible.

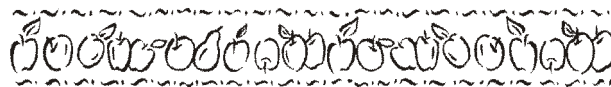
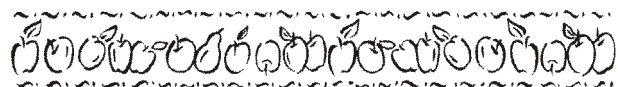
Our entire staff of volunteers thanks you for being part of Operation Support our Troops – America, Inc. Without your support and help we would not be able to continue our work. We sincerely, appreciate your contribution and are very grateful.

Sincerely,

Deborah Rickert
President
Operation Support Our Troops – America, Inc.
www.osotamerica.org



- September 1, 1951: Nicholas and Mary Sasuta
- September 5, 1998: Thomas and Lavinia Myers
- September 5, 1953: Ken and Shirley Wood
- September 6, 1997: Matthew and Janice Decosola
- September 8, 1990: Scott and Mary Jo Meyers
- September 13, 1997: James and Iveta Boyanchek
- September 19, 2009: Christopher and Laura Teter
- September 21, 2002: George and Joan Halas
- September 24, 2000: James and Sandra Gaydusek
- September 28, 1963: John and Emily Kostelancik
- September 30, 1995: Branislav and Adriana Kubo



Altar Flowers

- July 17th*: In celebration of the 25th Wedding Anniversary of Rev. and Mrs. Dennis and Jane Lauritsen on July 19th.
- July 24th*: In remembrance of the birth on July 28th of +Viola Krosiak Minarcin+ with grateful appreciation for her life and service to others and the church by Karyn Minarcin Bute.
- July 31st*: In loving memory of parents +Anne+ and +Jacob Drahos+ from remembering family.
- Aug. 14th*: In celebration of Irene Boor’s 91st birthday on August 16th by loving family, William, Richard, Debbie, Brian and Michael Boor.

APPALACHIAN SERVICE PROJECT 2011

During the week of June 11–18th several young persons from Sts. Peter and Paul, Ascension Lutheran Church in Riverside, and other congregations and communities in the area traveled to Kentucky for a week-long service camp to improve housing and receive spiritual growth in the culture and beauty of Central Appalachia. We are grateful for this experience that these young persons are offered each year and for the opportunity to support them as our missionaries on the Appalachian Service Project (ASP). ASP is “a Christian ministry, open to all people, that fosters human development by addressing the housing needs of Central Appalachia.” The vision of ASP is “to eradicate substandard housing in Central Appalachia and equip and inspire lives of Christian service, believing that each person is a child of God imbued with dignity and worth.” Several of our participants shared their experiences with the congregation at outdoor worship on Sunday July 17th. Thank you to everyone for your support of this annual event.

Cheers and more cheers! What a fun group from Sts. Peter and Paul who participated in the Riverside July 4th Parade. These enthusiastic participants were well received by many who attended the parade. Thank you to the following persons for their support: Paul Watkiss, our chauffeur; Charles Matthies, the navigator; Dale Hawes and Fred Kuzel, dressed in full costume as St. Peter and St. Paul; Carrie Watkiss, leading us in cheers; Ann Kmet, Ann Head and Charles Haase, waving flags; Claire Watkiss and Ramona Suffern, tossing treats; and bike riders, Jane Lauritsen and Kristine Boike. The Missions and Outreach Committee again thanks all for participating in the Riverside Community July 4th Celebration. We were there! Cheers to all (Parade #38)!

—Ramona Suffern, Missions and Outreach Committee



BEDS Plus Needs Volunteers!

Since 1988, BEDS Plus has sheltered, fed and helped hundreds of homeless people in our community return to a healthy, safe and stable life.

And we do it year after year with the help of volunteers from our local faith communities! Each volunteer works just 4 hours per month – but makes an impact that changes many lives.

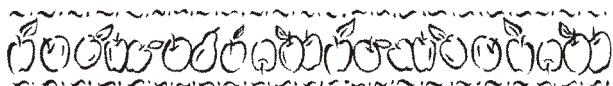
Right now, we are recruiting volunteers for our 2011-2012 shelter season, which opens October 15th and runs through April 30th.

We'd like you to join our mission.

If you're looking for a meaningful, rewarding and proven way to help those in greatest need, please visit our website or contact us today.

www.bedsplus.org
(708) 354-0858

Mandatory volunteer training sessions will take place every Tuesday night in August and September, and space is limited. Reserve your spot today and come find out more about this wonderful, local non-profit! Call (708) 354-0858, ext. 3 or email Cody at umbach@bedsonline.org to reserve your seat.



☆ SUPPORT OUR TROOPS ☆

The Missions and Outreach Committee is collecting items for the men and women serving our country. We feel there is a need to support the troops for all they have given us. Below is a complete list of items needed. We ask that donations brought in during the summer months be left on the table at the east end of the hallway. We gratefully appreciate your support.

☆ SUPPORT OUR TROOPS ☆

Wish List

Non-Food Items

- Body Wash (personal size)
- Individual Packets: Clothes Washing Soap
- Individual Packets: Clothes Liquid Softener
- White Socks
- Ziploc Freezer Bags
- Sandwich Size Bags/Plastic Spoons
- Neosporin/Antibiotic Cream
- Ibuprofen/Tylenol
- Hand Sanitizer (travel size)
- Wet Ones & Moist Wipes (travel size pkgs.)
- Razors
- Shaving Gel (no aerosol)
- Deodorant (no aerosol)
- Shampoo (travel size)
- Foot Powder (travel size)
- Sunscreen/Sun Block (personal size)
- Moisturizing Lotion (personal size)
- Lip Balm (Chapstick)
- Tooth Paste (travel size)
- Mouth Wash (travel size)
- Toothbrushes
- Q-tips and Kleenex (travel/purse size)
- AA, AAA Batteries
- Bug Spray (no aerosol)
- Pens, Highlighters
- Envelopes (letter size)
- Note Cards (everyday)
- Season Greeting Cards
- Crossword, Jigsaw, Word Search Books
- Car/Hunting/News Magazines
- Paper Backs: mystery, sci-fi, military, fiction

Food Items

- Individual Serving Size Coffee Packets
- Sugar and Creamer Individual Packets
- Granola, Protein and Snack Bars
- Power Bars
- Rice Krispie Treat Bars
- Ramen Noodles (no cups) Cello Packaged
- Chex Mix Snack Size Bags
- Pringles (travel well)
- Mento's - Altoids - Tums
- Individually Wrapped Hard Candy: Suckers,
Lolly Pops, Life Savers, Jolly Ranchers, Starbright Mints
- Licorice (individually packaged)

Fun Stuff

- Flash Drives
- Hand Held Computer Games
- Board/Card Games (travel size)
- DVD Movies (new only)

SEPTEMBER WORSHIP SCHEDULE

September 4th:

Greeters: Ramona Suffern and Fred Kuzel
 Acolytes: Sarah Michaels and Rachel Michaels
 Assisting Minister: Tom Michaels
 Comm. Minister: Sandi Spilotro
 Lectors: Jane Lauritsen and Olivia Lauritsen
 Nursery Attendant: Carrie Boike
 Ushers: Wally Kessler and Joan Triska

September 11th: (Outdoor Worship)

Greeters: Larry and Ruth Bakalich
 Acolytes: Charles Haase and Johnathan Haase
 Assisting Minister: Carrie Watkiss
 Comm. Minister: John Broussard and Martin Pennino
 Lectors: Phil Painter and Karyn Bute
 Nursery Attendant: No nursery coverage
 Ushers: Wally Kessler and Joan Triska

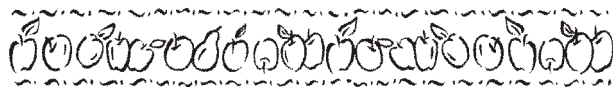
September 18th:

Greeters: John and Janet Broussard
 Acolytes: Jonathon Meyers and Amanda Meyers
 Assisting Minister: Tom Myers
 Comm. Minister: Charles Matthies
 Lectors: Sheryl Hallmann and Emily Kostelancik
 Nursery Attendant: Olivia Lauritsen
 Ushers: Wally Kessler and John Broussard

September 25th:

Greeters: William Boor and Irene Boor
 Acolytes: Charles Haase and Jacob Czerak
 Assisting Minister: Jan Hapgood
 Comm. Minister: Shirley Wood
 Lectors: John and Shirley Kostelny
 Nursery Attendant: Kristine Boike
 Ushers: Wally Kessler and Joan Triska

Sacristan and Altar Care:
 Jan Hapgood



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.

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.

OCTOBER WORSHIP SCHEDULE

October 2nd:

Greeters: Tad and Cathy Dabrowski
 Acolytes: Abby Collins and Jake Collins
 Assisting Minister: Brandon Michaels
 Comm. Minister: Anne Otjepka
 Lectors: Shirley Wood and Joanne Sefara
 Nursery Attendant: Hannah Boike
 Ushers: Wally Kessler and Joan Triska

October 9th:

Greeters: Steve and Beverly Podzamsky
 Acolytes: Isabelle Boike and Carrie Boike
 Assisting Minister: John Broussard
 Comm. Minister: Martin Pennino
 Lectors: Charles Matthies and Anne Otjepka
 Nursery Attendant: Katie Melnyk
 Ushers: Wally Kessler and Ann Pennino

October 16th:

Greeters: John and Annette Kozik
 Acolytes: Katie Melnyk and Hannah Boike
 Assisting Minister: Vicki Michaels
 Comm. Minister: Tom Myers
 Lectors: Olivia Lauritsen and Dale Hawes
 Nursery Attendant: Carrie Boike
 Ushers: Wally Kessler and John Broussard

October 23rd:

Greeters: Ramona Suffern and Fred Kuzel
 Acolytes: Sarah Michaels and Rachel Michaels
 Assisting Minister: Lois Mika
 Comm. Minister: Tom Michaels
 Lectors: Martin and Ann Pennino
 Nursery Attendant: Olivia Lauritsen
 Ushers: Wally Kessler and Joan Triska

October 30th:

Greeters: Ed and Joanne Sefara
 Acolytes: Nina Ritacco and Sara Watkiss
 Assisting Minister: Jan Hapgood
 Comm. Minister: Joan Triska
 Lectors: Jan and Janice Hapgood
 Nursery Attendant: Kristine Boike
 Ushers: Wally Kessler and Joan Triska

Sacristan and Altar Care:
 Rose Tornil

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

Successful Farming

Sermon for the Fourth Sunday after Pentecost, July 10th, 2011
Isaiah 55:10-13; Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

*Lord, let my heart be good soil,
open to the seed of your word.
Lord, let my heart be good soil,
where love can grow and peace in understood.
When my heart is hard, break the stone away.
When my heart is cold, warm it with the day.
When my heart is lost, lead me on your way.
Lord, let my heart be good soil.*

“So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything,” Paul writes to the Corinthians, “but only God who gives the growth. . . For we are God's servants, working together; you are God's field, God's building.”

“A farmer went forth to sow,” says Jesus. A farmer went forth to sow seeds as farmers have done for thousands of years. But here is a farmer who's the kind of guy that other farmers like to make fun of when they get together for coffee at the Blue Bonnet Café on main street.

“That George,” they say, “he doesn't give a care where he tosses his oats. Doesn't matter a lick to him if they just fly in the road ditch, or a weed patch, or even in the middle of Route 59,” they laugh, “he just throws 'em anywhere. Maybe they'll grow, maybe they won't. He doesn't seem to care.”

The farmers quietly revel with a sort of subtle delight, as we humans will do, awaiting another man's crop failure. But the one who tells the joke on this peculiar farmer, just isn't laughing with the rest of the guys at the coffee shop on

. . . The one who tells the joke on this peculiar farmer, just isn't laughing with the rest of the guys at the coffee shop on main street. . . Instead, Jesus appears to have the greatest respect and admiration for the unorthodox methods of this prodigal farmer.

main street. In fact, he seems to be dead serious. Instead, Jesus appears to have the greatest respect and admiration for the unorthodox methods of this prodigal farmer. And you're left with the impression that the two of them may be cousins, may even have studied at the same school of agriculture.

The story says that only a small portion of the seed actually matured, not a very good return on the man's investment. Nearly all the seeds perish, Jesus notes, ravaged by the birds, skipping off rocks, choked among nasty thorns, withering in the hot summer sun. Lots of life seems to be wasted every day.

I watch the wild plum trees in front of the parsonage from the earliest days of spring when they blossom abundantly and begin to set on a multitude of tiny green fruit, and I look forward to an abundant harvest to be used for that delicious sweet and sour compote that Jane and I like to make. But when the time arrives for gathering the plums, around the first week of August, after the parade of monsoons has waggled those trees throughout the summer, there is barely enough fruit left to fill the bottom of a bucket. What a waste.

“Well, that's what you get when you're so careless,” say the good farmers at the Blue Bonnet, “Everybody knows but George that you can't just throw seed to the wind with his reckless abandon.” Everybody but George, that dear farmer.

Jesus concludes the parable congratulating that dear, successful farmer on a very admirable harvest: “some a hundred times more than he planted, some sixty, some thirty.” So his methods were a bit wasteful. So he wasn't paying attention to where he tossed the seed.

So he did have some nasty opposition, not only from the birds, the rocks, the bad soil, the hot sun, the coiling thistles, but also from those pesky Pharisees at the coffee shop on main street.

There is something here that I need to hold close to my heart. The farmer had plenty of good seed, apparently enough not to worry about running out of it. There is no problem with the seed. There is a problem with the soil. There is no problem with God's Word. The is a problem with the human heart.

“For this people's heart has grown dull,” Jesus quotes Isaiah in the verses between the parable and its explanation, “and with their ears they can barely hear, and their eyes they have shut, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and turn, and I would heal them.” Jesus, in Mark's Gospel, is said to be “grieved at their hardness of heart.”

The seed is good. The soil is hard. “Lord, let my heart be good soil.”

I know farmers who can get very discouraged, disappointed, depressed, even despondent when they see all their hard work, all that investment, all the seed apparently going to waste. So much life goes to waste, we see. I think of the prophet Isaiah who laments that “I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for nothing and vanity; yet surely my cause is with the Lord, and my reward with my God.”

Paul reminds us that “. . . neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth . . . For we are God's servants, working together; you are God's field, God's building.”

Instead of being disappointed by all the seed that was wasted on nasty dirt, Jesus seems quite happy that at least a little of the seed fell on good dirt, put down roots, and produced a decent a crop. If Jesus can be happy with this, maybe we can be happy with it, too. When you think about it, this apparent wastefulness and recklessness, this inefficiency and extravagance are very common themes in Scripture. I just don't see many “bean counters” in the Bible.

Levitical laws pertaining to animal sacrifices did not allow the worshiper to pull out the best rack of lamb when it was almost roasted. The whole animal was to be “wasted,” that is, burned up as an offering to God: “You shall let none of it remain until the morning,” Exodus says of the Passover lamb, “anything that remains until the morning you shall burn.” What a waste, we think.

Maybe the same could be said for the Sabbath, setting aside an entire twenty-four hours for rest, a full day without working, “wasting” time that could otherwise be productive, we think. Better mow the lawn, wash the car, go shopping—anything but waste a whole Sunday.

The way we look at things, we are usually most concerned about whether something is “effective and efficient” with what we assume belongs to us. And, I suppose, we are most impressed by all the ways that the world uses to measure success and greatness. How big? How many? How much? These are very difficult questions for congregations and individuals who are not very great and successful. So, it should come as no surprise that most of our conversations, even in the church, have to do with whether something is “cost effective” or will be an “efficient use” of what little we presume to have. All these “wasted seeds” go against the grain of our sacred ideas about efficiency.

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A tell-tale sign of this sort of mentality is what I call the “leftovers diet” of the church—the leftovers from the garage sale, the leftovers of our time, the leftovers of our money, the leftovers of our lives. “If I don’t have anything else planned. . . .” “If I don’t have to work that day. . . .” “If I have any seed left over after I’ve used it where I want to use it. . . .”

You may not be aware of this, but even when I was growing up, most farmers had to borrow practically all the money it would take to plant a crop—the money to buy the seed, the fertilizer, the pesticides, the herbicides, the equipment, the fuel, and everything else it takes to produce a harvest. Imagine putting your entire life on the line every year for the sake of a crop. Today, if a farmer needs to buy a new tractor or an irrigation system, most banks require that he or she, in some cases, puts up the entire farm as collateral—farms that have been in families for generations. And there is absolutely no guarantee that there will be a crop when autumn arrives.

As I think about it, I experienced more faith among those farmers than any other people I’ve known, farmers who were trusting that there would be a crop sufficient to pay back the loan with something “left over” to live on until the next harvest. Maybe you will think for a moment about the faith of those farmers the next time you go into

a grocery store. Maybe you will think about the fact that those farmers are not being paid much more for a bushel of corn today than they were paid forty years ago. In order to make a living, they have had to increase production per acre many times over what they used to produce.

Good farmers have the abundance of faith to take the big risks that are required to produce a crop. And the first big risk for the farmers of the church is to sow the seed with reckless and wasteful abandon. If the sower had

taken no risk in throwing the seed, wasting his entire life for the sake of a crop, there would have been no chance for a harvest.

“Jesus answered them, ‘The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. I tell you the truth, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.’”

Martin Luther urged us to “sin boldly, but believe more boldly still.” To paraphrase, he encouraged us to “do something, even if it’s wrong—even if it is ineffective, or inefficient, or expensive—do something!”

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e x c e l l e n t

The willingness to make mistakes, “to do something, even if it’s wrong,” is essential to produce a harvest.

mistakes.” “If you want to succeed,” says one of them, “double your failure rate.” Says another, “If you aren’t making mistakes you aren’t doing anything [worthwhile].” The willingness to make mistakes, “to do something, even if it’s wrong,” is essential to produce a harvest.

One day Jesus watched a large crowd coming out of the temple, but the only one he really noticed was a poor, little widow who dropped just a single, small coin in the offering plate—“all the living she had,” he observed. Another day Jesus told one of the most

beloved stories about a little, lost sheep whom the shepherd found. And Jesus says, “There’s more joy in heaven over just one sheep who was found than the other ninety-nine who never got lost.”

The 20th century Trappist monk, Thomas Merton, wrote that “Every moment and every event of every person’s life on earth plants something in her or his soul. For just as the wind carries thousands of winged seeds, so each moment brings with it germs of spiritual vitality that come to rest imperceptibly in the minds and wills of men and women. Most of these unnumbered seeds perish and are lost, for such seeds as these cannot spring up anywhere except in the good soil of freedom, spontaneity and love.”

“So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth . . . For we are God’s servants, working together; you are God’s field, God’s building.”



Current, Benevolence and Freewill Offering Recap

Budgeted Offering: \$3,219.00

June, 2011

<u>Date</u>	<u>Weekly Attendance</u>	<u>Offering Received</u>
6/5	79	\$2,667.00
6/12	67	\$2,021.00
6/19	75	\$2,504.00
6/26	71	\$1,947.00

June, 2011 average attendance: 73
June, 2010 average attendance: 82

July, 2011

<u>Date</u>	<u>Weekly Attendance</u>	<u>Offering Received</u>
7/3	61	\$2,587.00
7/10	62	\$3,953.00
7/17	105	\$2,512.00
7/24	49	\$2,289.00
7/31	64	\$1,919.00

July, 2011 average attendance: 68
July, 2010 average attendance: 58



Attendance and Offering Report

MEMORIALS AND HONORARIUMS

FOR THE CHURCH

The Mendel and Sherwood Families, in memory of mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother +Anne Hustava.
Darina Durkovic and Family, in memory of husband and father +Ivan Durkovic, Sr.+ on the 90th anniversary of his birth on July 11, 1921.
Ann Neimes, in memory of parents +George+ and +Elizabeth Palencar+
Rev. and Mrs. Dennis and Jane Lauritsen, in memory of the first anniversary of the passing of +Rev. Juan Cobrda+ on July 1, 2010.
Anne Otjepka, in memory of brother-in-law +Philip Casello+
Betty Buffa and Joan Mikulina, in loving memory of dear father +John Mikulina+ on the 99th anniversary of his birth.
In memory of husband +John Krc+ on the 15th anniversary of his death on August 22nd, by remembering wife, Dolores Krc.
Ken and Shirley Wood, in memory of +Arlene Antonovits+
Paul Kubecka, in loving memory of beloved mother and father +Zuzanna+ and +John Kubecka+
Betty Kany and Family, in memory of brother and uncle +John Krc+ on his 15th anniversary of his passing.
Edward and Ann Borsuk and Family, in celebration of dear brother and uncle Paul Kubecka's 80th birthday.

LABOR DAY IS THE BURDEN OF OUR BEING

**Labor Day officially ends summer,
As those who work enjoy one final fling.**

**Labor is the burden of our being,
A weight that weds us firmly to the earth,
Blessed servitude that serves a common meaning
On which each may erect a sense of worth.**

**Remember, then the beauty of a calling
Demanding both integrity and skill:
A dancer in the drifts of early morning,
Yet traveling towards sunset through sheer will.**

Author Unknown



A Woman's Poem

He didn't like the casserole
And he didn't like my cake.
My biscuits were too hard...
Not like his mother used to make.

I didn't perk the coffee right
He didn't like the stew,
I didn't mend his socks
The way his mother used to do.

I pondered for an answer
I was looking for a clue.
Then I turned around and smacked him...
Like his Mother used to do.

-submitted by Anne Otjepka

Sts. Peter and Paul Lutheran Church
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Rev. Dennis J. Lauritsen
email: djlauritsen@sbcglobal.net

Church 708 442-5250

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 Haggood
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

PSALM OF CREATION

It is the first psalm I ever wrote, being struck by the attitude of prayer by turning east, and thinking first of the natural world and its wonders—the earth in all its beauty. But there is as much to wonder at in the world of human creation, and the various jobs that people do, for creativity is also seen in the way we live our lives. —John Hammersley

As I look to the east I praise you, my God:

from the rising of the sun you uphold my life;

when the sun goes down again I give you thanks:

you are my strength from beginning to end.

The whole created universe shares in our praise and gratitude:

for you have made all that is, whether seen or unseen -

hill and valley, tree and flower:

the earth in all its beauty is yours;

earthquake and storm, wind and flood, keep us in awe of you:

the power of the lightning is also your creation.

The workman labours with the sweat of his brow:

he shares in your redemptive work;

the secretary and teacher work for you:

those who use their mind and imagination -

the executive making important decisions:

those who care for others and serve our needs.

All whose work is hard, toil with your blessing:

those who find fulfilment in work can see it as part of your purpose.

So can we all in more humble activities:

as cleaner, sweeper, gardener or child.

Those whom society rejects are in your special care:

and those who have no place in a world of work;

without them your creation would be incomplete:

your plan includes our work and our unemployment.

Jesus was friend of the poor and outcast:

he was also a carpenter working for his living.

We thank you, Holy Spirit, for your gift of enterprise:

the spark of your creative power.

For your love builds us all together:

and shows us how to make one another great.

“Psalms of Life” is a collection of modern psalms written by John Hammersley. It is a resource for Christian worship, or private prayer and inspiration.

CLC's Harvest Moon Ball

Saturday, November 5th

Cocktails – 6pm (cash bar)

Dinner – 7pm

Crystal Sky

7941 W. 47th Street, McCook

Cost: \$40.00 per person

*Wear your dancing shoes as we
dance to the Big Bands and to
Popular Favorites*



For reservations, call Donna Tuider at 708/442-9517 or Ann Pennino at 630/850-7307.

Tickets are limited so make your reservation and payment by October 23rd.

If you have a preference of table mates, please let us know at the time of reservation.

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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