

# The Churchman

Sts. Peter and Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church

250 Woodside Road, Riverside, Illinois 60546 \* (708) 442-5250

*"Faith Active in Love"*

[www.stspeterandpaulriverside.org](http://www.stspeterandpaulriverside.org)

Volume 42

November 2020

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.*



## Hope in the Midst of Uncertainty

by Bishop Wilma Kucharek, October 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020

Fall, like spring, is a season of transition and change. Chilly nights, shorter daylight hours, the changing colors of the leaves, and even the calendar invite us to return to our familiar schedules of life in the church, our work, and school.

However, this fall is not like anything we've experienced in the past; the familiar and predictable can no longer be taken for granted. Even the store advertisements which, in the past, had promoted back to school sales have carefully adapted to entice people to update their wardrobe and decorate their homes with fall themes. It seems that everything around us is in a season of change and uncertainty as we continue to navigate our lives in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic, economic challenges, calls for racial justice, concerns for public safety, and a national election.

I am reminded of the words which the Apostle Paul wrote to the people of Corinth: "For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known" (1 Cor. 13:12 NRSV). The dictionary explains that to see "in a mirror, dimly" means to have an incomplete or obscure view of reality, and acknowledges that this expression comes from St. Paul who explains that what we do not see clearly now, will become certain at the end of time.

These uncertain times feel unclear and incomplete to us now. In fact, seeing "in a mirror, dimly" can even bring to mind our current reality of "seeing" each other virtually on screens, through masks and shields, and at a distance, an existence that also feels incomplete.

Nevertheless, even though we are living in a world that seems unreal to us, God promises that one day all will become certain. In the meantime, we have all learned in the past six months to adapt in our various contexts and remain faithful to our calling and responsibilities as children of God and members of our congregations and communities.

Many of you have expanded your use of telephone, mail, and technology to connect with each other when it is not safe to do so in

person. As I've met with the pastors of the Synod, I have marveled at the creativity and resiliency of our pastors and congregations in addressing the ever-changing challenges with which you are faced. For those of you for whom outdoor or other distanced worship has been possible this summer, you have continued to be mindful to minister to the vulnerable who have not been able to join you, as well as including the newcomers who have joined you through digital means in these times. In addition, you have acknowledged the reality that indoor worship and activities as you have known them in the past may not be possible in your context going forward, and have made alternate adjustments and provisions.

You have used digital platforms such as Zoom, GoToMeeting, Facebook, email, and telephone to conduct the business and educational ministries of the congregation. In similar manner, I have also been working through email, telephone, Zoom, and other platforms as I've shepherded the domestic and international ministries of our Synod and met with the congregational leaders and pastors of our Synod, regional bishops, the ELCA Conference of Bishops, various committees, as well as the boards of trustees of Women of the ELCA, Muhlenberg College, and United Lutheran Seminary.

The challenges of these times call us to be nimble, creative, and resilient as we tackle how best to serve God and God's people in an ever-changing landscape. Into what innovations has God's Holy Spirit invited you? How are you adapting your fall ministries and congregational events this year in the face of the current challenges? What does spiritual enrichment, pastoral care, and education look like in your congregation in this world of technology? As you think ahead to Advent, will there be a renewed commitment to Bible study and prayer? Let us know. We look forward to hearing from you!

These are challenging times for pastors, congregations, and communities. We are living as if we are seeing through a mirror dimly. For alongside faithful ministry and care for others, we are experiencing a sense of grief and lament for what was and is not possible now, fatigue as we continue to function in changed ways, as well as experiencing the uncertainty of how things may look very different in the future... Here, the words of the Apostle Paul can encourage us: "So let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest time, if we do not give up. So then, whenever we have an opportunity, let us work for the good of all..." (Gal. 6:9-10a NRSV).

Beloved in the Lord: I encourage you to faithfully go forward in hope, for it is precisely in the time of change and uncertainty that God is present with us. In the words of Scripture: "Be strong, and let your heart take courage, all you who wait for the Lord" (Ps. 31:24 NRSV). "For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope" (Jer. 29:11 NRSV).

You remain in my prayers that our gracious God will bless you and keep you well. "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 15:13 NRSV).

+Bishop Wilma S. Kucharek



## 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.

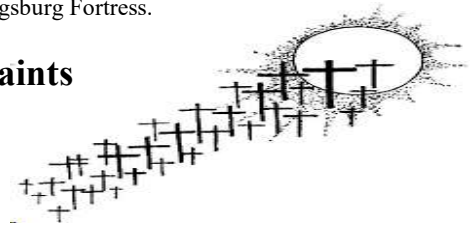
So the gospel writer Matthew reminds the church to live out the fruits of the Spirit, to use the rich talents and inheritance of the new

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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## Festival of All Saints November 1<sup>st</sup>



The Congregation at Sts. Peter and Paul remembered the following persons who passed to their eternal rest since All Saints Sunday, 2019 listed here in chronological order of their death dates:

- +Steve Michael+ (November 20<sup>th</sup>)
- +Jerome Gaydusek+ (January 10<sup>th</sup>)
- +Lawrence Bakalich+ (February 8<sup>th</sup>)
- +Jan Hapgood+ (February 16<sup>th</sup>)
- +Betty Kany+ (March 8<sup>th</sup>)
- +Branislav "Brian" Smetana+ (February 24<sup>th</sup>)
- +Robert Nowak+ (March 27<sup>th</sup>)
- +Emily Rusnak+ (April 8<sup>th</sup>)

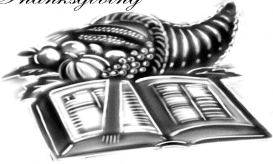


*Japanese maple in front of the parsonage in October.*

## Directory Additions and Changes

Ann Head  
P. O. Box 370  
LaGrange, IL 60525-0370



*Prayer & Thanksgiving*


## Thanksgiving Day

November 26<sup>th</sup>  
at 10:15 a.m.

**A Service of the Word  
and Prayers of Thanksgiving**

*The monetary offering will benefit  
the Chicago Food Depository.*

## Memorial Flowers

*Oct. 4<sup>th</sup>:* In memory of loving husband +Larry Bakalich+ on the 66<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our wedding on October 2<sup>nd</sup> by loving wife Ruth.

In memory of +John Kozik+ on the 91<sup>st</sup> anniversary of his birth on September 1<sup>st</sup> by remembering family.

*Oct. 11<sup>th</sup>:* In loving memory of beloved father and grandfather +William Stastny+ on the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death by remembering daughter Audrey Bucz and her family, and granddaughter Adrienne Gana.

In memory of +Mildred Kessler+ on the anniversary of her birth on October 12<sup>th</sup>.



If you would like to order a poinsettia to help decorate the chancel of the sanctuary for the Christmas liturgies, a sign-up sheet will be posted in the dining hall beginning Sunday, November 28<sup>th</sup>. You may also contact the church office to place your order. The cost per plant is \$17. The deadline for payment and sign-up is Wednesday, December 16<sup>th</sup>.

## The Most Important Work of the Church

I hold that the most important work of the Church today is the enthroning of Christ in the unity of the parish church. Here is the justification for all the energy and patience required to make the church school a real school for the kingdom of God. For this reason every thought put into the ennobling and vitalizing of the worship of the congregation bears fruit a hundredfold. On this account the confidence inspired in... parishioners by the faithful pastor as he [or she] ministers to young and old, the living and the dying, the believer and the scoffer, are to me clearer evidences of the kingship of Christ than all the high-priced organization endeavors which are sometimes resorted to because [people] have lost faith in the slower, more tedious methods of winning souls one by one. If there is to be a regeneration of American communities, be it in the metropolis or in the highway crossroads village, it must come from the small unit of a Christian congregation whose members have Christ as King in their lives.

—from *I Believe in the Church* by Conrad Bergenoff

## NOVEMBER

Nov. 5:	Jessica Drahos	Nov. 15:	Kelly Jones
	Collin Sender	Nov. 18:	Vincent Smith
Nov. 7:	Ashley Mazur	Nov. 19:	Abby Collins
Nov. 8:	Philip Painter	Nov. 21:	Joseph Decosola, Jr.
Nov. 9:	Jennifer Smith	Nov. 23:	Kristi Alonzo
Nov. 10:	John Vercimak	Nov. 29:	Mildred Londak
Nov. 13:	Ivan Durkovic		Ty Smith
	Mary Ann Waychunas	Nov. 30:	Jacob Czerak
Nov. 14:	Gino Decosola		
	Dale Hawes		

## Birthdays and Anniversaries

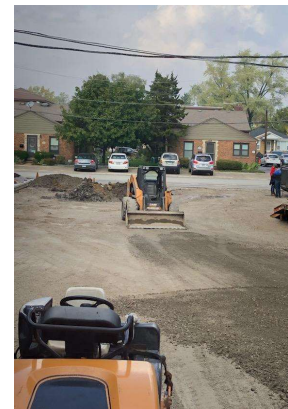
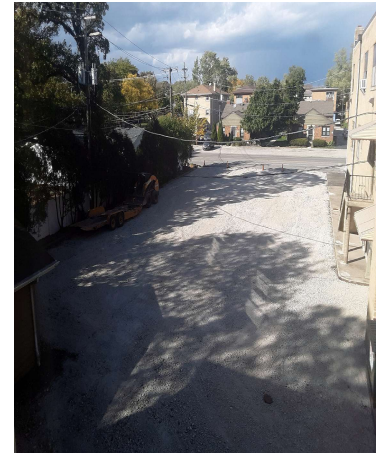
November 7, 1992: Vlado and Agnes Vercimak  
 November 10, 2012: James and Anne Marie D'Alexander  
 November 10, 2018: Thomas and Alexandra Miller  
 November 13, 1971: Robert and Suzanna Skudrna  
 November 18, 1984: Richard and Ruth Hurbanis  
 November 23, 1984: Gary and Annette Tapak

## Happenings

**Congregation Council Meeting**  
 Thursday, November 19<sup>th</sup>, 7:30 p.m.

**Service of the Word and Prayers of Thanksgiving**  
 Thanksgiving Day, November 26<sup>th</sup>, 10:15 a.m.

## Parking Lot Reconstruction Nears Completion



*Many thanks to John Kostelny and Rafael Martinez for planning, coordinating and overseeing this big project. Construction by Budget Paving.*

## Thoughts About Singing with *Lux Cantorum Chicago*:

An Interview with Pastor Dennis J. Lauritsen  
with LCC Board Member Stuart Barnes Jamieson

*What do you love about LCC?*

I can't remember a time when I did not love to sing. Where I come from, you practically begin singing with your first breath after learning some of the melodies from your mother while still in her womb! You sing at home. You sing in the fields. You sing on the school bus. You sing at church. You sing everyday in school and then college. And most of the time, you're singing with others in some form of a choir, even if it's a pick-up choir under a big, shady elm tree in the middle of a summer drought. You come to realize that maybe we were created to be, not just the "talking animals," but also the singing animals, second only to birds of course. Having come from this kind of Midwestern choral tradition (Midwesterners like to claim that there is such a thing!), and actually finding my voice in high school through singing, LCC became another home along the way for one of my deepest loves in life. I love the mystical movement of wind (breath or spirit) in song flowing through voices drawn together from many places and experiences. When we are swept up together as one voice in this transcendent experience, it seems that we may be more closely approaching that which we are intended to be: bearers of peace, unity, gentleness, beauty, truth, compassion, love and praise for the Great Mystery which is beyond comprehension. We in LCC have chosen to call this the "transformative" nature of sacred choral music. Yes, there is a sense for the divine presence among us, transforming us.

*What about its mission speaks most powerfully to you?*

That word "transformative" speaks clearly and powerfully to me as in the mission statement of the choir, "...the transformative power of sacred choral music." Our world, and especially our nation at this moment in its history, seems so desperately hungering and thirsting for transformation from its disordered state of hostility and hatred, division and distrust, chaos and cruelty, sickness and despair. I think of the Apostle's words in the Letter to the Romans, chapter 12, where he urges us, "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect." When we sing together as we do in LCC, and when we sing the choral repertoire that we have been given, I'm sure that most of us, if not all, have recognized in moments the transformation taking place within our own being as well as those among whom we sing. In my mind, this is an ineffable, exhilarating, and even ecstatic mystery, transcending words and transporting us to a realm of experience in such a way that we may return to "this world" with a renewed, reformed way of living that can communicate that which is creative and life giving. What makes life meaningful, it would seem, is participating in the wondrous, continuous unfolding of creation, that is, the transformation of chaos into a created order that sustains life. I think this is one of the things that we try to do with LCC.

*How do you see the role of music in spirituality and faith?*

The confessing movement to which I have been called teaches that faith is a gift of the Holy Spirit in contrast to something which is self-originating and self-sustaining. In other words, the freely given "spiritual experience" precedes, or one might say, accompanies the infusion of faith. Sacred choral music often serves as the bearer of this "spiritual experience" which can lead to faith and, I think, especially nurture and sustain faith during dry times like these when the showers of the Spirit seem few and far between. We witness this "inspiration," that is, the entering of the Spirit into one's being, and

the creation of human communities through its power, occurring throughout the earth in so many religious traditions.

*Tell me about an event (concert, etc.) that for you most captured the essence of the LCC experience.*

The sanctuary at Resurrection Lutheran Church in the Lakeview neighborhood of Chicago has held a place near my heart since the early 1990s when I was serving another parish in that neighborhood—the Romanesque arches, evening worship experiences, the restful and simple beauty of the sanctuary, the stained-glass windows, the worship space at sunset. Our mid-winter concert at Resurrection a few years ago, from beginning to end, was an experience for me like no other. The concert was at sunset when the western windows were splendorous with colored light. The acoustics seemed impeccable. The choir was well-prepared. The program was tender as well as exhilarating. Everything seemed to congeal and we had stepped beyond the vale of tears into a place of unrestrained joy and freedom. This is hope.

*What is your experience with music in your faith life?*

Sacred music, as we see in so many religious traditions, is often the bearer of the Word in ways that the spoken word is incapable of providing. The Word (as it is referenced in the Christian traditions) creates and inspires faith while music, it seems, sustains, nurtures and energizes that faith. Bach's cantatas readily come to mind as sermons set to music. As I think about it, so many of the great preachers, teachers and orators of history, as you listen closely to them, are going well beyond the spoken word even to singing their poetry to us in cadences, refrains and melodies. Sometimes I wonder whether or not I would have faith without music. The shape and substance of that faith would surely be different I imagine.

*What's next for LCC?*

I'm curious, as I suppose most of us are, about what we will look like when we emerge from this moment in history. It certainly seems to be a time of birth (and the birth pains that go with it!), but how this child will appear and what this child shall be is another question. At the moment, finding our way through the web of virtual rooms and realities seems to be "what's next for LCC," and this experience will surely be formative of the future in ways that are unimaginable right now. My hunch is that there will be no going back to "the way we were." The uncertainty is both disturbing as well as exciting. So, I think it's harder now to answer the question than it was seven months ago "what's next for LCC." What is immediately next is doing the very best we can by producing a good virtual holiday concert. The process, we're told, should hone our individual skills to become a better in-person choir—whenever and however that may return. Aside from this feeble foretelling of the future, I think getting the word out about LCC and broadening and building our audiences are always crucial next steps. We have healing in our wings to offer a wounded world but there are not many who know where to find it.

—submitted by Pastor Dennis

**September 2020**  
**Current, Benevolence and Freewill Offering**  
*Budgeted Offering: \$2,597.00*

<u>Date</u>	<u>Offering</u>
9/6	\$1,606.00
9/13	\$2,198.00
9/20	\$1,133.00
9/27	\$2,096.00

## DATED MATERIAL

### News from Riverside Preschool at Sts. Peter and Paul

Happy Turkey Day! This month we will be learning all about Pilgrims, Native Americans, and fun facts about the first Thanksgiving.

—Lisa Manganiello, Preschool Director



### November Announcements

- ★ The 2021 offering envelopes will be ready for pick up on the First Sunday of Advent, November 29<sup>th</sup> in the lower hallway adjacent to the dining hall. Please pick up envelopes for friends or relatives. If you would like to have your envelopes mailed to you, please contact Karen in the church office.
- ★ Financial donations made to the congregation must be received in the church office no later than December 27<sup>th</sup> in order to be included in your end of the year financial statement.
- ★ A reminder to the congregation, especially during the months of winter weather, that complimentary cab service is available on Sunday mornings for rides to and from worship services. Please contact Blue Village Cab Company at (708) 583-6900 as early as possible to make arrangements for pick up. When arranging your pick-up, please remind the dispatcher that the ride is to be billed to account number #101755.
- ★ 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 for a fee. Thank you for your assistance.

### From the Collected Writings of Charles Spurgeon

June 19<sup>th</sup>, 1834—January 31<sup>st</sup>, 1892; English Particular Baptist Preacher

*He shalt not be afraid of evil tidings* (Psalm 112:1).

You ought not feed dread at the arrival of bad tidings, because if you are distressed by them, how different are you from other men? Other men do not have God to fly to, so it is no wonder that they are bowed with fear and alarm. But you profess to be of another spirit, and your heart lies in heaven and not with earthly things. If you are seen to be distracted like other men, then what is the value of the grace which you profess to have received?

If you should be filled with alarm as others are, you would doubtless be led into sin, so common to others under trying circumstances. The ungodly, when overtaken by evil tidings, rebel against God; they murmur, and they think God deals harshly with them. Will you fall into the same sin and provoke the Lord as they do?

Trust in the Lord and wait patiently for him. Your wisest course is to do as Moses did at the Red Sea—“Stand still and see the salvation of God.” For if you give way to fear, you will be unable to meet the trouble with that calm composure which nerves for duty and sustains under adversity.

Saints have often sung God's high praises in the fires, but will your doubting and desponding, as if you had none to help you, magnify the Most High? Then take courage, and relying in sure confidence of the faithfulness of your covenant God—“let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”

Prayer:

*God be with us when we stand on the rock with our backs to the rushing waters or when we are in that dark expanse of desert with an unknown enemy gathering just over the next hill. You are our rock and our salvation. Grant your sustaining grace in the face of perils known and unknown.*

—submitted by John Broussard

