



# 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

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Issue 1

*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.*

## The Epiphany of Our Lord, January 6<sup>th</sup> *We Offer What We Have*



*Newly refurbished creche  
at the Woodside entrance in December 2020.*

We bring what we can. We offer what we have. We give our time, our skills, our resources. We give not out of a sense of duty or obligation but in response to the immeasurable gift we have received.

Together, the church is the body of Christ, a ragtag community of believers following a hunch and a star. Together, we offer what we have. We offer our songs, words, hopes, fears, and failings. We offer our prayers. We offer our ability to comfort and mourn, our willingness to be vulnerable. We give our gifts, whatever they are, and we give them joyfully. Some shiny and new, some worn and mended, some cracked but beloved. Gifts more precious than gold, rarer than frankincense or myrrh.

We journey down a long road, sometimes through the dark. Together, we face danger. We face uncertainty. We face temptation. When we come finally, joyfully to celebrate the arrival of the baby Jesus, the king in the humble manger, we rejoice. We pay homage. We offer our gifts in response to the God who has given us all that we see and know. We offer what we have because of what we have received. We bring what we can because the gift that God gives us in

Christ is a gift beyond our ability to measure.

We can't always offer as much as we wish we could, but we offer what we have in the spirit that we can and find that together, our broken gifts make a beautiful whole. The gift we have received is the sure and certain truth that our gifts are enough. That we are enough. That we are created with care and redeemed to be love and light in the world.

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*For waters break forth in the wilderness,  
and streams in the desert;  
the burning sand shall become a pool,  
and the thirsty ground springs of water...  
(Isaiah 35:6b-7a).*

**In addition to the in-person worship option,  
join us every Sunday at 10:15 a.m.  
for live-streaming of the liturgy  
accessed through the website at  
[www.stspeterandpaulriverside.org](http://www.stspeterandpaulriverside.org) .  
Recordings of the services are uploaded to the  
same site for viewing at a later date.  
E-worship folders are also available  
at the website.**

## When the Time Was Fulfilled

Excerpts from a Sermon by Eberhard Arnold

*Arnold was a Christian German writer, philosopher, theologian and communitarian. He left the Protestant church of Germany in 1908 because of its connections to the state and later became the founder of the Bruderhof in 1920. This "Place of Brothers" was a Christian community which sought to live together following Jesus' Sermon on the Mount.—djl*

"Joseph went up to Bethlehem to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time was fulfilled for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son" (Luke 2:5-6).

"When the time was fulfilled..."

What a redeeming power there is in these words! We are concerned day in and day out with lesser or greater matters that are to serve God and his cause. We work sometimes until we are weary and yet we see so little fruit. Does everything remain as it was? Haven't we gone forward at all? Have we really been able to help a little somewhere, or have we merely affected the surface of things? Where is there a trace or glimpse of the goal we long for? What are all our efforts against the apparently indestructible powers of misery and evil?

It is well for us that at such hours the light is shining from the stable of Bethlehem and that we are able to sense what it means that the kingdom of God was born as a little child "when the time was fulfilled."

Christmas did not come after a great mass of people had completed something good, or because of the successful result of any human effort. No, it came as a miracle, as the child that comes when his time is fulfilled, as a gift of the Father which he lays into those arms that are stretched out in longing. In this way did Christmas come; in this way it always comes anew, both to individuals and to the whole world.

You have perhaps waited for years to be freed from some need. For a long, long time you have looked out from the darkness in search of the light, and have had a difficult problem in life that you have not been able to solve in spite of great efforts. And then, when the time was fulfilled and God's hour had come, did not a solution, light, and deliverance come quite unexpectedly, perhaps quite differently than you thought? Hasn't this happened to you, just as the child comes at his own time, and no impatience or hurrying can compel it—but then it comes with its blessing and full of the wonder of God? Hasn't God's help come to us sometimes in this way?

And so it shall be with our yearning for the redemption of humanity and for a new shining forth of the world of God. When we are discouraged by the apparently slow progress of all our honest efforts, by the failure of this or the other person, and by the ever new reappearance of enemy powers and their apparent victories, then we should know: the time shall be fulfilled. Because of the noise and activity of the struggle and the work, we often do not hear the hidden gentle sound and movement of the life that is coming into being. But here and there, at hours that are blessed, God lets us feel how he is everywhere at work and how his cause is growing and moving forward. The time is being fulfilled and the light shall shine, perhaps just when it seems to us that the darkness is impenetrable.

Is it true that God only laughs at our efforts and strivings and that all this cannot avail; that we are to receive everything only as a gift? How wonderful is the answer given to us by the mystery of the child! Just as the mother knows that her own surrender, care, and faithful readiness must be present along with God's working and creating, and just as every life comes into being through a deep inward working together of God and [humanity], so it is also in the highest things, in the appearing and breaking through of divine life.

True, it is grace and a gift when our need is relieved and the

darkness is illuminated, and it is true that what is best must be given to us and to the whole world, and that we could never produce it ourselves. But we and our efforts always belong to this, even though it were only to keep the manger prepared in which the Child of God wants to lie. Our efforts count, even though like Simeon we only stretch out our arms in the patience of faith and in loyal endurance so that we may receive the holy gift. Even though we only wait, poor and yearning in the darkness, in fervent longing for the proclamation, we are ready, and may help to bring about the fullness of time.

For the miracle of God comes not only from above; it also comes through us; it is also dwelling in us. It has been given to every person, and it lies in every soul as something divine, and it waits. Calling, it waits for the hour when the soul shall open itself, having found its God and its home. When this is so, the soul will not keep its wealth to itself, but will let it flow out into the world. Wherever love proceeds from us and becomes truth, the time is fulfilled. Then the divine life floods through our human relationships and all our works. Then everything that is lonely and scattered and seeking for the way of God shall be bound together by divine power. Then, of human effort and of the divine miracle, shall the world be born in which Christmas is fulfilled as reality.



Jan. 3: Gerald "J.T." Tarbox	Jan. 18: John Galdun
Jan. 4: Suzanna Skudrna	Jan. 19: Sheryl Hallmann
Jan. 6: Esther Meksto	Jan. 20: William Boor
Jan. 8: Samuel Lauritsen	Jan. 22: Trevor Jech
Jan. 9: Olga Zavodny	Kenneth Kostelancik
Jan. 10: Joyce Hodul	Mildred Riban
Jan. 14: Thomas Michaels	Jan. 25: Emily Kostial
Jan. 15: Sarah Gavac	Jan. 31: Leslie Byrne
	Rachel Decosola

### Birthdays and Anniversaries

January 18, 2015: James and Kathi Zinsser  
January 19, 2014: Eric and Gretchen Kostelny  
January 21, 1996: Leslie and Matthew Byrne

### Happenings

**Congregation Council Meeting**  
Thursday, January 21<sup>st</sup>, 7:30 p.m.

### Memorials and Honorariums

#### ❖ For the Church ❖

Deb and Dave Bark, Ken and Pam Wood, Mike and Tam Wood, Sue and Larry Kusch and their families, in loving memory of +Shirley Wood+ for all the wonderful Christmas memories.

Charlene Patula, in memory of husband +David+ and parents +Emil+ and +May Terem+.

Lois Mika and Family, in memory of husband and father +Earl Mika, Sr.+ on the 21<sup>st</sup> anniversary of his passing on December 29<sup>th</sup>, 1999.

John and Shirley Kostelny, in memory of +Rev. Kenneth Michnay+. Slovak Athletic Association Ladies Auxiliary.

Bess Weglarz, in memory of parents +Anna+ and +John Kolarik, sister +Anne Babinec+, and +Emil Mendel+.

Betty Jane Licko-Keel, in memory of mother +Marie Michalic Licko+ on the November anniversary of her passing, and husband +William Jerry Keel+ and father +Stephen Licko+ on their November birthdays.

Ann Niemes, in memory of +George+ and +Elizabeth Palencart+.

## In the depths of winter...

*In the depths of winter, I finally learned that within me there lay an invincible summer. —Albert Camus*

Sometimes we suddenly see or sense opposite emotions within ourselves. The cold of winter presses in on us, and we may feel tested by its bite. Yet, when we think we cannot bear it a moment longer, we find a counterforce within, an inner reassurance that comes like a summer breeze and says we can do what we must. Perhaps it comes in a time of dark despair, and we realize that at least we've made it this far. We are pretty tough. In our deepest sadness about the loss of a love, we may find a more meaningful contact with our Higher Power.

The opposites in our lives may tempt us to fight them. One side may be very clear and obvious while the other side is hidden. When we are open, these extremes are spiritual teachers for us. As we think about life and our feelings today, what opposites do we find?

Today, I will remember that I have an invincible summer at the deepest part of winter in my life.

*Quoted from the app Touchstones. Find recovery resources at Hazelden.*

## A Season of Letting Go

By Deacon Tammy L. Devine

Falling leaves remind us we are entering a season of letting go. Like those remaining leaves hanging on into December, we too try to cling onto the familiar that once nurtured us and gave us life. We hold on tight not wanting to relinquish the comfort of our past.

Letting go of life as we knew it is hard. COVID-19 has taken much, and we are exhausted and weary. These past months, we've endured multiple tiny and significant deaths. We've lost connections, employment, and loved ones. And we've had to manage new and multiple demands. Like the falling leaves, we too have plummeted into a season of dying. Saying goodbye to our way of living and those we love puts us in a place of vulnerability.

Whether we are ready or not, change is in the air. Autumn reminds us to be thankful for the bounty of the past season and to prepare for the season that awaits us. A season for introspection and reflection, naming our grief, and gratitude. We cannot move forward unless we are willing to leave something behind. In one of his poems, Rumi noted how a closed fist precedes the opening of a hand. He wrote, "If the hand is always open or closed, the hand is crippled." There is a time to open and a time to let go.

Take stock of your feelings as we live into fall and the holiday season approaches. Find healthy ways to express the loneliness, fear, stress, and grief. It is easy to self-medicate with social media, food, alcohol, online shopping, and other behaviors that left unchecked can lead to unhealth. During this month of November, pause and give thanks. Take inventory of the ways you have been blessed.

- What emotion is most present for you today?
- Life, love, and time are three of our greatest gifts. How have you lived, loved, and stewarded your time well?
- What are you ready to let go of, so you can be open to receive?
- How do you live generously?
- What are you grateful for?

*Tammy L. Divine shares her passion for health, healing, and wholeness through consulting, coaching, and retreat facilitation. As an ELCA deacon, registered nurse, parish nurse/coordinator, and ICF certified coach, she collaborates with thought leaders to facilitate personal and communal growth toward living and leading well.*

## JANUARY WORSHIP SERVERS

### January 3<sup>rd</sup>:

Greeters: Walter and Judith Cudecki  
Assisting Minister: Charles Matthies  
Lector: Brandon Michaels  
Usher: Walter Cudecki

### January 10<sup>th</sup>:

Greeters: Edward and Joanne Sefara  
Assisting Minister: Vicki Michaels  
Lector: Joanne Sefara  
Usher: John Kostelny

### January 17<sup>th</sup>:

Greeters: John and Shirley Kostelny  
Assisting Minister: Brandon Michaels  
Lector: Carrie Watkiss  
Usher: John Kostelny

### January 24<sup>th</sup>:

Greeters: Larry Crachy and Karen Kubik  
Assisting Minister: John Broussard  
Lector: George Valek  
Usher: Janet Broussard

### January 31<sup>st</sup>:

Greeter: Carole Pollitz and Carl Busch  
Assisting Minister: Carrie Watkiss  
Lector: John Kostelny  
Usher: Fred Kuzel

**Sacristan and Altar Care:**  
Fred Kuzel

## FEBRUARY WORSHIP SERVERS

### February 7<sup>th</sup>:

Greeters: Paul and Carrie Watkiss  
Assisting Minister: Charles Matthies  
Lector: John Broussard  
Usher: Janet Broussard

### February 14<sup>th</sup>:

Greeter: Ann Kmet  
Assisting Minister: Vicki Michaels  
Lector: Fred Kuzel  
Usher: Fred Kuzel

### Ash Wednesday:

Greeters: John and Shirley Kostelny  
Assisting Minister: Brandon Michaels  
Lector: Tom Michaels  
Usher: John Kostelny

### February 21<sup>st</sup>:

Greeters: Larry Crachy and Karen Kubik  
Assisting Minister: John Broussard  
Lector: Charles Matthies  
Usher: Janet Broussard

### February 28<sup>th</sup>:

Greeters: Philip and Linda Painter  
Assisting Minister: Carrie Watkiss  
Lector: Jane Lauritsen  
Usher: Walter Cudecki

**Sacristan and Altar Care:**  
Janice Hapgood

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## December Announcements

- ★ 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.



## Memorial Flowers

- Dec. 6<sup>th</sup>:* In memory of dear husband +Larry Bakalich+ on the 92<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of his birth on December 7<sup>th</sup> by remembering wife Ruth.
- Dec. 13<sup>th</sup>:* In loving memory of beloved mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother +Mary Riban+ on the 19<sup>th</sup> anniversary of her death on December 19<sup>th</sup>, 2001 by remembering children Mildred Riban and Mike Riban, Jr. and family.



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

We will be starting off celebrating 2021 with number projects focusing on 20 along with winter hibernation and snow. We will end the month with a “Crazy Dazy Day” where we go crazy for preschool.

—Lisa Manganiello, Preschool Director

## The Star Signal

Matthew 2:1-12

*Not every journey toward the Christ  
starts like the magi's in darkness,  
but there might come  
a time when, in the empty hours  
of an otherwise unremarkable night,  
you have happened to look up at the usual sky,  
and noticed, almost by accident, between  
passages of gray beasts of slow-moving cloud  
the bright bloom of a strange star flowering,  
and something begins to open a little  
somewhere beneath your skin,  
as if that new wedge of light in the sky  
had inserted itself into your soul,  
not enough to cause you any hurt, but just  
enough that you feel a pang, the twinge  
of something like longing, as if your eyes  
in the silence have become ears  
in the darkness, and you are hearing  
a holy summons,  
distant but ringing like a silver trumpet  
in the chambers of your listening heart,  
and you gaze at that star where it stands  
in the sky dropping dust on the night horizon,  
and you think it might be signaling  
a holy Presence in the world  
and a road you can take to meet it,  
and that such a road, lit with such promise,  
might lead to a great adventure,  
where life becomes challenged  
and changed and as new as the sky  
above a better world.  
And so you pack, and you leave  
on this journey, this journey  
where Christ is not only waiting  
but walking your road at your side,  
and you follow that light  
as it closes the distance,  
as it reaches deep within you,  
touching gifts  
you carry in your hand.*



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