

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 7/8

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.

Farewell and Godspeed to the Lauritsen's!



Soli Deo Gloria!



**To God Alone
Be Glory!**



A celebratory luncheon was held in thanksgiving for our shared ministry following the liturgy on June 1st, 2025.

Images of the Season for Summer

Summertime. Perhaps you can hardly say the word without hearing, somewhere in the back of your mind, an earthy soprano voice singing the words from George Gershwin's opera, *Porgy and Bess*, "Summertime, and the livin' is easy." That's what summer is about—taking it easy. Schools close down, factories slow production, offices work with skeleton staffs. It's time for vacation, time to relax, ease up, sleep in, chill out. It is vacation time, whatever that may mean. For some it's travel—mountains or shore, down the road or over the sea. For some it's a hammock in the backyard. It may be catching up with the weeds in the garden or the novels you've been meaning to read. It may be swimming lessons or soccer camp or hot dogs on the grill or just sitting in the sun.

Most of all, summertime is about living. It's about having time, time for yourself, time to do what's important. Vacation doesn't require travel or equipment or expense. It only requires a sense of priorities. What's important to you? What makes you who you are? The answers to those questions will tell you how to make yourself new, how to renew yourself. And another word for that is re-creation—recreation. Vacation is about renewal, whatever that means for you.

For the church summer often means vacation, too, in the traditional sense. It can be a time of low attendance, low activity, low energy. Often it means that summer is when nothing much happens. It is simply a holding pattern, waiting until September when the real business of living will resume. But if vacation is indeed about living, then the same should be true for the church. Summer is for re-creation here, too.

Summer worship should provide an opportunity for renewal, but that does not necessarily mean that it should be easy-going or unchallenging. Our theological understanding of Sunday is that it is not only a day of rest but also, and indeed primarily, a day of worship. During the summer as throughout the year we come to church not to escape from the world but to enter into relationship with it more fully. Our worship should be asking the same questions about priorities that shape what we do with our vacation time. What matters most to us as Christians? What makes us who we are? How do we live in a way that gives us joy and fulfillment?

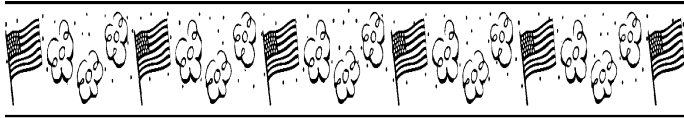
All of us need re-creation. Summer worship is a chance to discover what that means. Traditionally the readings for the Sundays after Pentecost have focused on the nature of faith and the Christian life. While that might seem demanding for a summer Sunday, it is in fact exactly what summer is about: living.

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Social scientists and economists tell us that the pattern of vacationing for U.S. workers has changed in recent years. The customary two weeks away in mid-summer is less and less common, replaced by more frequent but briefer breaks spread throughout the year. But whether we are on vacation or not, the longer days and warmer weather continue to make summer a season that is slower and more relaxed. The images of renewal and recreation remain appropriate for worship in these summer months, but those images also point to the need to carry them into the other seasons as well. One of the tasks of the church, carried out in worship and in learning, is to equip the saints for ministry. Just as vacation sends us back to our daily tasks re-energized, so worship sends us out to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the prisoner, and speak God's word of love.

Summertime. It's about relaxing, growing, believing, serving. Mostly, it's about living.

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Summer Solstice Reminds Us of God's Grace to All

Why it matters that the Lord lets the sun rise on both the evil and on the good. By Hannah Anderson (June 17th, 2022)

On June 21st the sun hung in the sky over the Northern Hemisphere for what is colloquially known as the “longest day of the year.” In reality, the sun’s position will be no different than usual, but our perception of it will be different owing to the earth’s tilt on its axis as it orbits the sun.

Where I live in the mid-Atlantic, we’ll enjoy over fourteen hours of sunlight, but for those at the farthest reaches north—in places like Svalbard, Norway—the sun will simply never set. (Folks in the Southern Hemisphere will enjoy the same phenomenon six months later when the seasons change.)

Traditionally, the summer solstice has been a time of celebration, bonfires, and revelry—inspiring stories like Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* and even the placement of architectural wonders like Stonehenge and the Great Pyramid of Giza.

For many pagan cultures, midsummer was a time of ritual and sacrifice as humans worshiped the sun as the source of life. But there’s a difference between worshiping the sun and worshiping by the sun. And surprisingly, at least to our modern sensibilities, Scripture invites us to the latter.

Psalms 19—the psalm that tells us that “the heavens declare the glory of God”—calls attention to the sun’s orbit as it traces a path across the sky. The author likens it to an athlete running around a racetrack:

*It rises at one end of the heavens
and makes its circuit to the other;
nothing is deprived of its warmth* (v. 6).

For the psalmist, the arc of the sun’s orbit (the same orbit that makes the summer solstice both possible and predictable) reveals something of God’s character. Elsewhere, the Scripture alludes to the role of the sun’s orbit in delineating “signs and seasons” (Gen. 1:14–19, NKJV)—while the consistent passage of the seasons tells of the faithfulness of God himself. As the Lord promises Noah after the flood,

*As long as the earth endures,
seedtime and harvest,
cold and heat,
summer and winter,
day and night
will never cease* (Gen. 8:22).

Finding theological truth in natural phenomena may feel odd to modern readers—and perhaps it might even smack of paganism—but this hermeneutic falls squarely within the tradition of natural theology or general revelation.

The natural world is one of the primary ways God has revealed himself to humanity since the beginning of time. And so, while we’re more accustomed to knowing God through holy texts and prophetic utterances, saints throughout history have found him through his creation.

In the early 13th-century hymn “Canticle of the Sun” (based on Psalm 104), Saint Francis of Assisi worships God via the greatness of the sun:

*Most High, all powerful, good Lord,
Yours are the praises, the glory, the honor,
and all blessing.
To You alone, Most High, do they belong,
and no man is worthy to mention Your name
Be praised, my Lord, through all your creatures,
especially through my lord Brother Sun,
who brings the day; and you give light through him.
And he is beautiful and radiant in all his splendor!
Of you, Most High, he bears the likeness.*

But general revelation also carries a kind of warning, reminding us of where we stand in relationship to our Creator. As much as we might minimize our helplessness or try to escape the uncomfortable truth of our dependence, the natural world has a way of snapping us back to reality.

When Job’s friends chide him for blaming God for his suffering, Job reminds them that even animals know their well-being rests in the hands of the Creator. “Ask the animals, and they will teach you, or the birds in the sky, and they will tell you; or speak to the earth, and it will teach you, or let the fish in the sea inform you. Which of all these does not know that the hand of the Lord has done this? In his hand is the life of every creature and the breath of all mankind” (Job 12:7–10).

We simply cannot escape the testimony of creation: We are dependent creatures whose only hope is in our Creator.

As we approach the summer solstice, our earth circling around a blazing mass of glory, I can’t help but think about how fragile our life on this planet is. Just the right tilt of the axis, just the right distance, just the right length of orbit—all sustained by the One who first set it in motion and maintains it in a continual act of creation.

In light of all this, I understand why people have worshiped the sun. I understand how easy it would be to see the sun itself as your source of life, to realize how dependent we are on its rays and respond accordingly. But our dependence is only half the story. The natural world—the sun specifically—also reveals the goodness and grace of the God on which we depend.

Returning to Psalm 19, David suggests that God’s glory is like the sun’s heat: “nothing is deprived of its warmth” (v. 6). God’s presence pervades every nook and cranny of the earth. It “goes out into all the earth ... to the ends of the world” (v. 4).

But even as God generously reveals himself as the source of our lives, he also shows himself to be generous—and this grace changes us.

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In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus appeals to the sun’s orbit to teach a new ethic of the kingdom of heaven. As children of our Father, he says, we must love not only our neighbors but also our enemies and pray for those who persecute us. And we must do this because this is what our Father does.

Our Father “causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous” (Matt. 5:45). He doesn’t differentiate between those who deserve the warming rays of the sun and those who don’t; he extends the grace of life to all—even to those who resist or hate him.

When we feel the glow of the sun on our faces, when we feast under its lengthening rays, we remember that our lives are sustained by its warmth in very real and practical ways. The energy that shines from heaven allows plants to grow and sustains all those who call this earth home. That light falls on everyone—regardless of whether we love and worship the Creator or not—and it is the same light that instructs us in his ways.

When self-reliance and ingratitude tempt us to forget the source of life (Jer. 5:24), we pray that God’s kindness will, like the sun, continue to shine on us and lead us to repentance. We pray that we will be open to what this light teaches us and that we will be made more like our Father in heaven—a Father so rich and so kind that the rays of his love permeate the whole earth, so that nothing can be hidden from them.

Hannah Anderson is the author of Turning of Days, All That’s Good, and Humble Roots: How Humility Grounds and Nourishes Your Soul. Reprinted from Christianity Today.



From the Finance Committee

As Chairperson of the Finance Committee I have been asked by several members of the congregation how our donations are being used. In march I presented our finances for January and February. Below is an updated summary for the first 5 months of 2025. On the bulletin board in the dining hall is the a detailed report for your review.

The following chart provides transparency. Hopefully it gives a better understanding of where donations are being used and where we need greater support. The following is through the end of May audited.

Category	Income	Expenses	Gain/Loss
Administration	\$25,675.93	\$ 12,697.27	\$ 12,978.66
Admin. (Tax/mileage)	\$ 0.00	\$ 4,563.02	\$ (4,563.02)
Benevolence	\$ 3,138.50	\$ 4,667.00	\$ (1,528.50)
Child Care (RPS)	\$ 6,471.25	\$ 5,879.30	\$ 591.95
Endowment	\$ 7,988.10	\$ 1,499.50	\$ 6,488.60
Maintenance	\$ 5,362.00	\$ 19,469.00	\$ (14,107.00)
Payroll	\$ 700.00	\$ 44,199.52	\$ (43,499.52)
Receipts	\$48,728.70	\$ 0.00	\$ 48,728.70
<i>(Receipts include current giving, freewill, special, special appeal, and capital improvements)</i>			
Utilities	0.00	\$ 17,585.67	\$ (17,585.67)
Worship	\$ 748.00	\$ 4,846.48	\$ (4,098.48)
=====	=====	=====	=====
YEAR TO DATE	\$98,812.48	\$115,406.76	\$ (16,594.28)

–submitted by John Kostelny



Summer Prayer

Father, Creator of all, Thank You for summer!

Thank you for the warmth of the sun
and the increased daylight.
Thank You for the beauty I see all around me and
for the opportunity to be outside and enjoy Your
creation.
Thank You for the increased time I have to be
with my friends and family,
and for the more casual pace of the summer season.

Draw me closer to You this summer.
Teach me how I can pray
no matter where I am or what I am doing.
Warm my soul with the awareness of Your presence
and light my path with Your Word and Counsel.
As I enjoy Your creation, create in me
a pure heart and a hunger and a thirst for You.
Amen.
- Author Unknown

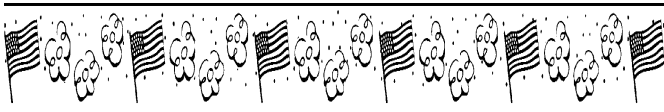
–submitted by Charles Matthies

Meditation for the Day, July 7th

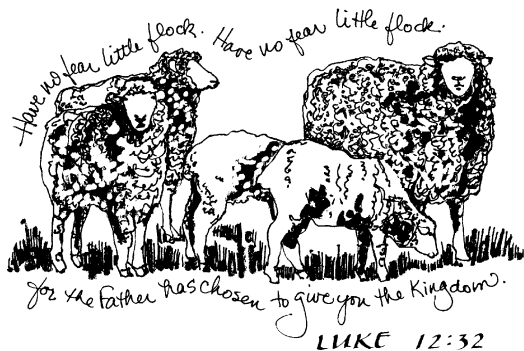
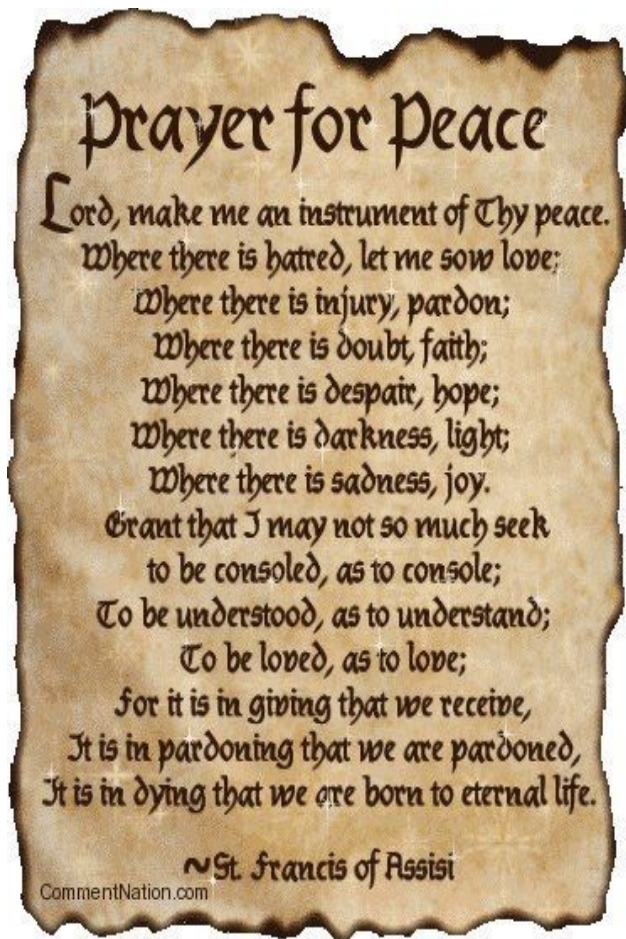
Painful as the present time may be, you will one day see the reason for it. You will see that it was not only testing, but also a preparation for the life-work which you are to do. Have faith that your prayers and aspirations will someday be answered. Answered in a way that perhaps seems painful to you but is the only right way. Selfishness and pride often make us want things that are not good for us. They need to be burned out of our natures. We must be rid of the blocks which are holding us back, before we can expect our prayers to be answered.

Prayer for the Day
I pray that I may be willing to go through a time of testing. I pray that I may trust God for the outcome.

*Quoted from the app Twenty-Four Hours a Day.
Find recovery resources at Hazelden.*



DATED MATERIAL



A Graduate's Prayer

Dear Lord,
As I look toward the future
Bright hope conducts this prayer,
For I know the plans You have for me
Were wrought with divine care.

Holy Spirit, lead me.
Let me run at Your command,
Yet be still and know that You are God
When trouble is close at hand.

Your Word will be a lamp for me,
A guide to light my way,
A solid place to set my feet,
A compass when I stray.

May I live my life to praise You,
Not for fortune, nor for fame,
May everything I say and do
Bring glory to Your name.

May my eyes stay fixed upon You
As I seek the way that's pure,
Tasting Your love and goodness
Sleeping and rising secure.

Planted by Your living streams
I'll delight in all Your ways,
Hidden by Your sheltering wings
With new mercies for each day.

Even in a dangerous land
When storms threaten to destroy,
At the cross I'll stand upon the Rock
My Strength, my Hope, my Joy.

Dear Lord, show me Your favor,
At all times keep me blessed,
May Your face ever shine upon me,
With peace and perfect rest.

—Mary Fairchild

JULY WORSHIP SERVERS

July 6th:

Greeter: Ann Kmet
Assisting Minister: Carrie Watkiss
Lector: Beverly Tarbox
Live Stream: Fred Kuzel
Usher: George Valek

July 13th:

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

July 20th:

Greeter: Carrie Watkiss
Assisting Minister: Tom Myers
Lector: John Kostelny
Live Stream: Paul Watkiss
Usher: John Kostelny

July 27th:

Greeters: Edward and Joanne Sefara
Assisting Minister: Beverly Tarbox
Lectors: Gary and Jocelyn Drahos
Live Stream: John Broussard
Usher: Rafael Martinez

Sacristan and Altar Care:

Fred Kuzel and John and Janet Broussard

SEPTEMBER WORSHIP SERVERS

September 7th:

Greeter: Staci Harden
Assisting Minister: Tom Myers
Lector: Philip Painter
Live Stream: Charles Matthies
Usher: Rafael Martinez

September 14th:

Greeters: Larry Crachy and Karen Kubik
Assisting Minister: Carrie Watkiss
Lector: Joanne Sefara
Live Stream: Paul Watkiss
Usher: Fred Kuzel

September 21st:

Greeter: Fred Kuzel
Assisting Minister: Charles Matthies
Lector: Beverly Tarbox
Live Stream: John Broussard
Usher: Janet Broussard

September 28th:

Greeter: Karyn Bute
Assisting Minister: Beverly Tarbox
Lectors: Paul and Carrie Watkiss
Live Stream: Fred Kuzel
Usher: John Kostelny

Sacristan and Altar Care:

Fred Kuzel

AUGUST WORSHIP SERVERS

August 3rd:

Greeter: Karyn Bute
Assisting Minister: Vicki Michaels
Lector: George Valek
Live Stream: Fred Kuzel
Usher: George Valek

August 10th:

Greeters: John and Shirley Kostelny
Assisting Minister: Carrie Watkiss
Lector: Aidan Altavilla
Live Stream: Charles Matthies
Usher: Fred Kuzel

August 17th:

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

August 24th:

Greeters: Walter and Judith Cudecki
Assisting Minister: Beverly Tarbox
Lector: Tom Myers
Live Stream: John Broussard
Usher: Walter Cudecki

August 31st:

Greeter: Ann Kmet
Assisting Minister: John Broussard
Lector: Charles Matthies
Live Stream: Fred Kuzel
Usher: John Kostelny

Sacristan and Altar Care:

Edward and Joanne Sefara

Memorial Flowers

June 22nd: In loving memory of beloved mother +Arlene Gana+ on the anniversary of her death by remembering daughter Adrienne Gana, sister Audrey Bucz, and nephew Brian Bucz.



Birthdays and Anniversaries

JULY

July 4: Carl Busch III	July 14: Janet Broussard
July 5: Joanne Sefara	July 17: John Kostelny
July 6: Karyn Bute	July 18: Timothy Dlhý
July 9: Lee Drahos	Megan Drahos
Robert Kubik	July 22: Elizabeth Cudecki
July 11: Hannah Decosola	July 26: Bode Smith
July 13: Amanda Meyers	July 30: Keith Altavilla

Anniversaries

July 7, 1979: John and Linda McShane
 July 11, 2015: Thomas and Kathryn Murray
 July 19, 1986: Dennis and Jane Lauritsen
 July 20, 2019: David and Jessica Barajas
 July 25, 1997: Timothy and Pamela Dlhý

AUGUST

Aug. 1: James D'Alexander	Aug. 18: Nicole Smith
Milton Podzamsky	Aug. 22: George Valek III
Aug. 5: Sofia Cobrda	Aug. 23: Garry Horak, Jr.
Aug. 7: Jenean Sawyer	Aug. 24: Adrienne Milkulka
Aug. 10: Kristine Boike	Aug. 25: Daniel Mikulka
George Hodul	Aug. 26: Carole Pollitz
Bradley Ruska	Aug. 28: Matthew G. Decosola
Aug. 12: Larry Crachy	Steven Deshazer
Aug. 13: Vlado Vercimak	Brandon Michaels
Aug. 16: Adrienne Gana	Aug. 29: Matthew J. Decosola
Daniel Tornil	Annika Diette
	Theodore Murray

Anniversaries

August 13, 2022: Samuel and Gianna Lauritsen
 August 15, 1997: Donald and Elaine Haase
 August 25, 2018: Jacob and Aaliah Czerak
 August 27, 1994: Daniel and Adrienne Mikulka

Donations made easy

Donations to Sts. Peter and Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church can be made using the Zelle service from your bank. For some, this may provide a more convenient way to donate on a regular weekly basis as well as before or after an event or for a special occasion. This service should not charge you or the church a service fee, avoids the need for a paper check, and gets your donation to the church as quickly as possible. Other ways of donating continue to be gratefully received. Here are some easy steps to follow: Zelle is supported by most banking applications, rather than being a standalone app. You simply go to your online banking website or phone app, go to the Zelle interface, and add Sts. Peter and Paul as a recipient via our e-mail address: donations@stspeterandpaulriverside.org. From there, you may send any amount of money with a note as to what it is for. The money will automatically be accepted into our account. We will get a notification at that e-mail address that you done so. Thank you so much for your ongoing support.

Memorials and Honorariums

❖ For the Church ❖

A loving Father's Day memorial to fathers +Joseph Hassel+ and +Paul Gavac+, grandfather +Sam Gavac+ and great-grandfathers +Pavel Hluchy+ and +Pavel Gavac+ by Joe, John and Sheryl Hassel, and Sarah Gavac.
 In loving memory of dear grandmother +Anne Gavac+ on the 105th anniversary of her birth on July 1, 1920 by remembering grandchildren Joe, John and Sheryl Hassel, and Sarah Gavac.
 In loving memory of +Anne Gavac+ on the 105th anniversary of her birth on July 1, 1920 by remembering daughter Susan Hassel.
 In loving memory of beloved mother +Arlene Gana+ on the anniversary of her death by remembering daughter Adrienne Gana, sister Audrey Bucz, and nephew Brian Bucz.
 Cynthia Sajid, in memory of grandparents +Anna+ and +Charles Černak+.
 Allan Stevo, in memory of grandparents +Anna+ and +Charles Černak+.
 Dr. Robert Kany, Liz and Mark Rouck and Family, in memory of +Dolores Krc+ on the first anniversary of her passing on June 16th. (*building maintenance fund*).
 In memory of son, husband, and father +Paul Babej+ on the 4th anniversary of his passing by remembering mother Magda Babej and family in Slovakia, and Paul's wife and children from the United States.
 John and Janet Broussard, in memory of +Mark Douce+.

❖ In memory of +Rose Tornil+ ❖

Vera Borysek
 Edward and Joanne Sefara
 Mark and Elizabeth Rouck
 Charles Matthies
 John and Janet Broussard
 Ann Vana
 Sandra and Peter Spilotro
 Emil and Helena Galdun
 Lois Michaels

"Music has a great advantage: without mentioning anything, it can say everything."

—Ilya Ehrenburg

April 2025	
Current, Benevolence and Freewill Offerings	
Budgeted Offering: \$2,615.00	
Date	Offering
4/6	\$ 815.00
4/13	\$2,160.00
4/20	\$1,875.00
4/27	\$2,274.00
May 2025	
Current, Benevolence and Freewill Offerings	
Budgeted Offering: \$2,615.00	
Date	Offering
5/4	\$ 790.00
5/11	\$1,015.00
5/18	\$1,065.00
5/25	\$1,455.70