

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

Volume 48

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Issue 6

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.

Images of the Season

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.

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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Father's Day Prayer

*God our Father,
in your wisdom and love you made all things.
Bless these men,
that they may be strengthened as Christian fathers.
Let the example of their faith and love shine forth.
Grant that we, their sons and daughters,
may honor them always
with a spirit of profound respect.*

*Grant this through Christ our Lord.
Amen*





Our Flag Flies High: A Flag Day Poem

*The U.S. flag is a symbol
Of what Americans treasure;
It represent the values
We cherish beyond measure.*

*Our flag flies high for freedom,
For legal equality,
For Constitutional rights,
And justice for you and me.*

*Our flag flies high for bravery,
The courage it takes to fight
And even give our lives
For what we know is right.*

*Our flag flies high for compassion;
We quickly help those in need;
When there's a need for service,
Americans take the lead.*

*The American flag is an icon,
Representing the American way;
Our hearts swell with emotion,
When we see it ripple and sway.*

...Joanna Fuchs



Memorial Flowers

May 10th: In loving memory of dear mother and grandmother +Ramona Suffern+ on the 8th anniversary of her passing today by remembering children Carla Boatright, Brian Suffern, Carrie Watkiss, and their loving families.

Note: The cost of altar flowers beginning April 1st has increased to \$25.00 per vase.



- | | | | |
|----------|------------------|----------|-----------------|
| June 2: | Ann Kasper | June 20: | Jessica Barajas |
| June 5: | Peyton Murray | | Clare Ruska |
| June 6: | Nico Tarbox | June 21: | Lana Papadatos |
| June 7: | Paul Drahos | June 22: | Jillian Collins |
| June 8: | Linda Painter | June 24: | Jonathan Haase |
| June 10: | Betty Buffa | June 25: | Judith Cudecki |
| | David McShane | | Staci Harden |
| June 18: | Krystyna Ritacco | June 30: | Rowan Smith |



Anniversaries

- June 6, 1983: BettyAnn Mocek and Adam Walker
- June 7, 2014: Ashish and Kristina Patel
- June 13, 1992: Paul and Carrie Watkiss
- June 15, 2024: Carl and Deborah Busch III
- June 20, 1987: Martin and Ann Pennino
- June 21, 1980: Philip and Linda Painter
- June 24, 1973: Anita and Lester Henley
- June 25, 1988: Thomas and Vicki Michaels



WHY DOES YOUR TEACHER EAT WITH
SINNERS AND TAX COLLECTORS?
MATTHEW 23:11

Memorials and Honorariums

❖ For the Church ❖

A loving Mother's Day memorial to grandmothers +Anne Gavac+ and +Betty Hassel+, great-grandmothers +Suzanna Hluchy+ and +Suzanna Gavac+ by remembering Joe, John and Sheryl Hassel, and Sarah Gavac.

Adolf and Ellen Heimann in celebration of their 62nd wedding anniversary on May 9th.

❖ In memory of Gerald "J.T." Tarbox ❖

David Richards, in memory of brother-in-law

Edward and Joanne Sefara

Tom and Vicki Michaels

John and Janet Broussard

Lois Michaels

Jennifer Bezold

Gordon and Anne Reiher

Brian and Donna Carroll

Nicholas and Tammy Reiher

Fred Kuzel

Charles Matthies

John and Shirley Kostelny

Ann Kmet

William Boor

Karyn Bute

JUNE WORSHIP SERVERS

June 7th:

Greeter: Ann Kmet
Assisting Minister: Beverly Tarbox
Lector: George Valek
Live Stream: Charles Matthies
Usher: John Kostelny

June 14th:

Greeters: Edward and Joanne Sefara
Assisting Minister: Charles Matthies
Lector: Joanne Sefara
Live Stream: Paul Watkiss
Usher: Janet Broussard

June 21st:

Greeters: Walter and Judith Cudecki
Assisting Minister: Vicki Michaels
Lectors: Paul and Carrie Watkiss
Live Stream: John Broussard
Usher: Walter Cudecki

June 28th:

Greeters: Karyn Bute
Assisting Minister: Tom Myers
Lector: Beverly Tarbox
Live Stream: Fred Kuzel
Usher: George Valek

Sacristan and Altar Care:

Fred Kuzel

JULY WORSHIP SERVERS

July 5th:

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

July 12th:

Greeter: John and Shirley Kostelny
Assisting Minister: John Broussard
Lectors: Gary and Jocelyn Drahos
Live Stream: Paul Watkiss
Usher: John Kostelny

July 19th:

Greeters: Larry Crachy and Karen Kubik
Assisting Minister: Beverly Tarbox
Lector: John Kostelny
Live Stream: John Broussard
Usher: Walter Cudecki

July 26th:

Greeter: Staci Harden
Assisting Minister: Charles Matthies
Lector: Tom Myers
Live Stream: Fred Kuzel
Usher: George Valek

Sacristan and Altar Care:

Fred Kuzel and John and Janet Broussard

Father's Day

Father's Day is celebrated annually on the third Sunday in June in the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, India, and a number of other countries around the world. Ever wondered how Father's Day came to be? It's more than a Hallmark holiday. Father's Day was first celebrated after the worst mining accident in U. S. history.

Who "Invented" Father's Day?

Like Mother's Day, the modern American version of Father's Day has a history that goes well beyond greeting cards.

The first known Father's Day service occurred in Fairmont, West Virginia, on July 5, 1908, after hundreds of men died in the worst mining accident in U.S. history. The Sunday service happened because of the efforts of Grace Golden Clayton, the daughter of a dedicated reverend.

While missing her own dad, who had died in 1896, Clayton wanted to honor the many fathers who had died in the mining explosion, which killed more than 360 men and boys, and left about 1,000 children fatherless. Although the Fairmont service was the first known to honor fathers, it did not turn into an annual event, nor was the idea promoted.

Father's Day Gains Momentum

Several other people across the nation had similar ideas throughout the years, but Mrs. Sonora Smart Dodd is credited for being the one to popularize it, starting events that led to Father's Day becoming a U. S. National holiday.

Her story began as she sat listening to a Mother's Day sermon in 1909. Dodd thought that it might be nice to honor fathers as well. Her father, William Smart, had raised his six children alone on his farm in Washington after his wife died giving birth.

Dodd proposed to the Spokane Ministerial Association and the YMCA that they celebrated a 'father's day'. She chose the 5th of June because it was her father's birthday.

The idea received strong support, but the good ministers of Spokane asked that the day be changed to give them extra time to prepare sermons on the unexplored subject of fathers. The first Father's Day in Spokane, Washington, was observed on June 19, 1910 (the third Sunday in June) and became an annual event there. Soon, the other towns had their own celebrations.

From Local Celebration to National Holiday

In spite of widespread support, Father's Day did not become a permanent national holiday for many years. The first bill was introduced in Congress in 1913, but in spite of encouragement by President Woodrow Wilson, it did not pass. In 1966, Lyndon Johnson issued a proclamation designating the third Sunday in June to honor fathers.

Finally, in 1972, President Richard Nixon signed a law declaring that Father's Day be celebrated annually on the third Sunday in June. It has been an official, permanent national holiday ever since.

Puzzle of the Month:

I hire parsons.
(Form a single word from this sentence.)
Puzzle answer on the back page.

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DATED MATERIAL

A Birthday Blessing

Blessed be the mind that dreamed the day
The blueprint of your life
Would begin to glow on earth,
Illuminating all the faces and voices
That would arrive to invite
Your soul to growth.

Praised be your father and mother,
Who loved you before you were,
And trusted to call you here
With no idea who you would be.

Blessed be those who have loved you
Into becoming who you were meant to be,
Blessed be those who have crossed your life
With dark gifts of hurt and loss
That have helped to school your mind
In the art of disappointment.

When desolation surrounded you,
Blessed be those who looked for you
And found you, their kind hands
Urgent to open a blue window
In the gray wall formed around you.

Blessed be the gifts you never notice,
Your health, eyes to behold the world,
Thoughts to countenance the unknown,
Memory to harvest vanished days,
Your heart to feel the world's waves,
Your breath to breathe the nourishment
Of distance made intimate by earth.

On this echoing-day of your birth,
May you open the gift of solitude
In order to receive your soul;
Enter the generosity of silence
To hear your hidden heart;
Know the serenity of stillness
To be enfolded anew
By the miracle of your being.

—John O'Donohue



“Free man is by necessity insecure; thinking man by necessity uncertain.”

By Erich Fromm

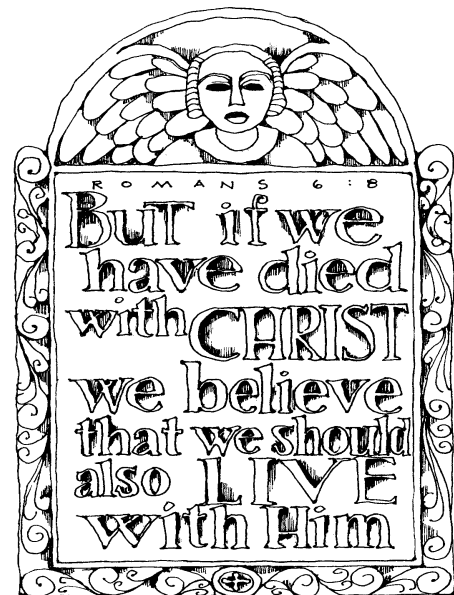
We hear comments like “Hang in there!” “Don’t quit now,” and “Don’t give up the ship!” When our outlook is gloomy and pessimistic, we should remember we are not in charge and we are not all-knowing. We cannot predict what will be around the next corner. If a difficult problem looms before us, we cannot be sure what help might also be there for us to meet the problem.

Our compulsion for control tempts us to quit and give ourselves over to defeat. Then the outcome would be settled and predictable. We no longer would have to live with the insecurity of not knowing the future. When we are tempted to indulge in our addictive ways, or to return to a relationship that isn’t good for us, or to face a painful problem, it helps to recall that change is a basic fact of life. However stressful this moment is, it will change. Not at our command, but it will change. We aren’t in control of outcomes, but we can choose now to “hang in there” and to give our energy only toward positive solutions.

May I have the serenity to accept the process and the courage to be true to my part. I will leave outcomes for the future.

Quoted from the app Touchstones.

Find recovery resources at www.hazeldenbettyford.org .



Puzzle answer: Parishioners

Fourth Sunday of Easter-April 26, 2026

Sermon by Rev. Marnie Rourke

Well, my sermon is not written my normal way. I'm having a conversation with God and I recorded it for you rather than doing a regular type sermon. So, I hope you get the message and I hope you hear the love.

And please know, I should have said this. I learned when I was hitchhiking all over Ireland, England, Scotland, and Wales that sheep do know the shepherd's voice. A shepherd calls a sheep and they follow. They don't follow the other guy. And over there, they don't have fences to hold in the sheep. They have spots on the hind quarters that say, "Hi, I'm blue. I'm pink. I'm green, and I belong to that shepherd." So all the sheep are good. All of them around and all of them have shepherds.

So let us pray.

The Lord is my shepherd.

I really need a good shepherd because I really am a lost sheep. Yep. Me. But Lord, you know, I don't have time for you to lead me. Maybe tomorrow or the next day. Look, I don't even have time to write this sermon. Can't you write it for me? As a lost sheep, I don't have much worth saying. Presidents. They have ghost writers. Like Obama. Maybe it was his wife. Good Shepherd, you could be mine if you wanted to.

I shall not want.

I know that I didn't actually want for the necessities of life, Lord, like I did when I was young and restless and stole my roommate's food. But there are so many things I could use. Oh, a fancy toaster oven that air fries and well, a new bathtub. Oh, and um a bigger bank account. Come to think of it, there's a lot of things I want. I wouldn't complain if a church called me to be their part-time pastor or if my retirement income went up a little.

He makes me lie down in green pastures.

Well, yes, you did once. I don't suppose you could arrange another little trip to Ireland, could you? It's only been 50 years and NASA's taking my daughter there in October. Yes, I can always walk down the street. There's a park at the end of the block and through that park, but I want green pastures. And I certainly don't have time to drive into the country or up to Lutherdale just to lie down in some grassy meadow every time I want to.

He leads me besides still waters.

A pleasant enough phrase. I hope someday in heaven I'll take just such a walk with you good shepherd. But you know how it is here. There's always a million things to do. Besides, the only reason the water is still is because it's so polluted, nothing can live in it anymore.

He restores my soul.

He what? Restores. Like when you take an old chest of drawers and refinish it so you can use it some more. That's a lot of work, isn't it? Well, if that's what you want, Lord, go ahead. But I can keep on using my old soul just the way it is. Besides, you don't think you can trick me into some more work, do you? I've been retired twice enough, and more grace doesn't change my learning contract. Just ask Pastor Mark, my internship supervisors. He's up there with you at dinner table now.

He leads me in right paths for his name's sake.

And all along I thought you were keeping me on the straight and narrow path just so our meals on wheels lunches could be delivered without my getting into an accident. Or I could lead another funeral. But I really am all for righteousness, Lord. But I have so many other things to do. Could we postpone this little jaunt for a while? Just for a while. But don't forget to put some gas in my tank. I've been running low lately. And um, well, everything costs more.

Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me.

You will be with me, with me forever, Lord, won't you? I can't go through another day all by myself. And I don't like walking in the dark shadows that are everywhere at night. I might be a lost sheep, but I sure don't want to get lost in the dark like Satan.

Your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

How about a little more staff and a little less rod? What are you trying to do? Make me a saint? It's hard enough being a Christian, especially when you're also pastor, even if you are retired.

You prepare a table for me in the presence of my enemies.

So far, it's been me watching my enemies, feasting, and making merry. Let's show them. I'm not too old for someone to die and leave me thousands. Then I could afford to move into independent living for seniors where they really do serve gourmet meals. And Lord, you know I will never stop baking cookies for my grandkids. Yes, Lord. They're not my enemies. Duh.

You anoint my head with oil.

What for? I'm tired of people telling me my nose is shiny.

My cup overflows.

Well, maybe not. Actually, there are a few more things I would like that I forgot to mention. A new car. Mine's only 19 years old. Lord, a new mattress. Even a new bed. Okay, one more chance to worship at the old LSTC.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life. And I shall dwell in the house of the Lord my whole life long.

I'm kind of busy right now, Lord, but you still have room for me, don't you? Won't you? Can't you?

The Lord is my shepherd.

Lord, don't you ever get tired of looking for me when I keep getting lost all the time? I shall not want. Yes, Lord. My life has been full of difficult moments, but you've made sure that I was never so alone that somebody didn't give me the love I needed like my BFF and her parents did.

He makes me lie down in green pastures.

Oh Lord, there is never a day when your creation doesn't show me a masterpiece that puts my heart at ease.

—continued on back side...

He leads me beside still waters.

Thanks Lord for the pastor who held me in his loving arms when I was small and afraid when he poured the water over me. Thank you for the gift of blessing me with the gift of baptizing my own daughter whose birthday was this week. Making it possible for me to be certain that no matter what happened or how I fail, your spirit will be there to give her peace.

He restores my soul.

Every time I confess my sins to you, you forgive me. And I can't tell you how good it always feels. I only hope I can learn to be as nice to other people as you always are to me.

He leads me in right paths for his name's sake.

Lord, only you know where you want me to go. Lead me and I will always follow. Please don't let anybody miss me when I'm gone. Let me leave your love with them so they will never be lonely.

Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil, for you are with me.

Lord, with you beside me, I can face every temptation. But we're all afraid of dying. When you stay close like you are now, I find it easier to keep on believing and hoping in the resurrection. Just like I've always told everyone at all the funerals I had the joy of leading to do. Just keep on believing. Just keep on believing.

Your rod and staff comfort me.

You keep on pushing me towards your people. And though it's hard, I keep trying, Lord, because the closer I get to your children, the closer I stay to you. And we are all, we are all looking for you, Lord.

You prepared table for me in the presence of my enemies.

Thank you, Lord, for helping us overcome our differences. We know that we are forgiven and not forgotten. Even though we forget our sins, we forget them as best we can in order to love one another. Thank you for giving us your body and blood to eat so that we no longer hunger. Thank you for strengthening us with your love.

You anoint my head with oil.

Not just ashes. Why me, Lord? For I am chief among all sinners. I do not deserve your blessing.

My cup overflows.

Praise to you, my Lord, my God. How can I ever stop telling the world and the person I see every time I look in the mirror about all the wonders of your love? Your love that keeps flowing over, flowing over, absolutely everything.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life and I like you will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Be with me, Lord, that as I prepare room for you in my heart, you might become the center of life, of my life. For just this moment, let your kingdom come. For I trust in you to love us all, both now and forever. Amen.

April 2026
Current, Benevolence and Freewill Offering
Budgeted Offering: \$1,827.00

<u>Date</u>	<u>Offering</u>
4/5	\$ 2,015.00
4/12	\$ 1,340.00
4/19	\$ 1,180.00
4/26	\$14,942.00

Benevolence is our commitment to SZS and ELCA missionary support. The budget's current need will be adjusted when a new pastor accepts our call.

Donations are welcome via Zelle at donations@stspeterandpaulriverside.org.



Thank you for your generosity...

Our sincere appreciation to Philip and Linda Painter for their generous offer to match contributions received during February and March of 2026. Offerings given to current, the building maintenance fund, special, and the Mary Sasuta funeral were matched at 50 percent. We ask God's blessings on the Painters for their generosity and commitment.

—Charles Matthies and the Finance Committee



Save the date...

Join Us for
**OUTDOOR
WORSHIP**

Sunday, July 12th, 10:15 a.m.