

The

St. Peter's

Voice

Of

January 2017

From the Pastor and Ruth:

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. And the Word became flesh, and has lived among us, full of grace and truth. John 1:1 and 1:14

As another busy Christmas season winds to its close, we would like to thank everyone who worked so hard to make our Christmas celebrations at St. Peter's so successful and wonderful this year. Thank you very much for your hard work, dedication, and enthusiastic service during the very busy holiday season!

This was a difficult Christmas season personally for us. Ruth had total hip replacement surgery on December 1st, so, for us, this season revolved around her physical therapy and rehabilitation. We are very grateful for all the support that you have given to us in our time of need. Thank you very much for your help and for your prayers! We want to thank the members of the Church Council for taking care of things that we would normally do for the Christmas Eve Services and for approving safety railings in the parsonage, and we thank Randy Knoll for installing the railings for us.

We would also like to express our heartfelt thanks to God for protecting Ruth through her surgery and for her progress in recovery. But most of all, we offer thanks to God for the most precious gift that all of us received this Christmas –the gift of Jesus Christ. It is at Christmas that the Eternal One gave to us God's own self – in the little baby Jesus. In the wondrous birth of Jesus, we receive the love of God that forgives our sins and brings us new life and salvation, and that is the most precious Christmas gift of all!

Yours in Christ, Pastor Richard and Ruth

Highlights from the December 8th Council Meeting

Pastor Richard reported that attendance in November was good. Pastor reported on Ruth's progress following hip replacement surgery and on some of the challenges presented by the parsonage.

The Property Committee reported that a divider in the Social Hall is broken and will need to be repaired.

The Anniversary Committee reported that the 200th Anniversary Booklets will be distributed following the Christmas Eve Services.

The Fellowship Committee reported that 120 quarts of filling were made and sold. The Committee is looking for new volunteers.

The Social Ministry Committee reported that we will need new coordinators for the Christmas baskets in 2017.

Under New Business:

The budget line for the parish secretary was increased to \$15,000 and the amended proposed budget for 2017 was approved for action at the Annual Congregation Meeting.

A committee Sue Stroupauer, Todd Tice, Nancy Reichelt, and Pastor Richard interviewed Jeanette Seitzinger for the position of parish secretary and strongly recommended hiring her. The council unanimously voted to hire her for 25 hours weekly at the rate of \$ 10 per hour.

The Annual Congregation Meeting will be held on January 29, 2017, following the Worship Service, with a snow date of February 19, 2017.

The Council approved safety improvements at the parsonage: installing a 3rd floor handrail, installing a back porch handrail, and fixing the basement handrail. Randy Knoll will make the repairs.

The fund balances as of November 30th were:

General Fund -- \$ 684

General Savings -- \$ 145

Anniversary Fund -- \$ 2,712

Capital Improvement Fund -- \$ 10,068 (with \$ 6,869 designated for the video)

Memorial Fund -- \$ 7,174

Savings Certificate (Stew Zerbe Scholarship Fund) -- \$ 7,727

The Treasurer reported that in September it was necessary to dip into the Memorial Fund to pay some monthly bills, and that money has not yet been repaid.

Confirmation Class News

Our Middlers (Eighth Graders) and Seniors (Ninth Graders) are studying Martin Luther's Small Catechism, beginning with Luther's understanding of the Ten Commandments.

The Middler-Senior class will meet at 9:00 AM on January 14th, 21st, and 28th

The Junior Class (Seventh Graders) will meet on January 14th.

Annual Congregation Meeting

The Annual Congregation Meeting will be held on Sunday, January 29th, following the 9:00 AM Worship Service. All voting members (confirmed members who have both communed and contributed in 2016 or 2017) are invited to participate in the meeting with voice and vote. Others in attendance may be accorded the privilege of voice, at the discretion of the Council President. In the event of inclement weather or the lack of a quorum, the make-up date for the meeting will be February 19, 2017.

YOUTH MINISTRY:

On Saturday, December 3rd, youth and adults gathered in the Fellowship Hall to prepare for Christmas caroling to members of the congregation. Our youth worked on "gift bags" to be presented to our Shut-Ins. After prayer, lunch was shared to give us energy to sing joyfully of the Good News of Jesus' birth. Five adults, 2 teenagers, and 3 children then embarked on a trip filled with the Spirit of Christmas. As carolers, we witnessed the faith we shared with the Shut-Ins as Scripture was read, prayer offered, and hearts were joined in singing.

SOCIAL MINISTRY:

On Saturday, December 10th, 4 women from our congregation assembled Christmas food baskets that were distributed to 9 families within our church family. We are thankful for their work in the name of St. Peter's to make Christmas, to those in need, a more pleasant and joyful time.

WORSHIP:

On Sunday evening, December 11th, St. Peter's hosted the annual Church Community Christmas musical festival. Despite the rain and somewhat icy surfaces, the Church was packed from front to the back to gather for this event of sacred and holy music.

Special music was provided by instrumentalists and vocalists from the Pine Grove area churches, the 4th grade Cardinal Chorale and the weekday Church School students (kindergarten through 4th grades).

Five musical selections were performed by our mass choir made up of 26 women and 7 men. Our church vibrated with voices lifting up praises to our God for the eternal gift of God's beloved Son, our Savior, Jesus the Christ!

A special thanks to all who assisted to make this festival a memorable Christmas blessing. With great appreciation we acknowledge the organist, Rosemary Kramer, the pianist, Beverly Zimmerman, and the choir director, David Watson.

On Sunday morning, December 18th, St. Peter's Cantata Choir joyfully shared songs of our faith in celebration of the birth of our Savior Jesus, our Lord. Our choir prays that our songs of Christmas will be a blessing to all of us as we come together to worship the Christ Child. We give thanks for the gift of music in our church. A special Thank You to hours of practice put into this Cantata by our choir and our organist/director Michaelene Watson.

SUNDAY SCHOOL:

On Sunday morning, December 18th, our Sunday School Christmas program was held in our Church Fellowship Hall. Five High School students took their places as Innkeeper, Mary, Joseph, sound system handler, acolyte, and back stage manager with commitment.

Nineteen (maybe even 20) sheep, made up our Nursery, pre-K, Kindergarten, and 1st Graders, with excitement and enthusiasm brought to us in such a special way the joy that happens in our lives as we are in the Presence of Christ.

Ten angels and eight shepherds from 2nd through 8th Grades did everything with energy and seriousness to tell the Christmas story once again for us.

Every teacher and many others helped greatly to make the Christmas program something special for us to hold dear in our hearts now and for a long time. The prayers, greetings, songs, and music (provided by organist, Beverly Zimmerman and pianist, Barbara Hikes) aided supremely in making this event very meaningful for us all.

Yet another blessing of our program was the 12 young instrumentalists playing Christmas carols, under the direction of Barbara Hikes.

Thank you to all the workers who got the Stage & Fellowship Hall ready for the program and all who cleaned up following the program.

And, a special Thanks to all the parents, grandparents, family members, and church family in attendance for the Sunday School Christmas program!

It was an awesome time together!

UPDATE FROM ANNIVERSARY COMMITTEE:

The long-awaited 200th anniversary booklets have arrived! They contain many wonderful, interesting facts and photos; and are beautiful!

Distribution had begun on Christmas Eve as a special gift to the family and friends of St. Peter's. What a perfect way to close out our anniversary year of events! We hope that all who read the booklets will feel it is a worthwhile product, which will provide a meaningful memento of celebrating our church's 200 years; and a great culmination to our anniversary year.

If you haven't gotten a booklet or would like more copies, they are available in the church office, or you may speak to one of the 200th anniversary committee members.

Have a blessed 2017!

Wednesday Night Live

To begin celebrating the 500th Anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation, Pastor Richard is teaching an Adult Course on the History of the Christian Church. We started with the early Christianity, which was persecuted by the Roman Empire, and see how it grew into the official religion of the Roman Empire under Constantine and his successors. After a break in December, we are ready to resume our sessions.

*Sessions will be held on Wednesday evenings, from 7:00 PM to 8:00 PM.

*The schedule for January is: January 18th and 25th.

Memorial Gifts...To the Glory of God

(Heating Oil Fund)

\$100 in memory of Loved Ones by Kenny & Betty Bressler

(Capital Improvement Fund)

\$500 in memory of Roxanne Umbenhauer by The Family

\$100 in memory of Loved Ones by Carol Baldwin

\$50 in memory of Loved Ones by John, Kim, & John Henry Schroeder

(General Fund)

\$100 in memory of my parents, Norman and Alice Zimmerman by daughter, Pat Zimmerman

\$200 in loving memory of Robert A. Schneck by wife Geraldine, daughter Tracie, grandson Ryan, & granddaughter Kyla

\$150 in memory of parents Jean & Leo and brother Neil by Marty and Valerie Beck

\$100 in memory of Rich Wertz by wife and children

\$60 in memory of Dad & Mom – George & Sybilla Gilbert by children, Anna, Nancy, Mattie, Mary & Charles

\$20 in memory of Cora Siegel by Elsie, Wayne, Tony, Scott, Kris & Scotty Jr. Lindenmuth

\$10 in memory of Cora Siegel by Debra & Allan Holley

\$40 in memory of Cora Siegel & William L. Siegel by Barb & George Blain

\$300 in memory of Grandchildren, Kevin Krause, Ryan Lemke, & Samantha Lengel by Gary & Mary Bohr

\$500 in memory of Arthur “Pat” Aungst by his wife and children

\$60 in honor of Charles & Bessie Keefer for their 60th Anniversary on

December 22nd by Tina Keefer

(Memorial Fund)

\$50 in memory of wife, Carol Becker & parents, Ruth and Irvin Becker by son, Dick Becker and daughter, Kathy Toy

\$100 in memory of Catherine Hardenstein, “Our Pine Grove MOM”, by Dolph Moller & family

\$100 in memory of Harold Hepler by wife, Katheryn & family

\$50 in memory of our mother & grandmother, Mildred Wessner, by Margaret and Jack Modesto

\$100 in loving memory of Sam Baldwin by wife, Carol Baldwin

\$50 in loving memory of my husband, parents, and family by Barbara Zimmerman

\$100 in loving memory of husband Richard and grandson, Brandon by Beverly Zimmerman

\$200 in memory of John Strubhar by Reba Strubhar

\$50 in memory of Ryan Lemke by Robert & Sharon Lemke

\$100 in memory of Chester C. Luckenbill by the Rod Luckenbill family

\$50 in memory of Marlin Knoll by wife, Arlene

\$100 in memory of Sterling & Mary Jane Stauffer, Wayne Stauffer, and Todd Shadle by Brenda Shadle & family

\$100 in memory of Tom Miller and both of our parents by Betty Miller and family

\$200 in memory of Thelma Hubler by son, Allen Hubler

\$100 in memory of Grace & Kenneth Kreiser by Kevin, Patti, Brett & Nick

\$50 in memory of Ron Schneck by Joane Schneck

\$200 in memory of Loved Ones by Howard & Shirley Lengel

(Endowment Fund)

\$700 in memory of John & Ruth Hikes, Jack Hikes, Violet Hikes, & James and Nora Aungst, Norman & Mildred Balthaser, and Luther & Vinnie Luckenbill and Chester Lucken