

THE
VOICE
OF

ST. PETER'S

JANUARY 2018

From the Pastor:

*Welcome to earth, O noble Guest,
Through whom this sinful world is blest!
You turned not from our needs away!
How can our thanks such love repay?*

In order to love us the way God wants to love us, God chose to become a tiny baby, who was born in a stable and was laid in a manger. In the festival of Christmas, we welcomed to earth Jesus, the “noble Guest” who is our Lord and our Savior.

In his Christmas hymn “From Heaven Above” Luther wonders what we can do to offer thanks to God for the love given to us in the baby Jesus. When Jesus arrived in Bethlehem, there was no room for him in the inn, nor was there a fancy crib to hold him. As Luther notes:

*For velvets soft and silken stuff
You have but hay and straw so rough
On which as King so rich and great
To be enthroned in humble state.*

There was no room for Jesus in Bethlehem—but we have room for him in our hearts. There was no suitable crib for the new-born baby—but Jesus can prepare a worthy crib within our hearts so that his love is part of our lives always:

*O dearest Jesus, holy child,
Prepare a bed, soft, undefiled,
A holy shrine, within my heart,
That you and I need never part.*

Yours in Christ, Pastor Richard

Highlights from the December 7th Council Meeting

The Property Committee reported that new long-lasting light bulbs were installed in the narthex. The Committee is close to having a solid bid for the video project.

The Council approved the Fellowship Committee's request to have a cookie sale.

The Endowment Fund Committee reported that there are not enough funds in the Lay Professional Account to have an Intern Pastor during the 2018-19 academic year.

The Council approved several cost-saving suggestions from the Finance Committee. The rotary phone will be removed from the kitchen. Financial Secretary Ben Moyer negotiated discounts with Verizon and PPL, and a \$1,400 reduction in the Church Mutual Insurance policy. The Council also voted to raise the deductible from \$1,000 to \$ 2,500 for an annual savings of \$ 400.

Under New Business:

The Council approved hosting the Schuylkill County Volunteer Firefighters' Memorial Service on August 19, 2018.

The Council set the Annual Congregation Meeting for Sunday, January 28, 2018, with a special schedule for the Sunday.

The Council approved \$1,200 for the purchase of a computer for the Treasurer.

The Council accepted Mark Barry's resignation from the Council, and a one-year term will be filled at the Annual Meeting.

The fund balances as of November 30th were:

General Fund -- \$ 964

General Savings -- \$ 241

Capital Improvement Fund -- \$ 15,923 (\$ 6,869 designated for the video and \$1,265 for the Fellowship Committee to use for kitchen improvements)

Memorial Fund -- \$ 9,670

Stew Zerbe Scholarship Fund -- \$ 6,995

The Treasurer reported that current fund offerings in November were sufficient to cover current expenses. A thank you to all for your generous support of St. Peter's.

Under New Business:

WEDNESDAY NIGHT LIVE

In November and December, we continued with Luther and the beginnings of the Lutheran Church and began to look at the other Reformers and their contributions to Church History.

The sessions are held on Wednesday evenings, from 7:00 PM to 8:00 PM.

The schedule for the January 2018 is:

Wednesday, January 17th

Wednesday, January 24th

Wednesday, January 31st

CONFIRMATION CLASS NEWS

Our combined Middler (Eighth Graders) and Senior (Ninth Graders) class is continuing its study of the history of the Christian Church with sessions on the impact of the fall of the Roman Empire on Christianity and the spread of Christianity in Europe during the Dark Ages.

The Middler-Senior Class will meet at 9:00 AM on January 6th, 20th, and 27th. There will be no class on January 13th.

The Junior Class (Seventh Grade) met on December 5th for a session on the Christmas story. It will meet on January 6th at 9:00 AM in the Youth Room for a lesson on the Parable of the Prodigal Son.

ANNUAL CONGREGATION MEETING

The Annual Congregation Meeting will be held on Sunday, January 28, 2018. We are changing the normal Sunday schedule on January 28th:

Sunday School – 9:15 AM to 10:15 AM

Worship Service – 10:30 AM

Annual Meeting – 11:30 AM

A Luncheon in the Social Hall will follow the Meeting

All members of St. Peter's are encouraged to attend the Annual Meeting & luncheon.

THE SUNDAYS IN JANUARY

January 7 – The Baptism of Our Lord

Every year, on the Sunday following the Day of the Epiphany (January 6th) we observe the festival of “The Baptism of Our Lord.” In the New Testament, the baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist in the Jordan River marks the first appearance of the adult Jesus as the Savior of the World, and we will read the account of his baptism from the Gospel of Mark.

This Sunday begins the Season of Epiphany (a word that means “appearance”) in which we see the light of God’s love and saving grace shining forth in Jesus of Nazareth. During the Epiphany season, we focus on the early ministry of Jesus, with the calling of disciples, with his first efforts at preaching and teaching, and with several miracles that demonstrate his divine power to bring healing and new life to weary people.

January 14 – The Second Sunday after the Epiphany

The Gospel lesson from John will recount Jesus calling Philip and Nathanael to become his disciples. Philip responds eagerly and quickly, but Jesus must overcome Nathanael’s cynical reply, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?”

January 21 – The Third Sunday after the Epiphany

The Gospel lesson from Mark is the familiar story of Jesus calling four fishermen – Simon Peter and his brother Andrew, and James and John, the sons of Zebedee, as his disciples. In an expression of faith and trust in Jesus, they leave everything behind to follow the Savior.

January 28 – The Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany

The Gospel lesson from Mark presents Jesus as one who teaches with authority and then who demonstrates his divine power by healing a man possessed by a demon.

January 28th will also be the Sunday of our Annual Congregation Meeting.

ASK THE PASTOR

This is a new column in our monthly Newsletter, in which Pastor Richard will try to answer questions of general interest to the Congregation.

QUESTION: “WHY DO WE HAVE AN ANNUAL MEETING?”

Under the Constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the final decision-making authority is vested in the Congregation as a whole, and the Congregation exercises its voice through Congregation Meetings. Such meetings may be called by the Pastor, the Council, or the Council President for a variety of reasons, and all voting members (confirmed members who have both communed and contributed in the current or previous year) are invited to participate.

In accord with St. Peter’s Constitution, we must hold the Annual Congregation Meeting “on one Sunday during January,” and our Bylaws state that “The Annual Congregation Meeting shall be held for the purpose of:

- a. Electing members to the Congregation Council.
- b. Electing members to the Cemetery Board.
- c. Electing members to the Endowment Fund Committee.
- d. Adopting the congregation’s budget for the following calendar year.
- e. Receiving the reports of the congregation’s secretary, treasurer, and financial secretary.
- f. Receiving the report of the pastor and the Parish Register.
- g. Receiving the reports of the congregation’s committees and organizations.
- h. Any unfinished business from previous Congregation Meetings.
- i. Any new business.”

Although these items of business are not always exciting, they are necessary for the functioning of St. Peter’s. The elections and the adoption of the budget are crucial matters, and sometimes there are other very significant matters under “new business.” We need the participation of our voting members at the Annual Meeting and at any other Congregation Meetings. Our Annual Congregation Meeting will be held on Sunday, January 28th at 11:30 A.M. Please plan to attend.

SPECIAL THANKS

WE THANK OUR CHURCH FAMILY AT ST. PETER'S FOR THEIR CARDS, WORDS OF SYMPATHY, PRAYERS, FLOWERS, AND MEMORIAL GIFTS WITH THE LOSS OF OUR MOM AND GRANDMOM AND GREAT-GRANDMOM, MARGE HOENICH. PASTOR BOB & NAN HOENICH AND FAMILY.

Technology Committee

The Technology Committee's first meeting was on Nov 21st. Even though it was our first meeting, the committee had set short term goals. The Technology Committee prioritized 3 short term goals to be accomplished before the end of 2017. Here is just one short term goal completed.

St. Peter's Lutheran Church now has a new website.

The past two years, St. Peter's Church had a nonfunctional webpage and was paying FinalWeb.com to host our domain name and website (stpeterslutheranpinegrove.org) for \$21.00 a month. The committee also did research at Wix.Com as a possibility to host our domain and website if Final Web failed to perform our test of function. The Technology Committee logged into Final Web.com and explored their editing platform. The findings were:

- Final Web platform was not editor friendly (took too long to input text and edit it).
- Platform was outdated and didn't have any security features.
- Had to pay more for a mobile ready platform.
- Overall not in the best interest for St. Peter's to pay \$21.00 a month.

Next the committee tried using Wix.com. platform and the findings were:

- Wix.com was cheaper and had a better overall package for just \$14 a month.
- Wix editing platform was fast and easy to use and was Mobile Ready.
- Wix had a better overall experience with up to date security features built in.

The Technology Committee quickly decided Wix.com was the right place for St. Peter's Church to host their domain name and website.

The Committee transferred St. Peter's domain name of stpeterslutheranpinegrove.org from FinalWeb.com to Wix.com on December 5th. We appreciate your thoughts and ideas on the website and encourage everyone to visit our new site and give us feedback, at stpeterslutheranpinegrove.org.

Part of our goal as the Technology Committee was to continuously update this site to keep it informative and relevant to the changing seasons and events of the church. Please visit frequently.

Sincerely,
Technology Committee

Christmas Food Basket Committee

On December 12th 2017 the Christmas Food Basket Committee went shopping for several families in need in our church. The committee bought over \$817.16 dollars' worth of perishable and nonperishable food. Here are just a few Items of perishable food that were purchased: Chicken, Ground Beef, eggs, salad, bologna, apples, cheese, and milk. A few items of non-perishable were: pasta, soups, can vegetables, cereal, ravioli, peanut butter and jelly, potatoes, cake mix, vanilla icing, ketchup, pancake mix and syrups and much more. Also 8 hams and 4 turkeys donated by families in the church.

On December 14th the committee members separated all non-perishable food and placed them inside Christmas Baskets. In the morning of December 16th the committee members finished up placing perishable food inside Christmas Baskets to be distribute to families in need.

The Christmas Food Basket Committee would like to thank our congregation members for opening up their hearts and contributions to help spread joy, hope and smiles to families in need within our church.

Breakdown of Funds

\$567.16 – Donation from Contributions

\$250.00 – Thrivent Grant

Total: \$817.16

Sincerely,

Christmas Food Basket Committee

Youth Ministry News

December 16th Christmas Caroling

What an awesome turn out we had for Christmas Caroling. We had a total of 30 participants: 16 parents and friends along with 14 children and teenagers. We would like to thank the children and everyone who helped spread "Christmas Joy" in the lives of our shut in members.

Our shut-in members were so excited to see so many children ringing bells and singing Christmas Carols. Shut –In gifts and lunch were provided by Youth Ministry Committee. Special thanks to Mark & Erma Barry, Ruth & Pastor Schoenleber for providing soups and Scott & Tina Ritzman for providing delicious chocolate chip cookies. We hope parents and children had a great time and plan on joining us again next year. Total expenses paid from Youth Ministry Fund for this Event were \$70 (Food & Shut-In Gifts).

Youth Ministry & Christian Education Committee hold a first annual “Happy Birthday Jesus Party” On December 24th during Sunday school at 10:30. Please read February’s addition for more details of this event.

As 2017 comes to a close, the Youth Ministry Committee would like to express our gratitude towards our members, friends, and community for their weekly contributions and donations into the Youth Ministry Fund. Blessed by our Lord, we hope for your continuing support and contributions towards the Youth Ministry Fund in 2018.

The Youth Ministry Committee will set a proposed budget of \$4500 in 2018. The following %:

Jr. Choir -----5%
 Jr. Youth-----15%
 Sr. Youth-----15%
 Youth Camping/Conferences---25%
 Children Ministry Events-----40%

The Youth Ministry Committee discussed ideas for 2018. Here are just a few examples: Run a Jubilee Youth ages 2-5yrs old & Jr Youth ages 6-11 the 2nd or 3rd Sunday of each month. Have Sr. Youth get more involved with local outreach projects within the community. Creating events to engage all youth that are actively participating or non-participating, and reaching out to the community to bring new youth to our church. Possible events & trips: Snow Tubing, Easter event, Water Rafting, Hay Ride & Bonfire, Trunk or Treat, Sweet Arrow Lake Picnic, SPCA, Bowling, Movie Day, Christmas Caroling, and Happy Birthday Jesus Party.

In closing we ask the children’s parents and family members to help participate, get involved, and be more committed. The Youth Ministry Committee members are committed and will continue to invest in our children and youth and to grow the body of Christ at St. Peter’s Church.

May the Lord bless our children, families, and our youth ministry committee in 2018. Most especially we ask for your prayers as God’s work is continually being done.

Happy New Year!

Sincerely,

Ben Moyer

Youth Ministry Committee

Financial Secretary Year End Letter

On behalf of St. Peter's Lutheran Church, I would like to thank everyone for their generosity and gifts throughout 2017. Because of your contributions, our congregation has been able to support the work of Jesus Christ locally, regionally, and around the world. Here are a few examples:

Our contributions & gifts throughout the year helped our local Pine Grove Food Pantry by providing 75lbs of food and over \$300 dollars in money donations, 7 Christmas Baskets for families in need, over \$800 dollars for weekday church school, youth ministry fund and also provided socks and "meals to go" bags to a homeless shelter. Regionally our contributions & gifts helped donate supplies and money amounting over \$200 dollars towards ELCA disaster hurricane reliefs for victims in Houston and Gulf Coast Area. Also our contributions have provided over \$2,400 dollars toward ELCA World Hunger around the world.

Thank you for your generous commitment to the work of Jesus Christ through this church.

Please don't forget to pick up your 2018 contribution envelopes located in our fellowship hall. The 2017 year-end financial statements will be available to pick up starting 1-7-18, you will find a detailed breakdown and summary of you're giving during this past year.

Please take the time to carefully review your statement of giving for accuracy, and if you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at [570-617-0703] to make any necessary corrections before January 31st.

May you be blessed by the LORD throughout 2018 and let the Word of God be the standard for your life.

Sincerely,

Ben Moyer

Church Financial Secretary

REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS:

✠ Those who were hospitalized, recuperating, ill, or in any need in the months of December & January:

Chase Morgan, Dennis & Anita Loy, James Gruber, Elaine Bender, Tom Seibert, Chris Beeman, Ruth Casterline, Mattie Tobin, Glenda Nagle, Betty Miller, John Yorty, Alivia Yorty, Stephen Krammes, and Lou D'Ambrosio.

✠ Landon Brooks Steven Morgan, the son of Heather & Ian Morgan, who was born on November 26th.

✠ The Family of Jay Donmoyer, who passed away on December 2nd.

✠ The Family of Roy Kerschner, who passed away on December 2nd.

✠ The Family of Margaret M. Hoenich, who passed away on December 3rd.

✠ Martha Tice and Casey Vogel, who were married December 9th in Dover, Delaware.

*The Prayer Circle will meet on Wednesday, January 3rd @ 9:00AM.

Memorial Gifts... To the Glory of God

(Memorial Fund)

\$200 in memory of Robert Schneck by Wife Geraldine, Daughter Tracie, Grandchildren Ryan and Kyla, and Great Grandson Riley

\$45 in memory of Jay R. Donmoyer by Joyce and Edward Eltringham

\$100 in memory of Rich Wertz by Anna Wertz.

(General Fund)

\$50 in memory of John Marsicano by June Marsicano

\$1,000 in memory of my Parents and Grandfather by Bill Siegel

\$50 in memory of George and Sybilla Gilbert by Charles Gilbert.

\$20 in memory of Loved Ones by Gary Adams.

(Capital Improvement Fund)

\$50 in memory of Parents, Emma and Arthur by Kay Potts.

(Endowment Fund)

\$700 in memory of Jim and Nora Aungst, John and Ruth Hikes, Norman and Mildred Balthaser, Luther and Vinnie Luckenbill, John "Jack" Hikes, Violet Hikes, and Chester Luckenbill by Stephen and Barbara Hikes.

Bible Journaling

Our new Bible Journaling Group, led by Nancy Reichelt, will meet on Tuesday, January 9th at 6:30 PM. Everyone is welcome!

CHRISTMAS MEMORIALS

(General Fund)

\$50 in memory of my Wife, Carol Becker, and my Mother, Ruth Becker by
Richard Becker & Kathy Toy

\$100 in memory of Loved Ones by Carol Baldwin

\$50 in honor of Caring Family and Friends by Carol Baldwin

\$50 in memory of Loved Ones by Sadie Umbenhauer

\$500 in memory of Arthur "Pat" Aungst from Grace and Family

\$100 in memory of Tom McMullen and Ralph (Ronnie) Keefer by Ruth
McMullen

\$20 in memory of Uncle Tom McMullen by Niece, Tami Christ

\$150 in memory of Parents, Jean and Leo and brother, Neil Beck by Marty and
Valerie

\$50 in memory of Loved Ones by Sadie A. Umbenhauer

\$500 in memory of Arthur "Pat" Aungst by Grace Aungst

\$35 in memory of Jay Donmoyer by Delphine Huber

\$100 in memory of Stew Zerbe by Donna, Jason, Kaitlyn and Kyle

\$100 in memory of William Harris by Donna Zerbe

\$500 in memory of Roxanne Umbenhauer by The Family

\$300 in memory of John Strubhar by Wife, Reba

\$500 by Richard & Sandra Manbeck to honor the following Army veterans:

\$100 in memory of Arthur J. Potts – World War I

\$100 in memory of Robert B. Nye – World War II & Korea

\$100 in memory of David L. Potts – Vietnam

\$100 to honor Jared P. Manbeck – Kuwait & Afghanistan

\$100 to honor Andrew D. Potts - Afghanistan

(Stew Zerbe Memorial)

\$100 in honor of Grandchildren – Lewis, Evelyn, Molly, Owen, and Maebel by Jean
& David Herring

(Fuel Oil Fund)

\$500 in memory of "Our Parents" by Linda Venzl and Vince Kulbitsky

(Memorial Fund)

\$100 in memory of Chester C. Luckenbill at Christmas by Rod and Family

\$100 in memory of Harold Hepler on "Our 62nd Anniversary and the coming Holiday's" by his Wife, Kathryn

\$100 in memory of Thomas Miller by Betty Miller

\$100 in memory of Sam Baldwin by Wife, Carol

\$100 in memory of James L. Bender by Wife, Elaine and Family

\$35 in memory of Jay Donmoyer by Delphine M. Huber

\$50 in memory of my Husband, Parents, and Family by Barbara Zimmerman

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

\$100 in memory of James Bender by Wife Elaine and Family

\$100 in memory of Marlin Knoll by Wife, Arlene

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

