

**St. Peter Lutheran Church**  
**208 Newtown Ave.**  
**Norwalk, CT 06851**

***PARISHSCOPE***  
***FEBRUARY 2020***



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# PASTOR'S PONDERINGS

This month I, along with Carl Mathis and JoAnn Shapiro from our Church Council, will be attending a one-day conference sponsored by our District titled, “The Communion of Saints as an Area of Practiced Grace.” It will provide an overview of the reconciliation ministry of our Southeastern District and how it offers healing to conflicted congregations, homes and workers. Now, on the one hand I feel that the leaders of our congregation don’t really need this conference, as we (thanks be to God!) are not dealing with conflict but have a congregation that is very much at peace. What a blessing this is! But, this has not always been the case.

Sometimes I hear people in our congregation lament the much lower worship attendance of recent years and recall how the church used to be much more full. And, we’re not alone in this. “Why is this?” we wonder. Well, in the beginning of January I began looking through church records from the past 30 years to see if I could find any answers. What I found was interesting (and will be reported more fully in our next Voters meeting on February 16<sup>th</sup>).

Back in 1991 our baptized membership (as near as I could figure, as the records were not always clear and complete) was 491. When I was installed as Pastor in August of 1994 the membership was 364. The congregation had lost a little over 25% of its members in 3 years! Why? Well, I wasn’t here, of course, and so I don’t know what all transpired. I do know that an extensive and costly building renovation had been proposed and ultimately, approved by the congregation – but, just barely. The vote, I believe, was just over 50% in favor. Such a small majority makes it difficult to move forward with a large and costly project. And so, not surprisingly, the renovation was delayed. During that time the Pastor received and accepted a call, and I know from discussions that I had with parishioners after I arrived that there were concerns because of this. The end result was that a large number of people – about 25% of the congregation – ended up leaving the church in 1993-94. Obviously, this impacts the budget, as well as many other things. And so, the renovation project was ultimately abandoned.

Now, I don’t bring this up in order to cast blame on anyone. Good people can have quite different opinions about serious issues. This has also been true during my time here. In the late 1990’s through the early 2000’s we dealt with a couple of significant conflicts: one over our music program and another which roiled the entire Synod after 9/11. The end result was about 10% of our members left the congregation.

Why bring this up? I want you to see that the intensity of differences – most likely, of how they are expressed – can lead to conflict in congregations and the loss of membership. This has been seen in Christ’s Church from its beginning. The devil is hard at work, seeking to exacerbate our differences and turn our focus inward, upon ourselves, instead of outward to each other. With this in mind, St. Paul says in Phil.2:

“If there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

As we emulate our Savior and put others before ourselves, the devil’s attempts to divide us will fail!

I would like to make you aware of one other, and very important, statistic. Did you know that, since 1991, our congregation has taken in 369 new members? 97 were received by baptism, 249 by transfer from other LCMS congregations, and 23 by profession of faith. So: God continues to build His Church among us! Give thanks to God that He numbers you among His redeemed, and ask Him to help you bring others to Him!

In Christ Jesus, our Lord,

Pastor

### **2020 BUDGET APPROVED**

Last month the congregation passed a budget for this year of \$314,257.00. Many thanks to those who put in many hours and worked hard to prepare and present the budget: Bob Streb (Treasurer); Carl Mathis (President); the members of the Finance Committee: Roger Sayler, Ron Leong, Kristen Hummel, and Cindy Douthwaite; and members of the church Council: Joe Shapiro (Elders), Tom Collins (Property Management), JoAnn Shapiro (Stewardship & Deacons), Fay Sobottka (Christian Ed & Evangelism), and Karen Shane (Secretary). They did an excellent job! (The budget summary is printed on the last page of this month's Parishscope.)

The budget includes a projected deficit of \$25,000, which will be funded as necessary from our Endowment Fund. There are two main reasons for this deficit. First, there are repairs and updates to our aging facility that need to be undertaken this year. Also increased significantly were the Evangelism and Fellowship budgets. The intent is to offer a number of events at church for both members and the community that will, it is hoped, draw people to our church. We should all be praying that the Lord would bring more people to hear of what He has done for us in His Son, as well as inviting people to come and welcoming those who do.

### **LENT BEGINS**

Ash Wednesday is on **Wednesday, February 26<sup>th</sup>**. We will worship that day at **noon** and also that night at **7:30 p.m.**, with the imposition of ashes for those who desire it. Put it on your calendar now and plan to be in church that day to begin your Lenten walk with your Lord.

### **STAR MEETING**

Monday, February 17<sup>th</sup> at 3:30 p.m. is our meeting this month with the folks from STAR.

### **WILL THERE BE A SERVICE TODAY?**

You might ask this question when the weather is bad. To find out, call the church office, as pastor is in the office early on Sunday's or will leave a message on the answering machine. Also, you can check the notices on channels 8 & 12 on TV.

### **MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORIES**

The Directories will be published in March. Please let Jo-Ann in the office know if you have any changes in your listing by **February 15th** so the directory can be brought up-to-date. Many thanks.

### **BIRTHDAYS**

See printed version offline

### **Anniversaries**

See printed version offline

### **MISSION OF THE MONTH FEBRUARY 2020**

### **LCMS WORLD RELIEF and HUMAN CARE**

Early records of the Synod show the General Relief Board was established in 1905 and expended its first disaster response funding in 1907. The board

primarily assisted LCMS employees and provided help for disaster survivors and destitute persons worldwide. Under different names, the board played major roles in relief and recovery efforts following both World Wars. After 1953, as the Board for World Relief, the agency focused its efforts on disaster response and self-help programs.

Today, LCMS World Relief and Human Care is a vibrant ministry of hope, sharing Christ’s mercy with people in need worldwide. In recent years, the agency enhanced relationships with international partners and continues to award grants to domestic and international partners for projects that benefit communities in need.

The core values of LCMS WR-HC are as follows:

- **Mercy** – Demonstrating the unconditional compassion and love of God in Jesus Christ through works of mercy.
- **Fidelity** – Demonstrating faithfulness to Holy Scripture, the Lutheran Confessions and the Mission of The Lutheran Church – MS.
- **Integrity** – Honor and accountability in our Relationships with partners and donors.
- **Capacity** – Developing and strengthening internal resources to meet human care needs.

And, so, LCMS WR-HC helps us to reach out in mercy and compassion to those in need, motivated by Christ and His Gospel, according to the Lutheran confession of the faith.

Donations for this mercy mission can be given in church – put a check marked for LCMS WR-HC in the offering plate – or, you can send them to LCMS World Relief and Human Care, P.O. Box 668612, St. Louis, MO 63166-6861. Finally, donations can be sent through their website, [www.lcms.org/worldrelief](http://www.lcms.org/worldrelief).

**BIBLE READINGS FOR FEBRUARY 2020**

February 1: Exodus 13:17-15:18  
 Matthew 21:23-46  
 Psalm 26:1-12  
 Proverbs 6:16-19

February 2: Exodus 15:19-17:7  
 Matthew 22:1-33

Psalm 27:1-6  
 Proverbs 6:20-26

February 3: Exodus 17:8-19:15  
 Matthew 22:34-23:12  
 Psalm 27:7-14  
 Proverbs 6:27-35

February 4: Exodus 19:16-21:21  
 Matthew 23:13-39  
 Psalm 28:1-9  
 Proverbs 7:1-5

February 5: Exodus 21:22-23:13  
 Matthew 24:1-28  
 Psalm 29:1-11  
 Proverbs 7:6-23

February 6: Exodus 23:14-25:40  
 Matthew 24:29-51  
 Psalm 30:1-12  
 Proverbs 7:24-27

February 7: Exodus 26:1-27:21  
 Matthew 25:1-30  
 Psalm 31:1-8  
 Proverbs 8:1-11

February 8: Exodus 28:1-43  
 Matthew 25:31-26:13  
 Psalm 31:90-18  
 Proverbs 8:12-13

February 9: Exodus 29:1-30:10  
 Matthew 26:14-46  
 Psalm 31:19-24  
 Proverbs 8:14-26

February 10: Exodus 30:11-31:18  
 Matthew 26:47-68  
 Psalm 32:1-11  
 Proverbs 8:27-32

February 11: Exodus 32:1-33:23  
 Matthew 26:69-27:14  
 Psalm 33:1-11  
 Proverbs 8:33-36

February 12: Exodus 34:1-35:9  
Matthew 27:15-31  
Psalm 33:12-22  
Proverbs 9:1-6

February 22: Leviticus 13:1-59  
Mark 6:1-29  
Psalm 39:1-13  
Proverbs 10:10

February 13: Exodus 35:10-36:38  
Matthew 27:32-66  
Psalm 34:1-10  
Proverbs 9:7-8

February 23: Leviticus 14:1-57  
Mark 6:30-56  
Psalm 40:1-10  
Proverbs 10:11-12

February 14: Exodus 37:1-38:31  
Matthew 28:1-20  
Psalm 34:11-22  
Proverbs 9:9-10

February 24: Leviticus 15:1-16:28  
Mark 7:1-23  
Psalm 40:11-17  
Proverbs 10:13-14

February 15: Exodus 39:1-40:38  
Mark 1:1-28  
Psalm 35:1-16  
Proverbs 9:11-12

February 25: Leviticus 16:29-18:30  
Mark 7:24-8:10  
Psalm 41:1-13  
Proverbs 10:15-16

February 16: Leviticus 1:1-3:17  
Mark 1:29-2:12  
Psalm 35:17-28  
Proverbs 9:13-18

February 26: Leviticus 19:1-20:21  
Mark 8:11-38  
Psalm 42:1-11  
Proverbs 10:17

February 17: Leviticus 4:1-5:19  
Mark 2:13-3:6  
Psalm 36:1-12  
Proverbs 10:1-2

February 27: Leviticus 20:22-22:16  
Mark 9:1-29  
Psalm 43:1-5  
Proverbs 10:18

February 18: Leviticus 6:1-7:27  
Mark 3:7-3  
Psalm 37:1-11  
Proverbs 10:3-4

February 28: Leviticus 22:17-23:44  
Mark 9:30-10:12  
Psalm 44:1-8  
Prove

February 19: Leviticus 7:28-9:6  
Mark 3:31-4:25  
Psalm 37:12-29  
Proverbs 10:5

February 20: Leviticus 9:7-10:20  
Mark 4:26-5:20  
Psalm 37:30-40  
Proverbs 10:6-7

February 21: Leviticus 11:1-12:8  
Mark 5:21-43  
Psalm 38:1-22  
Proverbs 10:8-9

**FEBRUARY 2020**  
**SERVICE SCHEDULES**

**WORSHIP ASSISTANTS**

**FEB. 2**  
**10:00 a.m**

T. Collins

**FEB. 9**  
**10:00 a.m.** R. Castillo, D. Whipple

**FEB. 16**  
**10:00 a.m.** J. Shapiro

**FEB. 23**  
**10:00 a.m.** B. Streb, J. Orban

**FEB. 9**  
**10:00 a.m.** C. Mathis, T. Collins,  
D. Russo

**FEB. 16**  
**10:00 a.m.** S. Sabol, R. Castillo,  
J. Orban

**FEB. 23**  
**10:00 a.m.** I. MacKenzie, S. Yuen,  
J. Soos

**CHANCEL SCHEDULE**

**Jan. 27 thru**  
**Feb. 9** E. & J. Meek

**Feb. 10 – 23** N. Sayler, H. Billowitz

**Feb. 24 thru**  
**March 8** K. & T. Collins

**FEB. 2** R. Sayler, J. Orban

**FEB. 9** J. Wash, S. Yuen

**FEB. 16** D. Raines, J. Shapiro

**FEB. 23** E. Meek, I. MacKenzie

**COUNTERS**

**USHERS**

**FEB. 2**  
**10:00 a.m.** B. Streb, D. Cakavell,  
W. Palmisano

## ST. PETER LUTHERAN CHURCH - FEBRUARY 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2 10:00 a.m. Worship Service  8:45 a.m. Sunday School & Sunday Bible Study	3	4	5	6  10:00 a.m. Bible Study	7	8
9 10:00 a.m. Worship Service  8:45 a.m. Sunday School & Sunday Bible Study	10	11  PRISON  1:30 p.m. Bible Class, Wilton	12	13  10:00 a.m. Bible Study	14	15
16 10:00 a.m. Worship Service  8:45 a.m. Sunday School & Sunday Bible Study  VOTERS MEETING	17  Presidents Day (Observed)  3:30 p.m. STAR	18  CONFERENCE IN WESTFIELD, MA	19	20  10:00 a.m. Bible Study	21	22
23 10:00 a.m. Worship Service  8:45 a.m. Sunday School & Sunday Bible Study	24	25  1:30 p.m. Bible Class, Wilton	26 ASH WEDNESDAY  NOON SERVICE  7:30 p.m. SERVICE	27  10:00 a.m. Bible Study	28	29