



The ANNOUNCER

Quick Upcoming

A publication of St. Peter's UCC in Skokie

- 7/4 Independence Day**
Office Closed
- 7/5** Office Closed
- 7/4-7/12** Laura on Vacation through 7/12. Office hours will vary, call ahead.
- 7/8** 10:00AM – Rummage Sorting Set Up
- 7/10** 6:30-8:30PM – Rummage Sorting
- 7/12** 10AM-12PM – Rummage Sorting
- 7/13** CRMS Meets 6-10PM
- 7/17** 6:30-8:30PM – Rummage Sorting
- 7/19** 10AM-12PM – Rummage Sorting
- 7/21** 11:15AM – Church Council Meets
- 7/22** August Announcer Articles due
- 7/24** 6:30-8:30PM – Rummage Sorting
- 7/26** 10AM-12PM – Rummage Sorting
- 7/28** 11:15AM – Fourth Sunday Conversations
- 7/31** 6:30-8:30PM – Rummage Sorting

From the Minister's Desk

Over the last two months I've revisited some (not all) of the events and developments since Beth and I arrived here in 1992. In April I wrote about the 1990s and then in May the following decade, plus a little crossover maybe. Let's finish the trip, at the end of which I will bid goodbye to my composing for the Announcer, and to any of you who read this, but were unable to come on May 19th or June 30th for the final fare-thee-well.

We lost some of the pillars of our church in the 'teens, as Karolyn Allison and Bernice Karol died, among others. The Youth Fellowship size also began to decline, and by 2014 it was not meeting anymore (that actual year is a guess). Sunday School was going all right, but the relocation of one family out of state, great for them, did lower our number of students to a low number for awhile.

I received a diagnosis of prostate cancer in 2012, and in September I received brachytherapy as treatment. Thank you to all who sent cards and who gave advice, stories of encouragement, and who prayed for my recovery. So far my numbers are still very good!

I was blessed by another burst of emotional support in January, 2014 when I announced the death of my mother, Peggy Lanford. She had been living with Alzheimer's for several years in the Twin Cities area. Again, my thanks to all who sent cards, who prayed, and otherwise lent their support.

In 2014 or 2015 I took some Continuing

Education classes and learned about what's called Appreciative Inquiry. It sounded like something that St. Peter's could use as a philosophy (and approach) for the future, building on our appreciation of our strengths as a congregation and applying our strengths to the challenges of the future. I still remember seeking Church Council buy-in by setting up a laptop in the Memorial Room where it met, and showing the Council this animated video demonstrating what Appreciative Inquiry looks like and how it works. The Council did 'buy in,' and away we went with an Appreciative Inquiry task force and many gatherings. After all our efforts, we ended up with a new mission project, the Rich Kalensky Memorial 11-11 program with the Military Outreach USA, where we as a church secure things that will help homeless veterans transition from homelessness to having their own place.

The second good thing that emerged from the A.I. process was ultimately becoming Open and Affirming. This came up at an A.I. gathering where we pondered how we could build upon one of our life-giving-narratives / values of being friendly and welcoming – becoming Open and Affirming was suggested for exploration. The Council took some exploratory steps, and then an Open and Affirming Committee was created to explore further, and present a covenant to the church for a vote. On June 24, 2018, we voted 40-5 to become ONA.

We had the Brat Fry in July for a few

From the Minister's Desk Continued

years, as a mission / fundraising project that combined feeding people, building community and enjoying music.

The boiler was replaced. There are still too many winter Sundays when it decides to stop heating up overnight. Rest assured; I won't miss that!

The Rummage Sale began to really bloom in terms of volunteers working, rummage coming in to us, the outpouring of customers, and the substantial increase in revenue. I was always glad that there was a Bake Sale attached to the Rummage Sale.

At some point in the not-distant-past, I decided I wanted to have a podcast. Upon hearing this, Laura got to work looking into formats and networks and how to put such a thing together. She became its editor and publisher, through SoundCloud. It has meant extra work for both of us but it has also boosted, in a small way perhaps, the spreading of the gospel of Jesus Christ in a mainline Protestant style. We've been listened to from Singapore to Dublin!

Since then, we've made it through COVID-19 with our YouTube channel (first recording on Saturdays in 2020, then uploading it for Sunday mornings; now livestreaming weekly) and through adaptability, words of encouragement and good lay leadership. Every stage of re-opening to more in-person worship was discussed by the Council. Before COVID, Dan Surma retired, and Ben Westphal accepted our invitation to be our next, and current, Music Director. Again, that is good news!

Also going on during the most recent few years was a growing sense within me that I could no longer fulfill this calling in a way that met my own criteria. Am I my harshest judge? Maybe. But my mind, body and spirit were telling me that I was nearing the time to retire, and at the start of January, I wrote to the Council that I was, indeed, retiring from the pastoral ministry at the end of this June.

I cannot say in a few words or sentences what our serving here has meant. It has been a monumental part of my life; I will have been here 32 out of my 65 years when I leave. Some of you have been here every step of the way. I am grateful for the times you forgave me, or Beth. I am thankful for the sacred times you let me and / or her share in your hallowed moments of joy, grief, doubt, hardship and uncertainty. I appreciate all the forms of support you have provided to both of us, and that includes the church's generous financial support and gifts over the years.

When Beth and I first arrived, she said that Saint Peter's felt like home. So it has felt, and so it has been. We say good-bye (God be with ye) with heavy hearts, but very confident in the lay leadership and membership we leave behind, confident in the Providence of God, and praising the Lord Jesus Christ for all the work we did together, by the grace of God.

May all our memories be blessings.
Keep, and share, the faith, Rev. Richard Lanford

Journey Notes: A Traveler's Welcome

One of the greatest things about travel is the interesting people you meet along the way. While it is wonderful to find welcoming hosts along a journey, sometimes it is the welcome and companionship of fellow travelers that means the most. This month get ready to offer a traveler's welcome to our pulpit supply pastors!

July brings new voices to our pulpit. Are you ready to hear them? We'll start with a familiar voice that we now get to know better. On July 7th and 14th, Rev. Wayne MacPherson will lead us in worship.

Pastor Wayne has served four congregations in the Chicago Metropolitan Association (CMA), two as Pastor and two as Interim Pastor. Most recently, he served as Interim Pastor at Epiphany UCC in Chicago. He spent nine years on the staff of the CMA and Illinois Conference. His service as a supply pastor includes preaching at around twenty congregations across the CMA and Fox Valley Association. Pastor Wayne says preaching has taught him the wisdom of Pilgrim Pastor John Robinson's words, "The Lord hath more truth yet to break forth out of His Holy Word."

We will welcome Minister Renita Ward to our pulpit on the last two Sundays of the July. Minister and Attorney Renita Ward describes herself as "passionate for Jesus Christ" which "fuels her ministry and professional efforts of living out Christ's model as an advocate, teacher, mediator, and preacher." She is a graduate of the University of Chicago, University of DePaul College of Law, and the University of Georgia holding advanced degrees in divinity, law, and journalism. She is a native of Georgia and "a preacher's daughter" who moved to Chicago early in her career to work at Allstate's corporate headquarters in Northbrook. Today she practices law in Illinois. Minister Renita is a Member in Discernment within the CMA and a member of Trinity UCC in Chicago.

Travel opens us up to new vistas and companions for the journey. Let's enjoy the opportunity to extend a St. Peter's traveler's welcome to all, including our pulpit supply pastors!

On Matters of Ministerial Excellence and Pastoral Care

Ministry in the United Church of Christ is a covenant between an ordained pastor, God, the UCC, and the local church. At its meeting on June 16th members of your Church Council unanimously affirmed their support for Pastor as he seeks to adhere to the ethical boundaries established by the UCC's Ministerial Excellence, Support and Authorization (MESA) team. All persons seeking to maintain ministerial standing in the United Church of Christ are expected to

abide by the UCC Ministerial Code. This includes a pastor's covenant to "not perform pastoral services within a congregation or for a member of a congregation without the invitation of the current pastor of that congregation." If you, a member of your family, or a friend of the church is seeking to contact Pastor Richard or Beth Lanford or needs pastoral care before an interim or settled pastor has been called to serve our local church, please reach out to our currently serving President, Peggy

Reins, at peggy.reins@gmail.com or 847-452-1718. (Email contact works best for non-urgent matters but if you have an immediate concern, please phone or send a text message.) Peggy will contact the Illinois Conference's Associate Minister for Pastoral and Congregational Transitions for guidance. If for any reason you can't reach Peggy, please call the office and Laura will connect you with another officer of our church.

Church Leadership Transitions

Please welcome Ann Herren to the role of Vice President of the Congregation. The Church Council unanimously approved the appointment of Ann to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of Beth Lanford. As a reminder, we have an eleven-member Church Council. Per our bylaws the Church Council includes the officers and the chair or an elected representative from each board. Your 2024 Church Council now includes officers Peggy Reins, Ann Herren, Annie Noorts, Maria Altmayer, Chad McCoy and board representatives Jennifer Schneider (Deacons), Barb Todd (Christian Ed), Carolyn Kuechler (Finance) and Peter Svenson (Trustees). The Board of Elders will name a new Council representative since Ann, who was previously that representative, has agreed to serve as Vice President. We will then have a ten-member Church Council for a while, at least until we have an interim pastor.

Its Rummage Sorting Season!

Yes, it is that time. We are going to set up the gym on July 8th starting at 10:00. After that we will start bringing rummage into the gym and sorting it. We will be sorting **Wednesday evenings, 6:30-8:30 and Friday 10:00 – 2:00.** I'm extending the Friday time slot hoping more folks can join

us, just come for as long as you are able. We are getting a later start than usual. This means we need to hit the ground -running in July. Please come join us anytime you can. If there are any questions, contact me anytime. (Annie 847-772-2717)

Fourth Sunday Conversation Thank-You and Invitation

Thank you to all who participated in our Fourth Sunday Conversations in April, May, and June. Your Church Council hosted the coffee hour conversations to create time and space for authentic conversations, reinforcing our connection to each other and to the mission of St. Peter's. We did this by putting some interesting questions on the table:

- When you think about St. Peter's what brings you hope?
 - Can we think about change as an opportunity? If so, what opportunities do you see?
 - Looking ahead, what do you see for ongoing involvement in St. Peter's? Are there ways to encourage renewal and re-engagement?
- Throughout these Fourth Sundays, we have enjoyed the spirited conversation and the re-assurance that belonging to St. Peter's brings. We hope for other such conversations in the months to come. Please put a July 28th coffee hour on your calendars and stay tuned for details.

Keep Our Sunday School Mission Project Going

On the last Sunday of every month our Sunday school families have been donating food items for St. Peter's mini food pantry. Please help us to continue our collection during the summer months by making the last Sunday of the month a focus for your mini pantry donations. We will have bins conveniently placed to receive your donations. Thank you for your generous support!

Fall Craft Show

The Fall Craft Show this year will be on **Saturday November 2nd from 10-3**. If you are interested in a table please let either Wendy Svenson (847) 528-4545 or Annie Noorts (847) 772-2717 know so we can mark you down. As you know we have limited space so before we send out applications the end of June to our other crafter's we want to be sure you have a spot. Any questions please let me know. - Wendy Svenson

A Good Goodbye

Since this will be coming out on July 1, we will have said our goodbyes to Pastor and Beth. Thank you to everyone who worked so hard to give them a truly good goodbye. The spaghetti dinner was a huge success! At that time, we announced the renaming of the old memorial room to the Lanford Fellowship Hall. On June 30th we will (did) celebrate Pastor's retirement with church family and friends. This celebration includes (included) a cocktail hour with fancy snacks, a delicious taco bar and other yummy catered food, fabulous baked goods from our always amazing bakers, a wonderful tribute video and a special gift for Pastor and Beth. A full write up with details will be in the August Announcer.

Women's Guild News

St. Peter's Women's Guild met for their annual picnic on Wed. June 12 at the home of Pres. Barbara Todd. Eighteen ladies plus Pastor enjoyed a delicious luncheon of sandwich loaves, salads, and cake, preceded by Jim Todd's excellent punch! Some ladies braved the heat and noisy cicadas out on the lovely deck and others ate inside. There was no business meeting, but lots of conversation with Pastor and Beth on their upcoming retirement and move up to Minnesota. Our gathering culminated in a presentation of our parting gift to Pastor - a beautiful book, displaying our treasured stained glass windows in the Sanctuary, accompanied by explanatory text for each window. A BIG Thank You to Heidi Tarzian for all her work on creating the Shutterfly book and thanks to Laurie Mitchell and Jen Schneider for their help! We will not meet during the summer and our next meeting will be on **Wed. Sept. 11**. Have a great summer, everybody! - Barbara Todd, Pres.

Staff Vacations In July

Our music director Ben Westphal will be on his honeymoon to Greece and Paris and will be gone the Sundays of July 7th and 21st. Substituting for him will be Katrina Sudman who lives part time in Chicago and Rome! She comes with a high degree of education and experience in music and piano and we are so grateful to her for helping us out!

Our Office Administrator Laura Olson will be out of the office taking some much-needed time off from July 4th through July 12th and back July 15th. There will be limited office coverage, so please call before coming if you do not have a key. If you are bringing rummage, hold off until the week of July 15th.

JULY BIRTHDAYS

7/1 – Mia Paige Speicher
Randy Altmayer
7/3 – Ann Aler
Mandy McDonald
Mike Taheny
7/4 – Dan Mahoney
7/7 – Ron Schuhrke
7/11 – Hillary Gack
Wendy Svenson
7/15 – Jeremy Steegmueller
Shari Meggs
7/16 – Mary Taylor
Sydney Kerbel
7/21 – Louise Dahm
7/22 – A.J. Tarzian
7/24 – Justin Mitchell
Kaitlin Garcia
7/27 – Alice Schaller
7/28 – Ryan Miller

JULY ANNIVERSARIES

7/3 – Linda and Bruce Mau
7/12 – Gail and Greg Thomas
7/17 – Beth and Paul
Brzozowski
Gail and John Balling
Lisa and Eric
Martinek

Budget at a Glance, May 2024

	<u>May Actual</u>	<u>Monthly Budget</u>	<u>YTD Actual</u>	<u>YTD Budget</u>
Income	\$13,641	\$16,008	\$69,830	\$80,040
Expenses	\$20,484	\$15,939	\$82,692	\$79,695
Gain/(Loss)	(\$6,844)	\$69	(\$12,862)	\$345

GOODBYE FROM PASTOR AND BETH

As Beth and I depart St. Peter’s, we say Thank You to God, and Thanks to all of you once more. Thank you so much to the Good Goodbye Committee, the Council, and everyone who made the Spaghetti Dinner and the June 30th dinner so magnificent. We thank you for everything. Thanks to all who came on the 30th.

We say thank you for letting me, Beth, or both of us into your lives, sometimes into sacred space; thank you for your generosity and your acceptance. Thank you for the laughs, prayers, the progress we made in ministering, and for showing us great love.

I thank Laura for mutual support and work done together over the years; thanks also to Ben, the Guild, and I’d best stop there. We will treasure the memories of our time together and will never forget or stop caring. May the Lord bless your future!

RENEWAL OF VOWS

On Saturday, June 15th, David and Karem Zafrane Iannotti, one day after their 10th wedding anniversary, renewed their marriage covenant and their vows in a brief outdoors ceremony officiated by Pastor Richard. Present were their children Alexander and Angelo Iannotti, Karem’s mom Raisa, Bob and Carol Iannotti, and Pastor and Beth Lanford.

HOSPITALIZED

Jane Abramchik remains at the McGaw Care Center, Frank Murdough Pavilion, 3200 Grant Street, Evanston, 60201. She continues to improve. Dorene Schurman (Jen Schneider’s mom) remains in hospice care at her residence facility in Ohio.

IN SYMPATHY, MARY LOU NOORTS

We said in last month’s newsletter that we’d say a bit more about the late MaryLou Noorts (Annie Noorts’ mother-in-law) in this June edition. The deadline hit too close to say much. MaryLou grew up in wartime Belgium; her dad was part of the underground against Hitler. She got engaged to George Noorts, who came to the US in the early ‘50s, and she followed him and wed in Chicago 3 years later. They had two kids, one being Gerry, who is now married to Annie! She became a grandma to Molly as well as to the kids of Gerry and his late sister Diane. Life was work, until they could retire and live in Florida. After her husband died, she moved back here. She lived to be 88; she and Annie were very close and she is missed much by MaryLou’s surviving family.

SKYE BAPTIZED

During worship on Sunday, June 9th, we celebrated the baptism of Britta Christianson’s daughter Skye Danielle, who is almost eleven months old! Melissa (Erickson) and Andy Paluck are the baptismal sponsors, but because this was hastily scheduled by Pastor and Britta during the Spaghetti Dinner, they could not make it as they had tickets to fly out of the country. Britta’s uncle Rich and aunt Jane were proxy sponsors, and Jane brought some water from the Jordan River, enabling Pastor Richard to continue his tradition of baptizing people here with water that includes some water from where Jesus was baptized!

ST. PETER’S SERVICE WITH A JUST HARVEST

By the time you read this, St. Peter’s will have provided the meal and served a lunch at the Just Harvest Community Kitchen on June 29th. Pastor, Beth, Peggy and Chad were on hand to serve. Pastor and Beth’s involvement in the Kitchen as a long-term, hands-on ministry has been meaningful and is much appreciated. Let’s keep it going! Our next turn to service is **August 31st**.

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Skokie, IL 60077
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Lector/Nursery for July 2024

July 7th Nursery: Laurie M.
Lector: David I.

July 14th Nursery: Heidi T.
Lector: Annie N.

July 21st Nursery: Carolyn V.
Lector: Jenn S.

July 28th Nursery: Mike R.
Lector: Judy P.

Aug 4th Nursery: Rita M.
Lector: Karen C.

Subject to switches. Thank you to everyone for helping out each week!



The ANNOUNCER

JULY 2024

Welcome Fellow Travelers

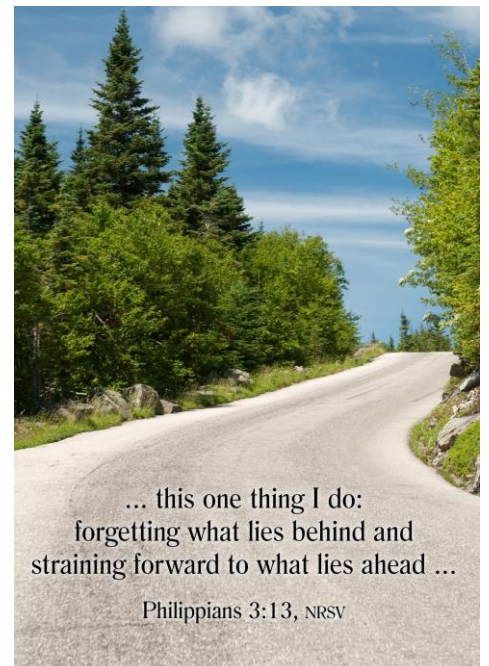
Welcome fellow travelers.

Welcome to all who have journeyed this path for a while.
Welcome to those who are new to the path.
Welcome to those who are not sure where the path lies.
Welcome to new visitors and to old friends.

Welcome to the young at heart.
To those of all ages and colors,
all orientations and gender expressions,
all abilities and cultures, and opinions.

Know that you are welcome here – no matter what.
Welcome to everyone.
We hope that you find peace and uplift in the worship and work that we share.

Source: Rev. Maggie Sebastian adapted from a welcome created by Rev. Elizabeth Myer Boulton at Hope Church in Boston (UCC, Disciples of Christ).



... this one thing I do:
forgetting what lies behind and
straining forward to what lies ahead ...

Philippians 3:13, NRSV