



# The Announcer

**St. Peter's United Church of Christ  
8013 Laramie Ave.; Skokie, IL 60077**

## FROM THE MINISTER'S TABLET

By Reverend Richard Lanford

### *From the Minister's Tablet*

Hello everybody! It's time to refresh the title of this column, even if just a little, to reflect reality. In fact, we're going through a lot of refreshing these days, aren't we?

As we, as a whole, start to return to large parts of life pre-COVID (thank you vaccines and its aggressive distribution!) we have been hearing about "transitioning" back to some practices we enjoyed (or did not) before lockdowns. From the pulpit I likened what we were entering and going through then was like the wilderness experience of the Hebrews after they escaped Egypt. Once those 40 years were over and God had led them to the Jordan River to start conquering Canaan, they too were looking at a set of changes. Changes that were not back to normalcy in Egypt, but at least back to a non-wandering, Moses-free period. A new chapter was about to be written for and by Israel, and so, one could think, are we.

It is a transition, in many ways, be we the proto-Israelites about to cross the river, the world last March going into COVID mitigations and lockdowns, or us now beginning to come out of the restrictions in so many ways. How do we stay grounded? What helps us navigate and thrive in this transition?

The Bible does offer answers for us. With Moses giving his farewell address before his death, he adjured them to "choose life." The people stood at a crossroads as they stood at the doorway into the future: "I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life so that you and your descendants may live." More to the point is after the basic conquest of the Promised Land, there was a covenant ceremony at Shechem, led by Joshua. "Choose this day whom you will serve . . . but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." The people did not keep this covenant, or follow the urging of Moses, but we have the guidance for transitions nonetheless.

One way you and I can transition forward is to return to Christian community if we have drifted apart from it. It may be through coming back to worship in person, which I encourage whole-heartedly. I preached a sermon on the values of faith communities in trying to know what God wants us to do. It may be through returning to watching the live-stream (or its "rewind" recorded version later) if that is what you've been doing. The viewership on the YouTube livestream has dramatically decreased. Yes, we've had problems with the Internet, but as of mid-June with two pretty-good to perfect Sundays in a row in that department, we HOPE we are done with that. Meaning, if you have quit watching, as I know some of you have, because of a bad hook-up, please come back and try it again. If you have the technology, these are ways to reconnect to a community of Christian faith, which attending to will help all of us together go through these current transitions as faithfully as possible.

Let us keep our covenant with God and the community. Let us find a grounding for the transitions we now work our way through. I encourage you to return to in-person worship if you are able; new clarified expectations are in the latest Council Updates from the Office. If you are a live-streamer, try us again. Even if you have tuned out in response to some of the sermons, being in covenant is like being a member of a family, and although family does not always get along, the family sticks together most of the time; likewise, being in covenant means we stick together, walk together, in God's ways.

Keep the faith, Pastor Richard Lanford



## Upcoming Events

**IN-PERSON  
Worship Sundays  
at 10 AM..  
Livestream –  
Sundays 10:00 AM  
on YouTube**

**Rummage Sorting  
Mon. & Wed.  
evenings – 6:30-  
8:30 PM; Fri 10AM  
to Noon**

**Village Inn Food  
Fundraiser – July  
25th Sunday, from  
1 PM to 11 PM**

**St. Peter's Re-Gathering Plan Update.** Given the move by both the state of Illinois and the Village of Skokie to Phase 5 of the Pandemic plan, St. Peter's Council has voted to make the following updates to our own plan.

## **WORSHIP – Beginning Sunday, June 27th**

Masks are not required during the worship service for those who are fully vaccinated. However, we are asking everyone to wear a mask when social distancing may be difficult. This includes before and after services when people naturally gather as they enter or depart from the worship service at the same time.

Distance in the pews will be reconfigured to every other row.

Hymnals and pew pads will be placed back in the pews.

Reservations for attendance no longer required. Offerings plates will not be passed yet, but text, PayPal, and Vanco digital giving is still available and encouraged.

Entry and exit continue to be available by both Oakton and parking lot doors – Laramie door will remain closed for now.

## **OTHER**

Masks are recommended during non-worship activities that take place in the building (Rummage sorting meetings, etc.). Check with the people you are with to determine if “masks off” is okay with everyone present before removing them.

In-person meetings are permitted.

Regular Coffee Hour will not recommence until September.

Call ahead before visiting Pastor and Laura in the building, and please be prepared to wear a mask if non-vaccinated persons are present in the building. The Rummage Committee will meet to determine their own next steps and protocols for the Rummage Sale – that was not covered in Council.

Extensive discussion was had about this plan, and the main message Council wishes to convey is that

ALL ARE WELCOME, including young children, others who may not yet be vaccinated, and people with weakened immune systems who remain at greater risk of severe COVID whether or not they have been vaccinated. Our hope is that in September we will be able to dispense with all the protocols and celebrate a complete reopening with Choir, Sunday school, Coffee Hour, and all the social things that we enjoy as a congregation – without masks and distance.

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## **At our last Council Meeting, the “Doomsday Pollyanna” committee was renamed the “Strategic Planning Committee.”**

This committee was formed in late 2019 to explore options for dealing with our financial issues, like joining with another church or possibly selling our building. While we made a few contacts with other congregations at that time, COVID and quarantine has significantly changed the landscape. Council has agreed that new brainstorming and ideation sessions are needed to address the future of St Peter's, its congregation, and it's building. We would like to hold our first meeting next week **Wednesday, June 30 at 7pm** on Zoom to allow for as many people as possible to attend. We will hold a second meeting on **Thursday, July 8, also at 7pm** on Zoom. If you can make both meetings, wonderful. If you can only make one, that's okay as well. Our purpose with these meetings is to share ideas, discuss possibilities, and provide some options for the Church Council to deliberate on at the July Council meeting. Please RSVP to Jen Schneider via email ([jenschneider@comcast.net](mailto:jenschneider@comcast.net)) if you plan to attend, and which meeting.

## **RUMMAGE SORTING DAYS INCREASE IN JULY AND YES WE ARE COLLECTING RUMMAGE!**

Our sorting days and times will increase as we inch closer to our sale September 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>. *In July we'll be sorting on MONDAYS & WEDNESDAYS from 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM. We'll also be sorting FRIDAYS from 10 AM to NOON.* Anyone can help sort, you need no prior experience and sorters get to shop while they work. If you can come for an hour or part of the time, we welcome you!

**Rummage collection:** we normally collect items during office hours weekdays 9 AM to 2 PM, but if you can't do it then call us and we'll make arrangements to have someone meet you there when it works for you. Call the office or Annie N. with any questions and thank you so much for all your support!!

## **Village Inn Food**

**Fundraiser July 25<sup>th</sup>!** From 11 AM to 1 AM if you order food from Village Inn and let the server know you are there for the St. Peter's UCC fundraiser we'll get 20% of whatever you spend.

This goes for carryout, delivery and dine in. Anyone can support us, not just members, so spread the word and mark your calendars!

## **Our A Just Harvest Kitchen turn to serve is July 31<sup>st</sup>!**

Look for a link to sign up to donate in our weekly emails and on Facebook starting in July. We'll be collecting \$500.00 which covers the cost of the meal and service. We don't know yet when they'll be opening their doors for service again, but we hope it will happen soon! Thanks so much to everyone who donates. Contact Peggy R or Laura in the office with any questions.

## **SEVEN MINUTES OF PRAYER**

- The Niles Township Clergy Forum has, for over a year, been gathering with any and all like-minded people in the area, on Wednesdays at 3 PM for 7 minutes of silent prayer. This happens at the Village Green space just to the east of the Library's eastern entrance. It began as some kind of response to all the gun violence that was taking over our news. Now it is once a month, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of each month. The convener is usually Rabbi Weill of Ezra-Habonim, the Niles

Township Jewish Congregation and we are accompanied by a large sign which simply says "Peace Love Kindness." If you are interested in joining us / them, please know you are welcome.

## **A HEADS UP ABOUT THE BACK LOT BASH -**

You may have already heard that the Skokie Back Lot Bash is ON this year! It will run from Friday, August 27th through Sunday, August 29th. The Skokie Park District has already been contacted to secure our space at Lorel Park for our outdoor, 10 AM, service -- and picnic to follow! If enough folks come, we can use the field for games. We did not get the electricity access that we always have, so this request has been specifically mentioned for this year. Please plan to come to this service, bring a lawn chair if you don't want to sit in a folding chair or a picnic table bench.

## **Special Occasion Coffee**

**Hour August 8.** Council approved a request from Marlene Russell to hold a special coffee hour on Sunday August 8 to celebrate her and Carol Burmeister's 85th birthday. We granted permission to do that, of course, and hope to see people there (masks on!).

# Church News

## LECTOR SCHEDULE FOR JULY AND AUGUST

### JULY

July 4th Jessica Schneider  
 July 11th Marcia Hilliard  
 July 18th Barb Todd  
 July 25th Mark Loach (also lay liturgist)

### AUGUST

August 1 Karen Christianson (also lay liturgist)  
 August 8<sup>th</sup> Annie Noorts  
 August 15<sup>th</sup> Rich Schneider  
 August 22<sup>nd</sup> Andre Gloeckner  
 August 29<sup>th</sup> Katy Schuhrke Aguayo (Lorel Park)

## PASTOR'S & LAURA'S VACATION DATES

Pastor Richard and Beth Lanford will be taking 13 of their 28 vacation days starting on Thursday, July 22nd through and including Tuesday, August 3rd. He will be back in the study the next day, Wednesday August 4th. This is presuming he succeeds in getting guest preachers for July 29th and August 1st, as well as someone or two to cover pastoral emergencies while he is away. Laura will be on vacation from Friday July 2 and return to the office on Tuesday, July 13<sup>th</sup>. Filling in for her will be Sharon Johnson on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday July 5-7.

## SPECIAL TOUR OF THE CHURCH

On a very rainy Friday morning on the 25<sup>th</sup> of June, Pastor and Laura welcomed a group of kids from Niles West for a special tour of our beloved church! Pastor took the kids all around the church and discussed our history, the meaning of things around the church and some of the things we do or have done for or in

in the community. We also gave out rainbow hearts to all who wanted them. The students were curious and thoughtful and we hope a good time was had by all.

## Counters Needed!

With the return to in-person worship, we are also returning to a regular schedule of people counting and depositing donations. We are looking for 2 more people to count, one monthly and one only 4 times a year. Can you help? Please contact Annie Noorts ([annie@mollyu.com](mailto:annie@mollyu.com), (847) 772-2717 if you can.

The Schedule as of now is

Week 1 - Rich Schneider and ??  
 Week 2 - Maria Altmayer and Beth Lanford  
 Week 3 - Kathy Zipperer and Annie Noorts  
 Week 4 - Ginger Kalensky and Dorothy Panzke  
 Week 5 (4x/year) - Rich Schneider and ??

**Mini Pantry Program Approved!** Council approved participation in a new Niles Township program called "Coming Together" (<https://www.comingtogether.in/2021>) and will be purchasing a "kit" to build a mini pantry outside the Laramie door of the church. Seven other organizations in Niles Township are participating, including Central United Methodist, Skokie Park District, and School District 69. The kit will cost \$350 – donations to offset that cost should be labeled "Mini Pantry." UPDATE – an anonymous donation has been pledged to cover the cost of the Mini Pantry – THANK YOU! Once it is purchased, built, and installed, it can be stocked and used by anyone at any time. This program has worked well in many other communities, and as St Peter's UCC we are excited to participate in our OWN community.

**JULY BIRTHDAYS**

7/1 – Randy Altmayer, Mia Paige Speicher  
7/3 – Beth Lanford, Ann Aler  
Mandy Taheny, Mike R. Taheny  
7/4 – Danny Mahoney  
7/6 – Nancy Lindroth, Sandy Piper  
7/7 – Ron Schuhrke  
7/11 – Hillary Gack, Wendy Svenson  
7/15 – Shari Meggs, Jeremy Steegmueller  
7/16 – Sydney Kerbel, Mary Taylor  
7/21 – Louise Dahm  
7/22 – A.J. Tarzian

7/24 – Kaitlin Garcia, Justin Mitchell  
7/27 – Alice Schaller  
7/28 – Ryan Miller  
7/29 – Ralph Burmeister

**JULY ANNIVERSARIES**

7/3 – Bruce & Linda Mau  
7/12 – Beth & Richard Lanford  
Gregory & Gail Thomas  
7/17 – Beth & Paul Brzozowski  
Lisa & Eric Martinek  
John & Gail Balling

**AUGUST BIRTHDAYS**

8/1 - Linda Haig  
8/2 - Sharon Johnson  
8/7 - Erik Altmayer,  
Richard Steegmueller  
8/8 - Arthur Daniel Svenson; Kathy  
Zipperer; Marlene Russell  
8/9 - Carol Burmeister; Kim Loach  
8/11 - Olivia Altmayer  
8/14 - Elliott Kerbel  
8/15 - Karen Rector  
8/16 - Tom Schaller  
8/19 - Rich Miller  
8/20 - Dan Guenther  
8/22 - Elizabeth Hoellerich

8/23 - Allison Guenther; Juanito Banoyo;  
Ron Lundeen; Valerie Paige-Mahoney  
8/24 - Harrison Kuras;  
Stephanie Lundeen;  
8/25 - Henry Muhrer  
8/31 - Helen Mauer

**AUGUST ANNIVERSARIES**

8/3 - Gail & Jack Hoellerich  
8/7 - Gene & Leslie (Todd) Kiesel  
8/17 - Ron & Stephanie Lundeen  
8/20 - Barb & Jim Todd; Bonnie &  
Mark Loach  
8/22 - Dan & Heather O'Hara  
8/23 - Errol & Laurie Mitchell  
8/28 - Christine & Peter Svenson

**PRAYER REQUESTS:** Ingrid Anderson, Guy and Traudel Cline, Pat Mauer Erdman, Linda Haig, Ken Itter, Helen Mauer, Jim Todd, Roy Svenson & Cristy Lopez.

If you see your name listed and would like it removed, or, someone you know should be added, please contact the office.