From the Pastor…

**Sts. Peter & Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church LC-MS**

Monthly Newsletter --- August 2020

699 Stambaugh Avenue, Sharon, PA 16146

Phone: 724.347.3620 Little People Pre-School: 724.347.3620 (option 4)

E-mail: church@saintspeterandpaul.net [www.saintspeterandpaul.net](http://www.saintspeterandpaul.net)

“THE ROCK and THE SWORD”

“Built upon the Rock of Christ and wielding the

Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God.”

**The “What Ifs” of Life**

There is a part of me that can’t get around asking the question “what if.” I ask because I want to think through all the consequences of a certain action or, when I’m filled with worry and angst, I think about what could happen or what could have happened if a situation had been changed. On August 8th, for the preparatory hymn, we will sing Martin Luther’s “If God Had Not Been on Our Side.” What if God had not been on the side of His fallen creation? What if He had left us to our sins? What if He had not, in mercy, come to save us from our enemies? This hymn tackles the biggest “what if” of our lives. Martin Luther penned this hymn after having meditated on Psalm 124, which is King David’s song for the people of Israel. These two songs give us true confidence to face all life’s situations with courage and confidence knowing that God is on our side and has come to aid us. These words of Luther and David show us that all our help and care come from the hand of the Lord.

***“If God Had Not Been on Our Side”***

*If God had not been on our side*

*And had not come to aid us,*

*The foes with all their power and pride*

*Would surely have dismayed us;*

*For we, His flock, would have to fear*

*The threat of men both far and near*

*Who rise in might against us.*

*Their furious wrath, did God permit,*

*Would surely have consumed us*

*And as a deep and yawning pit*

*With life and limb entombed us.*

*Like men over whom dark waters roll*

*Their wrath would have engulfed our soul*

*And, like a flood, overwhelmed us.*

*Blest be the Lord, who foiled their threat*

*That they would not devour us;*

*Our souls, like birds, escaped their net,*

*They could not overpower us.*

*The snare is broken- we are free!*

*Our help is ever, Lord, in Thee,*

*Who madest earth and heaven. Amen.*

**Psalm 124**

**A Song of Ascents. Of David.**

*If it had not been the Lord who was on our side—  let Israel now say—*

*2 if it had not been the Lord who was on our side*

*when people rose up against us,*

*3 then they would have swallowed us up alive,*

*when their anger was kindled against us;*

*4 then the flood would have swept us away,*

*the torrent would have gone over us;*

*5 then over us would have gone*

*the raging waters.*

*6 Blessed be the Lord,*

*who has not given us*

*as prey to their teeth!*

*7 We have escaped like a bird*

*from the snare of the fowlers;*

*the snare is broken,*

*and we have escaped!*

*8 Our help is in the name of the Lord,*

*who made heaven and earth.*

 Psalm 124, which this hymn follows so closely, is called a “Song of Ascent.” It would be sung by the pilgrims on their way up to Jerusalem as Jerusalem sat on a hill. As they went up to the temple in Jerusalem, they would sing of the deliverance that God had granted them from all their enemies, from the followers’ nets, from the flood, from the enticers, and from all things overwhelming. King David had many dangers: Saul, the Philistines, his own sons, and still others. The people of Israel had their own dangers: Leaving Egypt in the Exodus, forty years in the wilderness, entering the Promised Land in the midst of enemies, and still many more. What has been on your mind? Who or what has caused you to be overwhelmed? Is there someone or something enticing you away from the Lord? What trap has the devil laid for your soul in which you have become ensnared?

 Christians today, including you and me, still sing the song of ascent with David and with all the people of Israel, saying “Blest be the Lord, who foiled their threat that they would not devour us;...” If you only surveyed your life momentarily, you would still find plenty of things the Lord has delivered you from so that you may be able to bless His name most holy. God is with you. God is in the midst of this life’s troubles to deliver you from all your enemies. As we pray in the Lord’s Prayer, “Lead us not into temptation but Deliver us from evil.” What does this mean? “[6th] God, indeed, tempts no one; but we pray in this petition that God would guard and keep us, so that the devil, the world, and our flesh may not deceive us, nor seduce us into misbelief, despair, and other great shame and vice; and though we be assailed by them, that still we may finally overcome and gain the victory. [7th] We pray in this petition, as in a summary, that our Father in heaven would deliver us from all manner of evil, of body and soul, property and honor, and at last, when our last hour shall come, grant us a blessed end, and graciously take us from this vale of tears to Himself into heaven.”

 God gives the victory and God delivers us both here, in this time, and one day soon, into eternity.  We need this hymn and this Psalm to remind us that God has taken care of the greatest “what if” of our lives. What if God had not been on our side? God teaches us what would have happened to us, so that we might all the more draw near to His throne of grace with loud shouts of thanksgiving and praise. We needn’t fear anyone or anything that may come near us when we have God on our side.

In Jesus’s blessed name,

Pastor Jacob Deal

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We are currently looking for someone to serve as **vice president** for the remainder of this year. If you wish to know more about the duties or are willing to consider filling this position, please contact Jonathan Baisch (724-816-6866).

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**Word of Hope: 1-888-217-8679**

The only 24/7 CONFIDENTIAL Hotline that is distinctly Lutheran, bringing healing found in Christ, to those whose hearts have been broken by abortion.

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Remember the following in Prayer…

**~The Hurting and Healing:** *Sue BenderCA, Lois BortnerCA, Richard Brandes,Beverly Chlpka, Kim, George, Bradley Dirgo, Marjorie Dirgo, Tim Dudash, Henrietta (Hank) Holcroft, Neale & Melissa Huston, Donna Kennedy, Betty KnauffCA, Regis Knauff, Jess Lavoie, Virginia LehmanCA, Paul Lucas****CA****, Rhonda MoatsCA, Sandy Marshall, Tom MulliganCA, Linda Parkany, Richard ReuningCA, Marty Scott, Martin Weisenborn, Angela WeserCA, and Millie Zachar.*

**~The Homebound:**  *Helen Bender, Mary Chmielewski, Dan Davis, Edna Krajci, Mary Ann Krajci, Virginia Lehman, Robert Murchek, and Marion Roberts.*

**~Serving in the Military:**  *Clayton Drnek, Curtis Sinewe, and Joshua Solyan.*

**~Community & World Needs:**  *Those suffering from or affected by the coronavirus, victims of violence and terrorism; those suffering from loss and dislocation because weather disasters; those suffering from addiction and their families; Local, State, and National Government Leaders; Safety for all Police Officers, Firefighters, & First Responders; the unemployed; our Third Quarter Local Mission: Community Food Warehouse of Mercer County.*

*\*CA represents cancer; number after other names represents weeks on the prayer list. Please submit prayer requests in writing to the church office.*

**Homebound Members & Friends**

***Please keep the following people in your prayers:***

Helen Bender

920 Pleasantview Dr.

New Castle, PA 16101

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Mary Chmielewski

87 S. Neshannock Rd.

Hermitage, PA 16148

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Dan Davis, Avalon Springs

745 Greenville Road

Mercer, PA 16137

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Edna Krajci, **Continuing Healthcare at The Ridge**

 **#316 Nora’s Place**
3379 S. Main St
Mineral Ridge, Ohio 44440
330-652-9901

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Mary Ann Krajci, John XXIII

2250 Shenango Valley Freeway

Hermitage, PA 16148

724-981-3200

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Virginia Lehman

92 Wet Track Rd.

West Middlesex, PA 16159

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Robert Murchek

394 Fisher Hill St.

Sharon, PA 16146-5801

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Marion Roberts (NEW ADDRESS!)

287 East 2nd St. Apt. #103

Hummelstown, PA 17036

717-798-5330

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**Sincere thanks go out to Elizabeth Logan and Pastor & Evelyn Baisch who gave of their time in July and polished our communion ware. Your service is greatly appreciated.**

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**NOTE: Buhl Day 2020** has been canceled. You are on your own for making delicious halushki!

**CELEBRATING IN AUGUST!**

**Birthdays:**

Anthony Bale 8- 6

Brooke Psznick 8- 6

Diane Riefstahl 8- 6

Kathy McGowan 8- 7

Mildred Elavsky 8- 8

Sarah Chlpka 8-12

Gillian Brandes 8-19

Anson Holcroft 8-20

Alex (Sasha) Carr 8-28

Elizabeth Loughan 8-30

**Anniversaries:**

Mike & Marie Flaugher 8- 6

Rev. Jacob & Anna Deal 8-10

Rev. Arthur & Evelyn Baisch 8-17

David & Debbie Zurawsky 8-18

Rudy & Jean Tomko 8-20

\*If birthdays or anniversaries have been omitted, please let the church office know. Thank You!

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 **Be sure to check out our church’s website** [**www.saintspeterandpaul.net**](http://www.saintspeterandpaul.net) **for current service bulletins, newsletters, an up-dated church calendar and more!**

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**A note from Council President Jonathan Baisch:**

Members of Sts. Peter & Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church,

 One of my duties as President is to make appointments when needed to fill a vacant position. I have been made aware of a need for additional trustees and I have appointed Mike Flaugher effective immediately to fill this need. This appointment will stand until the August 16th, 2020 Voters’ Meeting when the appointment will be presented for ratification by the Voters’ Assembly.

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**Bible Memory Verses from July:**

**For Adults:**

**July 5th:** *God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

 *John 5:8*

**July 12th:** *For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. 1 Corinthians 1:18*

**July 19th:** *Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. Mark 13:31*

**July 26th:** *But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.*

 *2 Corinthians 12:9-10*

**For Children:**

**July 5th:** *Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. Galatians 6:2*

**July 12th:** *No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.
 Luke 9:62*

**July 19th:** *Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine.
 Isaiah 43:1*

**July 26th:** *Present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification.
 Rom. 6:19*

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**Sunday Bible Study:**

Sunday morning’s Bible Study is examining “The Augsburg Confession”. Those wishing to take part in this study virtually should speak with Pastor Deal for instructions. Class materials can be mailed to you or downloaded.

 Please consider joining us! Class begins at 10:30 am.

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**LIKE & FOLLOW our Church’s Facebook page (Saints Peter and Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church)!**

Remember to like, comment, and share to help us reach as many people as possible.

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The next

VOTERS’ ASSEMBLY MEETING

will take place

following worship

Sunday, August 16, 2020.

Your attendance will be appreciated.

Bible Study that day is canceled.

**Scrip/Gift Card Program**

Sts. Peter & Paul’s is once again offering members and friends the chance to participate in the Scrip/Gift Card Program.

 This program allows participants to order gift cards from major retailers. The participant receives the full value of the gift card ordered with the church receiving a percentage, which varies from retailer to retailer, of the amount.

 Order forms for this program may be found on the table in the narthex as well as along the windows in the main hallway. The next due date for ordering gift cards is Sunday, August 2nd. Orders and payments (made out to Sts. Peter & Paul’s) are to be given directly to Matt Berent.

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**To listen to Pastor Deal’s sermons, phone 724-347-3620 and press Option 6. Current sermons will be available by Sunday evening.**

**ALTAR FLOWERS**

An up-dated **Altar Flower Donation list** has been posted on the bulletin board in the narthex. Until the time a new provider is found, those wishing to donate flowers are asked to do the following:

1. Sign the sign-up sheet in the narthex at least one week in advance.
2. Leave a note for the church secretary as to the dedication to be listed in the weekly bulletin.
3. Purchase flowers from a vendor *of your choice* and deliver the flowers to the church by 9:30 Sunday morning ready to be displayed.
4. Remove the flowers from the altar following the church service.

 Artificial arrangements will adorn the altar on Sundays for which there is no donor.

**OUR THIRD QUARTER LOCAL MISSION:**

**COMMUNITY FOOD WAREHOUSE OF MERCER COUNTY**

The Community Food Warehouse of Mercer County (CFWMC) has been selected as our Third Quarter Local Mission. The CFWMC is a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and is a member of Feeding America, the nation's network of food banks.

 Your support of this local mission would be a blessing to so many especially at this time. Donations may be placed in a pew envelope and put in the offering plate. Make sure to indicate your envelope number and that the donation is for our local mission.

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**Sts. Peter & Paul’s Food Pantry is able to assist those in need of emergency food!**

If you or someone you know is in need of emergency food during this time, please contact John Dyll (724-734-7016). Anyone who is currently out of work due to COVID-19 and currently has NO income is eligible for SFPP (State Food Purchase Program) and TEFAP (The Emergency Food Assistance Program).

 Similarly, anyone who has lost hours, etc. because of COVID-19 and has a reduced income may be eligible for SFPP and TEFAP. These programs have been extended due to need.

 As we anticipate an increase in demand on our local food pantry as the days go by, please consider making a financial donation to this important function of our church. Please note that we are unable to accept food donations at this time. Also, families will only be able to receive food once a month for the time being. If you are able to assist with either the packing or distribution of food items, please let the church office know.

‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.’ Matthew 25:40

 **“Stock the Food Pantry Sunday”**

**is August 9th!**

***Let us remember those in need!***

Your financial contributions to this outreach mission will be greatly appreciated!

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**POP TAB EFFORTS TO BE REWARDED!**

During the fall of 2019, Sts. Peter & Paul’s participated in Thrivent’s **Pop Tab Challenge** to benefit Ronald McDonald Houses. Thanks to your efforts, under the guidance of Marie Flaugher, our church came in third by donating in excess of **40 lbs.** of pop tabs. Thrivent will be rewarding our efforts by sponsoring a catered luncheon in the upcoming months. Stay tuned for further details as plans become solidified.

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**Community Day 2020**

In spite of Covid-19, plans for Community Day 2020 are underway. Recognizing that modeling this year’s event to resemble previous annual events, Community Day organizers (Pastor Deal, Barry Nelson, Diane Riefstahl, and Jesse Riffle) have decided to hold an outdoor movie night. Tentatively planned for Saturday, September 19th, this event will allow for attendees to remain in their cars and view a family-friendly movie. Thanks to a generous $1000 donation from Steel Valley Logistics, LTD and a $500 grant from Pittsburgh Area Lutheran Ministries (PALM), along with other donations, we will be able to purchase a special outdoor projector, screen material, FM transmitter, and licensing rights to a popular movie.

 A real positive aspect of these plans is that, with the exception of the licensing rights, items will be able to be reused in the future.

 The purpose of Community Day is to foster a positive relationship between our church and our neighbors. This will be our fourth annual event. If you want to know how you can help with this year’s plans, please feel free to speak with one of the organizers.

**JULY MEMORIAL CONTRIBUTIONS**

**In Loving Memory of Barb Vasconi:** *Rev. & Mrs. Ed Kucera (Missions).*

**In Loving Memory of John Daris:** *Rev. & Mrs. Ed Kucera (Missions).*

**In Loving Memory of mother, Bettie Sulek, and brother, Richard Dorfi:** *Mr. & Mrs. Robert Sulek (Gen’l fund and Major Repair).*

**In Loving Memory of Don’s Brother, John R. Voytik:** *Pat Voytik.*

**In Loving Memory Aunt Jenny Hoyney & Cousin Ruth Gartner:** *Betty Frye*

**In Loving Memory of sister, Carol Swartzbeck:** *Viola Sakony*

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**ALTAR GUILD REORGANIZATION**

A reorganizational meeting of the Altar Guild took place Saturday, July 11th. At this meeting, Pastor Deal discussed the expanded responsibilities of the Altar Guild to those who were present. Key to the success of the Altar Guild is the willingness of others in the congregation to step up and assist those who have been shouldering the responsibilities for the group over the past years. There are a lot of different facets for involvement in the group allowing members to find the best niche for his/her time and talents.

 Current members of the Altar Guild are Evelyn Baisch, Vicki Bell, Anne Colt, Cheryl Fedele, Marie Flaugher, Judith Furey, Hank Holcroft, Clara Krivosh, Elizabeth Logan, Diane Riefstahl, and Viola Sakony.

 The Altar Guild is open to all communicant members regardless of gender, ages 18 or older. The next meeting is scheduled for Saturday, August 1st at 10 am in the Fellowship Hall. Please come and join us!

**We give sincere thanks to Catherine Carr and Chris Nelson** for filling in as substitute organists as we continue to search for a permanent organist. If you know of anyone who may be interested in the position, please contact Barry Nelson (724-866-1640) or Pastor Deal (724-347-3620) with their name and contact information.

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**Thank You for Serving in August:**

**Assisting Elder:** (Yet to be determined.)

**Altarware:** Clara Krivosh & Cheryl Fedele.

**Note:** Our greeting and ushering programs are temporarily suspended at this time.

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**REMINDER**: During the summer months of June, July, & August, the cleaning staff of Ana Deal & Cheryl Fedele will only be cleaning twice a month.

 Let’s all help to keep our church home looking beautiful.

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A special Divine Service

will be held Saturday, August 15th at 5 pm celebrating Mary, the Mother of Our Lord”.

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Pastor Deal will be on vacation Monday thru Saturday, August 3-8. Please note that there will be NO Divine Service Saturday, August 8th.

 Please contact Elder Chairman Barry Nelson (724-866-7417) if in need of pastoral care during this time.

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We give special thanks to Jesse Riffle and **Steel Valley Logistics, LTD** for their *generous* donation of $1000 to our Community Day efforts. This donation makes a *huge* impact on our plans for this year. Thanks, Jesse, for making it happen!

**Please Remember!**

* As voted on at the special June meeting of the **Voters’ Assembly** Sunday Divine Services will begin at 9 am through the end of September 2020. Bible Study will follow beginning at 10:30 am.
* Until otherwise announced, those attending church functions are asked to enter the building using either the Clover St. or parking lot entrances.
* Members are asked to wear masks upon entering the building. Out of respect for our most vulnerable, please, if possible, keep your mask on until leaving the building with the exception of when communing.
* Please sit in designated pews to maintain social distancing. Do not congregate in the halls prior to or following worship.
* Please only attend services if feeling well so as not to expose others.
* If you have any questions or concerns about any of this, please speak with Pastor Deal.

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“Thank you’s” go out to Marie Flaugher and Catherine Carr who have applied for Thrivent Action Dollars to help fund this year’s COMMUNITY DAY. Your efforts are greatly appreciated!

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**Church auditors** are reminded that the next audit of deposits and the food pantry account will take place following worship, Sunday, August 23rd in the youth room.

**Our Stewardship of Treasures for the Lord:**

In order to do the Lord’s work, we need $2,487.81\* each week to meet our 2020 budget for general purposes and $39.62 for missions.

**Monday, June 29, 2020 (Festival of Saints Peter and Paul):**

 General Offering: $295.00

 SELC Missions: $25.00

**Saturday, July 4 & Sunday, July 5, 2020:**

 General Offering: $1,300.00

 SELC Missions: $85.00

 Other: $50.00

**Saturday, July 11 & Sunday, July 12, 2020:**

 General Offering: $3,797.70

 SELC Missions: $215.00 Other: $40.00

**Saturday, July 18 & Sunday, July 19, 2020:**

 General Offering: $2,370.00

 SELC Missions: $60.00

 Other: $260.50

***Remember, you now have the option of on-line giving! Check out https://www.saintspeterandpaul.net/online-giving.***

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**AVAILABLE IN THE NARTHEX:**

* August/September issue of “The Lutheran Beacon”
* Minutes from the recent meetings of the Altar Guild and Preschool Board.
* Scrip order forms

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**Mark your calendar for Sunday, October 4th!**

Tentatively, we will be recognizing Paula & Mark Ostheimer for their years of service to our Little People Preschool as well as others in this congregation who have served our church over the years during the Divine Service. More details will be available in the September issue of “The Rock and the Sword” newsletter.