From the Pastor…

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

Monthly Newsletter --- July 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 Godly Discipline of Prayer**

As I was reading this past week from the Rev. Dr. Herman Sasse, an influential pastor of the 20th century, I stumbled upon these words from a letter written in 1949:

*The Lutheran Churches are still sunning themselves in the delusion that they have something to expect from the world other than the dear holy cross, which all those must carry who proclaim God’s Law and the Gospel of Jesus Christ to mankind. But this delusion will soon disappear.*

 With the Supreme Court decisions that have been handed down these past few weeks, we should get ready to brace ourselves. The time will soon come, and has now just begun, when there will be no amount of lobbying congress that will save the Church from religious persecution. And no adjudication from the highest court in the nation will prove to be in favor of Christians and protect the assembly of congregations.

 I say this, because Jesus told us what to expect from the world and her leaders (as Sasse would say, “the dear holy cross”). This is why we must not become lazy in the godly discipline of prayer. The world has promised to listen to our petitions, letters, and phone calls. The world is set, however, against listening to the plain words of Scripture since it sets itself opposed to Christ. We have spent countless hours petitioning the government for change so that marriage would remain between a man and a woman, babies would be born and live, young children would not grow up confused by sex and gender, foster children would have good homes to grow up within, women would not need to live in fear of being attacked, and that churches would be free to assemble without fear of violence or persecution. There are, of course, many other things, but these stand out to me.

 We shouldn’t pray to God because the world fails to meet our petitions. Rather, we should pray because we are commanded to and He has promised to hear our prayers. We are the Church of prayer; it is the calling of the Church to pray “without ceasing” (Acts 12:5). Many of us pray occasionally, but who has considered prayer with the magnitude that Luther writes of in the Large Catechism?

*For this we must know, that all our shelter and protection rest in prayer alone. For we are far too feeble to cope with the devil and all his power and adherents that set themselves against us, and they might easily crush us under their feet. Therefore we must consider and take up those weapons with which Christians must be armed in order to stand against the devil. For what do you think has hitherto accomplished such great things, has checked or quelled the counsels, purposes, murder, and riot of our enemies, whereby the devil thought to crush us, together with the Gospel, except that the prayer of a few godly men intervened like a wall of iron on our side? They should else have witnessed a far different tragedy, namely, how the devil would have destroyed all Germany in its own blood….or whenever a godly Christian prays: Dear Father, let Thy will be done, God speaks from on high and says: Yes, dear child, it shall be so, in spite of the devil and all the world.*

 “Rise! To Arms! With Prayer Employ You!” This is the title of one of our great hymns. Prayer is our weapon against all the foes and against the hordes of hell. The world and her leaders can throw our letters in the trash, they can field our phone calls, they can even lock us up, but they cannot silence the prayers spoken to God. God has promised to listen to our petitions. “When he calls to me, I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will rescue him and honor him” Psalm (91:15). God has promised to hear us when we pray in His Word. Now is a perfect time to pray as Daniel prayed, “O my God, incline your ear and hear. Open your eyes and see our desolations, and the city that is called by your name. For we do not present our pleas before you because of our righteousness, but because of your great mercy” (Daniel 9:18).

 The Lord has taught us to pray. Each day, as new events unfold before us, is a day that the Lord is teaching us to pray. We offer thanksgiving for the events which are seemingly favorable and cry out for mercy as many others add weight to the dear holy cross we must all carry. The prayer of Christians, and of the Church, is as pleasing incense rising from the stench of earth to the heavens. The Lord loves to hear our prayers, and when we are burdened with infirmities and weaknesses, believe that the Holy Spirit will make intercession for us, with groaning too deep for words.

 All that is happening around us, in our community, in our nation, in our world, is being used by God for our good. Many have fallen away from the Church and have denied the faith for temporal wealth and security. Now as God is tearing down our idols from before our eyes, will they also be torn down from within our hearts or we will perish likewise. As Sasse wrote:

*We believe that by conferences and organizations, by pronouncements and radio speeches we can spare ourselves the bitter way of sorrows of contrition and repentance- until God’s mighty hand one day will also crush those means and teach us that the church lives by the means of grace [Scripture, Baptism, Lord’s Supper], by nothing else, and that her life is expressed solely and only in this: that she becomes a praying church again, as she was in the days of the apostles. Then it was said of her: “And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers” (Acts 2:42). “And fear came upon every soul” is said of this praying congregation’ [v.43].”*

 God brings His Church back to its knees in prayer so that, through repentance and faith, it firmly holds that there is no God who governs as He does. There is no God who provides as He does. God teaches us that we, His people, live by His grace and shall be sustained through all sorrow, conflict, and war by the means of that grace. Jesus said, “Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. Believe in God; believe also in me” (John 14:1). “The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:5b-7).

Sasse, H., & Harrison, M. C. (2013). *Letters to Lutheran pastors: Volume I, 1948-1951*. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House. Pages 74-85.

God’s blessings,

Pastor Jacob Deal

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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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**REMINDER:** Please let the church office know of any changes to your address, phone, cell phone or your e-mail address!

**Membership Information needed!**

This is the “final call” for return of Membership Information forms! Even if your form had no corrections, it would be appreciated if you would return it to the church office so it can be checked off the list of outstanding forms. This form is an effort for us to not only double check the accuracy of the information we have on file, but to assemble it in one easily-accessible file.

 Membership information sheets can be dropped off at the church or returned by mail (Diane at Sts. Peter & Paul Ev. Lutheran Church, 699 Stambaugh Ave., Sharon, PA 16146). If your form has been misplaced and you need another copy, please leave Diane a message by phoning the church at 724-347-3620 (option 3).

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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

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, Neile & 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.*

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**A message from Barry Nelson, Chairman of the Elders:**

 The Board of Elders is in a time of transition. Ralph Dorman has moved to northern Ohio and has decided that he will be unable to meet Elder responsibilities. Hugh Owen also has decided that he will not be able to meet Elder obligations in the future. We thank them for their care and dedication as they take the next steps in their spiritual journeys.

 The Board will get together soon to decide how to proceed in the future to help meet the needs of the congregation.

 If any congregation member needs anything in the near future, please feel free to call Barry Nelson, Chairman of the Board of Elders, at 724 / 866 – 7417.

**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, **Vista Center at The Ridge**
3379 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 (Address soon to be changing.)

The Lakes at Jefferson, Room 221

7271 W. Market St.

Mercer, PA 16137

717-798-5330

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**Sincere thanks go out to those members of our congregation who worked so hard to get our church grounds in shape for the summer. From trimming shrubbery to working in the flower beds, your donations of time and talents have gone far to beautify our property.**

**CELEBRATING IN JULY!**

**Birthdays:**

Jeff Brandes 7- 2

Paul M. Petro 7- 2

Jesse Riffle 7- 4

April Bosnjak 7- 8

Betty Wolf 7- 8

Morgan Psznick 7-12

Elizabeth Haenftling 7-15

Clara Krivosh 7-16

Robert Sulek 7-16

Casonddra Thomas 7-20

Marilyn Weisenborn 7-23

Mary Ann Krajci 7-24

Jim McGowan 7-25

Suellen Burns 7-26

Selena Thomas 7-30

Anne Colt 7-31

**Anniversaries:**

Paul M. & Joyce Petro 7- 2

Barry & Chris Nelson 7- 6

Edward & Anne Colt 7-19

Mark & Janelle Gabriel 7-19

Carl & Maria Marks 7-26

Jerome & June Thomas 7-28

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

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**Steadfast Lutherans published an excellent article from our seminary in Canada concerning a “return to normal” and the current pandemic.**

 **If you did not receive a copy emailed to you, the article can be accessed at <http://steadfastlutherans.org/2020/06/st-catharines-seminary-faculty-issues-opinion/>.**

 **Printed copies are also available in the narthex.**

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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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We were pleased this past month to have welcomed **Rev. Art and Evelyn Baisch** as new members of our congregation. Pastor and Mrs. Baisch are Jonathan’s parents (and, of course, Bekah’s in-laws) and currently reside in Austintown, OH. The Baisches have one other son, Andrew and his wife Justi; and a daughter, Christi, her husband Brian and three grandchildren, Abigail, Duncan, and Faith.

 Rev. Baisch was an immigrant to the USA from post-WWII Germany in 1950 and grew up in Chicago. After working as a teacher and AAL (now Thrivent Financial) agent, Rev. Baisch got his Masters in Divinity at Concordia Theological Seminary in Ft. Wayne, IN. In his ministry, he has served at various locations in Illinois, Pennsylvania, and Arkansas.

 Evelyn grew up in Wisconsin and received her BA from Concordia University in River Forest, IL. She has served as an LC-MS Lutheran and public school teacher as well as held various secretarial and school-related jobs.

 We welcome Rev. Art and Evelyn Baisch!

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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 meeting of the

FINANCIAL COMMITTEE

will take place

Monday, July 13, 2020,

from 6:30 – 8 PM in the Fellowship Hall.

Committee members are asked to please be in attendance.

**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, July 5th. 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.**

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There will be an important, organizational meeting for all those wishing to serve as members of the **ALTAR GUILD** Saturday, July 11th in the Fellowship Hall beginning at 10 am. This meeting is an effort to expand upon the duties and responsibilities of the Altar Guild all while providing some much-needed help to the small core of women who have borne these responsibilities for years.

 If interested in more details about the plans for the Altar Guild, please pick up the information sheet which is found in the narthex.

 The Altar Guild is open to all communicant members ages 18 or older. Please come and join us!

**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.

 The Warehouse does not supply food *directly* to clients, but solicits local grocers, retailers, and food manufacturers for affordable/low-cost food products and warehouses them for distribution to its 33 member agencies. Sts. Peter & Paul’s Food Pantry is one of its agencies.

 Through its agencies, the CFWMC distributes food to 4,200 households across Mercer County. Agencies include food pantries, soup kitchens, abuse and homeless shelters, local churches, after-school programs, low-income day care centers, youth centers, and mental health treatment centers.

 The Community Food Warehouse is always looking for volunteers! Regular office volunteers provide a much-needed service to the food bank. Tasks include filing, answering phones, and data-entry among other office duties. This is a volunteer opportunity which requires a weekly commitment of at least 2-3 hours between the hours of 7:30am-3:30 pm.

 It is also possible to organize a volunteer session for a large group. Typically, one month’s notice is required, but if possible, you should contact them earlier to get scheduled.

 If interested in volunteering, please go to https://[www.foodwarehouse.org/volunteer](http://www.foodwarehouse.org/volunteer) and complete the Volunteer Application found there. Completed applications can be mailed to Community Food Warehouse of Mercer County, 109 S. Sharpsville Ave., Sharon, PA 16146.

 We all know that there have been numerous additional clients added to local foodbanks as a result of the Covid-19 Pandemic. Your support of this local mission would be a blessing to so many. 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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 **“Stock the Food Pantry Sunday”**

**is July 12th!**

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

Your financial contributions will be greatly appreciated!

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**ALTAR FLOWERS**

An up-dated **Altar Flower Donation list** has been posted on the bulletin board in the narthex. If you would like to provide altar flowers for a given Sunday, you 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.

 This temporary policy change has been made due to problems with delivery and quality from our previous provider. Anyone who would like to research other providers who are able to deliver flowers Sunday mornings and provide flowers at a reasonable cost, is welcome (and encouraged) to do so. Gathered information may be given to Diane in the church office.

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

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We wish to sincerely thank Mrs. Catherine Carr who has been donating her talents as an organist while we are seeking the employment of a new, permanent organist.

 We are truly blessed to have her services.

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**Thank You for Serving in July:**

**Assisting Elder:** Bob Sulek.

**Altarware:** Anne Colt & Traudi Sulek.

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

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**Bible Memory Verses from June:**

**For Adults:**

**June 7th:** *All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.*

 *Matthew 28:18b-19*

**June 14th:** *The Lord is good to those who wait for him, to the soul who seeks him. It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord.*

 *Lamentations 3:25-26*

**June 21st:** *Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. Mark 16:16*

**June 28th:** *Behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age. Matthew 28:20*

**For Children:**

**June 7th:** *The one who hears you hears me, and the one who rejects you rejects me, and the one who rejects me rejects him who sent me. Luke 10:16*

**June 14th:** *Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!*

 *Isaiah 6:3*

**June 21st:** *Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.
 Matthew 11:28*

**June 28th:** *The Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost. Luke 19:10*

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At the June 14th **Voters’ Assembly** meeting, members voted to move Sunday morning Divine Services to 9 am through Sunday, September 27th.

 Sunday Bible Study will follow beginning at 10:30 am.

 Saturday Divine Services remain at 5 pm, however are being held in the sanctuary at this time.

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**As we transition back to normal, please note the following:**

* All those in attendance at worship or Bible Study are asked to enter the building using either the Clover St. entrance or the entrance off the parking lot.
* Attendees are asked to wear a clean, protective mask upon entering the building. If you do not have a mask, one will be provided. Members are also asked to keep masks on their faces during the course of the worship service, removing them only for Holy Communion. Please do this out of respect for one another and to help protect our most-vulnerable.
* Temperatures will be taken of those in attendance.
* Attendees are asked to observe recommended social distancing. Please sit in pews which are not roped off. Also, please do not congregate in the hallways outside the sanctuary/chapel; rather, leave promptly following the end of the service.

 Please, only attend if in good health for your sake and that of others.

 If you have any concerns or questions about this, please speak directly with Pastor Deal.

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

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**UP-COMING MEETINGS:**

* The **Altar Guild** will have an organizational meeting Saturday, July 11th at 10 am. in the Fellowship Hall.
* **Community Day organizers** will meet Saturday, July 11th at12:30 pm in the church offices.
* **Auditors** are asked to meet in the library following worship July 12th to audit offering deposits and July 19th for a general audit.
* **Church Council** will meet Monday, July 27th, at 7 pm in the Fellowship Hall.
* The **Preschool Board** will meet at noon, Monday, July 20th to discuss future plans.

**The following is taken from an email Pastor Deal received from Ken Parkany in response to his inquiry about how Ken’s wife, Linda, is progressing following her recent traumatic brain injury (TBI). It is printed, in part, with Ken’s permission.**

Pastor Deal, Please forgive me for not updating you recently.  Thank you and the beloved members of my “home” church - Sts Peter & Paul - for your many prayers.  God listens and answers.  I just want you all, pastors and friends, to know that after 5 weeks your prayers are still being answered.

 We are witnessing Linda’s strength and stamina improve almost daily and her frequent headaches have diminished- last one was the past Saturday evening.

  Her ophthalmologist on Monday said her double vision had resolved 30% in two weeks (last appointment) even though Linda doesn’t see any improvement in her double vision.  Linda was given eye exercises to do 2X /day and (her) next eye appointment (is) in four weeks.

  Five weeks of in-home PT and OT end this week and studies indicate that her recovery is 33% better as a result.   We would agree. So far we have not witnessed any other symptoms emerge and many are possible with TBI.

 Praise God.  And thank you and everyone for your prayers, cards, flowers etc.

 Blessings!

*Anyone wishing to send emails to Ken to share with his wife may direct them to ken.happytrails@gmail.com*

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A special welcome is extended to new member **Vicki Bell**! Vicki became a member of our congregation June 28th. Some “get to know you” information about Vicki will be included in the next issue of “The Rock and the Sword” newsletter.

**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.

**Saturday, May 30 & Sunday, May 31, 2020:**

 General Offering: $3,060.00

 SELC Missions: $20.00

 Other: $50.00

**Saturday, June 6 & Sunday, June 7, 2020:**

 General Offering: $2,130.00

 SELC Missions: $150.00

 Other: $95.00

**Saturday, June 13 & Sunday, June 14, 2020:**

 General Offering: $3,320.00

 SELC Missions: $30.00 Other: $120.00

**Saturday, June 20 & Sunday, June 21, 2020:**

 General Offering: $1,637.35

 SELC Missions: $90.00 Other: $1.00

**Saturday, June 27 & Sunday, June 28, 2020:**

 General Offering: $1,260.00

 SELC Missions: $40.00

Quarterly Missions: $20.00

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

**JUNE MEMORIAL CONTRIBUTIONS**

**In Loving Memory of Barbara Vasconi:** *Mark Gabriel, Mary J. Krivosh, and Jack & Judith Luchette.*

**In Memory of my brother, Edward Swartzbeck, and wife, Fay, who are buried at Arlington National Cemetery:** *Viola Sakony.*

**In Celebration of daughter Tina & her husband Keith’s 25th Anniversary:** *Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Chlpka (Food Pantry).*

**Given in Loving Memory of Don for Father’s Day:** *Pat Voytik (Major Repair).*

**In Loving Memory of John Daris:** *Joan Rice (Trustees’ Acct. for flowers for church gardens).*