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

Monthly Newsletter --- March 2023

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“THE ROCK and THE SWORD”

“Built upon the Rock of Christ and wielding the

Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God.”

**Was Gomez Right?**

**By Rev. Greg Bauch**

*(Rev. Bauch is pastor of Ascension Lutheran Church in Nashville, TN, a supporting congregation of Luther Classical College. The following article was printed in the January 2023 issue of Ad Fontes, a publication of Luther Classical College.)*

In the first episode of *The Addams Family,* a truant officer visits the macabre home of “two kids who have never set foot in school.” After locating the head of household, the officer declares, “Your kids have got to go to school. Everybody sends their kids to school!” to which Gomez Addams replies, “Ridiculous. Why have children just to get rid of them? I’m opposed to the whole nonsense.” It’s funny because children should attend school. But as the scene plays out, one learns that Gomez simply believes in a school of different values.

That mid-twentieth-century sitcom patriarch and the fifteenth-century humanists shared a disdain for their respective eras’ state of education. And those humanists had an ally in Martin Luther, who sought significant education reform. Annoyed by his own early instruction, he concluded that children should “study not only languages and history, but also singing and music together with the whole of mathematics.” His desire to wed the piety of monastic schools to advances in language and history was never satisfactorily met in his lifetime. But the heirs of the Reformation continued his work and by 1569 produced an order “by which all schools may correspond to one another,” so that children “may be better instructed in prayer and the Catechism along with writing and reading, for their own as well as the common good, and in the singing of psalms, and thus raised in a Christian manner.” The order specified which books to read in which classes at which hours, prescribing interaction with authors such as Aesop and Cicero. It nurtured piety through the singing of Latin hymns, public recitation of the Catechism, poetic oration of the church calendar, daily practice of the Psalter, and attendance at “the sermon and Litany.” It so exalted the classical languages that students were to speak only Latin with one another both inside and outside of school, while the final academic levels—corresponding to the “gymnasium” that began at age 14—required the study of Greek. And all of this with the hope of providing “stipend schools…so that our poor rural area and its children who have entered school may, insofar as possible, be given a hand and helped,“ since baptism gave each child a claim to the most noble instruction. By the end of the sixteenth century, almost 300 German towns boasted schools founded upon the Lutheran blueprint, and the per-capita density of these schools was nearly ten time that of England.

The model succeeded for decades. The gymnasium—with its emphasis on catechesis, languages, history, and music—led to assuming one’s vocation and studying advanced theology. But just as this model was making strides, the Thirty Years’ War (1618-1648) erupted. The resultant woes led to dilapidated school facilities and decreased student attendance. Soon after, new emphases took root. Pietistic schools shifted focus to a practical education and a private devotion that trivialized the non-native tongue. One disciple of pietism, Henry Mühlenberg, became the foremost Lutheran educator in eighteenth-century America. Mass immigration enabled him to set the foundation for 240 schools by 1820. But the catechetical content, which added elements of progressive salvation, left much to be desired. Ultimately, the father of American Lutheranism spurned his own gymnasium training in favor of practical schools while declaring, “It would not be necessary to torment (preaching) candidates with foreign languages.” If the languages were no longer requisite for ministerial students, they were certainly superfluous for all others. A confessional Lutheran ethos and a zeal for classical education would not proceed through pietism.

American expansion was its own challenge to classical education: households were distant, supplies were lean, and teachers were unskilled. Those working in European gymnasiums were unwilling to relocate across the ocean to modest schools with uncertain futures. In addition, the advent of “free” public education created competition in the east. But one group of Germans committed themselves to a Lutheran identity through Reformation-era principles. Shortly after their arrival in the United States in 1839, they organized multiple schools, a college, and a seminary. This included a gymnasium that embraced “all branches of the (classical) high school, which are necessary for a true Christian and scientific education, such as Religion, the Latin, Greek, Hebrew, German, French, and English languages; History, Geography, Mathematics, Physics, Natural History, Introduction to Philosophy, Music, and Drawing.” The school’s proponent was C. F. W. Walther, who believed that Lutheranism hinged on instruction wherein “the old languages were taught.” However, he segregated students by trajectory, encouraging the classical model for church workers and a practical curriculum for all others. Within 50 years, there existed 1,603 schools with 89,202 students; amazingly schools outnumbered parishes.

Most gymnasiums that survived the American Civil War closed during the Great Depression. Financial demands were a factor. But more significant was a change in mindset: parents called for an education geared toward future professions. Add to the mix a perceived improvement in public school quality by parents and a reluctance to justify the classical model by educators, and the gymnasium lost all appeal. From 1920 to 1930, the number of Lutheran preparatory academies withered from 99 to 55. By the mid-twentieth century, the gymnasium was a dying light, as private schools began emulating public education to appear respectable, merely tacking on a religious instruction dismembered from the arts and sciences.

American public education and the institutions that train future teachers have embraced godless theory and curriculum. The Trinity, original sin, and divine revelation are just a few articles of faith under constant attack. But this is nothing new. Since the Enlightenment, confessional Lutherans have had to fend off the rationalism that rejects God. The eighteenth-century educator, Johann Pestalozzi, proclaims, “Believe in yourself, O Man—believe in the inner meaning of your being. Then you will believe in God and immortality.” This exaltation of self in place of Christ prevails in the most acclaimed pedagogues of our time: John Dewey, Maria Montessori, and Jean Piaget. For them, salvation is not through Christ alone but through self-discovery and autonomy. And because that which challenges personal belief is inherently wrong, the traditional institution of school must conform to the psychological self, not vice-versa. These principles deny Christ as the author of truth and that education occurs in service to His truth.

If Lutheran schools mimic public education in theory or curriculum, they will be influenced by that which banishes God’s word. Students will see the world as raw material with which to create order and meaning, rather than see the world as having a given order and meaning discovered in Christ. They will seek self-actualization through specialization as a cog in collective society. Whether practical know-how is emphasized at the expense of classical mainstays will be determined, in large part, by demand. But parents might see the value in the Christian polymath and repeal the negative stereotype associated with a “jack of all trades, master of none” approach. They might champion the classical gymnasium to sustain confessionalism “for their own (children’s) as well as the common good.” They might reply with Gomez Addams, “Why have children just to get rid of them? I’m opposed to the whole nonsense,” and keep their children through the education begun in the days of the Reformation.

*Note: Learn more about Luther Classical College at* [*www.lutherclassical.org/about*](http://www.lutherclassical.org/about)*. Donate at* [*www.lutherclassical.org/just-give*](http://www.lutherclassical.org/just-give) *or mail to Luther Classical College, 2300 Hickory St., Casper, WY 82604 All donations are tax deductible.*

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The next **VOTERS’ ASSEMBLY** will take place ten minutes following the end of worship Sunday, March 5, 2023, and will be held in the Fellowship Hall.

Your attendance will be greatly appreciated.

Tentative agendas are available.

**CAPITAL CAMPAIGN AT A GLANCE**

Blue: Pledged as of 02.19.2023 $184,320 (92.16%)

Orange: Remaining

$15,680 (7.84%)

Total Contributions

as of 02.19.2023:

$161,844 (80.92%)

Previous: $160,304 (80.15%)

New: $1,540 (0.77%)

Remaining: $38,156 (19.08%)

*Amounts used are based on*

*weekly deposits reported.*

It’s not too late to submit a Capital Campaign pledge card! Pledge cards are available on the table outside Pastor’s office. If circumstances have changed and you need to update your pledge card, please see Jonathan Baisch. Updated pledges help our Trustees plan more effectively and efficiently.

**2023 CIRCUIT CONFERENCE**

Sts. Peter & Paul’s hosted the 2023 Circuit Conference Tuesday and Wednesday, February 7-8. Several pastors were in attendance.

 Sincere “thanks” goes out to Ana Deal and her helpers (Marie Flaugher, Diane Riefstahl, Arlene Sutton, and Linda Tomko) for food preparation, serving, and clean-up.

 A special Divine Service was held Tuesday evening with guest organist Joanne Lozier from All Saints in Slippery Rock.

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**Thank You for Serving in March:**

**Elder:** Jonathan Baisch; **Ushers:** Cheryl Fedele, Mike Flaugher, & Jesse Riffle. **Altarware:** prior~Diane Riefstahl & Marie Flaugher (03.12); after~Elizabeth Haenftling & Traudi Sulek.

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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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**CELEBRATING IN MARCH!**

**Birthdays:**

Barry Nelson 3-17

Michael Laird 3-23

**Anniversaries:**

 Eddy & Judith Furey 3-1

Brian & Liz Shreffler 3-27

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

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**ATTENTION AUDITORS!** A **Monthly Audit** will take place following worship, Sunday, March 19th in the library. If unable to attend, please phone Bev Chlpka at 724-962-4806.

***Please keep the following***

***in your prayers:***

Evelyn Baisch

128 Wilcox Rd.

Austintown, OH 44515

501-253-8292

lll lll lll lll lll lll lll lll lll lll lll lll lll lll lll

Millie Elavsky

1209 Maple Dr.

Hermitage, PA 16148

724-342-0345

lll lll lll lll lll lll lll lll lll lll lll lll lll lll lll

Diane Riefstahl

740 Tamplin St.

Sharon, PA 16146

724-456-2081

lll lll lll lll lll lll lll lll lll lll lll lll lll lll lll

Nancy Robertson

P.O. Box 1358

6 Stone Ridge Blvd.

Hermitage, PA 16148

724-977-0107

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Viola Sakony

616 Smith Ave.

Sharon, PA 16146

724-272-1905

lll lll lll lll lll lll lll lll lll lll lll lll lll lll lll

Rudy & Jean Tomko

2629 Romar Dr.

Hermitage, PA 16148

724-979-4360

lll lll lll lll lll lll lll lll lll lll lll lll lll lll lll

Betty Ann Wolf

7777 Arthur St., SC

Masury, OH 44438

330-448-1080

lll lll lll lll lll lll lll lll lll lll lll lll lll lll lll

Ed & Millie Zachar

1320 Old Forge Rd.

Niles, OH 44446

330-652-9316

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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!

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

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**FOOD PANTRY NEEDS**

**CONTINUE TO GROW**

Our Food Pantry continues to grow and to increase its positive impact on the economically-challenged families of the Shenango Valley. We provide food boxes to as many as 32 different families on a regular basis. We also are asked to provide emergency boxes to needy families each week, as well.

We pick up food from the Community Food Warehouse in downtown Sharon on the first and third Thursdays of each month. We distribute the food on the second and fourth Thursdays of each month.

Special thanks to Mike Flaugher, Jeff and Arlene Sutton, Jerry Krivosh, Chris Nelson, Paul Andolina, and his father, Michael Andolina, for helping us to move forward over the last couple of months as we have experienced some unexpected challenges.

In January, we distributed 40 total boxes of food to families that included 100 members. On one February distribution day, we gave out 23 boxes to families that included 66 members. We anticipate these numbers to continue to increase.

As stated in last month’s newsletter, we now ask our church members, friends, and supporters to resume and continue their Food Pantry contributions to help fund our efforts. Our congregation members have responded! THANK YOU!!!!! for your commitment and generosity!

Anyone having questions or comments can direct them to Barry Nelson.

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Copies of the **2022 Annual Report** are available in the narthex.

**TRUSTEES’ UPDATE**

February was a busy month with work completed by Central Heating to help maintain and improve our radiator and boiler systems. A Hartford valve has been installed to prevent blow-back on the system and thermostatic radiator traps have been installed which should lead to more efficient heating.

 Trustees will be preparing to paint several of the rooms in the “old church” area of the building soon so that items may be moved back into them.

 The next Trustees meeting is scheduled for Monday, April 10th at 7 pm.

 As always, please feel free to speak with a Trustee with any concerns or place a note in Mike Flaugher’s library mailbox.

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Submissions for the April issue of **“The Rock and the Sword”** newsletter are due to the secretary’s office Monday, March 20th at noon. This includes meeting dates and times for the church calendar.

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**FOOD PANTRY SUNDAY**

The second Sunday of each month will once again be designated as “Stock the Food Pantry Sunday”. Your financial contributions will be greatly appreciated! Donations may be placed in a pew envelope and placed in the offering plate. Please be sure to indicate your envelope number and designate the donation to the Food Pantry.

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**Choir Practice**

is taking place Wednesday evenings from 5:30-6:30 pm.

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***Sts. Peter & Paul Ev. Lutheran Church***

***Supports* Alliance Defending Freedom**

(submitted by Pastor Emeritus Arthur Baisch)

About two years ago, Sts. Peter & Paul congregation made the decision to support the efforts of the Alliance Defending Freedom [ADF, <adflegal.org>], a non-profit 501c3 organization actively engaged in the courts of our nation, and also internationally, working to defend First Amendment and other civil liberties from the aggressive incursions of government. To inform our members of just what their financial support (both line-item budget and personal contributions from our members) might be used for, it is hoped a series of articles here in the coming months will help to clarify this for you.

First, a bit of history: in 2012, “by God’s amazing grace, a brand-new chapter in the 18-year history of this legal ministry (began). Alliance Defense Fund (changed its) name to Alliance Defending Freedom. This new name and tagline more effectively communicate ADF’s mission, strengthen (its) efforts and attract like-minded Allied Ministry friends.”

ADF is pro-religious freedom, pro-life, pro-parental rights, pro-free speech, and pro-marriage & family. Tune in next month for MORE about ADF!

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Heartfelt sympathy is extended to the family and friends of **Ernest (Ernie) Meszaros,** husband of congregation member Ruth Meszaros, who passed away January 31, 2023.

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**2023 Church Officers**

**and Boards**

**President**: Jonathan Baisch

**Vice President**: Matt Berent

**Recording Secretary**: Diane Riefstahl

**Treasurer**: Rebekah Baisch

**Financial Secretary:** Dolores Fee

**Trustees**:

Cheryl Fedele

Mike Flaugher

Michael Laird

Jesse Riffle

Jeff Sutton

**Auditors**:

Bev Chlpka

Marie Flaugher

Elizabeth Haenftling

Kati Laird

Jerome Thomas

**Financial Staff**:

Rev. Arthur Baisch

Susan Bender

Nancy Robertson

Linda Tomko

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**We were chosen!** By directing designated Choice Dollars through Thrivent Choice, eligible Thrivent members choose where Thrivent Financial for Lutherans distributes some of its charitable outreach grant dollars among thousands of participating Lutheran nonprofit organizations and congregations.

 **Many thanks** to Thrivent Financial members **Evelyn Baisch, Mike Flaugher, Lisa Jelinek, Max Jelinek, and Bess Kleindienst** who recently directed Choice dollars to our church!

**OUR 1st QUARTER MISSION:**

**Sts. Peter & Paul’s Annual Community Day**

March is the last month to donate to our First Quarter Local Mission: **St. Peter & Paul’s Annual Community Day.**

 If you would like to be involved with this year’s planning, please speak with Pastor Deal, Jesse Riffle, or Diane Riefstahl.

 A date for this year’s event has yet to be set.

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**SCRIP Program:**

The next date for **SCRIP orders and payments** is Sunday, March 5th. Checks should be made out to Sts. Peter & Paul’s and are to be given to Matt Berent or placed in the offering plate. You should receive your gift cards the following week.

Forms for ordering gift cards are available in both the narthex and on the parking lot entrance sign-in table.

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**Mission Outreach Project…**

**International Christian Literature Distributors, Inc.** focuses on getting the Bible and study materials to learn the Bible into the hands of Christian leaders in the least-fortunate places of the world. They supply churches and schools of Bible learning throughout the English-speaking world.

Copies of old Portals of Prayer are greatly appreciated; however, note that our church-provided copies of Lenten/Advent devotions are not accepted by ICLD. **Please recycle items by dropping them in the basket in the hallway by the secretary’s office. Thank you!**

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**Please continue to save pop tabs!**

Collected tabs may be given to Marie Flaugher or left on the table in the library.

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Thanks to so many of you for your prayers for my hip replacement surgery and recovery!  God’s miracle of healing through the medical community is amazing as are His peace and presence through your prayers for me!  I am doing well and hope to return to church soon.  My husband has been doing worship services and Bible classes at Gethsemane Lutheran near our home while they are in the process of calling another pastor.  I have been attending with him since I’m not driving yet.

Thanks again and God’s blessings –

Evelyn Baisch

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It is with heavy hearts that we mourn the passing of **Anson Holcroft**, a long-time member of this congregation on Wednesday, February 22nd. Anson’s funeral will be held at the church Tuesday, February 28th, with a calling hour beginning at 10 am and service at 11 am.

 Anson’s obituary follows.

Anson R. Holcroft, 93, of Hermitage passed away peacefully on Wednesday, February 22, 2023, in his residence.

Mr. Holcroft was born August 20, 1929, in Mercer, a son of the late William and Esther (Waid) Holcroft. He was a 1947 graduate of Hickory High School and served as a Sergeant in the U.S. Air Force during the Korean Conflict.  After serving his country, Anson went to work at the former National Castings, Division of Midland Ross, retiring as a supervisor in 1989.

Anson was an active member of Saints Peter and Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, Sharon,  where he was an elder, trustee, usher and helped with the church’s food pantry.  He enjoyed hunting, fishing, bowling and water skiing.  Most of all, he loved spending time with his family, especially his grandchildren.

Surviving is his wife of 67 years, the former Henrietta Heidbrink; three daughters, Toni Shaw, of Dallas, TX, Denise Lindsey, of Naples, FL, and Shelley Taranto, of Hermitage; six grandchildren, Gina, Neil, Courtney, Erin, Heather and Trevor; and two great-grandsons, Hudson and Randy.

He was preceded in death by his parents.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests memorial contributions be directed to Saints Peter and Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, 699 Stambaugh Ave, Sharon, PA 16146.

Calling hours will be 10 a.m. until the time of service, Tuesday (02/28/23) in Saints Peter and Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church.  Online condolences may be sent to the family at [www.McGonigleFuneralHomeandCrematory.com](http://www.mcgoniglefuneralhomeandcrematory.com/).

Funeral service will be held at 11 a.m. Tuesday in the church, with Rev. Jacob Deal, officiating.

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**Bible Memory Verses for February**

**For Adults:**

February 5: *Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God.  1 John 4:7*

February 12: *You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. Mark 12:30*

February 19: *You shall love your neighbor as yourself. Mark 12:31*

February 26: *Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. 1 Peter 4:8*

**For Children:**

February 5: *We do not present our pleas before you because of our righteousness, but because of your great mercy. Daniel 9:8*

February 12: *Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts. Psalms 95:7-8*

February 19: *See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written about the Son of Man by the prophets will be accomplished. Luke 18:31*

February 26: *The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. 1 John 3:8*

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**Church Office Hours for March** will be Mondays from 10:30-4:30, Wednesdays from 10:30-noon and 1-4:30, and Thursdays or Fridays, as needed.

 Please call ahead if needing someone to let you in to the church to make certain someone is here to do so.

ALTAR GUILD NEWS

* The Altar Guild will next be meeting Saturday, March 18th beginning at 2:15 pm. The March hostess is Evelyn Baisch.
* The next polishing session will take place Wednesday, March 22\* at 1 pm. \*Wednesday, March 29, same time, if weather is bad.
* Payment of 2023 AG dues ($25/member) is due. Half of the dues collected will be given to a chosen charity in October.  Please turn your dues in to AG Treasurer Evelyn Baisch. Make checks out to Sts. Peter & Paul.

**New members are always welcome!!!!**

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**Coffee Fellowship is March 12th!**

Join us following worship, Sunday, March 12th for **Coffee Fellowship.** This month’s sponsors are Jonathan & Bekah Baisch.

 If you would like to be a 2023 Fellowship sponsor, please sign the sheet posted on the bulletin board in the narthex. Sponsors are asked to bring 2-3 dozen donuts/muffins/treats along with 1-quart juice to the Fellowship Hall kitchen prior to worship. Set-up, clean-up, and the making of coffee will be done for you.

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**REMINDER:**

If you do not have an email account or do not receive emails from the church, but wish to be notified of significant information concerning your fellow church members (such as births or deaths), please put a note in the Secretary’s mail slot asking to receive a phone call. Every attempt will be made to phone you within 24 hours of an email being sent out.

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Remember thefollowing in prayer…

**~The Hurting and Healing:**  *The family and friends of Anson Holcroft, who passed away Wednesday, February 22, 2023; Amy, Gerald Arthur, Evelyn Baisch, Ellen BaronCA, Lois BortnerCA, John Burdette, Bev & Joe Chlpka, Kathleen Coughenour, Kim, Anna Mae Daris, Susan Davies, Tim Dudash, Millie Elavsky, Joseph Fleet, Judith & Eddy Furey, Tim Haenftling, Austin Hamilton, Neil Huston, Joan, Darla Krajci, Barbara Kreske, Donna Kennedy, Jess Lavoie, Paul LucasCA, Sandy Marshall, David Nelson, Linda Parkany, Juanita Rentschler, Richard ReuningCA, Diane Riefstahl, Nancy RobertsonCA, Viola Sakony, Marty Scott, Kara, Fred Tonty, Angela WeserCA, and Ruth Wolf.*

**~The Homebound:**  *Rudy & Jean Tomko, Betty Wolf, and Ed & Millie Zachar.*

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

**~Community & World Needs:**  *Those suffering from or affected by the coronavirus; those suffering due to the conflict between Ukraine and Russia; those suffering from loss and dislocation because weather disasters; those suffering from addiction and their families; Local, State, and National Government Leaders; the unemployed; our First Quarter Local Mission: Sts. Peter & Paul’s Community Day 2023.*

If you would like someone’s name to be added to or deleted from our prayer list, please put a written note in the secretary’s mail slot by the office door.

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Bev & Joe Chlpka

reaffirmed their wedding vows February 12th before those present in church that morning. The following photos were from that day and the Coffee Fellowship which followed.





