Guest Article…

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

Monthly Newsletter --- November 2020

699 Stambaugh Avenue, Sharon, PA 16146

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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.”

*The following article, written by Pastor Roberto E. Rojas, Jr, is printed with his permission.*

**Evangelism is Free**

*“You have received without paying; give without paying.” —Matthew 10:8*

Evangelism, outreach, “sharing the good news”—These are all words that Christians have used to refer to one and the same thing: Teaching people the Gospel, that is, who Jesus is and why they need Him. This is the content of all theology: Man as sinner, and God as Savior. Now, I don’t like to give a special label to this *act* of communicating the Gospel to people. And the reason is this: This shouldn’t be a special skill or task belonging to certain people. Confessing the Gospel is the work of all Christians at all times. (This doesn’t mean every Christian is a minister, as I pointed out last week. What this means is that all Christians are Christians, that is, they all have the authority from God Himself to confess the Gospel in their own God-given vocation. If you are a father, then you confess the Gospel at home. If you are a mother, you do the same. The same goes for all vocations.) This is also why I’m not a fan of having “evangelism committees” or “evangelists” in the congregation. This compartmentalizes the duty of every Christian to a select few. It’s not up to a few select individuals to confess the truth; it’s up to every Christian to confess the truth *where they are*.

This *act* of evangelism is nothing more and nothing less than simply being a Christian.

Christians confess the faith. This is what 1 Peter 3:15 gets at: “In your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect.” You don’t need a special program, method, or structure for evangelism and teaching the truth—You need only God’s Word: “Sanctify them in the truth; your Word is truth” (John 17:17). This means that the best way to get good at “evangelism” or “outreach” is to simply come to church and listen. The more you hear God’s Word, the more prepared you will be. God’s Word prepares you. So, don’t worry about special books and programs. Focus on what has worked for the Christian Church for the past two-thousand years: The Bible. Come to church. Listen. Attend Bible Study. Do devotions at home. With this alone, you will be better equipped to confess the truth than any program or method can pretend to teach you.

The next thing is this: The *best* place to start “evangelizing” is in your own home. In fact, this isn’t just the best place to start, it’s where you *must* start! God has called each Christian *first* to his own family. Your family is your priority. Just as you protect your own family from physical harm, even more, you must protect your family from spiritual harm. And you do that with God’s Word alone. This means that when you think of evangelism and outreach, your own family must come first: Your wife, your children, your relatives, your in-laws, and so on. The “circle” of evangelism starts with those who are closest to you and then grows out to those who are furthest from you. Just imagine this: If every one of you evangelized to your own family, your own children, your own grandchildren, your own relatives first and foremost, if you all put a concentrated, consistent, and concerted effort into teaching them the truth, I guarantee you that the church would quadruple in size. If everyone in your family, everyone you were related to believed the Gospel and came to church, we wouldn’t have enough room to hold everyone.

This is where evangelism should begin! However, what I’ve noticed is that nearly everyone thinks that outreach and evangelism should begin with the *stranger*, those out in the world with whom you have never met and have no relationship! This is why outreach and evangelism books always encouraged congregations to establish a coffee shop, program, business, after school program, etc. —These *things* are established as a way to offer something good to the public, and then *smoothly* tell them about Jesus, somehow. Many ex-Christians and atheists have dubbed this the “bait-and-switch” method of evangelism.

The way it works is this: You offer something that people want, and then when they come to get it, you tell them about Jesus. For example, you host a “free movie night” at the church, but then right before the movie begins or at the end (or even worse, you pause the movie in the middle), you give a speech on why everyone should come to church and believe in Jesus. This doesn’t work. People see right through this. People don’t leave the movie as Christians who rely upon the forgiveness of Christ—They leave the movie quite angry and annoyed that they were tricked into a “sales pitch” about Jesus. Bait-and-switch evangelism doesn’t work. Honestly, it’s quite deceitful. I think Christians should be honest, transparent, and upfront with their intentions. It would be much better to say, “This Thursday, we will host a Questions & Answers Bible Study open to everyone” or something like that. The people who attend will attend because they actually want to, not because they’ve been tricked. And they’ll also go and receive what they’re expecting.

Another popular evangelism “technique” is the use of clever puns and clichés. Some believe that if you know how to turn-a-phase, or use words cleverly, you will somehow impress people into believing in Jesus. This is what started the fad of funny and clever church signs. Many congregations put up some sort of pun on their church sign. And, to be honest, some of these are clever (the majority, however, are quite *cringey*). Others will use a special item to impress others. I’ve even seen some leave a fake twenty-dollar bill that’s actually an evangelism tract in place of a tip at restaurants! (This is shameful and embarrassing.) The list goes on. You can find dozens of them online with a simple search. Nevertheless, this sort of “gimmick-based evangelism” is more harmful than it is helpful. It’s another form of a “bait-and switch.” It never works.

The other way that people believe evangelism works is with a way I mentioned in passing before: An exchange of goods. The way *this* method works is by offering some sort of good in exchange for another, and adding the Gospel to it. For example, this is the idea that propelled the coffee-shop evangelism craze into existence. The way it works is this: Open up a Christian coffee-shop, sell coffee, and then use it as an opportunity to tell people about Jesus.

Many churches bought into this idea in the 60s and 70s. But instead of using a coffee shop, they used a *school* as the main “tool” for evangelism. The idea was this: Build a school, offer a Lutheran education, and then, overtime, the children would become Christians, convert their parents, and they would all join the church. However, this also never works. Now, the purpose of this article is not the financial viability of churches with schools—That’s for another time. What I’m interested in is this: Are schools a form of genuine outreach or evangelism? The answer is “It *depends*.”

*If* the Lutheran school is completely supported by the church and then *free* to anyone in the public, then this would be an instance of genuine outreach and evangelism. The school would be entirely free and offered to all people regardless of their financial situation. This would cost the host church an exorbitant amount of money, but some have made it work. Again, this would have to be *entirely free*. However, *if* the school costs money to attend, then this is *not* genuine outreach or evangelism. Why? Because there is an exchange of goods. This would charge people money in order for them to hear the Gospel. The Gospel would come at a price—The cost of tuition. That’s not evangelism or outreach.

Evangelism is free. Jesus says, “You received without paying; give without paying” (Matthew 10:8). Our preaching of the Gospel should not come at a price or cost. We did not have to pay to hear the Gospel. And so, we should not charge others to hear the Gospel. There is a practical point to all of this: You can never win anyone’s heart with an exchange of goods. As soon as there’s any transaction of some sort, the opportunity for actual *evangelism* goes away. People will seek the product and goods above the message. In order for evangelism to be evangelism, it must be free. It must be offered to all, regardless of their income. You don’t need a complex system or organization to “do” outreach or evangelism. Everything we’ve learned from experience tells us the opposite: Churches that spend lots of money on evangelism efforts and programs end up exasperating themselves. This is because many believe their effort will win people to the faith. But no one is a Christian by any reason or strength—Christians are Christians because they have been called by the Gospel. The Holy Spirit works faith when and where He wills.

We can learn a very good lesson from church history by asking one simple question: How did the church before us grow? When we read the Old Testament, we see that the prophets used nothing but the Word. When we read the New Testament, Peter says, “I have no silver and gold, but what I do have I *give* to you…” (Acts 3:6). Even more, Peter gives a stern warning to those who think they can give anything in exchange for the Gospel (Acts 8:9–25). Christ Himself wins our salvation not with gold or silver (1 Peter 1:18). Finally, the early church, though poor, grew using only the Word. Thanks be to God for this! The one thing we need the most is the one thing we already have: God’s Word! God gives us what is most invaluable *for free*.



Your servant in Christ,

Pastor Rojas+

October 11, 2020 

**2021 THRIVENT POP**

**TAB CHALLENGE!**

Be certain to pick up your 2021 Thrivent Pop Tab Challenge container and begin to save tabs for next spring’s contest. You can bring saved tabs periodically to the church and deposit them in our larger containers. These are found in both the narthex and main hallway, as well as in the Fellowship Hall.

Let’s see if we can exceed last year’s collection of 62 pounds! This project benefits the Ronald McDonald House.

If you have any questions, call Marie Flaugher at 724-301-8278.

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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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**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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**PRAYERFUL CONSIDERATION**

Soon it will be time to consider 2021 church officers and board/staff members. For our congregation to thrive, we need members to step up and prayerfully consider how they can be of service. It cannot just be the task of a few to lend their time and talents.

So, if asked to serve, please consider doing so.

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  Congratulations are extended to **Paul Andolina and Gretchen Testani** who were joined in Holy Matrimony October 10, 2020. We pray that the Lord richly blesses their union.

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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!**

**OUR FOURTH QUARTER LOCAL MISSION:**



**PITTSBURGH AREA LUTHERAN MINISTRIES (PALM)**

Pittsburgh Area Lutheran Ministries (PALM) serves the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod congregations in the Pittsburgh region and outer lying areas. It seeks to forge partnerships with the districts in its membership and to expand and support the mission and ministry of the church.

PALM has provided financial grants in the past to both our preschool and Community Day activities.

Financial donations to PALM may be placed in a pew envelope and placed in the offering plate. Please make certain to indicate your name and PALM on the envelope.

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It’s time, once again, to place orders for **The Lutheran Witness**. Subscriptions cost $10.90 (same as last year!). Checks may be made out to our church. Please place payments in a pew envelope labeled with your name and note that it is for the LW. See Diane with any questions. Orders are due to the office on or before Sunday, November 8, 2020.



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December orders and payments will be due Sunday, December 6th.

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Your attendance at the **Nov. 1st VOTERS’ ASSEMBLY meeting** will be greatly appreciated. The meeting will begin 10 minutes following the end of worship and will be held in the church sanctuary.

**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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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

287 East 2nd St. Apt. #103

Hummelstown, PA 17036

724-893-4570

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**CELEBRATING IN NOVEMBER!**

**Birthdays**

Maria Marks 11- 2

Jerome Thomas 11- 3

Martin Weisenborn 11- 3

Autumn Matijevic 11- 8

Rev. Arthur Baisch 11-10

Patricia Voytik 11-23

Edward Zachar 11-25

Elizabeth Shreffler 11-26

Paul Adolina 11-29

**Anniversaries:**

Jeff & Stacy Brandes 11- 2

Martin & Marilyn Weisenborn 11- 6

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



**Bible Memory Verses from October:**



**For Adults:**

**Oct. 4:** *Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Colossians 3:12-13*

**Oct. 11:** *For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. Romans 8:13*

**Oct. 18:** *You will be hated by all for my name's sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved. Matthew 10:22*

**Oct. 25:** *Let each person lead the life that the Lord has assigned to him, and to which God has called him. 1 Corinthians 7:17*

**For Children:**

**Oct. 4:** *He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? Micah 6:8*

**Oct. 11:** *This commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother. 1 John 4:21*

**Oct. 18:** *Know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins. Matthew 9:6*

**Oct. 25:** *“The Lord knows those who are his,” and, “Let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity.” 2 Timothy 2:19*

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**Thank You for Serving in November:**

**Assisting Elder:** Jonathan Baisch

**Altarware:** (Before service) Diane Riefstahl; (After service) Viola Sakony & Ruth Meszaros.

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

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**“Stock the Food Pantry Sunday” is November 8th!**

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

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

(At this time, we are unable to accept direct donations of food products.)



We wish to sincerely thank the employees of **NLMK** for their generous donation of $1000 to **Sts. Peter & Paul’s Food Pantry**. This is the fifth year that we have been the recipient of their generosity. This donation will make a significant difference to those whom our food pantry serves.

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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). Our food pantry operates through the Community Food Warehouse of Mercer County and distributes food the second and fourth Thursdays of each month beginning at 9 am.

Please consider “lending a hand up” to those in need.

‘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

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**Sunday,**

**November 1**

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Please note the following changes or updates in **Contact Information**:

* Mr. Paul Andolina (Gretchen) *(new address)* 445 McClure Ave., Sharon, PA 16146.
* Mrs. Marion Roberts *(phone number)* 724-893-4570
* Mrs. Brittany Forbis (Ian) *(address)* 413 Curtis Court, Pgh., PA 15237
* Mr. William Nelson *(address)* 143 Curtis Court, Pgh., PA 15237

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**New phone directories**

**are available.**

**See Diane to get yours!**



**Veterans’ Day is November 11th**

To those members of our congregation who have served: “We salute you and we thank you!”

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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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**ALL SAINTS SUNDAY IS**

**NOVEMBER 1ST**

Join us as we fondly remember those from our church family who passed into everlasting life this past year.

**Barbara Vasconi**

May 1, 2020

**Edna Krajci**

August 16, 2020

**Dan Davis**

October 22, 2020

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**IMPORTANT MEETING DATES**

**Auditors:** Sun., Nov. 8th following worship

**Altar Guild:** Sat., Nov. 14th 1 pm-polishing; 3 pm-meeting

**Finance Committee:** Sun., Nov. 22nd following worship

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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.**

Order forms for **2020 CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS** will be available beginning Sunday, November 15th. Orders and payments will be due back to the church office no later than Sunday, December 6th. Prices have increased since last year: 1 plant branched ($7.00); 3 plants branched ($15.00). A variety of colors will be offered. Please speak with Diane if you should have any questions.

FROM YOUR ALTAR GUILD:

This month’s Altar Guild article is focused on the names given to parts of the Church you see each week and to increase your feeling of being a part of the Church

As you enter our church through the main doors you enter the NARTHEX. This area is meant to symbolize the passage from the outside world into God’s house and His presence. A feeling of calm and security may come over you.

At this point you will enter the NAVE, which holds the seating you will use during the Church Service. The nave always faces the front of the Church.

Just beyond the nave, and one step up, is the CHANCEL. The chancel is the pathway to the altar.

One more step up and you have arrived at the ALTAR. This is where you share space at the COMMUNION RAIL with fellow members.

If you could look down from above, you would notice the area to be cross-shaped. The side extensions of that cross are called TRANSEPTS. Transepts are typically used for seating; ours contain the baptismal font, to the right, and the organ/piano, to the left.

Behind closed doors is the SACRISTY. Our sacristy area contains all of the sacred

Communion vessels, the linens used during Communion, and Pastor’s VESTMENTS-the

garments worn by the Pastor during Divine Service.

Use these words as you enter and participate in Church each week as a way to become a part of your Church!

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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. Your old Portals of Prayer, seasonal devotions, and other materials are greatly appreciated. For more information about ICLD, check out their website: [www.icld.org](http://www.icld.org/). **Please recycle these items by dropping them in the basket in the hallway by the offices. Thank you!**

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**OCTOBER MEMORIAL**

**CONTRIBUTIONS**

**(Bulletins October 4-25, 2020)**

**In Loving Memory of James Carr:** *Rev. Ed & Irene Kucera (Missions).*

**In Loving Memory of Nephew and Cousin Joe Vasconi:** *Betty Ann Wolf (Major Repair) and Bill Wolf (Major Repair).*

**In Loving Memory of Father, Andrew Sulek:** *Mr. & Mrs. Robert Sulek (Major Repair).*

**In Honor of Breast Cancer Survivor and Daughter, Tina:** *Mr. & Mrs. Josep Chlpka (Food Pantry).*

**In Loving Memory of Husband, Robert Rice:** *Joani Rice (Major Repair).*

**In Loving Memory of Germaine Tatusko, Sister of Jean Tomko:** *Ed & Anne Colt.*

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**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.

**Sat., Sept. 26 & Sun., Sept. 27, 2020\*:**

General Offering\*: $875.00

SELC Missions: $80.00

Other: $1.00

**Sat., Oct. 3 & Sun., Oct. 4, 2020\*:**

General Offering\*: $1,536.10

SELC Missions: $65.00

Other: $21.00

**Sat., Oct. 10 & Sun., Oct. 11, 2020\*:**

General Offering: $2430.00

SELC Missions: $130.00

Online Giving (9/30, 10/7, 10/14): $165.00

Other: $220.00

**Sat., Oct. 17 & Sun., Oct. 18, 2020:**

General Offering: $1350.00

SELC Missions: $85.00

Other: $150.00

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

Remember the following in Prayer…

**~The Mourning:** *The friends and families of Joe Vasconi who passed away October 2nd; Germaine Tatusko, Jean Tomko’s sister, who passed away October 14th; and Dan Davis, who passed away October 22nd.*

**~The Hurting and Healing:** *Sue BenderCA, Darlene Berent, Lois BortnerCA, Kim, George, Tim Dudash, Joseph Fleet, Marie Haenftling, Henrietta (Hank) Holcroft, Neale & Melissa Huston, Donna Kennedy, Betty KnauffCA, Regis Knauff, Jess Lavoie, Virginia LehmanCA, Paul Lucas****CA****, Ernie Meszaros, Rhonda MoatsCA, Tom MulliganCA, Steve Parkany, Juanita Rentschler, Richard ReuningCA, Marty Scott, Martin Weisenborn, Angela WeserCA, and Millie Zachar.*

**~The Homebound:** *Helen Bender, Mary Chmielewski, Mary Ann Krajci, 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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**Pastor Deal** will be on vacation Monday, November 23rd thru Friday, November 27th. Please contact Elder chairman, Barry Nelson (724-866-7417) if in need

of pastoral care.

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**Helping Others Put Their Best Foot Forward**



We are sincerely grateful to Vince’s Family Shoes, West Middlesex, PA, for their amazing donation of 1480 *pounds* of shoes for the people in Haiti. These new, but older style shoes will be shipped to a location in Nebraska which will, in turn, get the shoes to those in need in Haiti.

We also sincerely thank Pastor Deal and those who assisted him with this project.

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**Church Office Hours:** Diane plans to be in the church office Mondays and Thursdays from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm. *During the week of Thanksgiving, the secretary’s office will be opened only Monday (8:30-4:30) and Friday (as needed).* As always, please phone the office to make certain someone is there before stopping in.

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**A note from Pastor Deal:** *Please let me know if you or a loved one are in the hospital or have a special need. Also, please ask the hospital to call me or the church office. I wish to visit those who may be hurting.*

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**Have your noticed?** Our Fellowship Hall has undergone a transformation! The large screen which was used for Community Day has been hung in hall. It is used weekly during Bible Study and, also, was used during the September General Pastor’s Conference.

The Preschool Board and Trustees have been busy working on the preschool office area. The area was cleared out, cleaned, and painted. Damaged items or those past their usage have been discarded. Plans are to soon begin sorting through remaining preschool items to determine those which will be kept.

An area for children has been created in one corner of the hall as well as a permanent “coffee” bar which houses coffee items for both our church and AA.

**“Sew” Grateful:** Altar Guild members Marie Flaugher and Judith Furey will soon begin work on the restoration of our altar **paraments** and the making of additional **altar cloths and sacramental linens** (fair linens, purificators, corporals, chalice palls, etc). We are excited to have such talent “in house” and appreciate their efforts in restoring these veritable art treasures.

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It’s not too late to join the Sunday morning **Bible Study**! Sessions are held following worship. Currently, members are examining the Lord’s Supper. All are welcome!

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**SACRAMENTAL WINE TASTING**

We are in need of selecting a new sacramental wine to be used during Holy Communion *and* we would like your opinion! Join us in the Fellowship Hall Sunday, November 15th following worship for a sacramental wine tasting. Five different varieties will be sampled and those present will vote for their preference.

Come learn about the history of sacramental wines and share in a unique experience with your church family.

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**HAPPY NEW YEAR!** No, that is not a mistake! The last Sunday of the Church Year will be celebrated November 22nd followed by the First Sunday in Advent November 29th! Advent is the official beginning of the Church Year. Mid-week Advent Services will commence Wednesday, December 2nd and will be offered at noon and 7 pm. Join us and start the “new year” right!

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Pastor Deal and the Board of Elders, along with Church Council Members

wish you and your family a

wonderful Thanksgiving!