

# The Parish Voice

St. Thomas Lutheran Church — Streetsboro, Ohio

January 2021

One of the promises of the Gospel is that God's people are renewed in Christ.

It has become customary for many people as they begin a New Year to make some resolutions that are designed to renew oneself: lose weight, quit

smoking, exercise more faithfully, read more good books, take more time off, pray more diligently, attend worship more regularly, control one's temper, spend more time with the family, get organized, smile more, laugh more, save money, become a "better person" (did I miss any?).

It's a New Year!

I am convinced that those of us who make such New Year's Resolutions are quite serious and intend to pursue those laudable goals we set before ourselves. Yet, inevitably, with rare exceptions, we come up short . . . the diet doesn't quite work out; smoking is much harder to quit than we imagined; time for exercise gets swallowed up in weekly demands; the pile of good books hasn't gone down appreciably; the weekly planner gets just as filled with little gaps for time off; our prayer life stagnates; worship on Sunday is held hostage by the pillow's allure; stressed, we lose control more often than we care to admit; our grand plans for "a place for everything" don't quite materialize; we find less to smile over; and less yet about which to laugh; and we just don't see ourselves as having made much change for the better.

Self-improvement is doomed to failure; the fact is we *cannot* improve ourselves. God does not say to us: "*Get yourself in shape!*" or "*Try a little harder this year.*" He says, "*I make all things new.*"

What God asks of us is not that we seek self-improvement, but that we seek Him. He does not ask us to set goals that become nothing but new sources of frustration, and then guilt, for us. He bids us to come into His presence, sit quietly with Him, meditate on His Word, be fed and nourished by that Word, come into contact with His people in community, and let the Holy Spirit do the work in us that we need to be done.

He promises that when we are in touch with Him — intimately in touch — we will be renewed. That's much better than improved. We don't take our old selves and produce a slightly better model; He takes our old selves and provides us a whole new identity — we are transformed into the likeness of Christ. We cannot do that; but He can! We can only make a bad thing slightly less bad; He gives us something altogether new, altogether whole, altogether wonderful. And as He is making us new, He is renewing the whole creation — all things!

Draw near to this God of newness, and watch Him reshape, renew you into the instrument of His purpose and the child in whom He takes utter and complete delight.

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## Our Worship This Month

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### January 3 — Epiphany Sunday

Sermon: "*Ablaze!*"

Texts: Isaiah 60:1-6; Psalm 72; Ephesians 3:1-12; Matthew 2:1-12

The familiar story of the Wise Men becomes a different story about our journey into the blazing glory of Jesus' light.



### January 10 — The Baptism of Our Lord

Sermon: "*Beginnings*"

Texts: Genesis 1:1-5; Psalm 29; Acts 19:1-7; Mark 1:4-11

We reflect on the start of Jesus' earthly ministry at His baptism, and are drawn to our own — a new creation!

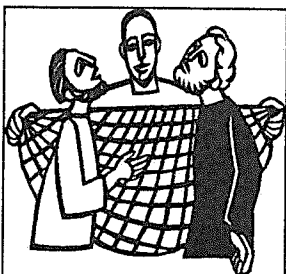


### January 17 — Epiphany II

Sermon: "*Attentive Living*"

Texts: 1 Samuel 3:1-10; Psalm 139; 1 Corinthians 6:12-20; John 1:43-51

Two stories — the calling of Samuel and of Nathanael — reveal our need to give heed when God wants to speak directly to us.



### January 24 — Epiphany III

Sermon: "*Living Out the Irony*"

Texts: Jonah 3:1-5,10; Psalm 62; 1 Corinthians 7:29-31; Mark 1:14-20

By juxtaposing the account of Jonah in the Great Fish and the narrative of the Great Catch of Fish, the lectionary provides us some irony about our lives in Christ.



### January 31 — Epiphany IV

Sermon: "*With Authority and Power*"

Texts: Deut. 18:15-20; Psalm 111; 1 Corinthians 8:1-13; Mark 1:21-28

Jesus taught with authority and healed with power. Does His Church have either of those qualities? Can we use them?

## Introducing our Interim Pastor

Okay, so it won't take much of an introduction; the man has been our Pastor for five years. But his role as Interim Pastor will be something of a change. First, Pastor Just will provide worship leadership most Sundays; he is giving thought to taking a Sunday off now and again. He will be available for Pastoral Acts (weddings, funerals, baptisms, etc.). He will also be available for counseling, if needed. If it can be arranged with all concerned, he hopes to restart Confirmation Classes.

He will not be keeping a steady day in the office. Ergo, if you need to reach him, your best bet would be to call and, and if needs be leave a voice mail on his cell phone [(216) 789-6688], which number you can also text; or send him an e-mail at [doctorjust@gmail.com](mailto:doctorjust@gmail.com). He checks voice mail, texts, and emails regularly and will get back to you as promptly as possible.

All this will continue while the Search Committee (Gilbert Ayers, Robin Hoffman, Guy Jeanblanc, and Diane Pencini) is exploring avenues to secure pastoral leadership for St. Thomas. They will be looking into a number of possibilities with the English and Ohio Districts for creative ways to meet not only our needs, but perhaps those of sister congregations in the area. Your active support for them, especially your intercessions, will be of great value.



Thank  
you so  
much

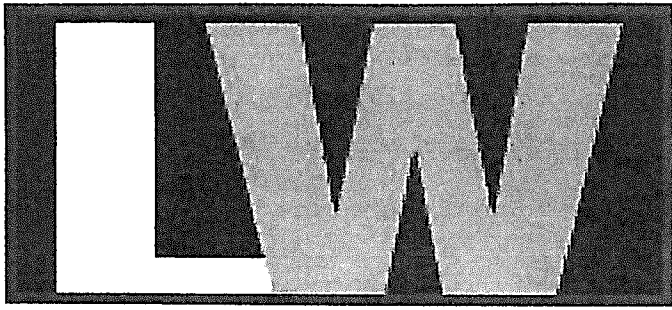
Thanks to all those who worked so hard to make our Christmas worship a time of real celebration. Special work was done to ensure that those who came were safe, including much thought that went into how we could arrange the sanctuary and fellowship halls for social distancing, set up electronics so that everyone could be enabled to participate as fully as possible. Church Council (Steve Hvala, Jim Doerfler, Joyce Torres, Marla Manijak, Deb Wolff, Diane Lee, Del Groff) spent considerable time on this, assisted by

Rory Wolff, Steve Manijak, Gilbert Ayers, Robin Hoffman, and Amy Rohaly. There are likely several others whose names are not listed here, but whose contributions were valued.

### PASTORAL ACT

Burial: On December 23, 2020, a Christian Burial was provided for Ronald Stenglein, who was born in Rochester, New York, and died December 13, 2020. Interment was at Ohio Western Reserve National Cemetery in Rittman on December 26, 2020.





It is time to renew or add new subscriptions for the official publication of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod — The Lutheran Witness.

The Lutheran Witness is published eleven times a year (monthly except for a combined issue for June-July) and costs \$ 10.00 for the 2021-2022 period.

If you want to subscribe, you need to sign up on the narthex bulletin board **no later than January 18**. You do not need to spend any money at this time; we will be billed for the total and will ask for your contribution when that bill arrives.

If you wish to see what is offered in the Lutheran Witness, go to [www.lcms.org](http://www.lcms.org), click on "Resources" then click on "Publications." When that screen appears, look for the Lutheran Witness and click "Select" under "Print." There you will find a message that says "View a free sample today."

If you have subscribed before, you still need to enter your name as a new subscriber. **Remember: January 18 is the deadline.**

On January 18, the Church marks the day of **The Confession of St. Peter**, recalling Peter's words about Jesus: "*You are the Christ, the Son of the living God!*" On January 25, the Church marks the day of **The Conversion of St. Paul**, remembering Paul's encounter with Christ on the Damascus Road. The week intervening is called **The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity**. It is obvious to all that Christ's Church lacks unity; there are over 800 Christian church bodies in the United States, many of them the direct result of two parties that could not agree and split. We have Christians who refuse to worship together, pray together, work together, even talk together. All are sure they are very right, or at least more right than others. It infects not only church bodies (like synods and denominations) but individual congregations (like St. Thomas?). In many ways it is a sad situation; it surely saddens our Lord who Himself prayed: "*Holy Father, keep them in Your name, which You have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one*" (John 17:11).

I urge you to join me in earnest prayer this month — each day from January 18 to 25 — asking that the Holy Spirit fill our hearts, first and foremost, and then the hearts of all Christians, so that the walls of distrust, disagreement, and disharmony may be dismantled.

In the One Christ,  
Pastor Just

## **1 + 1 + 1 giving**

We thank you for continuing to give to our 1 + 1 + 1 fund raiser throughout this pandemic. The missionaries who spread the good news of Jesus are very appreciative of your generosity. 1+1+1 means \$1 per member each Sunday. There is a plastic box at the door to the sanctuary for your donations or you can give them to Steve in the parking lot and he will put it in for you. Thank you for your donations!

## **SYNOD NEWS**

**From the Rev. Dr. Jamison Hardy Bishop/President**

Thank you for your faithful tithes and offerings which enable the English District to continue to be a source of hope and opportunity for people who need us. It is important to us that our ministry remain open, accessible, and inviting in ways that encourage all members of the English District to use their gifts in ministry. Our generosity allows us to provide assistance to others in new and exciting ways.

As we reflect upon 2020, we would like to share some of the highlights of this year. In this 2<sup>nd</sup> year of 1+1+1, English District members have joyfully given over \$47,850 to support Holy Cross Lutheran Chapel Mission and Tree of Life Lutheran Church. There is power and strength in many giving a little. You can find links to the 1+1+1 video and Frequently asked questions on the 1+1+1 ministry page of the district website; englishdistrict.org. We are excited about this initiative as it allows everyone to participate in serving the Lord and giving towards missions. The district was also able to provide financial assistance to church workers during the pandemic in cooperation with the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod and Lutheran Church Extension Fund.

## **FIFTH SUNDAY**

During November's 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday, we collected \$355 for the Lutheran Metropolitan Ministry. Thank you for your generosity.

With the recent break-in at Redeemer Crisis Center, council decided that they will be the beneficiary of January's 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday collection. We thank you in advance for your generosity for this important organization.

## **INTEGRITY STAINLESS**

Integrity Stainless, a specialty metals processing company located in Streetsboro is currently in need for General Labor employees. If you are interested, please apply online using the link <https://www.ohiodiversity.com/j/43435204>



**2021**

**HAPPY NEW YEARS!  
MAY 2021 BE A BLESSED YEAR  
FOR YOU AND YOUR FAMILY!**

## CONGREGATION MEETING

Thank you for your generous donations of \$355.00 on our fifth Sunday offering to the Lutheran Metropolitan Ministries.

Coleman Clinic needs a “contact person” from the congregation to be in contact with directly for the Akron Crisis Center – Pregnancy Center. This is an organization run by Christian individuals. If you are interested please see Steve Hlava or Pastor Just.

Our 2021 Budget was approved. If you have not seen this budget, it is on the bulletin board or you can ask for a copy.

As most of you know, Pastor Just officially retired on December 27. A motion was made to call Pastor Just as our Interim Pastor effective January 1, 2021. Pastor accepted.

Due to Covid-10, the 2021 Synod convention dates and location has not been set yet. It could be held as normal in June or be delayed a couple months or even postponed ‘til 2022. The congregation voted to delegate any of its decisions to the council, as needed, to best address changes in this matter. Thank you Rory Wolff for volunteering to be the congregations lay delegate and to Robin Hoffman to be the alternate. A thank you also goes out to Gilbert for serving as our most recent delegate.

As of this meeting the Synod has sent us the following information. The council will be voting on the following Convention Referendum.

**Shall the Synod add a year to the current 2019-2022 triennium, allowing districts to hold their conventions in either 2021 or 2022, and moving the upcoming national Synod Convention from 2022 to 2023? Vote: Yes or No**

We will let you know after our January council meeting what the vote was.

A big thank you to Diane Lee for coordinating the Salvation Army Donations.

A big thank you to Diane Lee, Robin Hoffman and Marla Manijak for coordinating the Food Pantry Donations for November and December.

A big thank you to Jim Doerfler for the banners out front and the side of the property advertising our services and our Christmas Eve service.

A big thank you to Rory Wolff and Del Groff for all their hard work in getting our services out to the public through Facebook and our radio station. Your expertise on this is greatly appreciated.

A big thank you to Steve Manijak for making sure all the cars in the parking lot have everything they need for the service.

A big thank you to Amy Rohaley for all her beautiful music each Sunday.

A big thank you to our search committee for all their hard work in preparing all the documents Synod required to start our search.

A big thank you to Elizabeth and Madeline Ayers for decorating the Christmas Tree in the Fellowship Hall.

## BULLETIN PICKUP

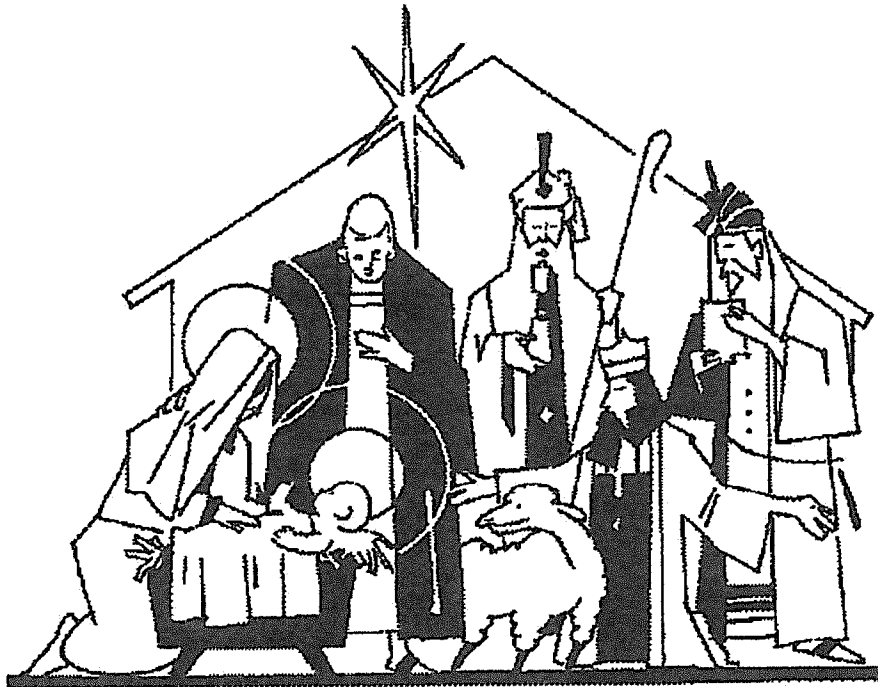
Steve is standing in the Narthex watching for cars. He will bring you your bulletin, communion cup and collect your donations. If you would like to add someone to the prayer list he will bring the book out to you.

Those coming in can pick up your bulletin and communion cup on the stand in the Narthex. An offering plate and the 1+1+1 box are on the stand by the sanctuary door. The prayer book will be on the stand by the front door.

Thank you everyone. Please join us this Sunday.

## SEARCH COMMITTEE

The Search Committee has finished all the paperwork the Synod needed to start our search. The committee and church council will be meeting soon with Pastor Gau to discuss all this information and to get us started on this search. Any questions on this search can be asked from our search committee members Gilbert Ayers, Guy Jeanblanc, Robin Hoffman and Diane Pencin or our council members Steve Hlava, Jim Doerfler, Diane Lee, Deb Wolff, Joyce Torres, Marla Manijak and Del Groff.



**Wise Man still Seek Him!  
Let us continue to seek him also!  
Come, Jesus, come!**

## REMEMBER IN PRAYER

Bill Crile	Carol Earle	Deb Earle	Cory Hautmann
Linda Hautmann	Palagia Hlava	Nicole Johnson	Lorene Kozar
Joanna Nicely	Ken Nicely II	Kenny Nicely III	Kenny Nicely IV
Carol Poston	Heather Poston	Diane Seman	Joyce Torres
Debbie Anderson	Alice Artman	Rick Artman	Avis
Ed Boland	Patty Bowman	John Butterbaugh	Jeremy Campbell
Carl	Jerry Chapala	Leona Corban	Scott Corban
Tom Corban	Jamie Dunn	Bill Earle	Billy Earle Jr.
Sue Ellinwood	George Foerster	Christine Frank	Sommer & Mark Dunlevy
Bridget Gehri	Ken Granville	Debbie Hovanetz	Janice
Kathi	Brad Kozar	Suzanne Latham	Lauren
Tyler Lutz	Dave Lauver	Lori	Frank Manijak
Nadine Nicely	Samantha Nicely	James Olsen	Inge Osborne
Sandy & Ron Platten	Karen Power	Peter Power	Art Robinson
Agnes Rovison	Barbara Schreiber	Mary Small	Derrick Smith
Tim Tolodzieski	Kenneth Udovic	Linda Velatta	Tara Vargo

COVID-19 patients

Family Units being attacked by Satan

Safety for all our school and college students

All Marriages to stay strong in Christ

Our shut-ins—please send them a card

Mrs. Audrey Holland  
4552 Aspen Lake Road  
Apartment 102  
Brunswick, OH 44212-4582

Carole & Heather Poston  
3096 E. Pioneer  
Aurora, OH 44202

Our College Students—Grace Rohaley, Abigail Ayers, Corey Hautmann, Troy Roman and Joanna Nicely

**Our sincere heartfelt prayers are with Linda and Corey Hautmann** on the loss of their father and grandfather Ron Stenglein. Ron passed away on December 17 and will be greatly missed. Please keep them in your prayers!

### JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

#### Birthdays

6-Joanna Nicely  
6-Gabe Johnson  
11-Troy Roman  
12-Deb Wolff  
21-Nicole Johnson  
22-Sam Nicely  
28-Logan Hagen  
29-Rory Wolff  
30-Becky Larkins



### JANUARY BAPTISM BIRTHDAYS

#### Baptism Birthdays

13-Ben Wolff  
25-Grace Rohaley  
31-Amy Rohaley  
Robin Hoffman



Happy Anniversary to  
24-Jim and Jeanette Doerfler



## WE CARE

We care about you! Please let us know if there is any need during this time of the pandemic. We are here to help you in any way it is needed, driving you somewhere, picking up groceries for you or just someone to talk to, please call your church family. Everyone has a new church directory! We are here for you!

You have several options to worship with us. If you can't get out, then please join us on Facebook. We are meeting in the parking lot and you can listen to the service on Channel 96.9 FM. You can also come inside. Your temperature will be taken at the door. Masks must be worn. We have plenty of room to space members out so it is very safe. However you worship with us it is just great to see all of you!

Stay safe everyone! You are all in our prayers!

**If you haven't** checked out our church website yet, please do and let Del Groff know how you like it or if there is something you would like to see added. The website is [www.stthomasstreetsboro.com](http://www.stthomasstreetsboro.com)

**New Offering Envelopes** are available on the table in the Narthex.

**Our January-March** Portal of Prayers devotionals are available now. You can find them on the table by the door or ask Steve for one and he will bring it to your car.

**Contact Person:** Please call Pastor Just at 216-789-6688 or Council President Steve Hlava at 330 422-1959 for any emergencies or questions. Pastor Just is in the office on Thursdays from 8:00-4:00.

## OFFICIAL AND UNOFFICIAL HOLIDAYS FOR JANUARY!!

- |                                 |                                 |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1-New Year's Day                | 19-Popcorn Day                  |
| 4-Trivia Day                    | 20-Martin Luther King Jr. Day   |
| 5-National Bird Day             | 21-Hugging Day                  |
| 8-Elvis's Birthday              | 23-Pie Day                      |
| 10-Save the Eagles Day          | 25-Chinese New Year             |
| 13-Rubber Ducky Day             | 27-Bubble Wrap Appreciation Day |
| 14-Dress Up Your Pet Day        | 29-Puzzle Day                   |
| 15-Hat Day                      | 31-Backwards Day                |
| 17-Benjamin Franklin's Birthday | and Hot Chocolate Day           |

**St. Thomas Evangelical Lutheran Church  
P.O. Box 2247  
9042 State Route 43  
Streetsboro, OH 44241**

**Change Service Requested**

**THE PARISH VOICE NEWSLETTER**

**Office: 330-626-4945**

**Pastor Just office hours—Thursdays 8:00-4:00**

**Cell Phone (216) 789-6688    Email: [doctorjust@gmail.com](mailto:doctorjust@gmail.com)**

**Web Site: [www.stthomasstreetsboro.com](http://www.stthomasstreetsboro.com)**

**SUNDAY SCHEDULE**

**TRADITIONAL WORSHIP SERVICE 10:00 A.M.**

**IN THE CHURCH PARKING LOT ON CHANNEL 96.9 FM**

**LIVE ON OUR FACEBOOK PAGE**

**OR YOU ARE WELCOME TO JOIN US INSIDE**

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