



# NEW CREATION NEWS

November 2021

## St. Peter's United Church of Christ

1475 Orchard Park Rd., West Seneca, NY 14224 (716) 674-1233  
www.st-petersucc.org stpetersws@gmail.com

### PASTORAL PONDERINGS

We have been very intentional about keeping anyone who comes for worship safe. That meant that we kept masks as the norm. The Council made it unanimous that those who have been vaccinated for Covid-19 have the option to wear a mask. The first Sunday that was a choice had 90% were not wearing a mask. We hope that those who have not been vaccinated will continue to keep a mask on, to protect those who may be more suspected to contact the virus.

As we face the winter, there are thoughts that we will have to face the virus again. Hopefully, those who are able to stay safe will be able to attend worship and not worry about getting the virus.

It's good to see attendance pick up when we don't have to wear a mask. If you have been waiting, please come back. I know the Holy Spirit is moving among us.

In Christ,  
Rev. Paula



**CHURCH OFFICE HOURS:** \*Please call ahead.  
The church office hours are Tuesday – Friday from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm. The office is closed on Mondays.

**PASTOR OFFICE HOURS:** \*Please call ahead.  
Rev. Paula will be in the office on Tuesdays from 10:00 am – 12:30 pm and Thursdays from 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm.

**PASTORAL CARE**  
Rev. Paula Gustafson is available to provide pastoral care for members of St. Peter's congregation. Rev. Paula can be reached by phone at 716-476-9261 or by email at pastorpaula2021@gmail.com.



**MEAT RAFFLE**  
Saturday, November 20, 2021  
Doors open at 6:00 pm

St. Peter's United Church of Christ  
1475 Orchard Park Road, West Seneca, NY 14224

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**PRE-SALE TICKETS AVAILABLE  
CALL 716-674-1233**

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Pre-sale tickets are \$7 per person  
\$8 per person at the door  
Tables of 8 for \$50

Ticket includes admission, a beer or pop, and a sandwich.  
Guests can bring their own snacks and coolers for their winnings!

Meat supplied by Camillo's Sloan Meat Market!



### OCTOBER UPDATE

St. Peter's October Meat Raffle was a big hit and there were only a handful of seats available to purchase at the door. We made over \$1,500 and it was a fun time for all! Presale tickets are on sale now for our next Meat Raffle, Saturday, November 20. Call the Church Office to purchase your presale tickets before they sell out!

**BUDGET MEETING**  
Sunday, December 5, 2021

Immediately after church service on December 5, 2021, the 2022 Budget will be presented for congregational review and vote. Please plan to attend this meeting.

**ENCIRCLING IN OUR PRAYERS...**

**FOR GOD'S HEALING**

Renae Johnson; Kay Wiese; Marge Applebach; Barb Rodgers; Esther Woltz; John Sworen; Jerry Morrison.

**FOR GOD'S PRESENCE**

For **those in the hospital and with medical problems** known only to God and their loved ones.

For **all victims of violence.**

For all **Gold Star parents** – those who have lost sons or daughters in the military—may God be with them and comfort them in their time of loss.

**FOR THOSE IN SERVICE TO OUR COUNTRY:**

Earle C. Heusinger III ★★☆☆ Army

Justin Hurlburt ★★☆☆ Army National Guard

Jacob Kruwel ★★☆☆ Army

Kristin McDermott ★★☆☆ Navy

Matt Toense (Kaitlin Landers' husband) ★★☆☆ Marine Corps

Caleb Tolley ★★☆☆ Air Force

Jack Welsh ★★☆☆ Marine Corps

*And for all firefighters, EMTs, law enforcement & border officers.*



Our beautiful Taylor Madison Voit was christened on October 10. Our family and friends loved the service. Taylor surprised us by not crying when she was given to Reverend Paula. I had the joy of walking down the aisle showing her off. We had a small reception in the fellowship hall afterwards. I want to thank our church family for sharing this joy with us.



**A SIMPLE WAY TO HELP!**

Over the past year, there have been many people donating money to help others in need to purchase groceries. The Mission Committee has distributed these donations to families in need throughout our church and community using Tops Gift Cards. You may continue to donate gift cards for this purpose by simply listing 'Tops Cards' on your donation envelope. We appreciate the money provided to help those with food insecurities purchase the basic necessities. Our Office Secretary will coordinate with the Mission Committee, Financial Secretary, and Treasurer to monitor the donations and card purchases. We will continue to work with Tops to purchase cards for the upcoming Holiday Season.

You will still be able to purchase Tops gift cards to hand out to family and friends by going to the Church Office after service to make your purchase. For every \$500 in cards purchased, we receive \$25 to increase the amount we distribute!

Thank you for your support of this fundraising project.

St. Peter's UCC....

***Faith, Fellowship and Service***

**Faith** in Christ,

Welcoming **Fellowship**

and Loving **Service**



**St. Peter's Council 2021**

President & Deacon	Rod Nash
Vice President & Deacon	Dan Richards
Treasurer & Deacon	Linda Richards
Secretary & Elder	Jerry Morrison
Elder	Karen Buranich
Trustee & Financial Secretary	Sue Beier
Trustee	Brian Welsh



## MISSION MUSINGS

Submitted by  
Kathy Reandeau

*Sharing Christ's love and peace with all!*

While definite plans have not been made for Thanksgiving and Christmas, I think we can move away from focusing solely on gift cards for those who are comfortable shopping again. I will provide further information, but it looks like we should be able to rely on a combination of donations, Tops gift cards, and other gift cards to satisfy the holiday season needs.

**PLYMOUTH CROSSROADS:** Although they no longer have the residential home, Plymouth Crossroads continues to provide vital services to alumni and homeless youth in WNY from a satellite office inside Ebenezer United Church of Christ. Staff members, together with the United Church Home Board, are diligently working towards opening back up for residential services again. Further info or donations via PayPal at [www.plymouthcrossroads.org](http://www.plymouthcrossroads.org).

**SIERRA LEONE/JERICO ROAD GLOBAL OUTREACH:** Phebian Abdulai continues to perform astonishing acts of healing through her medical mission in Sierra Leone. With Jericho Road Ministries, they opened a third health center in Komao, which is home to over 5000 people. One reason they brought a permanent presence to this village is because Phebian and her team were seeing many very sick patients, especially children, from Komao at the Adama Martha Clinic. After two years, they started bringing a mobile outreach clinic to Komao on a regular basis, but even this wasn't sufficient to meet the village's needs. Much illness was caused by poor sanitation and lack of access to clean water, and those root issues needed to be addressed. Thanks to partners at Hope Rising Together, Komao now has access to clean water through newly-drilled wells!

Thank you for supporting this life-transforming work by donating money through the bi-monthly envelopes and gently-used clothing to the clothing shed. Learn more at <https://www.jrchc.org> and visit the global work tab.

**CLOTHING SHED:** We use the clothing shed to collect and redistribute gently-used clothing to organizations and people all over the world. Thank you to Sue Beier and Gloria Elersic for help in keeping that organized.

**PLEASE DO NOT** put any household items, electronics, toy or books in the shed!

**FOOD PANTRY:** St. Peter's maintains a food pantry to help address any emergency food insecurity issues in our church or community. We will also draw from this for any additional Thanksgiving or holiday needs. Please contact me if you know of anyone in need of food. If you have donations please put them in the barrel in the glass vestibule during church office hours, or contact Kathy Reandeau to make arrangements for a pick-up.



**NY HELP/HONDURAS:** NY/HELP volunteers don't know when they will be able to travel to Honduras to continue their work helping the people there. Please contact Ginger Comstock at [gkcomstock@gmail.com](mailto:gkcomstock@gmail.com) or c/o Arcade UCC, 297 Main St, Arcade, NY 14009 for further info. NY/HELP also has a blog (<http://ny-help.blogspot.com>) and Facebook page.

Continuing missionaries in Honduras, Bruce and Linda Hanson, often provide updates on their work. Excerpts from their *Cooking With Shoes On* blog: The pueblo we live in, Río Chiquito, is small. Restaurants sell delicious local foods but, every so often we long for something more in line with our North America palate: French fries, hamburgers, subs or pizza! I do make pizza, but that can be a challenge here. Sometimes we lose water and electricity. The ingredients are hard to find, the pepperoni is weird, the ham highly processed and sometimes the mozzarella refuses to brown. But, it's pizza so we persist.

We talked to another missionary who mentioned a project they had of making and selling pizzas to support their ministry. And so was born our pizza project. We now make and sell pizzas one day each weekend, with proceeds supporting the local church and our work with deportees at the border.

On our first pizza Sunday we made and sold eight pizzas. After expenses we cleared about \$20 and still have ingredients left for next week. Mostly, people were excited to buy pizza locally. Nobody seemed to want vegetables on their pizza, but the weird pepperoni was a hit. We had fun, got to meet and talk with more neighbors, and we have enough money to buy diapers and wipes for the kiddos amongst the deportees.

**MISSION COMMITTEE:** Donations for mission work can be made to specific projects or through "Benevolence" contributions in your weekly envelope.



## SEASON OF ADVENT

*Submitted by Jerry Morrison*

What is Advent? Sure, you know of Christmas and Easter, but what about Advent? "Advent" is a rather odd word; you don't often hear it in everyday conversation. Some may use it to mean "onset", as in the advent of an illness. Others know it only as an adjective before the word "calendar" during the holiday season. But for Christians, Advent means much more.

The English word "advent" comes from the Latin word *adventus*, which means "coming" or "visit". The season of Advent is a time when Christians focus on the coming of Christ, whose birth we celebrate in December.

Christians observe Advent as a season of the church or liturgical year. This "year" includes the seasons of Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Holy Week, Easter, Pentecost, Ordinary Time and other Holy Days.

The Bible doesn't prescribe these liturgical seasons, but Christians have been observing them as part of church tradition for centuries. The church year is shaped by the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, especially his birth, death, and resurrection.

Rarely exactly four weeks long, Advent can in fact vary in length from year to year. The season always begins four Sundays before Christmas (December 25), but since Christmas falls on a different day of the week each year, Advent can begin anywhere from November 27 to December 3. Advent is followed by twelve days of Christmas, culminating with the day of Epiphany.

A generation ago, you might have been hard pressed to find evidence of Advent traditions outside of highly liturgical denominations, such as Anglican, Lutheran, and Roman Catholic churches. Today, however, many non-liturgical churches incorporate Advent traditions and observances into their holiday services.

There is no hard and fast prescription for how to observe the Advent season correctly, but some traditions do exist. One of these is the Advent wreath. Many churches begin the Advent season by displaying a wreath with five candles-often four of the same size and one larger candle in the center referred to as the Christ candle.

Each of the four candles, typically placed around the circumference of the wreath, commemorates themes of Advent related to expectation, hope, love, and joy. Advent wreaths usually contain three purple or blue candles and one pink candle. The colors aren't mandatory - or magic. But they are imbued with meaning.

Taking a few weeks to focus on the hope of Christ's coming can make Christmas a more meaningful and joyful celebration. When you attend service on these four Sundays of Advent, pay careful attention to its themes within your own worship tradition. You may hear its themes echoed in the music of the season, perhaps through hymns like "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel," "Come Thou Long Expected Jesus", or "Joy to the World".

Additionally, you can celebrate the Advent season with your family or a group of friends. You don't need an "official" church leader on hand to do so! You may decide to incorporate a wreath and candles for your celebration, along with readings from the Bible and prayers. Any community can gather together each week to look toward the day of Jesus' birth. Take advantage of some of the many wonderful devotional books available for the season. Finally, look for opportunities to share with others your personal need for the Lord Jesus Christ, the hope of men and nations. Consider the idea of waiting for a Savior in the many opportunities the holiday season affords for waiting-check out lines, traffic jams, and children's anticipation of vacation time and hoped-for gifts and parties.

Advent is meant to help us remember our need and longing for the Light of the World, the Savior who is Christ the Lord. For "the people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned".



Stay up to date with all of the St. Peter's UCC events by visiting our Website or Facebook page.

Check back often so that you don't miss anything!

Website: [www.st-petersucc.org](http://www.st-petersucc.org)

Facebook: [St. Peter's United Church of](#)

## WITHIN CHURCH WALLS

*Submitted by Linda Richards*

Some of you have given up on church; you've been burned. People are flawed, and broken, and most of us are hypocritical, at least to a small extent. But the church is also beautiful. Some of the closest friends I've had have been church friends. So much of my spiritual growth has come out of my church experience. I learned how to sing in a church. I learned how to think about other people more than myself in church. And I've seen people serve each other and the world with wild abandon in church.

People who have been hurt and broken by the church can find a place of healing and rest within a good church. I hope you can find one that allows for authenticity and doesn't require perfection, allowing you to be present with your questions and cheering you on during your quest for hope.

And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

*Hebrews 10:24-25*



November 1<sup>st</sup> is a very special day for me. It is both All Saints Day and my father's birthday. On November 1<sup>st</sup> 2021, I read a powerful message from a Daily devotional that really hit home, reflecting on what our church is experiencing today. (Within Church Walls above)

My father and mother brought me to St. Peter's UCC when I was only 5 years old. We had just moved to West Seneca and joined our neighbors, the Wettlaufer's in attending Sunday School at St. Peter's.

So much has changed since those days over 50 years ago – but some things in this message are so true – some of my closest friends have been church friends. I have learned to sing in church and love my Strike the Rock and choir musicians. I have learned to think of others more than myself as I experienced caroling to shut-ins, angel tree gift giving, making meals for others, donating to various needs of the church, and being involved with Plymouth Crossroads.

I do believe St Peter's is a special place, where we have provided a place for people to learn, love, and grow in their faith. It has allowed others to learn leadership skills

as they have stepped into unknown roles on Council, Deacons, or Elders in the Church. Those roles are critical in the church to maintain its governance, bi-laws, and constitution. Without enough people to help with running the business of the Church, the Spiritual Mission side of our church cannot exist. Years ago, the bi-laws were changed to allow a Council of twelve members to be reduced to eight members due to reduced membership and lack of interest to be on a Council.

At the last Annual meeting, our Council was down to 7 members. We currently have a Council of 5 members, plus a Financial Secretary who has maintained her role.

After our time away from each other due to restrictions of Covid, I ask you to consider reengaging in your Church life at St. Peter's. Look for ways you can help with the Leadership or Mission of the church. We do need your help. Please ask yourself, "what can I do to help?"

Stepping into key vacancies and committees will allow us to continue a long tradition of helping others in our community and a safe place to worship for years to come.

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## NEW INSURANCE REVIEW

**New Insurance Review covers our Building updates and our Business Processes.**

We recently received a questionnaire from our Insurance Provider as a part of the renewal process.

The Questions addressed many facets of our campus, the building conditions, how we handle our money flow, and how we address the Human Resources aspects for our employees.

The review process required an updated appraisal (within the last three years) of our building to ensure the replacement costs for all insured buildings were accurate. Our building improvements to the two main bathrooms in the Sunday School and updated air handling filtration during 2020, updates to all the children's bathrooms, and the classroom flooring projects in collaboration with Page One that were completed before the start of the school year this September all needed to be reflected in the Buildings Valuation.

When we walked around the building with JoAnn Litwin we showed her the updated Water Intrusion Water Sensor Device that protects our Boiler Room. We walked her through the updated classrooms – with the new carpets provided by Page One and the new floors

installed by St. Peters. We discussed the new Filtration System on our Sanctuary Furnace to help capture of air particles that might harm our members. She was impressed with the condition of the rooms, the thought put into keeping the building clean and up to date, and how professional everything looked.

We provided documentation on our Safe Sanctuary Policy, Boundary Training for our Pastor, the Documentation we have for Job Descriptions, and posting of all State and Federal requirements for Employers.

It also provided a chance for us to gather all the current insurance policies for all those who occupy our building such as Page One, Girl Scouts, Irish Dancers, My Little Sprouts, and Angels of Light.

In the response to the questionnaire, we described the controls we use for our Financials, describing how money is handled, such as donations, bill paying, and a clear separation of duties from our Secretary, Treasurer, Financial Secretary, and check signers. We explained the process to have all Operations reviewed on an annual basis from an external Auditor with reports filed for the Council.

Our Liabilities and exposures of the acres of grounds, an inactive cemetery, private fenced playground, rental properties, and worship were all documented.

We did receive an updated appraisal from her based on the upgrades we have done to our building.

The Sanctuary/Sunday School replacement cost including the Foundation, Exterior, Roof, Interior, Plumbing, Electrical, Heating/Cooling is estimated to be \$2,358,151. The Parsonage including the Foundation, Exterior, Roof, Interior, and Mechanicals is estimated to be \$232,302. Including contents, the total value of our campus is \$3,322,723. An additional portion of our insurance covers the replacement value of the Stained Glass Windows in our Sanctuary. The thirteen windows have an estimated value of \$591,500 of coverage for their replacement.

Several processes will continue to be updated by the Deacons, HR Committee, and the Elders to ensure our processes for Annual Building Maintenance, Annual Employee Reviews, and Worship continue to be refreshed as needed.

Linda Richards  
Council Treasurer

*Classroom #1*



*Classroom #2*



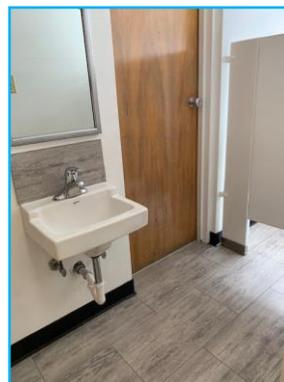
*Classroom #4*



*Classroom #5*



*Girls Junior Bathroom*



*Boys Junior Bathroom*

## BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

<b>NOVEMBER</b>	5	Jerry Morrison
	10	Emma Heppner
	14	Pam Rost
	17	Jeffrey Mikula
	18	Harriet Schneider
	20	Paul Dimmig
	26	Susan Mikula

## ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

<b>NOVEMBER</b>	20	Braima & Phebian Abdulai
	28	Carl Paul & Deborah Dimmig

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Join us every Sunday at 10:00 am for our  
Virtual Worship service streamed live  
on our Facebook page:

[St. Peter's United Church of Christ-West Seneca](#)

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*Photos from October Meat Raffle*



## GOOD NEWS/BAD NEWS

How many times in your life have you had to ask someone “do you want the good news or the bad news first?” My experience is to accept the bad news first because it can only get better after that. With that said, here goes. The bad news is that the Christmas Cookie Sale is being cancelled. It’s not just bad news but sad news as well. The reasoning is as follows: due to the ongoing price increases of baking products (and food in general) it would be imprudent to ask others to make something they normally would not make for themselves due to costs to make for others to sell. Simple and straight forward!

### Good News

The good news is, instead of a Fundraiser we will be promoting a “Friendraiser”. How many months have we lost out on our ability to have Fellowship after lockdown and reopening? Too many! To make up for that loss we will be hosting a Cookie Exchange event to replace the Cookie Sale. This is very easy to do, however, there is ONE guideline that all participants must follow and that is to SIGN UP. Each person who signs up will be asked to bring 6 dozen of his or her favorite holiday cookies for exchange. When all is said and done, each person will leave with six dozen of everyone else’s cookies. Sounds good to me! This can only work if you are signed up. If you are not signed up you cannot be a participant, as this will cause a shortage for those who are participating. A sign up sheet will be available on November 14<sup>th</sup> at the church. Deadline to sign up is December 5<sup>th</sup>. This list will ask what type of cookie you are bringing so we do not have too many duplicates. Variety is the spice of life!! The exchange will be on Sunday, December 12<sup>th</sup> immediately after service and Council will be providing fellowship that day. If you would like to make an extra dozen of your exchange cookies for coffee hour you are more than welcome and most appreciated. Coffee and hot chocolate will be provided along with much anticipated fellowship and Christmas music to fill the air. Details regarding drop off to the church will be forthcoming. Please consider being a part of this fun and exciting, even YUMMY time of socialization that we have all longed for to brighten your holiday season. Any further information can be addressed to Jerry Morrison, 716-327-2230 or [jerryjamm256@gmail.com](mailto:jerryjamm256@gmail.com).

