

Newsletter

JANUARY 2021

Worship God.

Follow Jesus.

Serve Others.

“How good and pleasant it is when brothers (and sisters) live together in unity! For there the Lord bestows his blessing, even life forevermore.” Psalm 133:1 & 3b

Dear Friends in Christ,

In a Psalm of only three verses, David writes of the beauty and blessing of living in peace and unity. We could write similarly. There is something special about being at peace with others, experiencing harmony in the home, having the assurance of equality in community, the confidence of justice in the courts, and the unity of vision and purpose in such institutions as government, education, religion and business.

David uses considerable poetic liberty in expressing what goodness looks like and how unity feels. You can read the poetic analogy in verses 2 and 3. But David’s analogies will not ring familiar to us as they are culturally and geographically particular to when and where David lived. So the invitation is extended to us to create in our minds and hearts, our writing and poetry, our music and art, how peace, justice, equality, unity, and harmony look and feel.

Our personal analogy and vision will vary as much as our creativity. But this we know, it is beautiful and desirable. And this we know also, eternal blessings from God accompany the presence of these virtues. “For there the Lord bestows blessing, even life forevermore.”

Because these virtues are beautiful and desirable, we pray and labor for their experience and fruition. May God bless our Church, our community, our nation and our world with the reality and fulfillment of unity and its many manifestations.

Wade Panse, Pastor

“In all things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us...Christ Jesus our Lord.” Romans 8:37 & 39

From Pastor Karen Wheat

As we move from 2020 to 2021, we realize that this has been quite a year! COVID! ... election chaos and a new president! ... COVID!! ...loved ones who are ill or who have died ... COVID!!! Births and babies... COVID!!!! marriage and divorce ...COVID!!!!!! found employment ...loss of employment ...COVID vaccine!!!!!!!!!! As Bob Dylan would say, "*The times, they are a-changin.*"

The fear of the unknown worries us all. Questions abound, like, "Can we really get a handle on this pandemic?" "What does 'Black Lives Matter' say to me?" or "What will happen with the economy?" . These questions may be followed by others, like "Why is this happening?" or "How did things get the way they are now?" and sometimes the answer simply is, "I just don't know."

Transitions are often very difficult. But instead of focusing on the difficulties and the things we don't know, as Christians we must turn our attention to the things we *do* know. We must lead the way in facing the future without fear! And we can do this because, as Christians, we should be **convinced** that the leadership of Jesus is perfect.

Why? Because Colossians 1.16-18 says,

"For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. He is also head of the body, the church."

The same God who created all and rules over all is also the Shepherd who carefully leads you and me beside the quiet waters. He is brilliant!

Secondly, I am **confident** that regardless of the turmoil we see and experience in this world, we can walk in peace. Jesus said, "***Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.***" John 14.27

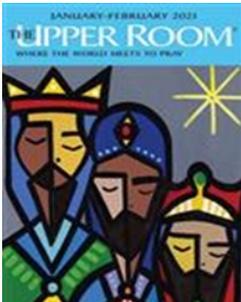
Third, I am **certain** that the things we do each day count for eternity. Colossians 3.23-24 is one of my favorite Bible passages: "*Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart as working for the Lord and not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as your reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.*"

So, in light of these things I am convinced, confident and certain of 2021. Therefore, for the year ahead, I choose to: (CONTINUED...)

- Trust God to accomplish his perfect plan for my life, the Church and the world
- Appropriate peace to my heart when everything around me is shaken, and strive to be a peacemaker in the world
- Live with an eternal perspective

I invite you to join me in this exciting quest!

Have a Blessed and Happy New Year! Shalom, Rev. Karen



The January/February 2021 Upper Room is now available. You may pick one up in the office, in the mailbox by the back door, or we will mail one to you if you let us know.

Thank you to Vicki Follett, Ty Caruso, Arden May-Fox and others for providing special music for us during our months of shut-down. We would love this music to continue. If YOU, or someone you know, can provide music for our service, please let the office know.

\$\$\$\$ GOD DOLLARS \$\$ GOD DOLLARS \$\$ GOD DOLLARS \$\$\$\$

The "God Dollars" jug is again being filled. Rest assured that your donations are used for a good cause.

Smile 2020



I never imagined myself wearing a mask, walking into a bank, asking for money!

Thank you notes:

Patti and I thank you all for including us in the many expressions of love and generosity during the Advent and Christmas season. We are blessed to be appointed and serving in this local church and we cherish the love and relationship that has developed over the last six years. God is good!

We will be absent from the Cassopolis community for the months of January, February and March, but you will be in our thoughts and prayers daily. In April we will return in time for the celebration of Easter and will pray that at that time we will be able to once again meet and worship in person. Please stay well and safe. God loves you and so do we.

Blessings, Wade and Patti

Church family:

Thank you so much for the generous Christmas gift. I appreciate all of you so very much. Stop in and say hello after the new year.

Vicki Beebe, Secretary

Dear Cassopolis church family:

I want to say thank you so much for the sweet card and generous gift. I am blessed to be part of such a wonderful community.

Audrey Fenwick (Pianist)

Thank yous continued...

Dear Church:

Thank you to all for your prayers and cards of condolence at the time of my husband's death. All are appreciated.

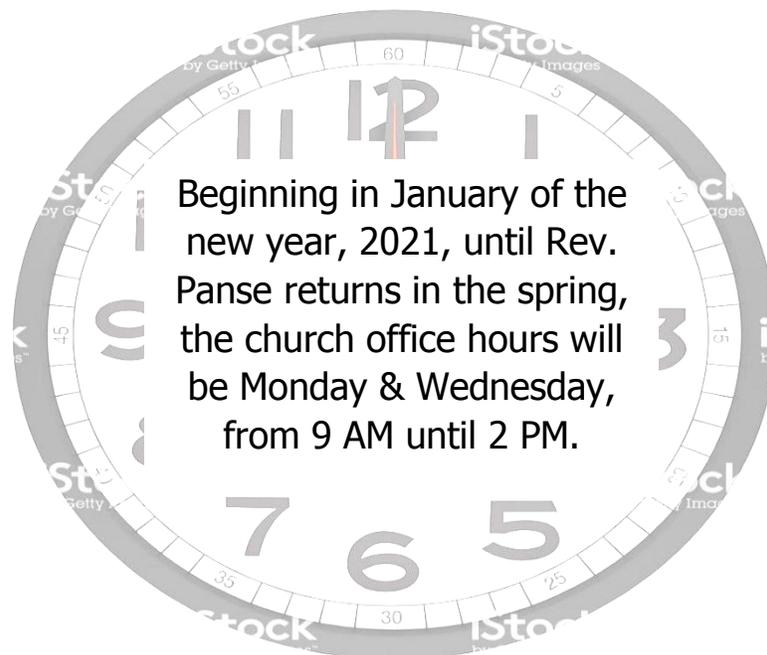
A special thank you to Pastor Panse for the meaningful service he delivered at Roger's funeral.

*My sincere gratitude,
Mary Bruegel*

Dear Church Family:

Thank you for the lovely bouquet of flowers and card. I love being remembered.

Love, Laura Maddox



VOLUNTEER CORNER

As the church secretary, I get a front row seat to see those persons who keep our church running efficiently. Beside those wonderful folks who volunteer weekly for ushering, refreshments, etc., we have people who take on a continuing role that keeps them busy each week or each month throughout the year. In each newsletter I will highlight "unseen heroes" of our church who take on a continuing job for us.

This month I want to highlight all the various council and committees of this church. These folks work behind the scenes making decisions and implementing programs that affect us all.

Staff/Pastor/Parish Relations Committee: Char Hiemstra, Chair; Gretchen Kelley, Nancy Smith, Jo Lynn Watts and Kelley Nickel, members. These church members do the church hiring, work with other committees to establish salaries and handle relations between employees and the church..

Finance Committee: John Kelley, Chair; Jim Beebe, Secretary; Mike Hiemstra, Treasurer; Teresa Dahlgren, Leslie Paul, Barbara Strlekar and Don Woodhouse, members. These folks handle all finance issues and keep track of donations and spending. (Greg Connelly, Liana Heath and L J Starling count the offering each week.)

Education: Carrie May-Fox, Chair. In charge of Sunday School and Camping.

Trustees: Mike Fox, Chair; Sherry Hilden, Sue Loux, Zachary May-Fox and Mike Watts members. (See previous article in Nov. newsletter outlining their responsibilities)

Membership: Vicki Beebe & Diane Sumption. This committee keeps track of membership.

Welcoming Hospitality: Vicki Beebe, coffee fellowship, and Jane Moraw, card ministry.

Lay Member to Annual Conference: John Kelley (attends annual conference)

Local Representative for Native American Ministry: Liana Heath

Nominations: Char Hiemstra, Nancy Smith and JoLynn Watts. They nominate committee members each year.

Church Leadership Council: Kelley Nickel, Chair; Vicki Beebe, Secretary; All committee chairs are members of the Church Leadership Council which is the main governing body of the church.



JANUARY

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				<i>Good bye, 2020</i>	1 	2
3 Worship 10 AM On-Line	4	5	6 <i>John & Gretchen Kelley</i> 	7	8	9
10 Worship 10 AM On-Line	11	12	13	14	15	16
17 Worship 10 AM On-Line <i>Isabel Kennedy</i>	18	19	20	21	22	23 Lutheran Church food pantry 11:30 - 1 <i>Rob Dohm</i>
24 Worship 10 AM On-Line	25	26	27	28	29	30
31 Worship 10 AM On-line <i>Norma McRae</i>						

If your special date does not appear on this calendar, please let the office know.