

THE KEYS

ST. PETER'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST GRANT PARK, IL



December 2019



815-465-6191

St. Peter's

**UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**

310 N. Meadow St.
Grant Park, Illinois 60940





Amazing! That's how I would describe our trip to the Holy Land November 8th-18th.

While there are so many thoughts, pictures, comments I could make in sharing reflections from our trip, one thing that stands out centers around this upcoming season of Advent and Christmas.

As we were standing in the Shepherd's Field area in Bethlehem I recalled the passage from Luke's gospel which reads, "there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks by night (Luke 2:8)."

Shepherds, some of the lowliest people on earth were guarding their flocks (prized possessions). Soon, the One, the Child, the Baby Jesus would be brought into their world, our world.

Not just a baby, but the Good Shepherd (John 10:11). So, as you would have it, lowly Shepherds were watching their flocks in preparation for the Good Shepherd to arrive.

Briefly before this experience I was blessed to receive a special gift from the people in Bethlehem. A wooden sculpture of the Good Shepherd made from olive wood. It was given to me as a reminder that I am a "shepherd" to you!

What a responsibility (and I don't take it lightly). As your earthly "shepherd," I encourage you, my God-given flock, to share with me this season of Advent and Christmas together during our services of worship!

May you be blessed with God's love and grace!

Kyle J. Timmons

Pastor Kyle Timmons

2019 Israel Trip



(Our group from left to right: Sadye Bernheim (adopted from Louisiana), Ken Erickson, Nicholas Timmons, Jennifer Radostits, Laura Erickson, Sandy Erickson, Kevin Mussman, John Wolfe, Pastor Kyle, Evelyn Bond, Bob Chesterfield. Missing: James (Jim) Chesterfield).

From Pastor Kyle: What a wonderful group of friends to travel with. I was extremely humbled at the opportunity to read God's Word at the Mount of Beatitudes, baptize many in the Jordan River, and lead communion worship at the Garden Tomb. Once again, I was reminded that the places we traveled were the footsteps of Jesus Christ Himself, along with the many names of those in God's Word. Truly, a humbling and wonderful experience.

From John Wolfe: I had so many moments of peace and personal blessings to account for on this recent trip to Israel. Perhaps my biggest "spiritual moment" of the trip was while receiving communion and sharing in the Lord's Prayer while we were in the Garden area near the empty tomb. I had tears streaming down my face as our group sang Amazing Grace. It was an overwhelming moment.

From James Chesterfield: The whole group was dispersed shopping along various streets in Jerusalem. I had gone off by myself to explore. Upon exiting a shop, I noticed our tour guide - a younger-looking woman, maybe in her early 30s - sitting on the curb having a smoke and looking at her phone. She sat there nonchalantly as dozens of people moved along the roadway around her.

I walked over and sat down next to her, reintroducing myself and thanking her for her care at guiding us through such a bustling city center. We exchanged pleasantries, eventually moving on to topics of culture and humanity as we people-watched. Eventually, I asked her, "What is Jerusalem? What is this place to someone who lives here?" She shifted a bit in her seat. She took another puff and told me that Jerusalem is a weight. It's this uneasy merging of dozens of ethnic groups, religious groups, creeds, and cultures, all wrapped in thousands of years of historical differences and political strife. Jerusalem is a look over your shoulder. It's a wobbling set of scales. It's a tacit agreement between historical enemies that violence in the holy city could spell danger not just for oneself and those they love, but for one's immortal soul as well.

And so, everyone carries this weight around their shoulders, reminding them that it could all come crashing down at any time. It's like a Sword of Damocles - a reminder of the imminent and ever-present peril faced by those who live at the inflection point of culture and religion and faith and politics.

Her response was mind-blowing to hear. I hadn't been able to put my finger on it, but I'd been feeling the same way since entering the city - this feeling of pressure and forced-awareness that you could never really turn off. Her comments served as a powerful reminder of the balance we all share and how easily an ideology can destroy the bonds that hold us together. (Cont. page 5)

(continued from page 4) As we stood to return to the group, she thanked me for coming to her country to explore these themes with her. Through that exchange, we shared a very human moment - a moment of really seeing each other. Through it, I suddenly discovered my own view of Jerusalem - that this holy city fought over for thousands of years is really just two people, sitting on the street, sharing their lives and fears and hopes. It's not the holy places, the buildings, or the historical contexts. Jerusalem is something that lives inside us when we share an open moment with another. It's actually *doing* as Christ did rather than talking about it. It's breaking bread, sharing a smile, creating a connection. That's about as good a description of spirituality as any, I suppose. As for me, it was one of the most human moments I'd experienced in a long time. I'll never forget that.

From Evelyn Bond: It was my childhood dream...I walked the land where Jesus walked, I was baptized in the Jordan River where Jesus was baptized. I went to the city where Jesus went, where He prayed, I prayed. I made lots of friends as Jesus did and I broke bread and drank wine where Jesus did. I walked the stone roads where Jesus carried the cross to His crucifixion, Jesus died for me. What an amazing man He was and still is. A story to be ever told.

From Bob Chesterfield: How ancient the Land of Israel is. It's many diverse peoples live side by side in a kind of uneasy, complicated relationship. The Arabs, Jews, Christians, Muslims and many other peoples.

Even though I went to learn about Jesus and travel the places he lived, worked, and died, I came away feeling that what I expected and the reality were very different.

The Jewish people are living in one of the most troubling areas in the world, yet there is that constant optimism that I can feel. Even though it is tinged with a feeling of "elevated" risk of the need to prepare for defense of the people from enemies that are all around. There is always that heightened state of alert.

The visit to the “Mount of Beatitudes” was one I will always remember. Pastor Kyle used my Bible that was given to me by St. Peter’s UCC in 1966 for my confirmation, and he read a verse at the place where Jesus preached the “Sermon on the Mount.” When Pastor Kyle finished his reading, I looked out over the valley of “Armageddon” realizing that the final battle between good & evil will be fought here, so close to where Jesus gave his sermon.

Would you like to hear more about the 2019 Israel Trip?

Please join us on Sunday, December 15th at 9 am (during Sunday School hour) as individuals who made the trip will share some of their experiences and also be willing to answer any questions that you may have.

If you can’t make it, or if you’d like to learn even more, Bob Chesterfield & Evelyn Bond invite you to their home following the service on December 15th for a light brunch and time of sharing.

Currently, we are praying about taking another trip either in the Spring or Fall of 2021. If you think you might want to go, this is a good time to start asking questions and start saving for a trip of a life-time.

Advent Worship Schedule

12/01: 1st Sunday in Advent (Celebration of Hanging the Greens)
12/08: 2nd Sunday in Advent (Children’s Christmas Program)
12/15: 3rd Sunday in Advent
12/22: 4th Sunday in Advent (Adult Choir Sunday)
12/24: Christmas Eve Contemporary Service (4 pm)
Christmas Eve Traditional Service (7 pm)
(communion & candlelight).

YOU'RE INVITED FOR COFFEE BEFORE WORSHIP!

Don't forget the coffee bar in the Sunday school entrance area each Sunday morning from 9:00 am – 10:15 am. You're invited to have a cup of coffee before worship.

Proceeds will go to the Board of Christian Education.

YOUNG AT HEART

The Grant Park Seniors will be meeting on Monday, December 16th from 1:00 – 3:00 pm at the Community Center, Dixie Highway in Grant Park. A Christmas lunch will be served.



Thank You

Thank you to everyone who sent me cards that brought a smile, caring thought, and prayers for healing and comfort. Thanks to friends who called, texted, brought food and stayed with me when my family could not. Thanks to Pastor Kyle for his visits, calls and prayers. I have been blessed!

Ann Smith



ANNUAL MEETING – SUNDAY JANUARY 29, 2020

The annual meeting of St. Peter's United Church of Christ will be held Sunday, January 29, 2020 immediately following the worship service. We encourage all church members to attend as we make decisions and vote on issues that will impact the coming year and years in the life of our church.

**Committee reports for the Annual Meeting Report
are due Monday, January 6th, 2020.**



Students in Grades 6-12

Fusion Lunch & Caroling: Join us Sunday, December 15th after church as we enjoy lunch together and go Christmas Caroling to our shut-ins and others. Each student/family is asked to bring a dozen Christmas cookies or treats that we can share with those we go singing to.

Fusion Summer Trip: Are any of your students interested in going on a trip this summer? Let Pastor Kyle know before the early part of January!

Currently, the plan is to leave the morning of July 8th. We will do a half day of service work in Ohio. We will then spend one day at Cedar Point Amusement Park and one day at a Water Park before returning on July 11th. Cost will depend on how many students plan on going, but remember, there is always plenty of time to do fundraising projects.

There's a Connect Class for YOUTH!

It's not Sunday School, I promise! However, on Sunday mornings there will be two different CONNECT classes for our youth.

Classes will be split between 6th – 8th and 9th – 12th grade.

This will be a relaxing environment with friends where you can discuss current topics, issues relating to real life, and just enjoy growing in your faith in a different way.

CHRISTMAS CARD MAIL BOX

You are invited to bring the Christmas cards you send to your friends at St. Peter's to the church and leave the cards by the "mail box" on the counter by the southeast sanctuary entrance. The cards will be sorted and placed alphabetically in the slotted "mail box."



If you'd like, you may donate an amount equal to your normal postage costs in the can on top of the mail box.

Be sure to check to see if you have mail!

2019 OFFERING ENVELOPES

The 2019 Offering envelopes can be picked up outside the church office.



Electronic (EFT) Giving

Are you interested in learning more about setting up your giving to St. Peter's electronically? No more need to worry about checks, offering envelopes, etc. Let Pastor Kyle know if you'd be interested to give electronically and we'll help you set it up. This is a GREAT way to make sure you are giving on a regular basis (even if you miss church due to illness, vacation, weather).

Want to Give, but forgot your cash/check?

In addition to EFT giving (see that announcement) there is another avenue that you can plug into your phone right now and its safe and protected. You can provide a credit card number or a bank account and set it up to give as frequently as you desire. Feel free to share the web address with others. <https://tithe.ly/give?c=696160>



Sound Technician

It's not as hard as it "sounds" (pun intended). We are looking for individuals who would be willing to sit and monitor the sound system on Sunday mornings during worship. It can be one individual or several who would like to rotate taking turns. Please notify the church office if you'd like to learn more about serving in this capacity.

Power Point Specialist

We are looking for individual(s) who would be willing to operate the power point slides on Sundays when we utilize this feature.

You will be trained and informed how to operate the slides during the service and you will not need to design the presentations as they will be done for you in advance. Please notify the church office if you'd like to learn more about serving in this capacity.

Miss a Service? Can't Make it on Sunday?

Did something come up and you can't make it to church on Sunday morning? Not feeling well and you want to still join in worship?



We have the solution! Join us on facebook live during the normal service time. While we'd prefer you to be in church we know that life provides many obstacles and we want to give you a chance to stay in touch with the weekly announcements, worship music, time of prayer and sermons.

All you need is a facebook page! From there, search for our church page (St. Peters UCC Grant Park, @StPetersGrantPark) and "like the page."

Click on the "Posts" tab and a post with the current service should begin a minute or two before the service. Occasionally, we have technical difficulty, so be patient with us.

If you aren't on at the time of the service, that is okay as well. You can go to the church facebook page at any time and scroll through the posts to watch the previously recorded services.

If you experience difficulty, please contact the church during the week and explain your problems and we'll do our best to help out.



DECEMBER MISSION GIVING

Our Churches Wider Mission (OCWM) –

Also known as Basic Support, our contributions support God's mission in the Illinois Conference, nationally, and globally. 71% of our contribution stays in Illinois to carry out the mission of the Illinois Conference. Part of that mission is the support of local church pastors and the local churches.

Christmas Fund

One of our **5 for 5 Annual Offerings of the United Church of Christ** is the **Christmas Fund**. The generous gifts of UCC congregations and individuals to the Christmas Fund enables the Pension Boards' Ministerial Assistance program to provide the following gifts:

- * Ministerial Assistance.
- *Christmas Gift checks.
- *Monthly pension supplementation.
- *Health premium supplementation.
- *Emergency Grants for individuals and families.

Monthly Church Council Minutes

If you are interested in receiving a copy of the previous month's council minutes, please contact the church office. An e-mail copy can be sent or we can supply a printed version. Thanks!

In Our Thoughts and Prayers:

Louise Sievers – prayers for healing,

Carter Fortin – prayers for healing

Pauline Mitchell – prayers for healing,

Max Markland – prayers for healing,

Austin Delaney (Great Grandson of Clifford & Ethel Zimmerman)
– prayers for healing,

Nancy Lewke –prayers for healing.

and all of God's children seeking comfort, peace, and love.

CONTACT INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS NOT ABLE TO ATTEND CHURCH ON A REGULAR BASIS

Mrs. Mabel Phebus
19101 State Line Rd
Lowell, IN 46356

Mrs. Louise Sievers
Riverside Senior Life
85 Burns Road
Bourbonnais, IL 60914

Minnie Pfingsten
703 N East Street
Hudson, IL 61748

Pauline Mitchell
Bickford Sr. Living
100 Jones Drive
Room 227
Bourbonnais, IL 60914

Faith, Food & Football - Throughout the NFL season we will have several gatherings at the Parsonage for those who want to tune into the Monday Night Game of the Week and enjoy fellowship, faith discussion and yummy food. . Bring a beverage(s) of your choice and a snack/dessert to share if you choose. Everyone is welcome.





DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

These birthdays are compiled from church membership records.
Please call to our attention any omissions or corrections

Theo O'Nions	1		
Bob Dennis	1	Wesley Schneider	15
Clifford Zimmerman	1	Peggy Weybright	17
Isaac Hamann	2	Russell Reynolds	17
Kaleb Lehnert	3	Audrey Lehnert	18
Owen Reynolds	3	Noah Hamann	23
John Wolfe	3	Ed Bush	24
Jason Schneider	4	Jerry Eckhoff	24
Brittany Buttle	5	Alex Fugate	24
Ella Schriefer	5	Connie Granger	25
Josie Boicken	8	Erin Hamann	25
Brian McKinstry	9	Clayton McKinstry	30
Hollie O'Nions	12	Lori Burrell	31
Lukus Hamann	14		
Michael Reaman	15		

DECEMBER CALENDAR OF EVENTS

1	9:00 am	Sunday School
	10:30 am	Worship Service
		Communion
3	6:30 pm	Budget Committee
4	7:00 pm	Adult Choir practice
		Dart GP at Manhattan
8	9:00 am	Sunday School
	10:30 am	Worship Service
		Children's Christmas Pageant
11	7:00 pm	Adult Choir practice
		Dart Manhattan at GP`
15	9:00 am	Sunday School
	10:30 am	Worship Service
16	1:00-3:00	Young at Heart lunch served
18	7:00 pm	Adult Choir practice
		Dart GP at Peotone
19	7:00 pm	Church Council Meeting
22	9:00 am	Sunday School
	10:30 am	Worship Service
		Adult Choir Cantata
24	4:00 pm	Christmas Worship Service
	7:00pm	Christmas Eve Candle light Service
25		<u>MERRY CHRISTMAS!!</u>
29	10:30 am	Worship Service
		Mussman Baptism

Church Website: www.stpetersgp.org
Facebook: St. Peters UCC Grant Park
Church Office Hours: Tuesday – Friday; 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM

STAFF

Rev Kyle Timmons, Pastor
Marcia Langlois, Office Administrator
Beverly Junker, Financial Secretary
Ann Smith, Senior Choir Director
Betty Wolfe, Youth Choir Director
Judy Schneider and Shari Ohm, Organists
Peg McCraw, Custodian
Jessica Frahm & Kole Stadt - Youth Advisors
Neal Currier & Josh Hamann – Connect Leaders

2019 CHURCH COUNCIL

Garry Junker, President
Russ Koehn, Vice President
Kelly Schneider, Secretary
Susan Williamson, Treasurer,
Ron Hamann, Assistant Treasurer
Evelyn Bond, Michelle Claussen, Karen Ekhoﬀ & Max Toppen



***No Matter Who You Are or Where you Are on Life's Journey,
You Are Welcome Here***