



St. Peter's Lutheran Church

4897 Old Oneida Road
Verona, New York 13478

Phone: (315) 363-5211

office@stpetersverona.org

pastor@stpetersverona.org

November 3, 2021

Dear friends in Christ,

"And as God's grace reaches more and more people, there will be great thanksgiving, and God will receive more and more glory." 2 Corinthians 4:15 (NLT)

I think it's safe to say that after nearly two years living through a global pandemic, we've all got COVID fatigue. We're all tired and we're all ready to be done. There are some encouraging signs lately, as the number of new cases starts to trend downward, and a vaccine for children 6-11 has just been authorized. But we're definitely not out of the woods yet.

While we don't mean to downplay the terrible impact of COVID on our world, some of us recently wondered what it might look like to experience a different kind of "epidemic" --one that gives life instead of taking it, and leaves us with a positive experience – not a positive test result!

Our stewardship theme for 2021 is "**The Gratitude Epidemic.**" One of the values that we share as people of God is gratitude for all that God has given us, as well as the call to share our blessings freely with others. This means that gratitude is contagious – and it only takes one person to spread it! Showing gratitude to others changes the way we see the world, but it also spreads to others and transforms them as well.

Through the month of November, you'll be invited to participate in some activities to help us all become carriers of this "gratitude epidemic."

- "**Contact tracing.**" Each day, take a moment to think of three people that have been a blessing to you recently, as well as three ways that you could bless others in the week ahead. Make a note of that as part of your "contact tracing report." (We're including a resource to help you do that, but feel free to use a journal, social media, or some other tool if you prefer.)
- Worship will also include **stewardship moments** that give us an opportunity to practice and participate. Instead of a rapid test, take a "rapid blessed" by filling out the slip in your bulletin to share the results of your contact tracing. If you're joining us for worship online, you can share that information in the comments. We'll hear impact studies on how this "gratitude epidemic" spreads from your church family to the rest of the world. *(continued on reverse)*

- Earlier this fall we introduced “**Thank You**” lawn signs to help us say “thank you” publicly to those in the community who have worked hard to get us through the COVID pandemic. The signs are now available in the narthex for anyone who would like them. Feel free to fill them out and post them at church or at your home.

And of course, you can also be part of this “gratitude epidemic” by supporting organizations and causes that act based on gratitude. We've all heard of super-spreader events that amplify and magnify the impact of one carrier. Supporting organizations like St. Peter's with your finances is one key way to magnify your impact on your community and your world. Your offering empowers the church to share the gospel and change lives right here in central New York and around the globe. This is a super-spreader event that you might actually want to be part of!

As you consider your household budget for 2022, we invite you to consider making a plan for how you will support St. Peter's. Enclosed you will find a **giving card** to assist you in this task, should you choose to do so. As the cost of doing ministry increases in our world, we hope you will prayerfully consider growing by increasing your estimate – even by only a small amount. (Percentage charts are available on request.) Please remember that if life throws you a curve ball, you can always revise your giving plan at any time by contacting our financial secretary Paula Bishop.

We understand that the patterns of your life may be different than they were pre-pandemic, so we invite you to return your giving card (minus the stub for your records) in **whatever way makes the most sense to you**. You can use the enclosed envelope to return it securely to Paula through the mail. You may drop it off in Paula's mailbox at church if you wish, using the enclosed envelope to ensure privacy. You can also email the information to Paula directly at pbishop2344@icloud.com if that is more convenient for you. You can even visit our website at stpetersverona.org, click on “Giving” in the top menu and then on “Stewardship” to fill out your card electronically. We invite you to complete this process by the end of November as part of your (and our) planning for 2022.

Thank you for all that you share with St. Peter's – and contributing to the “community spread” of gratitude, hope, life, and love!

Together in Christ,

Pastor Katie Yahns