



# St. Peter's Currents

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## The Veterans Day Concert *Honoring Our Brave Men and Women in the Armed Forces*

On Nov. 11 each year, we honor those who have served and continue to serve our country in the armed forces. This year, the students of Faithful Shepherd recognize these men and women with an annual tradition — the Veterans Day Concert.

In its fourth year, the Veterans Day Concert gives particular recognition to the veterans of the tri-parishes. The event begins with a slide show, which displays pictures of the veterans. The sixth through eighth-grade students in the band and choir organize a repertoire of patriotic music, including "God Bless America." Each branch of the military is recognized while their respective anthems are played, and art projects made by the students decorate the gym. The students also do a dramatic reading from *America's White Table*, which explains the tradition of setting a table that remains unoccupied in remembrance of the fallen.

"The concert was a brainstorm between the former band teacher and myself about three years ago," says Maureen Odegard, the assistant principal. "We hope to raise student awareness of what a veteran is and



why it is important to honor and celebrate them. It has evolved in that we have a much higher parent and veteran attendance, and each year we add details."

Since the beginning, the Veterans Day Concert has seen a steady increase in attendance by veterans and their families. In 2010, approximately 10 veterans attended while in 2013 there were at least 60. One veteran, whose son attends Faithful Shepherd, believes this initiative of the school is extremely important.

*continued on page 2*

# *The Veterans Day Concert* continued from front cover



“A ‘thank you’ to veterans is always appreciated, especially to those that gave their life or limb,” says Todd Corbo, a member of the U.S. Army Reserve from 1985 to 2013. “It’s a good reminder that freedom is not free.”

Todd explains that in the past, such appreciation has not been offered to veterans, particularly those who served in the Vietnam War and the Cold War — including veterans with whom Todd has served. Throughout his service, Todd spent time in Germany, Panama and Cuba. After completing ROTC in 1987, he was commissioned as an Army engineer, and following his completion of law school, Todd served as a JAG officer until his retirement as a lieutenant colonel in August of 2013.

“I joined the Army just as the country was going through a great ‘reconciliation’ with its veterans,” says Todd. “I am proud to have started my career with these soldiers. I hope I held my end of the bargain as they did, keeping the faith with the citizens of this country and to have laid the foundation for the next generation to continue these grand traditions.”

The Veterans Day Concert is an opportunity to foster in our children such a foundation of pride in our veterans.

“It’s important that kids understand that there is an implicit agreement between citizens and those in the armed forces in a democracy — that citizens will support them,” says Todd. “This next generation needs to know this for this country to continue to be the beacon of hope and freedom to its own people and to those abroad. It is never too early to teach this.”

In light of student participation and enthusiasm about the concert, it seems that this generation is receiving an understanding of the support that is due our veterans. One student shares why the concert means so much to her.

“This concert is special to me because my father is a retired naval commander and my grandfather, Carl Sievers, a St. Peter’s parishioner, played the saxophone in the 451st Army Band,” says Caroline Johnson, an eighth-grader who will play the clarinet at the concert. “When my grandpa was alive, he came to the concert, and I was able to sing a solo for him. I do it to honor those who served in the military. I’m close to a few of the veterans, so this is very important for me.”

On Nov. 11 at 8:30 a.m. in the Faithful Shepherd Auditorium, please join the veterans and their families as we honor their service to keep our country free. For more information about the concert, please contact Shawnessy Schwartz at [sschwartz@fscsmn.org](mailto:sschwartz@fscsmn.org).

## A Month Filled with Gratitude

Dear Parishioners,

The month of November naturally brings to mind thoughts of thanksgiving. Not just thoughts about Thanksgiving Day — although I look towards it with happy anticipation — but with thoughts filled with the many reasons we should be thankful.

We begin the month with a Holy Day of Obligation, the Solemnity of All Saints. This feast has been celebrated on November 1 since 835. It is a stewardship feast in many ways, instituted to honor all saints, known and unknown. The communion of saints — the sharing of spiritual goods by those in heaven with us who are still in our pilgrimage — is a great cause for thanksgiving. We read about the lives of the saints so that we can be encouraged and inspired by their examples. We are also strengthened by their fellowship in the Body of Christ, and their prayers aid us.

We follow All Saints Day with All Souls Day on November 2 so we can pray for the souls of all people who have died—including those others in our lives who have been “saints” in another sense. It may have been a mother or father, sister or brother, son or daughter, next-door neighbor, good friend, grandparent, uncle or aunt, cousin, teacher, or student. The list is endless. We have been blessed in our lives with people who have shown us what it means to be a good Christian, what it means to be a good steward. During this month of November, we need to thank God for those people in our lives. In fact, we need to thank God period, which is another important element of this month.

Toward the end of the month we celebrate what is mainly a secular holiday, Thanksgiving, but this national holiday is also grounded in our Christian stewardship



tradition. This year is the 150th anniversary of the first official Thanksgiving in the U.S., as proclaimed by President Abraham Lincoln in 1863, during the horrors of the Civil War. In the beginning of that proclamation, President Lincoln stated, “The year that is drawing towards its close, has been filled with the blessings of fruitful fields and healthful skies. To these bounties, which are so constantly enjoyed that we are prone to forget the source from which they come, others have been added, which are of so extraordinary a nature, that they cannot fail to penetrate and soften even the heart which is habitually insensible to the ever watchful providence of Al-

mighty God.” Lincoln takes great care to recognize God’s presence in all of the “thanks.”

Couldn’t we say those words of Lincoln about our lives, about the life of our parish this year? In fact, we could say it every month. Stewardship is the appreciation of our many, many blessings, both personally and as a faith family.

From the beginning of the month when we thank God for the example of the saints and for the example of the saints in our lives, to the end of the month when we thank God for basically everything we have and everything we are, November is a time to remember and to approach the Lord with a grateful heart. That is what stewardship really is — approaching God; approaching each day; approaching all those with whom we come in contact — with hearts filled with gratitude and love.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Fr. Joseph Gallatin  
Pastor

*November is a time to remember and to approach the Lord with a grateful heart. That is what stewardship really is — approaching God; approaching each day; approaching all those with whom we come in contact — with hearts filled with gratitude and love.*

## Using Talents to Enhance the Church Environment



The members of the Environment Team are in charge of our church decor. However, their purpose is not to simply decorate the church. Instead, they work to enhance the liturgical seasons through physical changes to the environment in our church.

“We try to keep it within liturgical boundaries,” says Mike Berndt, head of the Environment Team. “We try to keep it correct with whatever changes there are.”

Mike and the other members of the Environment Team are responsible for maintaining all of the flowers, plants and other decorations in the church. This is something they do throughout the year, but they are especially active during certain seasons in the liturgical calendar, such as Advent and Lent, and for major feasts like Christmas and Easter.

For the upcoming seasons of Advent and Christmas, the team will make meaningful changes to the decor within the church to mirror the focus of each season. The Advent decorations include the Advent wreath and three unlit artificial pine trees. All other plants will be taken out for this season. Then for Christmas, the team will put lighting on all of the trees, hang different colored banners, set up the Nativity scene in front of the altar and decorate the church, inside and out, with poinsettias and more.

“Advent is a solemn time,” Mike says. “It’s a time of preparation for the Christmas season. Then on Christmas Eve, you switch into a time of celebration. So it goes from dark and quiet to well-lit with different kinds of candles and things like that.”

These transitions to the visual components of the church serve to highlight and enhance the changes in the liturgical season. They remind the congregation to pay attention to the differences in the Mass, like the readings.

“It signals to the congregation a time of change, especially when you go from Ordinary Time to Advent,”

*“I notice every little thing in the church during liturgical seasons. It’s made me much more aware of what goes on and what all goes in to keep the church looking good week and from season to season.” — Mike Berndt*

# Enhance the Liturgy Environment Team

Mike says. “They understand what Advent and Christmas is from their perspective, but it gives them a liturgical perspective of what those liturgical seasons mean. And that’s also true of Lent and Easter.”

Mike has been a member of the Environment Team for about 24 years, taking over leadership of the ministry from former leader Wynona Gaworski some years ago.

“Wynona was a very gifted coordinator and very committed to Church of St. Peter,” Mike says. “When she decided to retire from the environment committee, she inspired me to take over and keep the spirit of the committee moving forward. I thank her for her talents and inspiration!”

Mike’s involvement in the ministry has blessed him in many ways, such as deepening his faith and his experience of the Mass.

“It really enhances it, because I’m a part of it and I notice every little thing in the church, from Sunday Mass to the change in liturgical seasons,” he says. “It’s made me much more aware of my church surroundings and what goes on and what all goes in to keeping that place maintained from week to week and from season to season.”

From a stewardship perspective, Mike shares his gifts of leadership and organization with the Environment Team. He readily admits his talents do not lie in the area of decorating – he leaves that up to the individuals who do handle the artistic side of this ministry. However, Mike plays a meaningful and important role in this ministry nonetheless, pointing to the importance of sharing one’s talents no matter their nature.

For more information on the Environment Team, call Mike Berndt at 651-454-4884.

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# Meet the Miller Family

As parents, teaching our children the Catholic faith is a legacy that is passed down through the generations. Parents teach the faith to their children who, in turn, pass it along once they become parents. Such is the case with parishioners Lance and Della Miller, who have very traditional ideas about faith, family and their Catholic identity. And for Lance and Della, a big part of living, learning and passing on that faith is rooted in family.

Although both Della and Lance didn't come from particularly large families — there were six in Della's family and four in Lance's — the presence of extended family meant that there was always something going on and that there were large numbers not only for holidays, but also for Sunday dinners. And in both families, faith was important. Della's parents were strong, traditional Catholics who were always involved with their parish. In fact, Della says that her father has been a lector for longer than she has been alive. Lance's upbringing, however, was a little different, in that he was raised as a Congregationalist. After mutual friends introduced him to Della, it wasn't long until both marriage and fatherhood propelled Lance down a new pathway.

"Lance converted to the Catholic faith after both of our girls were born," says Della. "At first, Lance converted for family reasons. But the more he learned about the faith, the more it became his own."

Today, Della and Lance have been married 18 years and have two beautiful daughters, Lauren, 16, and Emma, 14, both of whom went to Faithful Shepherd, but are now attending Trinity School at River Ridge. Although life can



*Lance and Della Miller with their daughters, Lauren and Emma.*

get busy between raising a family and their careers — Lance works as a financial advisor in Apple Valley and Della works as a CPA from home — the Millers make time for family prayer, Mass and, of course, those Sunday dinners.

"Sunday dinners with the extended family is a time for big discussions, which seem to always be centered on our faith," says Della. "Our girls have learned a lot about their faith not only from their parents, but from grandparents, aunts and uncles."

It has been 12 years since Della and Lance first joined the parish, and over time they have been involved individually, as a couple, and as a family in various ministries. Their daughter, Lauren, is active in the Youth Group and went on a mission trip to Missouri this past summer. Lance serves on the Pastoral Council, Della is on the Finance Council, and together they volunteer on the Stewardship Committee. As a result of their involvement, the Millers have made some special friendships here at St. Peter's. However, Della and Lance admit they did not truly feel connected to the

parish community until they made the decision to embrace stewardship and become active in ministries.

"We used to just attend Mass," says Della. "But with kids, we started getting involved in things like Sunday school and sacramental preparation. When we started meeting people, the church became more like a home. I love looking around at Mass and seeing all the friends we know there."

Finally, stewardship offers valuable lessons about faith and the importance of recognizing our individual and unique gifts, and these are lessons which Lance and Della are now passing on to their two daughters. Life is not always easy, but they believe that the Church is the rock to hold on to in an uncertain world, and that faith is a gift to be passed down to their children.

"I learned to be involved with the church from the example my parents set for me," says Della. "We are now trying to set an example for our girls. I can see them growing into people of faith, and that is a huge blessing."

*"We used to just attend Mass. But with kids, we started getting involved in things like Sunday school and sacramental preparation. When we started meeting people, the church became more like a home. I love looking around at Mass and seeing all the friends we know there."*

*— Della Miller*

# *The “Thanksgiving Spirit” Doesn’t Have to End at Thanksgiving*

The origin of the first Thanksgiving feast is a matter of some debate among historians. But since 1863, Americans have annually set aside the fourth or fifth Thursday of November to give thanks to God for a bountiful harvest. The holiday became a matter of federal law in 1941, as President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed a joint congressional resolution to observe Thanksgiving Day on the fourth Thursday of November. Even as our society has become less agrarian, families continue to gather each November to give thanks to God for each other, and for the many blessings they’ve received throughout the year.

Most people associate this “spirit of Thanksgiving” with the fall holiday and its many recognizable symbols – brisk weather, cornucopias, family gatherings and plenty of delicious food. But giving thanks to God in gratitude for the gifts we have received isn’t an attitude we should save for this annual holiday alone. When we live lives of stewardship – sharing of our time, talents and treasure in thanks to God and at the service of others – we can sustain life in the Thanksgiving spirit throughout the year.

The Church teaches that this daily response of gratitude is an important element of living the life of a Christian disciple. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states, “Indeed, in the work of salvation, Christ sets creation free from sin and death to consecrate it anew and make it return to the Father, for his glory. The thanksgiving of the members of the Body participates in that of their Head” (CCC 2637).

And how can we express this spirit of thanks? We can serve others, living the virtue of charity by reaching out to our brothers and sisters in need through acts of kindness. We can give back to God from our “first fruits,” sharing of our treasure in thanksgiving and recognition of the need to return a portion of our gifts to God. We can utilize our unique talents to make our parish and local communities better places. And, as the *Catechism* also points out, we can even express thanks through prayerfully offering up our daily activities to God: “Every event and need can become an offering of thanksgiving” (CCC 2637).

This Thanksgiving, take a moment to think of ways that you can live in the “spirit of Thanksgiving” on the fourth Thursday of November, and every other day throughout the year. Living the stewardship way of life may not always involve a precisely-carved turkey, pilgrim decorations or a family viewing of *It’s a Wonderful Life* – but it will provide lifelong fulfillment and joy rooted in an attitude of perpetual thanksgiving.



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# Church of St. Peter

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## November and December Events

**Friday, Nov. 1 to Sunday, Nov. 3**  
Confirmation Retreat, Amery, Wis.

**Friday, Nov. 1 — All Saints Mass**  
7 a.m., Historic Church  
9 a.m., Main Church  
6 p.m., Main Church

**Saturday, Nov. 2 — All Souls Mass**  
10 a.m., Main Church  
Reception to follow

**Saturday, Nov. 2**  
Peruvian Fundraiser, 6 p.m.

**Monday, Nov. 4**  
Appalachian Packing, 9:30 a.m.

**Saturday, Nov. 9**  
Human Trafficking Presentation, 10 a.m.

**Saturday, Nov. 16, and Sunday, Nov. 17**  
Blest Art Olive Wood Sale

**Friday, Nov. 22**  
Youth Group Lock-In

**Saturday, Nov. 23**  
First Reconciliation Service, 1 p.m.

**Saturday, Dec. 7**  
ACCW Women of Faith, 8:30 a.m.

**Sunday, Dec. 8**  
Giving Tree Sorting and Lunch, noon

**Wednesday, Dec. 11**  
“Keeping Your Kids Catholic”  
— David Rinaldi, 6:30 p.m.

**Sunday, Dec. 15**  
St. Paul Symphony Concert, 3 p.m.  
Youth Group Christmas Party, 6 p.m.

**Tuesday, Dec. 17**  
Advent Parish Penance Day, 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.

**Saturday, Dec. 21 and Sunday, Dec. 22**  
Workcamp Christmas Bake Sale, after all  
Masses

**Sunday, Dec. 22**  
Children’s Christmas Pageant, 10 a.m.

**Christmas Eve — Tuesday, Dec. 24**  
4 p.m., Main Church  
10 p.m., Main Church (Christmas Carols begin  
at 9:30)

**Christmas Day — Wednesday, Dec. 25**  
9 a.m., Main Church  
11 a.m., Main Church

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**Weekend Mass:** Saturday, 5:00 p.m. Vigil | Sunday, 9:00 & 11:00 a.m.

**Daily Mass:** Monday - Friday, 9:00 a.m.

**Confession:** Saturdays, 4:00 - 4:45 p.m.; Thursdays, 5:30 - 6:30 p.m. and by appointment