



# KOINONIA



January-February 2016

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LUTHERAN PARISH OF NORTHERN DUTCHESS

PASTOR WILLIAM STARKWEATHER

845-853-0640

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**“The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can anyone do to me?”**

RECENTLY, I WAS BROWSING THROUGH news stories and saw one that caught my eye. A certain man, who has been called “the most hated man in America” because he had raised the cost of a drug his pharmaceutical company produced by an exorbitant amount, was arrested under suspicion of fraud. And because the I was seeing this news on Facebook, it came along with all sorts of commentary: a satire piece about his lawyer raising the cost of legal counsel according to the amount of the prescription, gleeful comments about this man “getting what he deserved,” and more than a few with just one word: “karma.”

Karma is an interesting thing. It’s a concept that comes from Hindu and Buddhist belief, but it’s found its way into common parlance to describe a situation where somebody gets what is coming to them - usually a person we find distasteful having some misfortune visited upon them. And whenever we talk about karma, it tends to come with a sense of satisfaction. We like to see things work out the way we think they should.

But I’ve noticed something else recently. It’s only karma when it happens to somebody else. When it is my misfortune, or that of somebody close to me, we lament the unfairness of this life. It’s not fun to see bad things happen to good people, particularly good people we care for. I’ve been thinking about these things a fair bit lately. It seems like life has been unfair to a lot of good people in the last few months, and I don’t know about you, but I’ve struggled to find a satisfying answer for why. I have a hard time with the old cliché that “everything happens for a reason,” because so much of the tragedy I’ve seen in our world and in the lives of those I know and love seems so very senseless. Likewise, while I firmly believe that God is in control, sometimes I struggle to understand why God would allow these things, or for that matter, cause them.

Now, I’ll be the first to admit that I haven’t found an answer that really satisfies me, but I can say that two things are true. Sometimes people get what they deserve. And sometimes life is wildly unfair. Sometimes people get what they deserve. That’s not necessarily about karma so much as it is about sin. The witness of scripture tells us that sin is separation - from God, from one another, even within ourselves. It is a pervasive brokenness, and we are all affected by it. And as Paul reminds us, “the wages of sin is death.” When I look at the news, I see the effects of sin all around - violence, fear, suffering, injustice. Separation. And as harsh as it sounds, as much as I don’t like to admit it, I can see the brokenness reflected in my own life and the lives of those around me. Sometimes we get what we deserve.

And sometimes life is wildly unfair. It seems at best like a cop out (and at worst incredibly cold and uncaring) to simply write off all our sufferings and sorrows to sin. Taken to one extreme, it makes God sound vengeful, and taken to the other, it makes our loved ones sound unsavory. But that’s not what I mean. Rather, it is to say that in a broken world, sometimes bad things do happen to good people, and there is no good reason. While we might assign blame or lash out at those whom we determine to be at fault, the truth is there is no one to blame - just a broken and chaotic world. Sometimes life is wildly unfair.

But lest I come across sounding hopeless, let me assure you that there is good news: Sometimes life is wildly unfair. Because in spite of the separation of sin, we have a God who took on flesh and lived among us. In spite of the brokenness of sin, we have a God who died and rose in order to forgive our sin, repair that which is broken, and reconcile us to God and one another. Even though we have a staggering capacity to be unfaithful, God has an even more staggering capacity to remain faithful. You see, that thing Paul said about “the wages of sin” doesn’t stop at death. The full sentence reads: “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” And because God is faithful, then we can say with confidence along with the writer to the Hebrews, “The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can anyone do to me?”

No matter what happens, brothers and sisters - on good days and bad days, in joy and in pain, God is with us. When we trust in God’s provision, God is with us. When we doubt whether God hears our prayers, God is with us. That is the promise of Emmanuel (which means “God with us”) - that even though we live in a broken and chaotic world, sometimes life is wildly unfair and we are not left with what we deserve, but a God who promises so much more.

Grace and Peace  
Pastor Will Starkweather

## LUTHERAN PARISH OF NORTHERN DUTCHESS – PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

Our Parish Council has spent most of its time this past year developing through discussion and prayer a Parish Mission Statement and a Parish Vision Statement. They are as follows:

### **Lutheran Parish of Northern Dutchess Mission**

*United by the Gospel of Jesus Christ, we are three congregations who together promote abundant life for all people through the collective use of our time, talents, and treasures.*

### **Lutheran Parish of Northern Dutchess Vision**

*We envision a world in which all people have abundant life.  
We believe abundant life is a process advanced by broadening our faith,  
engaging with others through service, and sharing the Good News.*

Using both of these statements as guides, we have begun to develop a multi-year strategic plan. This strategic plan will help us as a Parish implement our Mission and Vision over the next one, two and three years. So far, we have broken the strategic plan into three main categories:

***Broadening our Faith:*** This will include developing or expanding ideas and programs that will we help each of us strengthen our own faith.

***Engaging through Service:*** This will include examining our existing community outreach programs, developing new programs, working more closely with other groups and programs that currently utilize our buildings, and exploring other needs in our community.

***Sharing the Good News:*** This will involve evaluating, expanding, and developing programs that will share our good news with members of our Parish community and the community outside of our Parish. Not only sharing the good news of Jesus Christ, but the good news of the Lutheran Parish of Northern Dutchess as well.

Three task force groups relating to the three categories above have been formed from members of our four councils to work on developing the strategic plan. **But, more help is needed!** We are asking anyone involved with our Parish who is interested in working with one of the three task force groups to contact me, Pastor Will or your Congregation Council President to volunteer.

We are entering the seventh year of being the Lutheran Parish of Northern Dutchess. We have come a long way in the past six years, but have a lot more to do. It is difficult to explain what it is we have ... three parts... but at the same time one, just as it is difficult to explain the Holy Trinity. I believe we all need to think of ourselves as belonging to the Lutheran Parish of Northern Dutchess, but regularly worshipping at Memorial, St. Paul's or Third. In unity we will be able to accomplish a lot! Happy New Year!

God's Peace to all of you,  
Carl Dowden, Parish Council President

### **Joint Service & Christian Ed. Epiphany Program**

**January 3 10:00 a.m.**

at

**St. Paul's in Red Hook**

***Fellowship immediately following the service***

**Come out and support the children, youth, and teachers of our Parish!**

***No services at Memorial or Third***

## Service Opportunities

### Crafty Christians

**Wednesday**

**10:00a.m. - Noon**

at

**Third in Rhinebeck**

**Upper Meeting Room**

*Contact Bonnie Revero*

*518-697-7608*

No meeting February 10

### Children's Community

**Clothes Closet**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Friday**

**January 15 & February 19**

**9:30a.m – 1:00p.m.**

at

**Third Rhinebeck**

### MEETINGS

Third W&M	January 5 & February 2 @ 4:00p.m.
Third Council	January 12 @ 7:00p.m.
Parish Council	February 16 @ 6:00p.m.
Joint Session of Councils	February 16 @ 7:00p.m.
Congregational Councils	February 16 following joint session
Memorial Council	January 31 & February 28 following service

### Annual Reports

#### St. Paul's

Due	January 10
Available	January 17

#### Third

Due	January 17
Available	January 24

#### Council Installation

Memorial	January 24
St. Paul's	January 31
Third	February 7

### Annual Congregational Meetings

Agendas include vote on updated Parish Covenant

*Copies to be mailed to voting members*

**Memorial  
January 17**

immediately following the worship service

**St. Paul's  
January 24**

**Potluck lunch**

immediately following the worship service

**Third  
January 31**

**Brunch**

immediately following the worship service



### Lenten Services and Events

#### **Shrove Tuesday Pancake & Sausage Supper**

Feb. 9 at 6:00 p.m. @ Memorial

#### **Ash Wednesday Soup & Sandwich Supper**

Feb. 10 at 6:00 p.m. @ Third

#### **Ash Wednesday Joint Services @ Third**

10:00 a.m.

7:30 p.m.

*Members of Third — contact Neal and Elaine Silvernail  
if you need a ride. 876-6769*

#### **Wednesday Evening Services**

**in Rhinebeck and Red Hook**

*details to be announced*

### SPECIAL GUEST PREACHER — FEB. 26

**The Rev. Dr. Jack Horner**, Assistant to the Bishop for Evangelical Mission will preach at each worship service.

## Faith Building Opportunities

<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Christian Ed &amp; Confirmation</u></b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Wednesday</b>  <b>6:30 – 7:30 pm</b>  at  <b>St. Paul's in Red Hook</b>  <i>Parish Hall</i>  <i>Contact Brad Patton</i>  889-4437</p> <p style="text-align: center;">No classes January 6 &amp; February 10</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Bible Study</u></b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Wednesday</b>    <b>Noon</b>  at  <b>Third Rhinebeck</b>  <i>Upper meeting room</i>  Based on Sunday Lessons  No Study February 10 &amp; 24</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Bible Study</u></b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Thursday</b>    <b>6:30 pm</b>  at  <b>St. Paul's in Red Hook</b>  <i>Kort Room</i>  Topical Studies</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Bible-in-a-Year</u></b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Saturday</b>    <b>9:30 am</b>  at  <b>Memorial in Rock City</b>  <i>Parish Hall</i>  No Study January 2</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Men's Breakfast</u></b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Saturday</b>                      <b>8:00a.m.</b>  <b>Memorial in Rock City</b>  <i>Breakfast and a message by Pastor Will</i>  No meeting January 2</p>	

### **DID YOU KNOW: SYMBOLS IN THE WORSHIP SPACE**

Recently, I wrote an article about the Sign of the Cross, and what it symbolizes to make this sign when we pray. Christian worship is filled with rich symbolism, intended to help connect our actions with the traditions of our ancestors in the faith. Symbolism infuses everything we do, and Lutheran worship spaces are typically designed with careful consideration of these things. So if you've ever wondered about the items we have present in our sanctuaries, you're in luck, because in this edition of *Did You Know: Liturgy*, we're focusing on Symbols in the Worship Space.

Probably the first symbol that comes to mind in our worship space is the cross. As Lutheran Christians, the cross has central place in our theology and in our ritual. The presence of the cross reminds us of the innocent death of Jesus in our place, bearing the sin of the whole world upon the cross. Many of the crosses we use do not include the corpus (the body of Christ), and by the emptiness of the cross, we are reminded that Jesus did not remain dead, but rose again on Easter as an assurance that because he lives, we shall live too.

Lutheran worship confesses that Christ comes to us in both Word and Sacrament, and the symbols in our wor-

ship space remind of this fact. The presence of the pulpit and lectern, the Bible, lectionary book, and altar book are all reminders of the gift of the Living Word of God. As Christ comes to us in the Word, written in the scriptures and proclaimed in hymns and preaching, we are reminded that the Word of God comes to us first and foremost in the “Word made Flesh” - Jesus Christ incarnate.

The font and table have their own symbolism as well. We’ve talked before about the abiding importance of our Baptismal claim and call, and the font is a physical reminder of the promises that God makes to us and that we make to God in our baptisms. In addition, many fonts have eight sides, or a bowl suspended on eight poles, as a reminder that in the flood, God saved eight people (Noah, his wife, their three sons and their wives) through the ark. Luther draws a connection between the great flood and the cleansing of our baptisms.

The altar, or table, has a few meanings connected with it. When we refer to an altar, we call to mind the sacrifices of the first covenant in the Hebrew Scriptures, and we remember Jesus’ death on the cross as the greatest and final sacrifice for sin. When we refer to a table, we tend to shift our focus to the Eucharistic meal which Jesus shared with his disciples on that final night, and which he shares with us each time we come together, giving the gift of his Body and Blood to sustain us. While it was once common practice to have the altar against the wall at the front of the sanctuary, it has become more common to move the table out where communicants may gather around it, having been invited to their own seat at the Table of the Lord.

Our worship space also includes paraments, candles, and flowers. While these certainly serve to beautify our space, these are more than simply pretty decorations. Altar paraments are made in colors that reflect the liturgical season, and may also bear symbols of Christ, the Holy Spirit, or the Church. The candles represent the light of Christ in our presence, and the eternal light is kept burning at all times as a reminder that Jesus’ presence never departs from us, but a light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not overcome it. The flowers can be seen to represent growth, life, and beauty that comes from a life rooted in Christ, and their pleasant smell can call to mind the prayers we lift up to God, which the psalmist says are a “pleasing odor” like incense.

While all of these symbols can be connected with ancient traditions, it is also the task of individual congregations to continue to make meaning, discovering how these symbols enrich our lives and our worship, and knowing what their importance is to us beyond being “the way it’s always been.” What meaning do you attach with these things? Are there other symbols we’ve skipped over? Let me know!

Grace and Peace, Pastor Will Starkweather

### **NEWS FROM ST. PAUL’S LUTHERAN CHURCH**

Greetings:

As we approach the end of an eventful year, I again thank God for the many faithful, dedicated parishioners who again stepped up to make this past year so successful.

That said I would like to direct our focus on the year ahead. In addition to the many efforts to organize and coordinate our worship schedules and learning opportunities, we will be identifying our next major project and funding sources in our continuing efforts to restore and maintain our physical structures. We will, I am sure, also host several more dinners and fellowship opportunities for the Parrish. Keep in mind this is the short to-do list.

This brings me to the appeal. As members of the Body of Christ we all have a roll to play. The members that year in and year out offer up their God given gifts to the benefit of us all, are getting a little worn out. I would urge everyone to consider how you might contribute in some way as we endeavor to recognize and do Gods will. There are many opportunities that will mesh well with whatever God given gifts you wish to share.

Thank you all for your consideration and service.  
Stephen Bucala



*Did you remember the church in your Will?*

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO THESE MEMBERS OF ST. PAUL'S**

<b>January</b>					
1	Bob Unson	10 Vineyard Court	Tivoli	NY 12583	
5	Uri Marcos	7460 South Broadway	Red Hook	NY 12571	child
5	Edra Marcos	7460 South Broadway	Red Hook	NY 12571	child
5	Debra Kazantzis	10 Poplar Court	Kingston	NY 12401	
7	Nabil Ayoub	7460 S. Broadway	Red Hook	NY 12571	
8	Laura Donegan	44 Trestle Lane	Clinton Corners	NY 12514	
12	Rev. Dennis O'Rourke	16 Rondout Harbor	Port Ewen	NY 12466	
13	Charlie Lueck	1 Locust Tree Drive	Red Hook	NY 12571	child
14	Ryan Wright Starkweather	35 Livingston Street	Rhinebeck	NY 12572	
15	Glen Murray	39 Hampton Court	Clinton Corners	NY 12514	
21	Emma Walker	45 Benner Road	Red Hook	NY 12571	
23	Rob Frey	44 Jefferson Road	Red Hook	NY 12571	
24	Steve Semke	7 Winding Brook Lane	Rhinebeck	NY 12572	
<b>February</b>					
1	Christine Murray	39 Hampton Court	Clinton Corners	NY 12514	
9	Alexandra Piaget	22 Hoffman Woods Road	Red Hook	NY 12571	child
10	Ian Bucala	31 Grandmour Drive	Red Hook	NY 12571	
12	Marshall McConville	789 Spring Lake Road	Red Hook	NY 12571	
18	Don Campbell	22 Country Club Drive	Red Hook	NY 12571	
20	Pat Holden	7460 S. Broadway	Red Hook	NY 12571	
20	Michael Edward Semke	7 Winding Brook Lane	Rhinebeck	NY 12572	child
20	Madysen Semke	7 Winding Brook Lane	Rhinebeck	NY 12572	child
25	Mary Lou Williams	53 Sunrise Drive	Red Hook	NY 12571	
25	Ruth Queen	23 Cambridge Drive	Red Hook	NY 12571	
26	Gladys Putnam	3 Sunset Terrace	Red Hook	NY 12571	

**NOTES FROM THIRD**

**AUTOMATED EXTERNAL DEFIBRILLATOR (AED) AT THIRD LUTHERAN**

In the spring of 2015 Third Lutheran applied to the Cardiovascular Fund of Dutchess County of the Community Foundations of the Hudson Valley for a grant to fund the purchase of an AED device and to train members of our church community in CPR and the use of the AED.

A generous grant for this purpose was awarded to Third Lutheran in August. Dr. John Sabia, Medical Director of Emergency Services at Northern Dutchess Hospital, agreed to be the church's emergency health care provider. This required collaborative agreement and other essential AED program documents were filed with the NY State Department of Health, Bureau of Emergency Medical Services.

An AED unit with both adult and pediatric capability was then purchased. In late October, 17 members of our church community completed the American Heart Association CPR/AED course as taught by the

training coordinator at Northern Dutchess Paramedics. The AED was installed in November and dedicated by Pastor Will. This new device is mounted adjacent to the stairwell in the hallway between the church sanctuary and the church office.

Third Lutheran is honored and blessed to have been granted the funds to establish this potentially lifesaving program.

Carole Hack

### **THOUGHTS FROM THE PRESIDENT @ THIRD**

A blessed New Year to all. This is the second installment on Stewardship. As before: **Please don't stop reading now!** This note is not about finances, the three T's, or my least favorite – a push for more money.

In the last installment we were asked to consider whether we were good stewards of our faith and encouraged to increase our commitment to Sunday worship attendance. We come together in Christian fellowship to worship, hear the Word, give thanks, and be refreshed by the Body and Blood of Christ. The hymns we sing together as one body re-enforce the Word, bring solace, and lift our spirits. You are missed whenever your pew is vacant and your voice is absent. By now hopefully we have all filled in our goals for increased attendance at worship services and number of invitations extended to worship and events. Remember to place this sheet before Easter in your box of envelopes as a reminder of your personal commitment.

Today we are once again asked to consider the question: *Are we good stewards of our faith?* As noted last time, the concept of stewardship seems relatively simple:

***Care for that which has been entrusted to us.***

If we take that to the next level:

***Seek to make that which has been entrusted to us better.***

There are several opportunities available for faith building throughout the Parish. The Wednesday noontime Bible study focuses on the current week's lessons, Thursday evening offers a topical Bible study, and the Bible-in-a-year study group meets on Saturday mornings. Christian Ed meets on Wednesday evenings. See the box dedicated to these opportunities for more information. Consider participating in one of these opportunities to strengthen your faith.

God Bless,

*Monica C. Gabryszewski*

Third Council President 914-475-6613 gabrymc@frontiernet.net





## CHILDREN'S CLOTHES CLOSET AT THIRD NOW HAS WINTER COATS

These coats are available for anyone in need of a child's coat so please pass this information on to others. We expect to have more coats donated in January. We remain in short supply of boys clothing sizes 24 months through size 12. All donations would be gladly accepted

The Closet is open on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday of each month 9:30am – 1:00pm. Appointments for other days & times are available by calling Carol 845-889-4168 or Bonnie 518-697-7608 or C 845-337-1590.

### ---- HELP IN SHARING GOD'S LOVE IS NEEDED ----

We would like to have the closet open twice a month, even better, every Friday. In order to do this we need more volunteers for One Friday a month from 9:15am – 1:15pm. It takes only those few extra minutes to open & close each time. —**The rewards are great !!!!** If enough people sign up perhaps you'd only be on once a month or even better once every other month.

We invite all Parish members to consider joining this mission with an opportunity to share God's Love. If you would like to give it a try please contact Carol Cronk 845-889-4168.

## MINISTRY HIGHLIGHT - STRATEGIC PLANNING

For the past several months, the Parish Council, working with direction from the Congregational Councils, has been working to develop our Parish Identity through a concrete mission and vision. In case you haven't seen them yet, I'd like to share those statements now:

The Mission of the Lutheran Parish of Northern Dutchess is: *United by the Gospel of Jesus Christ, we are three congregations who together promote abundant life for all people through the collective use of our time, talents, and treasures.*

The Vision of the Lutheran Parish of Northern Dutchess is: *We envision a world in which all people have abundant life. We believe abundant life is a process advanced by broadening our faith, engaging with others through service, and sharing the Good News.*



Photo courtesy of Neal Silvernail.

These are important statements, and I am thankful for the good work of our councils. At their heart is a promise — that the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ opens the way not just for eternal life when we die, but also for abundant life here and now. I encourage you to get to know these statements. It's important to know who we are and what we're about. But there is another step as well - because it's one thing to have a vision, and another thing entirely to live into it.

So how do we get there? Currently, our councils are working to develop a strategic plan, identifying specific objectives for our life together for the next three years. This plan is divided into three parts: 1) *Broadening Our Faith*; 2) *Engaging Through Service*; and 3) *Sharing the Good News*. These areas and activities have been identified by our councils as important parts of what it means to have abundant life. Furthermore, they have been identified by our councils as activities that we share in common as a Parish - activities that are not designated to our individual congregations, but the work of the Church Universal, and as such, areas where we can and ought come together to provide a common witness to the Lutheran Christian way in our communities. Abundant Life, like our baptism, is both our claim and our calling, and as such, we have a brilliant opportunity in front of us to come together, providing a witness to what Abundant Life looks like, even as we make this promise of God available to those we serve.



In the coming months, we're going to be continuing that work. I'm going to be talking more about these three areas of *Broadening Our Faith*, *Engaging Through Service*, and *Sharing the Good News*, discussing what these might look like in our life together. And I'd like you to be part of the conversation. We'll be organizing cottage meetings around these topics, and looking for your input on how you would like to see this Parish and its members live into the claim and call of Abundant Life. Where is God calling you? What gifts has God given you for the building up of God's kingdom right here in Northern Dutchess?

I'm thankful for you, brothers and sisters of the Lutheran Parish of Northern Dutchess, and for the ways that God is at work in, through, and among you. And, as Paul wrote to the Philippians, "I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ." May you take hold of the fullness of Christ's promise of Abundant Life, and having received, may you help others live into the promise as well.

Grace and Peace,  
Pastor Will Starkweather



*O star of wonder, star of night,  
Star with royal beauty bright,  
Westward leading, still proceeding,  
Guide us to thy perfect Light*



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**LUTHERAN PARISH OF NORTHERN DUTCHESS  
PASTOR WILLIAM STARKWEATHER**

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<http://www.lutheranparishnortherndutchess.org/>

**Dated Material Address Correction Requested  
THE SEASONS OF CHRISTMAS & EPHIPHANY & LENT**



**LUTHERAN PARISH OF  
NORTHERN DUTCHESS**

**Parish Council President: Carl Dowden**  
Memorial Lutheran, Rock City, Council  
President: Fred Novak  
**Sunday Holy Communion 8:30 am**

St. Paul's Lutheran, Red Hook, Council  
President: Steven Bucala  
**Sunday Holy Communion 11:00 am**

Third Lutheran, Rhinebeck,  
Church Council President:  
Monica C. Gabryszewski  
**Sunday Holy Communion 9:45 am**

Pastor William Starkweather  
**845-853-0640**

## SEE INSIDE FOR INFORMATION ABOUT OTHER UPCOMING EVENTS

### Lenten Services and Events

**Shrove Tuesday Pancake & Sausage Supper**  
Feb. 9 at 6:00 p.m. @ Memorial

**Ash Wednesday Soup & Sandwich Supper**  
Feb. 10 at 6:00 p.m. @ Third

**Ash Wednesday Joint Services @ Third**  
10:00 a.m.  
7:30 p.m.

*Members of Third — contact Neal and Elaine Silvernail  
if you need a ride. 876-6769*

**Wednesday Evening Services  
in Rhinebeck and Red Hook**  
*details to be announced*

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