

Proclaiming Liberty in Christ in the City

NEWSLETTER | THANKSGIVING 2022

By Permission of Your Fatherly Hand

by Rev Rob Kieselowsky
Executive Director



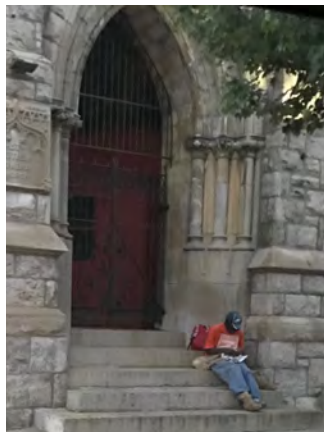
In Philadelphia, the congregation has been reciting this prayer:

“Guard and protect us from all dangers to body and soul . . . Grant that we may with faithful perseverance accept our sorrows as well as our joys, knowing that health and sickness, riches and poverty and all things come by permission of your Fatherly hand.”

These simple words often bear particular significance for our work in the city.

Sometimes in our newsletters, we have included specific hardships individuals have endured in the city, asking for prayer and support during difficult times. Telling you about them turns out to be the easy part. Much more difficult is enduring those hard times as gifts allowed by the compassionate, fatherly hand of God. As we look back over the course of this year, we realize that some difficult days have turned to joy and that Christ builds his church amid poverty as well as prosperity.

Some of you have been praying for Tim, a member of Logos Lutheran. When we first met Tim in 2017, he had been living on the streets of the neighborhood for at least a decade and would stop to rest on the steps of the church (*right*).



Vicars over the course of years have assisted Tim with government paperwork and cold-weather shelter, working to stabilize his physical wellbeing while the church fed his soul. In previous newsletters, we had mentioned the harsh reality of life on the street, including the threat of physical violence, and asked for prayer as we tried to find Tim permanent housing. Thanks be to God; those prayers have been answered!



Tim's confirmation in 2018



In June, Pastor and Vicar Warner helped Tim move into a private, second-floor room (*left*) in public housing for seniors with its own bathroom and small balcony for fresh air.



Though it may not make sense to us, our heavenly Father allowed Tim to see a great deal of sorrow,

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Two Former Vicars Ordained

Pastor Kieselowsky was thrilled to participate in ordinations this year for two of his former vicars.



In June, he traveled to Anthony Mandile's ordination in Connecticut (*above*). Anthony served as vicar in Philadelphia during the 2020-21 academic year.

Then in August, Pastor Kieselowsky flew to Minnesota to the ordination service for Christian Einertson (*right*) who served as vicar in 2018-19.

Praise be to God for calling these men to serve as pastors in Christ's church. It is exciting to see the plans God has for Anthony and Christian in their respective calls.

Please pray for them and their families, for maturity in ministry, for patience, and for protection from the assaults of the devil.

By Permission of Your Fatherly Hand

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poverty and sometimes sickness all the while working to protect and care for him in mighty ways.

Likewise, Christ has worked through sickness and sorrow in the city of Philadelphia. We are so grateful that after nearly two years of COVID restrictions and fear we are seeing more opportunities to interact with people in person. We finally see people returning to work and visitors coming to the city.

We are very grateful that Christ has called two new laborers to work in his vineyard as two former vicars were ordained into the Office of Holy Ministry.

We are grateful for our new vicar who explores Philadelphia with enthusiasm and a unique ability to connect with people.

"It is good to give thanks to the Lord, to sing praises to your name, O Most High. For you, O Lord, have made me glad by your work, at the work of your hands I sing for joy" (Psalm 92:1,4)



Welcome to Vicar Jesse Greenhagen



Jesse Greenhagen grew up in rural Minnesota, where he obtained a Lutheran education. He attended Valparaiso University where he obtained a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering. He ran cross country collegiately, and, when training back home in the summers, he would run to the top of the steps of his hometown's city hall and pause to punch his fists in the air in honor of Rocky Balboa.

His undergraduate research inspired him to pursue a master's degree in mechanical engineering at the University of Minnesota. During his studies, he began attending University Lutheran Chapel (ULC) in Minneapolis. At ULC, Jesse developed an interest in confessional Lutheran campus ministry. He served as ULC's director of outreach for two years. He continued attending ULC upon graduating from the University of Minnesota. In 2020, he would begin his studies at Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne as a seminarian.

Being new to Philadelphia, Jesse is excited to run up the real steps that Rocky climbed and get to know the rest of the city through his continued runs. He is, however, even more excited to get to know the people of Philadelphia during his time with Philadelphia Lutheran Ministries.



Vicar Greenhagen (above) and Pastor Kieselowsky gather with other Lutherans for the Pennsylvania March for Life in September.

Logos Lutheran

Since Vicar Jesse Greenhagen was installed as the year-long vicar for Philadelphia Lutheran Ministries (*below*), he has assumed the mantle of social coordinator this year, planning weekly social events at local restaurants and the vicarage apartment. These have included theological discussions, a salmon cooking challenge and a Reformation party.



We are so grateful to have a regular group of attendees at Logos who enjoy visiting with one another, sharing baked goods (*below*), and encouraging one another through the many changes they face in their academic and professional lives.

Please pray for the university professors and students (we have both in our group) as they teach and learn this semester. Also pray for those who are looking for employment as they graduate.





Philadelphia
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Proclaiming Liberty in Christ in the City

NEWSLETTER | YEAR-END 2022

City Grime and Unbelief



A few days ago, I tackled the job of cleaning a plastic cover that protects our basement window from the elements and litter. It had gotten smeared with a combination of street silt, exhaust fumes, and pollen that had created a sticky grime that I needed to scrub and scrape off. The cover that had once been clear is now cloudy, scratched and cracked.

These elements cause the same trouble for stained glass windows in the city. They get covered in silt and dirt just as every other surface until their colors are dimmed and their images are nearly unrecognizable. With every layer of grime, the original picture deteriorates and darkens.

Scrubbing these windows reminds us of how much we love freshly fallen snow: the pure whiteness covers the dirt for a little while.

Some people comment that the city is a dark place, which I suppose is true both physically and spiritually. Keeping buildings, sidewalks and windows clean is a constant battle against the onslaught of dirt and litter. The more people who live an area, the more gunk settles on facades. The same is true of sin.

Much like fighting the grime that coats city surfaces, the Church has two options when faced with the slime of sin around us. She can cover herself with smut and goo to look just like the rest of the neighborhood in an attempt to win people over. Or she can fight against the powers of sin, death and the devil to allow the Gospel to shine in all its glory.

I have been a pastor in Philadelphia for a decade now and part of that ten-year grind has been the fight against the unbelief around us. It is sometimes tempting to think that if we could just dress things up a little bit by being more winsome or more articulate people would turn to Christ.

But Luther's words in the *Small Catechism* call us back to the truth of Scripture:

I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith. In the same way He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith.

Mere water does not clean city windows; the grime is too thick. Even freshly fallen snow quickly succumbs to gray silt and slush. In the same way, mere humans do not clean up human messes; the sin is too pervasive.

We need the Holy Spirit to call people to Christ through the preaching of God's Word. Unlike Philadelphia snow, however, Christ washes away sin and cleanses repentant sinners: "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool" (Isaiah 1:18). It is a privilege to be included in this work of our Lord.

Just like the awe of the angels, shepherds and wisemen at the birth of our Lord in human flesh, we are amazed at Christ comes to us to build His church in our midst. To Him alone be the glory.

The Lord richly bless you and grant you joy as you celebrate His incarnation.

New PLM Board Member: Dr. Joshua Eggold

We are delighted to welcome Dr. Joshua Eggold to the board of Philadelphia Lutheran Ministries this year. Josh has been a part of Lutheran campus ministry at both Vanderbilt University, where he earned his bachelor's degree in molecular and cellular biology, and at Stanford University where he earned his PhD in cancer biology. Josh moved to Philadelphia last year to conduct postdoctoral research on T cell therapies for ovarian cancer at the University of Pennsylvania. He also teaches a course on cancer biology at Rutgers University–Camden.



Josh brings a thoughtful and generous perspective to the work of PLM in the city. He is a faithful member of Logos Lutheran where he serves as cantor and supports the campus ministry at local universities. In his spare time, Josh conducts kitchen research to surprise friends and colleagues with a variety of baked goods.

Partnership with Mount Calvary

For many years, Mount Calvary Lutheran Church in Lititz, PA has partnered with Philadelphia Lutheran Ministries to sponsor events and to support Christ's work financially.

This year, Mount Calvary coordinated with PLM to host a presentation by Bishop Juhana Pohjola of the Evangelical Lutheran Mission Diocese of Finland. He shared his perspective on his court trial in Finland where he has been charged with hate speech for supporting the biblical teaching on marriage and sexuality. Members of Logos Lutheran (*bottom left*) attended the presentation and met with Bishop Pohjola afterward to ask questions.

Mount Calvary also hosted a Family Retreat for regional Lutheran churches, a day for families to meet for classes on hymnody, sketching, and church history and to enjoy games and food (*bottom right*). Families from five different churches attended the retreat in August.

PLM extends its gratitude to Mount Calvary for its continued support for the work in Philadelphia



Bishop Juhana Pohjola (center) stands with Pastor Kieselowsky and parishioners who attended his presentation.



Remember PLM in Year-End Giving

Please consider a year-end gift to support the work of Philadelphia Lutheran Ministries.

Your financial support is especially critical as we come to the close of the year. Due to several factors related to our economy, PLM needs to gather additional funds this December to fulfill the goals of our budget. Every gift is helpful as we seek to finish the year on a solid financial footing.

Please consider contributing as we seek to raise \$7,500 before the end of 2022.

Your contribution allows PLM to offer social gatherings (*below*) and meals to local university students. Your gift supports Pastor's care for the least among us, especially the incarcerated and the homeless. Your generosity allows the doors of Logos' chapel to open each Sunday to welcome all who seek God's gifts.

Thank you for remembering us in your annual giving!



Scan this QR code to give online.

PLM is a 501(c)(3) non-profit Registered Service Organization (RSO) of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.



Vicar Greenhagen organized an early Thanksgiving dinner for the members of Logos Lutheran (above). They gathered at his apartment to share favorite Thanksgiving dishes and enjoy a time of fellowship.

Federal Detention Center Update

After three years of COVID limitations, the federal detention center in Philadelphia has called Pr Kieselowsky to re-establish contact between him and the incarcerated men. This means that he will be able to enter the facility again to conduct Bible studies and services during the Christmas season.

We are delighted by this news! Pastor looks forward to going back into the detention center to minister to these men during a very difficult time in their lives.

Pastor Elected to Board of Directors

The English District of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod has been a substantial supporter of the work in Philadelphia. Earlier this year, Pr Kieselowsky agreed to stand for election for the Board of Directors as a way to give back to the District in appreciation for its support.

At the English District convention, he was elected to the Board of Directors along with several other pastors and lay leaders (*below*). He looks forward to serving on the board and learning from a very talented group of individuals. He also hopes to support and encourage Bishop Jamison Hardy in the process.



Proclaiming Liberty in Christ in the City

NEWSLETTER | EASTER 2022

A Marathon, Not a Sprint

by Rev Rob Kieselowsky
Executive Director



I admit I have no experience with running marathons—I have only played sports that require short bursts of running. But we have now entered the Philadelphia marathon season when we check regularly for street closures as runners weave through the city streets and parks most weekends. People approach official marathons very differently than, say, fundraising walks that do not require much more than comfortable shoes and a positive attitude. And a marathon run looks very different from a person sprinting to flag down a city bus. Marathon runners have trained, learning to pace themselves and researching the proper shoes, clothing and hydration.

In any location, but particularly in the city, mission work seems a bit like a marathon. It takes more than comfortable shoes and a positive attitude, and it takes practice to find a reasonable pace to accomplish long-term goals.

The past two years have been challenging in Philadelphia with its widespread Covid restrictions and closures. I praise God that even in the midst of social unrest and heightened anxiety when most churches in Philadelphia were closed, we were blessed to continue engaging people with the proclamation of the Gospel and instruction in the Christian faith.

During that time, we met a recent Temple University graduate, an engineer who lives a few blocks from the church. He had been thoughtfully reading a great deal of theology, and he began attending services. On the Sunday he was confirmed, he brought his then girlfriend. She has since admitted that experiencing the liturgy for the first time was overwhelming.

But the group warmly welcomed her, and she grew interested in our fellowship around God's word and the sacraments. She's a nurse studying in graduate school to be a nurse practitioner—through a complicated schedule, she came to services over the course of the past year, has now been catechized, was confirmed in February, and was recently engaged.

It is not a quick sprint to talk through the content and implications of Lutheran teachings. It takes time.

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(above, left)
Members of
Logos Lutheran
celebrate a
confirmation in
February.

Vicar Updates



When it comes to living in the city, a useful mantra is “expect the unexpected.”

These unexpected moments include a man who walked into the church building before service and declared to Vicar Warner that we will all face the judgement of God for our grave sins against the environment based upon our carbon emissions. While that particular man did not willingly hear of Jesus’ sacrifice on our behalf, the vicar and Pastor Kieselowsky have had on many occasions the opportunity to interact with unexpected, and often distressed, people coming off the street into the church building.

The unexpected may also come in answer to prayer. As we have mentioned in previous newsletters, Pastor Kieselowsky and the vicars have been working to assist a member of Logos Lutheran, Tim, in finding housing. In January, Pastor Kieselowsky had a conversation with one of his daughters’ basketball coaches that led to a near immediate transition for Tim to semi-permanent housing —on a night right before a significant cold front. It was an answer to prayer to know that Tim was off the street during those cold nights of snow because of an unexpected conversation on the sidelines of a basketball game.

So amid all the planning that mission work requires, God still sends unexpected visitors to cross our paths to care for them in their time of need.



(above) Vicar Warner traveled to Washington, D.C., in January to walk with other Lutherans in the annual March for Life.

Social Events

One of the more enjoyable responsibilities of the vicars in Philadelphia is to organize social events throughout the year.

Over the winter months, these activities include game nights at the vicar’s apartment (*below*) where intense strategy meets good humor.



Cookie baking has also become an annual tradition for the members of Logos Lutheran.

This year, the Kieselowsky kitchen (*below*) hosted the cookie baking. Each person brought a favorite dough and style of cookie, which this year included a pizzelle maker, rolled cookies, and pressed cookies of many different flavors.



Women's Retreat: Prayer



In March, Pastor Kieselowsky's wife Allison (*below*) spoke at a women's retreat on the theme, "Lord, Teach Us to Pray." She spoke at four main sessions over the course of three days.

Allison also had opportunities to speak with and pray for many of the women individually over the course of the weekend.



The weekend retreat allowed time for about forty women (*below*) to study Christ's teaching on prayer, to pray for one another, and to enjoy leisurely activities.



Marathon, Not a Sprint (continued from page 1)

Sometimes, mission work will span years, cross continents and impact generations. A few years ago, I instructed and confirmed a young couple and baptized their sons when they first moved to Philadelphia. After years in medical school and residency, the family moved last fall to South Korea to a U.S. army base. Now, I have the honor to pray with them over Zoom and work through the catechism with their children.

Whether I am sitting in a café chatting about the Lord's Supper or listening to children recite the commandments over Zoom, I am awestruck by the magnificent work of the Lord. Praise be to our Heavenly Father that pandemic fear and closures cannot prevent Christ's continued work among us.



(above, right) Military family in South Korea prays Matins with Pr Kieselowsky via Zoom.



(left) The Kieselowsky family enjoys a walk (not a marathon) through Center City in March.



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Thank you for your continued support!

Please Pray For . . .

- **Incarcerated men** in the federal detention center in Philadelphia
- **Logos Lutheran** leaders and members
- **Vicar Jesse Greenhagen**
- **Pastor Kieselowsky** and his family