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St. Peter Herald

localmatters



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NEWS TIP? editor@apgsomn.com

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SERVING UP SERMONS



Chris Culuris joined the First Lutheran Church in St. Peter as its lead pastor at the start of the new year. He has 20 years of experience in the ministry and his wife Heather is also an ELCA pastor. (Carson Hughes/southernminn.com)

New First Lutheran Church pastor highlights inclusivity in worship

By CARSON HUGHES
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Through growing up in Colorado, studying at an Air Force base outside Oxford, England and preaching from Pennsylvania to Minnesota, Pastor

Chris Culuris has been around the world and back again. In his travels, Culuris has learned that "all people are God's children" and is bringing that message to St. Peter Lutheran Church in St. Peter as the new lead pastor.

Culuris began his leadership role at St. Peter Lutheran after the seven members of the Call Committee unanimously selected him as their first choice candidate. He comes to the church with 20 years of experience as a pastor.

The pastor said he had a love of worship from an early age. Culuris was an active member of his faith during his youth and was an altar boy starting in the fourth grade.

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Keller Williams agent Amber Seaver opens main office in St. Peter

By CARSON HUGHES
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Just in time for the spring housing market, real estate agent Amber Seaver, of Keller Williams Preferred Realty, is planting her home office in the city of St. Peter.

On Tuesday, Seaver and her team broke in their new office at 108 S. Minnesota Ave. with a ribbon cutting. The team and their supporters enjoyed coffee and donuts while being welcomed by the St. Peter Chamber of Commerce.

Over the past seven years, Seaver was based in her Le Sueur office. While she had established herself in the Le Sueur and Henderson area, Seaver said she felt a pull to the St. Peter and Mankato communities, but it was difficult to persuade customers down south to meet with a Le Sueur-based realtor.

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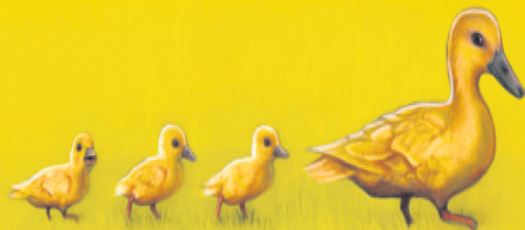
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Becca Kennedy crowned St. Patrick's Queen ahead of parade

By CARSON HUGHES
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Irish Queens of St. Patrick's Day past gathered on Thursday to crown St. Peter's 43rd St. Patrick's Day Queen: Becca Kennedy.

Kennedy was bestowed a shamrock crown, emerald cape and jeweled scepter at the annual St. Patrick's Day Queen luncheon Thursday, March 3 at Patrick's on Third. With the royal honors bequeathed upon her by the St. Peter Ambassadors, Kennedy will lead the St. Patrick's Day parade beginning at 5:30 p.m., March 17.

"It's a wonderful tradition we've been a part of for many, many years, so it's fun to celebrate with all the past queens and ambassadors and

family and friends," said Kennedy. "We're going to have fun with it"

Growing up in Cleveland, Kennedy traveled to St. Patrick's Day Celebrations across southern Minnesota in Janesville, Waseca and Le Center. But since moving to St. Peter with her husband of 25 years Josh Kennedy, the St. Peter St. Patrick's Day Celebration has been the only one for her.

While some may assume the Irish in the family comes from her husband, descended from the Kennedy clan, Becca has plenty of Irish on her side of the tree. Her maternal grandmother was 100% Irish. This makes their children, Hailey and Carson Kennedy, super-Irish, said Becca. Carson is a St. Peter High School graduate of the class of 2020

while Hailey graduated from Gustavus Adolphus College last year.

Kennedy plays an important role in the community through her career as a psychiatric nurse practitioner at the forensic mental health program at the Minnesota Regional Treatment Center in St. Peter. She also works one afternoon a week at Gustavus to help people struggling with their mental health.

"I'm very passionate about helping those with mental health struggles," said Kennedy. "I love what I do, and it's been a very rewarding career."

In her free time, Kennedy said she enjoys boating, camping, playing cards and watching the Minnesota Wild hockey team.

Kennedy is the 43rd queen in a

tradition going back to 1979. The St. Patrick's Day Celebration is rooted in the deep Irish heritage of the St. Peter area, stemming from Bishop John Ireland's settlement of southern Minnesota in the 1840s. Every year, the celebration is coordinated by the St. Peter Ambassadors.

"This luncheon is all about the queens. It's about the new queen and the past queens and is a way to pay homage to their service," said Cory Abels of the St. Peter Ambassadors.

Since its establishment, the St. Patrick's Day Celebration parade has only been canceled twice — in 2020 and 2021. While a full celebration couldn't be held, restaurants and shops that were still open kept the St. Patrick's Day Celebration



Becca Kennedy (center) received the St. Patrick's Day crown, robes and scepter from St. Peter Ambassador Co-Chairs Aaron Petersen (left) and Cory Abels (right). (Carson Hughes/southernminn.com)

going. This year marks a return to form for the celebration.

"It's been unfortunate to not have the parade the last few years, so I'm really looking forward to ev-

erybody getting back together and getting back to some normalcy," said Kennedy. "I'm really excited to celebrate this year with our entire community."



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Send press releases to Valleyeditor@apgsomn.com

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The Herald welcomes letters to the editor. Here's what you should know:

- Letters must express an opinion on a topic of local interest. Letters to announce events are appropriate for the Community page.
- Letters to the editor must be exclusive to the Herald.

• Submissions must be signed by the author and include an address and daytime number to verify authorship. That information will not be published. Anonymous letters will not be published.

- Letters should be 400 words or less.
- Writers are limited to one letter every 30 days.

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Readers are invited to submit guest columns of local interest. Submissions should be 500 words or less, be sent to the editor by mail, e-mail or hand delivered to the office, and include the writer's name, address and headshot. Columns published at the Herald's discretion. It reserves the right to edit submissions.

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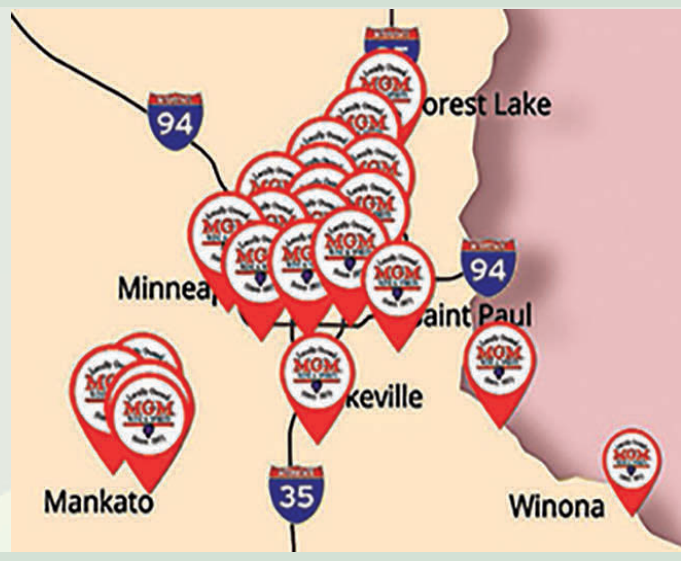
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