



# Cornerstone

## February 2020

Newsletter of St. Peter's Protestant Episcopal Church

107 State Street, Albany, New York

### 2019 Annual Reports

### ST. PETER'S CHURCH RECTOR'S REPORT

An Annual Meeting is a time set aside in our polity for many things. Much that is reported is of an ordinary kind. There is an element of house-keeping about the annual meeting, which is a good thing. Housekeeping matters. The mere fact that we can concern ourselves at St. Peter's chiefly with routine matters is a sign of health. Yet we are more than healthy in this way. Saint Peter's is doing well at nearly every level that matters in church life.

For this reason, I want to avoid much anxious talk this year about our ASA. Indeed, it is perhaps best to get this topic out of the way upfront. We all know that The Episcopal Church has been experiencing decline in both membership and attendance. We are not alone, nor is the Diocese of Albany any worse or better than the Church as a whole. Decline has little to do with Church politics. Liberal dioceses decline, conservative dioceses decline in about equal measure. Believe me, I've looked hard at the numbers.

As a numerical matter, the ASA at St. Peter's when I arrived at the end of 2004 was 126. Our number is now 116.5. Over the period 2004-2018, the Diocese had a 35% drop in attendance. If St. Peter's had followed the trend, our ASA would be 82 now and not 116.5. You can see that we are more than beating the trends. In fact, this year we actually went up from last year very slightly. This reflects that we are healthy in our context. Context truly matters. The culture is what it is. Of course, we can always do better and should do better. Yet our responsibility is to proclaim the Good News in our actual context and not a better yesteryear.

In brief, we can say that Christmas attendance reflects our actual parish membership. These are folks who would seek baptisms, weddings, confirmations, funerals, pastoral care, and would call St. Peter's home. Meanwhile, our ASA reflects routine Sunday choices made by our broader membership. If we look deeply into those numbers, the place where I see the greatest hope of movement would be among the more regular attenders attending just a little more frequently combined with new membership. However, growth is possible in every category of our parish's life.

But I do think that we ought to move away now from this kind of preoccupation. Your Vestry and you here today are doing all that you can to support regular Sunday attendance. More importantly, you are responding with your customary willingness to roll up your sleeves and serve. Our strengths are many. We have children here of all ages – a fact not overlooked by visitors. We have an active Sunday School with wonderful teachers. We have lively fellowship at coffee hour and at parish events. Indeed, I sometimes think that we may have the longest coffee hour in The Episcopal Church.

We are also engaged in real outreach to the community. The homeless shelter is in its 11th year. We support the schooling of AIDS orphans in West Buganda. We collect coats, homemade hats, and backpacks for the mission out of Grace and Holy Innocents. We gave Christmas gifts to the guests in the overflow shelter and at the Capital City Rescue Mission. Many of you serve at Equinox on Thanksgiving. We are actively engaged in spiritual programs of renewal such as Alpha. Our choir is stellar and new trebles have joined. People coming through the church's doors feel welcomed. Our Archives is in extraordinarily fine shape thanks to Connie Powell. Parishioners are responding to both our Stewardship and Interior Restoration campaigns in generous ways.

We are working on attendance and new membership. This past year, a Committee formed to produce a formal survey of the parish. This survey will be launched shortly. Along with the survey, we will be working this year to implement The Episcopal Church's "Invite, Welcome, Connect" program. It is an excellent program with much promise. We can implement such a program with confidence. Why? We not only get along but love each other. We feel to prospective members like the true Christian family that we are. We are also ready for all stages in the faith journey. We are baptizing adults as well as infants in recent years. As life in The Episcopal Church goes these days, we are doing better than fine. We are in fact in a time of renewal.

So, I would like to focus there. I will cover some high and low points in the year. But mostly, I want us to know that we are in good shape as a parish. I say this not with sentimental mist in my eyes or lack of concern about trends in the Church as a whole. I say this as one who believes we have what it takes to weather this time and to enter the Kingdom of God within it. This brings me to my theme which is taken from our Gospel for today.

*As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea-- for they were fishermen. And he said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fish for people." Immediately they left their nets and followed him. (Mat. 4:18-20)*

The question before St. Peter's, and indeed every church, is this: How do we cast our nets? Cast them as broadly as possible, bringing in fish of every kind? Precisely because St. Peter's is healthy, the question before us is not "Do we want to cast our nets?" but the how of it. We believe Jesus is with us. We can go forth with nets in hand confident of the Lord's grace.

The Strategic Growth Committee has been meeting to talk about the nets. We are, in a sense, talking about what nets we have, how to repair them if needed, and where and how exactly to cast them. I am reminded that the biggest haul of actual fish the disciples ever received was when Jesus told them where to cast their net. I want to ask the entire parish to join your leadership in prayer about how best to cast our nets in our time and place. With your help and prayers, we will draw on our strengths and develop needed new ones. But we know it is not mere technique, but the casting of the Gospel itself. The Collect for today says it well.

*Give us grace, O Lord, to answer readily the call of our Savior Jesus Christ and proclaim to all people the Good News of his salvation, that we and the whole world may perceive the glory of his marvelous works; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.*

Our world begins in Albany. The Good News remains the same. Yet every generation needs to find its voice. A couple of years ago, I was sorting out some old books from the parish library. It struck me at once how this or that one felt so dated. But I also know that they were the right voice at the time. We too need to find that right voice. I continue to believe that one such voice is Alpha.

I have been especially encouraged by the reception of Alpha. I want to share my thoughts on this evangelism tool first and based on our own experience. What Alpha has shown us at St. Peter's is that we have a hunger for spiritual renewal. We truly want to be open to new ways of receiving "the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints" and feeling it afresh at depth. (Jude 3:1)

Educational programs are generally a strength in our tradition, but programs of spiritual renewal have not been. Alpha has proved itself among us in three ways. Firstly, it has been a profound renewal for existing members. Secondly, Alpha has helped to integrate newer members. Thirdly, Alpha has revealed our joy in Christian basics. On one level, Alpha is Christianity 101. On another, it is a fresh anointing of the Holy Spirit given us in Baptism. Both matter. Again and again, we have witnessed how Alpha has answered the questions people actually have about the Faith. This is true regardless of their length of time in the Church. They have gone forth empowered in the Spirit.

The coming year will involve using Alpha as no small part of our net casting. I say this because we are increasingly receiving new members who have basic questions about Christianity itself. This is our true cultural context. What were once called "Inquirers' Classes" are no longer sufficient. Such education can follow Alpha, but can't replace it. One of the Alpha talks is entitled, "Why and how should I tell others." It encourages us to find our voice. Alpha is an easy invite. You can go with a friend. It also works well as we tell others to experience what we ourselves have previously experienced. I want the parish to feel confident about this tool and able to invite others to experience it. "Invite, Welcome, Connect" will make use of Alpha and other vehicles in this new year.

Saint Peter's has grown in many ways over the past decade. We have truly welcomed time set aside in the Service simply for our children. We have introduced anointing for healing on the first Sunday of the month. We exchange the peace! The Daughters of King are being used as "prayer warriors." We have opened a shelter. We have attended not only to needed repairs, but acts of beautifying the church for future generations. It is all a commitment to going forward. You have given generously to do so. It shows your investment in our future and that of our children. The Vestry has become more reflective of our young adult membership. The next generation of leaders – our future pillars -- are in place. Lay initiative has grown with each passing year. We are focused on things that matter, from outreach to renewal. The "evangelism" word is now spoken comfortably among us.

Of course, we have had our share of challenges this past year. Most are typical of any parish these days, but one is pressing indeed. Bishop Love's ministry was restricted last year and he awaits an ecclesiastical trial. This restriction and trial concern his response to General Convention's Resolution B012. In a pastoral letter, Bishop Love reaffirmed traditional marriage in very strong language. We had a time of trial at St. Peter's as deep commitments on both sides surfaced. I will say that I am proud of the parish's response. We could speak the truth as we saw it to one another. As the Bishop's trial takes place, I anticipate a fresh awakening of the issue of same-sex marriage among us. I pray that we can respond as we did this past year, with candor and charity. The trial date has finally been set. We learned this week that it will be held in Albany on April 21<sup>st</sup>, at the Desmond Hotel. The trial is open to the public, although space is limited. Regardless of your personal convictions, please pray for Bishop Love, the Diocese, and the Hearing Panel.

As our Treasurer will report, the market has been kind to St. Peter's investments. We also have seen an increase in the average pledge. Our focus is equally on the rate of participation. We have had a strong response to our various appeals. Thank you-- Thank you George, for all that you do for us. I ask that we all prayerfully consider pledging to aid the Vestry in planning expenses. New electronic means of giving are now available. I want to thank Ashley Closson and Christie Gordon for encouraging this modernizing movement. Your Vestry has been hard at work to enter the modern age, in finance and social media. I also want to thank Fred Hershey, Jim Chenot, and Maria Holden for their work in encouraging the wonderful parish response to our interior restoration project.

Now this year, we had some weddings following Christmas. We saw Ashely Spath and Dan Closson married as well as our Associate Rector, Mtr. Sue and Jimmy Troiano. I can't begin to convey how moved I was at the parish's response to both weddings. Many hands were busily at work. I want to thank especially Fred Hershey, Deb Spath, Donna Ohlman, Nancy Cregan, and Jeffrey Hartt for all that they did to make the parish reception for Jim and Sue so grand. Both these weddings are

certain signs of the love we have here and delight we take in one another. We share our joys because we are family.

For a number of reasons this past year, the Altar Guild has been worked especially hard. I do want to thank the whole Altar Guild and Director Cathy Schunk for their labors. The Flower Guild, Usher Guild, Coffee Hour Hosts and LEMs have met their accustomed high standards at our Services. It is a sacrifice to serve in these ways, as it impacts their own worship experience. We honor them and thank them. I would also like to thank, Pat Shortall, Ian Mike, and Wayne Hill for having done such a fine job in greeting folks as they visit and also in keeping the church in such good order. In no small way, they are the first face of St. Peter's for many visitors. Ruth Manss has done exceptional work in the front office. We are in good order thanks to her labors. Our entire parish staff are top notch. Connie Powell has done wonderful work to secure and develop our Archives. Janice Chenot serves endless hours as a volunteer in the office and elsewhere. Thank you, Janice.

Music this year hardly needs my commendation. Both Sunday worship and special performances have blessed us with heavenly notes. Our music program continues to be a major draw to the parish. Moreover, the fellowship among Choir members forms deep and abiding community. Thank you Mr. Keen and the entire Choir for your dedication and skill. I want to recognize Nathan Douglas for his very fine treble solo at Lessons and Carols.

Mtr. Sue is nothing short of my right arm around here. Her counsel, prayer, faith, example, and vision undergird all that I do. Thank you, Mtr. Sue, for the honor of having you as a colleague in ministry and for your many gifts among us.

Our Sunday School is a gem. It is a gem because of our children and our teachers and nursery staff. I want especially to recognize Laura Rulison's and her extended family for their work on our behalf over many years. You have formed several generations and laid up treasure in heaven. Thank you Laura, Sharon, Kelly, Ariana as well as Vicky Pautler and Ashley Closson for the care you take in your lessons and your Christian example. Thank you, also, to our parents for the work you do at home to convey the Faith. Your good labors show at both the children's homily and Sunday School. It also blesses other children as they share what they have learned at your hand.

This past Summer, we welcomed the Cathedral congregation to St. Peter's. The Cathedral was having asbestos tiles removed and needed a temporary home over the summer months. I cannot begin to say how gracious you were to the Cathedral congregation and the good will and mutual appreciation that grew among us all. It was a joy to have Dean Harding on the preaching rota. I know that he and the entire Cathedral were grateful for our hospitality and very much enjoyed their time with us. The success of this joining together speaks to the health of both congregations.

I want to thank Deb Spath for your dedicated leadership these past two years as Sr. Warden. Your counsel and leadership have been invaluable to both the Vestry and clergy. You have actively participated in Alpha and your support has meant a great deal to me. We look forward to your serving as Jr. Warden until next year's elections when we hope you will run again for that seat. God bless you. Likewise, Jim Chenot, in whatever seat he occupies on the Vestry does both sacrificial and deeply faithful work for St. Peter's. There is not a harder worker for the Kingdom. Jim has been central to the interior and exterior renovations over many years. He loves St. Peter's with all of his heart. Thank you, Jim.

I could go on and on about St. Peter's strengths in our challenging times. The point is that the Kingdom of God keeps breaking in afresh among us. We are a true family of God. We are also casting our nets as those with a renewed sense of purpose and openness to Jesus' plans for us. Pray to see the Lord's call on you each day. Our future is really about empowering the whole congregation in the work of the Gospel.

I want to thank Mrs. Hartt for her love and support these many years of ministry. She is a deeply faithful Christian woman and her insights mean the world to me. It is not an easy role, and her grace about it inspires me more than I can say.

Your rector turned 60 this year. I want to thank you not only for your birthday wishes, but for all the ways you have grown along with me in these years of ministry. I do not claim that my time here has been without some stumbles and mistakes. I can only claim that you have always been so gracious and sought to work with your clergy in deep affection. I want you to know that this affection is returned. You are loved by both me and Mtr. Sue.

Most importantly, St. Peter's has revealed itself to be a genuine Christian family. People sense that such affection can be theirs as well. And it can. Christian love seeks ever to grow its circle. You know that and you live it, because Jesus is your Lord. We need nothing more than His love leading us on.

To God be the glory. Amen.

## **ST. PETER'S CHURCH ASSOCIATE RECTOR'S REPORT**

I am blessed to have traveled yet another year with this great congregation of St. Peter's. Many of our traditions continue amongst long-standing members, while new faces and practices bless us as well. A highlight this year, of course, was our Interior Restoration project which I was blessed to join many in support. While we have been given the legacy of a most beautiful church building built by former generations, we have the great privilege and responsibility to care well, with good stewardship, all that we have been given and enjoy. I am so proud of our church members, along with individuals from the community, who have answered this challenge so generously.

Good care of our worship space not only provides for our own worship enjoyment, but also allows us to open our doors to our community for their benefit. Every weekday, visitors marvel at this holy spiritual space they find open to them in the midst of the busyness of downtown Albany. Our weekly Wednesday services bless many parishioners and visitors alike. Summer worship was enjoyed immensely by the Cathedralites who joined us for worship while their own sanctuary was renovated. The Diocesan regional confirmation service in the Spring brought yet others to our church. We are poised well to continue to answer the call on us to provide "worship in the beauty of holiness."

There was much in the way of spiritual “restoration” as well. The Daughters of the King, who I serve as both member and chaplain, have embarked on a new study using the national DOK Spiritual Formation Study Guide. This has been invigorating to both our personal and corporate development as Christians and Daughters of the King. We of course thank them for their daily intercessions which support and uphold us and our loved ones. Last Lent, the Daughters hosted a Lenten program focused on Making and Praying with Anglican Prayer Beads. Many Daughters made extra Prayer beads which have blessed individuals in the hospitals and those who are homebound. They also coordinated the Blessings Bags to benefit both women and men of the Capital City Rescue Mission.

The women of the church enjoyed the Women’s Book Bible Study *Sensible Shoes* which focused on introducing and practicing many spiritual disciplines. We also ran two sets of Alpha classes, instructing over two dozen individuals on matters of the Christian faith all while fostering community and hospitality among the groups. We instructed teens preparing them for a springtime Confirmation and helped one youth prepare for her First Holy Communion on All Saints Sunday. Our weekly children’s sermons, along with Children’s chapel with instructed Eucharist, help our youngest grow in the faith. Let us not forget our furry friends who bless us richly daily and whom we blessed in October celebrating the Feast of St. Francis. Spiritual formation continues to be a building block of our faith community and lives.

We are always reminded that we are part of the wider church with Diocesan initiatives and events. I continue to Chair the Diocesan Commission on Ministry which helps individuals discern and answer a call to Holy Orders. It is a great comfort for us all to see God continue to raise up men and women for ministry in the Church. This past summer I also hosted an individual from our companion diocese of Down and Dromore (church of Ireland), and I attended the annual Diocesan Convention, annual Postulants and Candidates Retreat and also the Diocesan Advent Preaching Conference. This past summer, I assisted two congregations without clergy (St. Eustace Lake Placid and St. Thomas Tupper Lake) by supplying one Sunday each. It is always a blessing to connect with the wider church, even while celebrating one’s spiritual home.

The most amazing part of ministry at St. Peter’s are all the people I serve with. Fr. Hartt and I have served for over a decade together and we are an amazing team if I do say so myself. Even so, I never stop learning from him and am blessed he is both a colleague and an amazing priest. The office staff at St. Peter’s is top notch as well. Ruth is now well acclimated and has not only learned her job well but has organized and blessed us in so many ways beyond the scope of her “job duties”. We also must give thanks for Janice who has been a constant support to us for many, many years. She is not only dedicated, but a valuable part of the administrative team. Ian and Pat keep all our practical needs met at the highest level while Wayne is a welcoming host to many in our sanctuary weekdays. Laura and her team of teachers are amazing with our most precious asset: our children, and the lay leadership offering their talents in our choir, guilds, and as ushers, lectors, LEM’s and Vestry members are what makes our church so unique and special. Connie continues to make amazing discoveries among our Archives and provides organization and record-keeping. I’d like to especially thank our wardens Deb Spath and Jim Chenot for their deep dedication and love for this church and us all and the countless hours they give in service and Christian witness.

There were many joys and also some heartaches throughout the year with births and baptisms, confirmations, weddings and also funerals of our loved ones. But that is what the faith and church purposes to do: to support one’s walk through life a little richer and better than it could be on our own. In that spirit, I give my greatest thanks for my marriage to Jimmy and this parish family who celebrated with us and have blessed us so richly. May this next year and decade bring new joy and hope to us and our community of faith.

With love, Mtr. Sue Troiano

## **ST. PETER’S CHURCH SENIOR WARDEN’S REPORT**

In preparing for this Annual report I have reviewed the work and efforts of the Vestry for the past year. I am pleased to say that Saint Peter’s is in good health, functionally, pastorally, and financially.

We are blessed to have our Rector and Associate Rector. Father Hartt and Mother Sue have been remarkable in their heartfelt devotion to Saint Peter’s. They have taken on not only countless hours of dedication to us pastorally, but also have taken on many additional projects as well for the enrichment and growth of our Diocese. Father Hartt has been appointed, Chair of the Diocesan Deacon School and Mother Sue appointed, Chair of the Commission on Ministry (managing the ordination process for the Diocese of Albany). Along with these duties they have been able to provide tireless pastoral support to our homeless community, as well as, several extremely successful Alpha programs, Bible studies, Confirmation classes, glorious weddings, Baptisms and funerals just to name a few. Thank you both for your work, support and never-ending dedication.

As we are witnessing this morning, the Vestry year at Saint Peter’s begins with the election of a new Senior Warden. My term is coming to an end and I would like to thank all of the Vestry members, past and present for their help to me and our Junior Warden and their service to Saint Peter’s.

On a personal note, I would like to say, it has been a tremendous privilege to serve on the Vestry and to be your Senior Warden for 2018-2019. I want to thank all of you for your generous support, words of kindness, frank honesty and your prayers and guidance. Although my term is ending my dedication and appreciation for you and our parish will continue on forever.

If during today’s meeting you are curious or have lots of questions, I encourage you to run for Vestry in years to come. It is serious work, but fun, interesting, and you get an unforgettable eye-opening experience on the operations of our church.

Although you will be hearing their reports, I would like to take a moment to say thank you and recognize just a few of the many accomplishments.

Laura Rulison, and all our Sunday school teachers, continue to teach, support and love our precious children. We all recognize the importance of our children receiving strong spiritual formation.

Neil Keen continues to lead our divine music program. Our choir is glorious and continues to give so generously of their time, talent and energy. These musicians provide to their listeners an ongoing gift of beauty and wonder.

We have incredible and hard working office staff, Ruth and Janice are dedicated to their job and “all other responsibilities”. Always going above and beyond. We all benefit from their professional organizational abilities and attention to detail.

Our Guilds all have dedicated individuals that provide a ministry of witness. Silently working behind the scenes and alongside us, they provide for the elements that make our worship beautiful.

Our Treasurer George Scala will provide you with his comprehensive finance report for the year. George is continuously overseeing our financial operations. This is no small task, providing to our Vestry a monthly review of the most current budget data. Thank you George for your many hours of data gathering, reports, education and never ending questions from us.

Our newest addition this year is our Strategic Growth Committee. Our chair Maria Holden will be presenting to you on this new initiative. This is an exciting beginning of an essential ministry that will help us in growing our church.

Our Junior Warden Jim remains extremely busy. Along with overseeing all of our property projects, he continues to work with Fred Hershey and Maria Holden on the highly successful Interior Restoration Project.

Every beautifully completed piece of the project leaves us in anticipation and asking, “how can this get any better?” But it can and it has!

We continue to need and work hard on raising contributions for Phase Two and are all looking forward to beginning our second phase of the Interior Restoration.

Jim also continues to work with the City Mission and our 11<sup>th</sup> year of hosting Saint Peter’s homeless overflow shelter in our auditorium. This is an incredible mission and we thank Jim for his leadership and never-ending energy and support.

Mother Sue will be giving you a report on our outreach initiatives, and we have many. But as I am reminded on a daily basis, our parishioners are richly involved and the outcomes make us proud. Thank you all for your dedication and hard work. You all are a blessing.

I would be remiss not to mention at this time that we continue to support many beloved events. Thanksgiving dinner, Soup Sampler, Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper, Easter Egg Hunt, Annual Church Picnic, Hanging of the Greens, just to name a few! These activities take many hands and hearts to make happen, and it is joyful to be involved in and receive the benefits of these great events.

There is a lot that has been done, but a lot to do yet in the upcoming year. The annual reports from our committees and guilds will give you a vision of what we have accomplished and what we need to do to continue to grow.

Having a great Vestry team and wonderful parishioners make our journey together so blessed.

Faithfully, Debby

## **ST. PETER'S CHURCH PROPERTY AND RESTORATION REPORT**

This past year in 2019, the congregation was able to see Phase 1 of the Interior Restoration Project completed. We also received an additional generous donation that went directly toward cleaning the pulpit which was completed by Easter. The compliments from the congregation as well as visitors have been very positive and well received by the clergy. Interest in Phase 2 immediately followed which tasked the clergy and vestry to reach out to those who may not have been able to contribute to Phase 1 as well as those who may have wished to contribute again. With the generosity of many, including the Bender Family Foundation Grant and Challenge, it made it possible for us to contact Egan’s Restoration in December to inform them that we had met our goal and were able to have them start Phase 2 in January of this year. We are hoping that this phase will be close to completion by Easter Sunday 2020.

The energy behind this project has been incredible and we would like to thank all those who have already contributed as well as those who are continuing to contribute. The contributions are still coming in on a regular basis and are being earmarked for the third and last phase. We will give the congregation an update in regard to where we stand with the third phase in late spring/early summer. This last phase consists mainly with all restoration work done in the chancel area including the altar. There is an incredible amount of cleaning needed to be done in this particular phase, but if we can continue to receive contributions the intention would be to have Egan’s begin work this summer and possibly have it near completion for this coming Advent season.

This past fall we were able to do some clean up, cosmetic work, and minor repairs to the masonry in the church garden. It was a major improvement and work that needed to be done. It is now ready for Spring and we are hoping to find some eager volunteers interested in helping to beautify the area further with their gardening skills. Also, in the fall we were able to put a seat stair lift from the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor to the Parish Hall. This has helped those that were previously unable to enjoy functions in the Parish Hall due to these stairs. Many were able to take advantage of the lift at our annual Thanksgiving dinner and were very grateful for this new amenity.

There has also been an interest to update the Pumpelly Room which would include fixing the plaster wall, repairing windows, painting, and finally purchasing new furniture which is sorely needed. A small committee has been formed to look into what is needed to get this project off the ground. We are looking forward to their report so that we are able to move ahead with this important project, upgrading a room that is used each Sunday for coffee hour as well and many other gatherings.

The parishioners of St. Peter’s should be very proud of the commitment and due diligence we have all put forth these past few years regarding work done to the physical appearance of St. Peter’s. We are very fortunate to worship in one of the most beautiful churches in Albany which we should be proud to call our home. We all have a shared responsibility in maintaining its beauty and integrity. Thank you again to all those who have financially contributed and supported these important projects.

Jim Chenot.

## ST. PETER'S CHURCH USHERS GUILD

A welcoming environment is one of the things we value at St. Peter's Church. Our ushers have played a major role in creating an environment that makes everyone feel at home. The ushers strive to ensure that each person attending worship is greeted kindly upon arrival. I would like to say a big "Thank You" to those who serve in this capacity each Sunday every month and to those who fill in on special occasions. Please join me in acknowledging the contributions of the following ushers:

**8:30 Service:** Clark Daggett; Fred Lincoln; Bernie Burnell; John Davis; John Sterrett; Robin LaPlante

**10:30 Service:** Catherine Schunk; Julie Hotmer Drao; Sharon DeBonis; William Collins; Kevin Creagan; Jeff Russom; Sherry Bishko; Frank Spath; Chris Grill; Mark Lundberg; Michele Lundberg; Moses Kamya

We are always looking for new Ushers to assist during Sunday and special services. Becoming an usher is very important but simple. You can sign up for once a month commitment. The Usher Guild is a great way for parishioners to become active in the life of St. Peter's. If you are interested or know someone who might be interested in serving in this capacity or substitute, please contact Moses Kamya at 518-869-6599 [mmkamya@aol.com](mailto:mmkamya@aol.com) or any member of the Ushers Guild or by simply calling the office.

Respectfully submitted:

Moses M. Kamya, Head Usher

## ST. PETER'S CHURCH ALTAR GUILD

The Altar Guild, in 2019, was responsible for setting and clearing on 146 occasions for our services. Members also participated in the Maundy Thursday, Christmas, and Thanksgiving holidays, in addition to several weddings and funerals.

We welcome Donna Ohlman to our membership and thank her and our other members for their continued care and laundering of our linens.

We are sorry to lose John Davis and Betsy Newnum from our membership. I thank John for his years of dedicated service to the Altar Guild. We wish Betsy well in her new life on the West Coast. I thank her for her contributions and appreciate her willingness to help whenever asked.

I thank all our members for their continued dedication and hard work, especially over the summer when our combined services required our attention above and beyond the usual schedule.

My thanks to Sharon DeBonis for preparing our list of Altar Guild necessities to keep the Vestry informed of necessary care and upkeep of our frontals, silver, and linens.

New members are always welcome, either to set the altar or launder and iron our linens, or both: please see me or call the church office anytime.

My thanks as always to Pat Shortall, Ian Mike, and Sharon DeBonis for their time, expertise and advice.

Respectfully submitted,

Cathy Schunk, Director

Active members for 2019: Barbara Adams, John Davis, Sharon DeBonis, Pam Gerfin, Laura Grill, Catherine Gabriels, Donna Hershey, Barbara Kelly, Michele Lundberg, Diana Martin, Betsy Newnum, and Donna Ohlman

## ST. PETER'S CHURCH FLOWER GUILD

The Flower Guild has worked faithfully to provide beautiful and appropriate flowers for the church throughout the past year. We are dependent upon the generosity of parishioners who request (and fund) special memorial or thanksgiving offerings. We work hard to stay within our budget as we decorate the Church each week.

As in past years, we have provided flowers regularly for the Main Altar, while during Lent the altars are bare and during Advent we use only greens. If there are special requests, we will do flowers for St. Mark's and the Tower Altars. Christmas poinsettias and greens, Palm Sunday palms and our special Thanksgiving display of food are long-standing traditions at St. Peter's, organized and implemented by members of the Guild. Occasionally, other special requests can be accommodated.

Help for our efforts is always appreciated: flowers for the Main Altar are \$50, St. Mark's or the Tower Altars are \$35 – all arranged through the Church Office (and payable in advance.) Our spectacular Christmas and Easter displays are also funded by generous parishioners. The Thanksgiving altar project (with overflow to fonts this year) has become an annual tradition; donations of non-perishable food are received gratefully before being donated to the food pantry.

New hands and ideas are always welcome. Anyone who loves flowers, be he or she experienced or just eager to learn, who might enjoy working with us, should consider joining this wonderfully satisfying ministry.

Sally Jennings, Chair; Sherry Bishko; Ann Collins; Nancy Creagan; Sharon DeBonis; Catherine Gabriels; Laura Grill; Jeffrey Hartt and Cathy Schunk.

## **ST. PETER'S CHURCH DAUGHTERS OF THE KING JULIA CHAPTER**

The Julia Chapter of the DOK in St. Peter's Church continue to stay active with all prayer requests from St. Peter's Church as well as the Albany Diocese. In 2019, the DOK assembled Blessing Bags for women that are staying at the Albany Rescue Mission Homeless Shelter. This has become an annual tradition. In addition, the DOK hosted an annual Lenten Day and Advent program during the year and look forward to doing so again this March 2020. The Daughters of the King Julia Chapter meets on the second Sunday of every month to honor all prayer requests, as well as to improve the spirituality within the Julia Chapter of the DOK. The Julia Chapter of the DOK has spent time during monthly meetings reflecting on the Spiritual and Faith Formation Guide. This has been a very positive area towards the growth of the DOK. The Julia Chapter of the DOK are always looking for interested parishioners who may wish to join our chapter. We hope to be offering a Fall DOK Discernment Class, which will provide prerequisite course instruction adding new members to our chapter. We are looking forward to the promise of 2020, in prayer for all DOK members across the country, as well as the entire parish of St. Peter's Church.

Julia Hotmer Drao, President

## **ST. PETER'S CHURCH ARCHIVES**

I have written a history of St. Peter's Church in three parts with the goal of informing our parishioners of our church history. So far two of the parts have been put in the St. Peter's Newsletter with the third part to be published soon. Parts of the history have also been put in the Cathedral of All Saints electronic newsletter.

I am cleaning out and filing the last of the two boxes of unsorted information into the collection.

I am continuing to use the boxes with lids for storing information, thus saving the church the cost of the fold-out boxes.

I had two windows of the Archives unsealed so that some air could circulate in the area. I had new blinds installed over these windows.

I have continued to answer questions and supply pictures to support the Vestry in their plans for the makeover of the Church.

I now have Windows 10 software on my Archival Computer.

I have acquired and framed a copy of the James Eight's watercolor of Fort Frederick. It is now hanging in the Church Archives hallway.

Submitted by Evelyn Constance Powell, Archivist

## **WOMEN OF ST. PETER'S CHURCH**

The Women of St. Peter's Church provide support for various ministries that the parish participates in throughout the year. The Women of St. Peter's Church assisted with the assembling of Blessing Bags and with hosting coffee hour during the year. We look forward to other important ministries that the Women of St. Peter's Church can participate in during the upcoming 2020 calendar year. The Women of St. Peter's Church are looking for new members that are interested in any new ideas to grow our membership and outreach.

Respectfully submitted, Julia Hotmer Drao

## **ST. PETER'S CHURCH SUNDAY SCHOOL**

I want to begin my report by thanking Deb Spath, James Chenot and the Vestry for their support with St. Peter's Sunday School. The only way to have a successful Sunday school is to have full support of the Church. I want to thank Father Hartt and Mother Sue for the wonderful children's sermons each week. They continue to bring the children to the front row to hear the word of God! Thank you both.

I want to thank the parents and grandparents for bringing our little angels to church each Sunday. A big THANK YOU to some of the most fantastic Sunday School teachers; Sharon Vardabash and Kelly Welch in the nursery, Vicky Pautler, Ashley Closson and Ariana Saffares, all bringing exciting lessons to our children every week. Thank you also to Pat, Ian, Ruth, and Janice Chenot for all the behind the scenes support that allows me to do my best to reach our children.

This year we collected "Back to School Backpacks" in which the children and parishioners collected school supplies for St. Francis Mission (formerly known as Grace and Holy Innocents.) We collected over 50 bags and supplies to stuff them. Many children of the Soup Kitchen were able to start school with everything on their supply list. Thank You! On the same note, many thanks to the St. Peter's members for their help in collecting coats, gloves, and hats for the children and elderly of Grace and Holy Innocents. The congregation of St. Peter's hit a home run! For two months I was able to bring children back to the kitchen and fit them with warm coats for the winter months. Blessings to all that donated.

Please check the monthly newsletter for more outreach opportunities to come, and please give me a call with any comments or suggestions you might have for our Sunday School, always love hearing from you. Thank you for letting me serve the children of our church. I am truly blessed.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura (Saffares) Rulison (518) 368-4284





# February 2020



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
<p><b>2 The Presentation of our Lord Jesus Christ in the Temple</b> Healing Prayers</p> <p>8:30am - Holy Communion 10:30am - Holy Communion 12:15pm - Bible Study</p>	3	4	<p>5</p> <p>8:45am - Top o 12:05pm - Holy</p>
<p><b>9 Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany</b></p> <p>8:30am - Holy Communion 10:30am - Morning Prayer 11:45am - DOK Meeting 12:15pm - Bible Study</p>	10	<p>11</p> <p>4:30pm - Outreach Meeting 5:15pm - Vestry Meeting</p>	<p>12</p> <p>8:45am - Top o 12:05pm - Holy</p>
<p><b>16 Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany</b></p> <p>8:30am - Holy Communion 10:30am - Holy Communion 12:15pm - Bible Study</p>	<p><b>17 President's Day</b></p> <p>Office Closed</p>	18	<p>19</p> <p>8:45am - Top o 12:05pm - Holy</p>
<p><b>23 The Last Sunday after the Epiphany</b> <b>Youth Sunday</b></p> <p>8:30am - Holy Communion 10:30am - Morning Prayer w/ Children's Chapel 12:00pm - Soup Sampler 12:15pm - Bible Study</p>	<p><b>24 St. Matthias the Apostle</b></p>	<p>25</p> <p>5:00pm - Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper</p>	<p><b>26 Ash We</b></p> <p>7:30am - Ash V w/ 8:45am - Top o 12:00pm - Ash V 5:30pm - Ash V w/</p>



	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1
of the Hill Communion	6 4:30pm - Treble Rehearsal 5:30pm - Full Choir	7 12:30pm - Organ Concert	8
of the Hill Communion	13 4:30pm - Treble Rehearsal 5:30pm - Full Choir	14 <b>Valentine's Day</b> 12:30pm - Organ Concert	15 11:00am - Angels in Training
of the Hill Communion	20 4:30pm - Treble Rehearsal 5:30pm - Full Choir	21 12:30pm - Organ Concert	22
<b>Wednesday</b> Wednesday Service Holy Communion of the Hill Wednesday Service Wednesday Service Holy Communion	27 4:30pm - Treble Rehearsal 5:30pm - Full Choir	28 12:30pm - Organ Concert 5:45pm - Lenten Evensong	29

## ST. PETER'S CHURCH MUSIC PROGRAM

2019 was a busy year for music at St. Peter's. Friday noontime organ recitals continued, including performances by guest musicians. Our choir continued its work with great skill and dedication, and we welcomed several new singers to the choir. The Choir's principal work is the musical enrichment of regular Sunday worship. In addition, we note these special services and events in 2019:

February/March:	Ash Wednesday noon service Friday Lenten Evensongs (six services)
April:	Hosted concert by the Choir of Lincoln College Oxford UK
Good Friday:	Handel's <i>Brockes Passion</i> , with orchestra
Easter Day:	Two choral services, with trumpet and timpani
May:	Regional Confirmation Service
November:	Thanksgiving Eve service
December:	Performance of Handel's Messiah Service of Lessons and Carols Two choral services for Christmas Eve, with trumpet and timpani

As 2020 begins, we are more eager than ever to welcome new singers to the treble section. The best way, by far, to reach potential trebles is by word-of-mouth, and we ask for the help of our parish members in reaching out to musical youngsters. The rehearsal schedule has been eased in recognition of the many demands on young people's time.

We are grateful for the support that the parish gives to its music program. Choir Mother Diana Martin gives the choir invaluable service. She keeps the vestments organized, polishes medals, facilitates the Easter breakfast, is always there to help at every service and event, and plays a vital role in the training and orientation of new choristers. We also owe a great deal to the strong support of the parents of our young singers, without which we couldn't even begin. Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,

Neil Keen, Organist and Choirmaster

## ST. PETER'S CHURCH OUTREACH PROGRAM

Outreach continues to grow and thrive at St. Peter's Church. We have had a wonderful year with many projects and programs. Thank you to all who have contributed in so many different ways, and made this such a special year.

Here are some of our many 2019 activities:

**St. Peter's Overflow Shelter-** This ministry in conjunction with the Capitol City Rescue Mission is in its eleventh year. During the colder months, St. Peter's serves as an overflow shelter and host for homeless men from the mission. The support for this project has been truly amazing. We have received numerous monetary and food donations.

**St. Francis Mission Soup Kitchen-** Laura Rulison and her "Angels in Training" together with other church members volunteer in the preparation and serving of a hot lunch to over 100 people on one Saturday a month.

**West Bugunda-** Outreach provided scholarships for four girls from West Bugunda to attend school. Our annual Soup Sampler raised additional monies to support these orphans.

**Healing a Women's Soul** – Outreach provided a donation to this organization in support of women recovering from domestic violence and abuse.

**Thanksgiving-** For the 7th year, a large collection of food donations adorns our altar at Thanksgiving. Thanks to Jeffrey Hartt, the youth and flower guild members for arranging this beautiful display. Some of the food is kept at the church to assist walk-in requests, however, most of it is donated to the food pantry at St. Mary's Church.

**Christmas-** This year St. Peter's members donated gifts to the men who stayed in our overflow shelter.

**Equinox-** Many members and church families helped prepare meals for the annual Thanksgiving Meal Program.

**Tea-** The Annual Tea was held in April to raise money to provide scholarships for Beaver Cross summer camp.

**CROP Walk-** Thanks to both Tim Murphy and Maria Holden for organizing our team for the CROP Walk and the parishioners who walked to raise money for hungry.

**Hearts of Hope Luncheon** – was attended by women of St. Peter's, with personal and Outreach donations made in support of women's programs at the Capital City Rescue Mission.

**Daughters of the King-** The members of the DOK, with donations from the parish members, assembled over 80 Blessing Bags for the men and women staying at the CCRM.

**Beaver Cross-** St. Peter's provided four Beaver Cross Scholarships.

**Church Office Staff and Clergy Outreach-** Father Hartt, Mother Sue and Pat, Ian, Ruth and Janice continue to provide outreach and welcome to the many daily "walk-ins" in need during office hours on a daily basis. A special thanks to our clergy and the staff for going the extra mile to help those in need.

**Free Organ Concerts-** Our very talented organist and Choirmaster, Neil Keen, continues to graciously reach out and generously provide free recitals on Fridays at 12:30 pm for the enjoyment of the public.

**St. Peter's Softball Team-** St. Peter's Angels Softball Team led by Peter Benson provides a wonderful athletic and fellowship program for church members.

**Backpacks-** Laura Rulison and the youth with donations from members filled back packs with school supplies for needy children.

As Chairperson of Outreach, I continue to be thankful and truly amazed by the support and generosity of so many members of this parish to our many outreach programs. I am grateful to Carol Daggett for all her years as Chairperson of Outreach and the many wonderful programs she helped start. A special thanks to Jim Chenot, Deb Spath, Father Hartt, Mother Sue, Carly Crewell, Janice Chenot, and Pat Shortall for all they do to assist with our Outreach programs, and to Laura Rulison for all she does to involve the children of the parish in outreach.

Respectfully submitted,  
Judy Burns

**ST. PETER'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH - 2020 BUDGET**

	2019 Budget	2019 Actual	2020 Budget
<b>INCOME</b>			
Offering Income/Pledged/Envelopes	\$ 200,000	\$ 181,294	\$ 205,000
Offering Income/Loose	\$ 4,500	\$ 5,167	\$ 4,500
Offering Income/Special Funds	\$ 23,150	\$ 26,862	\$ 23,150
<b>TOTAL Offering Income:</b>	<b>\$ 227,650</b>	<b>\$ 213,323</b>	<b>\$ 232,650</b>
Other Income (Columbarium, Interest, Misc.):	\$ 2,000	\$ 3,760	\$ 1,500
<b>Investment Income</b>			
Key Trust Return (Net of fees)	\$ 54,394	\$ 248,702	\$ 58,065
Merrill Lynch Return (Net of fees)	\$ 75,000	\$ 455,189	\$ 77,313
<b>TOTAL Investment Income:</b>	<b>\$ 129,394</b>	<b>\$ 703,901</b>	<b>\$ 135,378</b>
<b>TOTAL INCOME:</b>	<b>\$ 359,044</b>	<b>\$ 920,984</b>	<b>\$ 369,528</b>
=====			
<b>EXPENSES</b>			
Outreach - Total Outreach	\$ 15,000	\$ 15,290	\$ 15,000
Fellowship - Parish Events & Hospitality	\$ 4,000	\$ 3,029	\$ 3,500
Music/Choir	\$ 16,000	\$ 16,002	\$ 16,000
<b>Pastoral Support</b>			
Diocesan Conferences	\$ 3,000	\$ 1,187	\$ 3,000
Travel	\$ 4,150	\$ 3,453	\$ 4,150
Discretionary - Rector/Assistant	\$ 8,400	\$ 8,600	\$ 8,400
Visiting Clergy Stipends	\$ 1,000	\$ -	\$ 1,000
<b>Total Pastoral Support</b>	<b>\$ 16,550</b>	<b>\$ 13,240</b>	<b>\$ 16,550</b>
<b>Christian Education</b>			
Sunday School Supplies	\$ 1,500	\$ 2,747	\$ 1,700
Adult Education	\$ -	\$ 1,008	\$ 1,200
<b>Total Christian Education</b>	<b>\$ 1,500</b>	<b>\$ 3,755</b>	<b>\$ 2,900</b>
<b>Worship</b>			
Altar Supplies	\$ 2,750	\$ 1,332	\$ 5,750
Altar Flowers	\$ 2,750	\$ 7,369	\$ 2,750
<b>Total Worship</b>	<b>\$ 5,500</b>	<b>\$ 8,701</b>	<b>\$ 8,500</b>
<b>Administration/Salaries</b>			
Salary: Lay, Clergy, Other	\$ 230,890	\$ 230,967	\$ 247,308
Diocesan Assessment	\$ 64,000	\$ 65,847	\$ 66,000
<b>Total Administration</b>	<b>\$ 294,890</b>	<b>\$ 296,814</b>	<b>\$ 313,308</b>
<b>Operations</b>			
Supplies, Equip Maint, Insurance, Office Exp.:	\$ 72,000	\$ 73,105	\$ 71,800
<b>Total Operations</b>	<b>\$ 72,000</b>	<b>\$ 73,105</b>	<b>\$ 71,800</b>
<b>Payroll Related Expense/Benefits</b>			
Payroll Taxes, benefits, etc.:	\$ 136,100	\$ 146,941	\$ 159,600
<b>Total Payroll Related/Benefits</b>	<b>\$ 136,100</b>	<b>\$ 146,941</b>	<b>\$ 159,600</b>
<b>Plant Operations</b>			
Utilities, Repairs, Property Maintenance:	\$ 66,000	\$ 81,456	\$ 83,500
<b>Total Plant Operations</b>	<b>\$ 66,000</b>	<b>\$ 81,456</b>	<b>\$ 83,500</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES:</b>	<b>\$ 627,540</b>	<b>\$ 658,333</b>	<b>\$ 690,658</b>
<b>GAIN/(LOSS):</b>	<b>\$ (268,496)</b>	<b>\$ 262,651</b>	<b>\$ (321,130)</b>

## 2019 VESTRY MEMBERS

**SR. WARDEN:** Deborah Spath

**JR. WARDEN:** James Chenot

**TREASURER:** George Scala

**VESTRY MEMBERS:**

Ashley Closson; Nancy Creagan; Christie Gordon;

Fred Hershey; Maria Holden; Mark Lundberg;

Timothy Murphy and Jeff Russom

## PAROCHIAL REPORT FIGURES

<b>Baptisms</b>	5
<b>Confirmation/Reception</b>	4
<b>Weddings</b>	7
<b>Funerals/Committals</b>	4
<b>ASA 2019</b>	116.5

## 2020 VESTRY ELECTION RESULTS

Jim Chenot was elected Senior Warden for his first two-year term.

Christie Gordon was elected for her second three-year term.

Fred Hershey was elected for his first three-year vestry term.

George Scala was elected for his second three-year term.

**Congratulations to all!**

### Vestry Meeting

The February Vestry meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 11th at 5:15pm.

### Outreach Meeting

The February Outreach meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 11th at 4:30pm. Please join us to learn about Outreach ministries and hospitality events being planned!

## The Season of Lent at St. Peter's Church

- ◆ Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper: Tuesday, February 25th, 5:00pm - 6:30pm
- ◆ Ash Wednesday Services: Wednesday, February 26th  
7:30am Holy Communion with Ashes imposed  
12:00pm Ash Wednesday Service with Ashes imposed  
5:30pm Holy Communion with Ashes imposed
- ◆ Friday Lenten Evensong: 5:45pm every Friday during Lent beginning February 28th
- ◆ Bible Study: Philippians 12:15pm every Sunday in February

## Upcoming Events

### 2020 PARISH LEADERSHIP CONFERENCES

Mark your calendar for the 2020 Diocesan Parish Leadership Conferences which will focus on how your parish can use the Alpha Course as an evangelistic tool. The course seeks to introduce the basics of the Christian faith through a series of talks and discussions and is described by its organizers as "an opportunity to explore the meaning of life". More information regarding the conferences will be released soon, but in the meantime, please plan to attend on March 21, 2020 at Christ the King Center, Greenwich, NY

### FOOD FOR THE POOR

A representative from Food for the Poor will be our guest preacher on Sunday, March 22nd at both services. Please pray about a donation to this organization which makes transforming differences, as a testament to our Christian faith, in communities throughout the world. More about this organization can be found at: [www.foodforthe poor.org](http://www.foodforthe poor.org)

# Happenings

## Bible Study: Philippians

At 12:15pm on the Sundays of February, Fr. Hartt will be offering a Bible Study on St. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians. The course is aimed chiefly at those who attended the Alpha talks, but the class is open to all. We will be meeting in the Vestry Room. Please read Chapter 1 of Philippians for the first class. We will be using the NRSV translation. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians offers basic instruction in the Christian life and gives significant insight into Paul's missionary work and imprisonment for the Gospel.

## Daughters of the King - Julia Chapter

The Daughters of the King will meet on February 9th in the Sunday School room on the second floor, immediately following the 10:30 service. We will be reviewing the Spiritual Formation Guide, chapter 8 (please bring your Guide to our meeting). We will also update our Prayer List. If you are interested in learning more about the Daughters of the King, please speak to Julie Hotmer Drao, Carly Crewell or Mother Sue.

## ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICES



Please join us for Ash Wednesday services on February 26th. They are as follows: 7:30AM, 12PM and 5:30PM all with imposition of ashes. The 7:30AM and the 5:30PM services will be services of Holy

## LENTEN EVENSONG

Fridays: February 28th, March 6th, 13th, 20th, 27th, and April 3rd. Please join us for our Lenten Evensong services which will be held every Friday evening during Lent beginning at 5:45pm.

Winter Traditional Silent Retreat

## God is in the Stanzas: Poetry for Religious Meditation

Conducted by  
Sister Gelasia, J/CSM

February 14-16, 2020  
Presidents Day Weekend

Suggested Donation: \$158 for full retreat  
—2 nights, meals & program  
\$75 for commuters—meals & program  
\$79 for extra day (long weekend)

Participants in this retreat will experience British religious poetry and its connection to Christian themes. Caedmon and George Herbert poems, among others, will be shared and used as the focus of these five meditations

For more information & to register, visit: [stmaryseast.net/retreats.html](http://stmaryseast.net/retreats.html)

## St. Francis Mission Soup Kitchen

Saturday, February 15th ~ 11AM to 1PM

On the 3rd Saturday of every month St. Peter's Church is committed to preparing and serving lunch to 100+ people at the St. Francis Mission Soup Kitchen (formerly known as Grace and Holy Innocents) located at 498 Clinton Avenue in Albany. We invite you, and the youth of our church (the Angels in Training) along with their friends, to join Laura Rulison (our Director of Christian Education) in helping with this outreach program that is in such desperate need of volunteers. For information or to let her know you are coming please call Laura at (518)368-4284.



## Annual Soup Sampler

Please join us on Sunday, February 23rd after the 10:30am service and enjoy a bowl (or two) of delicious soup! This year's proceeds will benefit the Overflow Homeless Shelter our church hosts for the men of the Capital City Rescue Mission. If you'd like to bring soup, please add your name to the sign-up sheet in the Pumpelly Room.

## SHROVE TUESDAY

Our annual Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper will be held on Tuesday, February 25th from 5PM to 6:30PM. Volunteers are needed to cook and should arrive by 4PM. Many other volunteers are needed for clean-up so that the Parish Hall can be ready by 7PM for the arrival of the men from the Overflow Shelter. If you have any questions or are volunteering to cook, please contact Janice Chenot at 518-786-1070.

## BEAVER CROSS RETREAT

Beaver Cross Camp meets the winter in our Son Shine Retreats! These retreats will be running over school winter break, middle school and high school students, will be playing epic games, having inspiring worship, prayer, and engaging with teachings. All of this to have fun, build community in Christ, and draw closer to Jesus! Retreat includes a trip to Willard Mountain for an evening of **tubing!** Information/Registration at: <https://www.beavercrossministries.org/registration.html>

**WHEN:** Feb 14-17, 2020,  
**DROP-OFF:** Friday 6:30 - 7:30 p.m.  
**PICK-UP:** Monday 2:30 p.m.  
**PRICE:** \$190/ camper



**MINUTES FOR THE VESTRY MEETING**  
**ST. PETER'S PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH**  
**December 10, 2019**

**Present:** Fr. Hartt, Mtr. Sue Waldron, D. Spath, J. Chenot, C. Gordon, F. Hershey, M. Holden, M. Lundberg, J. Russom, G. Scala, A. Spath

**Absent:** N. Creagan, T. Murphy

Opening Prayer Led by Father Paul Hartt

**Approval of the Minutes of Vestry Meeting, November 12, 2019**

The November 12, 2019 minutes were approved on a motion by J. Russom and seconded by M. Lundberg. The motion was unanimously approved by the vestry.

**Warden Report** –D. Spath

As we moved into the month of November one of the biggest highlights was our annual Pre-Thanksgiving Dinner which was held on Saturday, November 16<sup>th</sup>. The turnout for this event was very impressive and as each year goes by the crowd seems to grow larger than the year prior. Thank you to those who prepared turkeys at home beforehand and those who brought dishes to pass and those who helped in the kitchen. The dinner has become quite an event, the food and fellowship could not have been anything short of being wonderful. We also celebrated our annual Thanksgiving Eve service with the choir which was also well attended. Also as in year past, St. Peter's volunteered at the Equinox on Thanksgiving morning to help prepare dinners for those in need. Laura Rulison heads up this outreach each year and we thank her for her continuing support to this incredible community event.

December 1st was the first Sunday in Advent which started off our Christmas season. This past Sunday December 8th we had a magnificent performance of the Handel's Messiah, done by our choir and chamber orchestra, led by our dedicated choir director Neil Keen. This annual musical tradition again was well attended, and we want to thank all the musicians and soloist for all their musical talents and dedication that ended up being a top notch performance. It was also Father Hartt's birthday and the choir was able to celebrate it after the performance at the rectory. Thank you to Father and Jeffrey Hartt for opening their doors at the rectory, hosting the traditional Messiah party for the choir after the performance. A special thanks to our choir director, Neil Keen for all his hard work and dedication during this past year, as well as, all the work needed for the remaining Advent season.

It has been very encouraging to see many already sending in their pledges for next year. Many are coming in the traditional way in the collection plate, as well as by mail, but many are now taking advantage of pledging on line by visiting our website. We want to thank those who have sent in their pledges already for next year and hope others will be able to fill out a card to help our finance committee properly budget for 2020. Also, we want to thank all of those who have committed to the second phase of the interior restoration campaign that has now enabled us to begin work on phase two in early January.

On December 1st we also opened our doors to our men's shelter in our auditorium, hosting those in need for a warm place to stay in the evening during this upcoming cold winter season, in conjunction with the City mission in Albany. This is our 11th year hosting this incredible outreach at St. Peter's helping those in need in the immediate downtown area. Please remember we are looking for individuals that may want to volunteer a few hours at any given night, to welcome them in and prepare snacks for the gentlemen. Also keep in mind we are always looking for donations; drinks, snacks as well as momentary donations to support this program.

This coming Sunday December 15<sup>th</sup>, the third Sunday in Advent, the Sunday school will perform their annual Christmas Pageant at the 10:30 service. Many thanks to Laura Rulison and all those who help in the Christian education department for all the coordination and rehearsing that has to be put in to perform this wonderful performance. The following Sunday December 22<sup>nd</sup>, Lessons and Carols will be performed at the 10:30 service followed by The Hanging of the Greens. Lunch will be served for all those who help decorate and prepare the church for our Christmas services. Again, we ask those who will be helping to bring a dish to pass. Each year we look forward to this Sunday event greening and beautifying the church for our Christmas services.

As mentioned, each year there is an incredible amount of unseen extra work and time that is needed to for us to enjoy the Advent and the Christmas season. The vestry would like to thank the Flower Guild, Altar Guild and the Usher's who volunteer so much of their time during this busy time of year. We also need to thank Ian Mike and Pat Shortall for keeping the Church and physical plant clean and tidy especially during this Advent season. And lastly enough cannot be said to Janice and Ruth for all their work throughout the year and but especially this time of year in the office. We are truly deeply indebted to both of them and we thank them both for all their dedication and hard work.

Finally, we would like to thank Father Hartt and Mother Sue for all their tireless work preparing for this upcoming Advent Season. We want to thank them for their love and commitment to St. Peter's Church, as well as the work they do for the immediate community in outreach. St. Peter's Church, as well as downtown Albany is blessed to have both of them ministering to us, as well as those who come off the street for help.

We want to wish everyone a blessed and Merry Christmas and wish everyone a safe and Happy New Year.

**Sunday Attendance** – The average Sunday attendance is 116.5

**Rector's Report** - Father Hartt

Father Hartt began by thanking Neil Keen and the entire Choir for a glorious performance of the Messiah. Attendance was strong despite a few snow banks. The party afterwards at the rectory was joyful and the food delicious. Fr. Hartt thanked Jimmy and Janice Chenot for their considerable help in setting up the party and for providing main dishes. Fr. Hartt also thanked the parish for the many good wishes on his birthday. The cake at the Messiah party was unexpected and much appreciated. Fr. Hartt shared that one of his earliest memories of the parish was of the Messiah party. He was overwhelmed then in seeing the special traditions and depth of connection between members manifest that first encounter.

Our Pre-Thanksgiving Dinner was also quite a success. Attendance was over 100. We had sufficient food and everyone had a great time. Father Hartt thanked the many kitchen volunteers and all those who brought "a dish to pass."

Father Hartt spoke of the work of the Strategic Growth Committee. The Committee, chaired by Maria Holden, has now met on three occasions. The Committee is presently working on a parish survey. The Committee has also reviewed a considerable amount of material

from the Episcopal Church and elsewhere on strategic growth initiatives. The growth footprint for St. Peter's would be wide, including the website, videos, surveys, and new member incorporation. The Committee has identified both strengths and weaknesses that need address at St. Peter's. Good progress is being made. "Welcome, Invite, Connect" is an Episcopal Church program that will be used along with others. Related materials are in the vestry packet.

Father Hartt gave an update of the canonical process affecting Bishop Love. The trial date has not yet been set, but the process for moving forward has solidified. We should hear shortly about the trial date. This matter concerns Bishop Love's November 2019 Pastoral Letter and Directive which concerned last year's passing of Resolution B012 by General Convention.

This coming Sunday will be the Christmas Pageant. Fr. Hartt thanked the Sunday School staff for their work on this year's performance. Sunday School Director Laura Rulison has also done important work with outreach and her "Angels in Training."

Fr. Hartt alerted the Vestry that considerable progress has been made in the required training of staff for Anti-Harassment and Safe Church/Godly Boundaries programs. The Vestry approved related policies at November's Vestry meeting. Anti-Harassment training has been completed. Your Clergy, Arianna Saffares, and Neil Keen have completed the Safe Church/Godly Boundaries material. Laura Rulison has begun the training and has plans for the rest of the Sunday School staff.

Father Hartt reviewed the remaining Advent schedule. He looks forward to Lessons and Carols. Christmas Eve will be are at the traditional times and a single Christmas Day service will be held at 9:00AM.

#### **Finance** – G. Scala - Treasurer's Report

George reviewed the Treasurer's Report for November. Offerings YTD through November were \$183,290. This compares to a budgeted number of \$208,679. YTD Offerings through the same period in 2018 were \$175,617.

The investment/endowment accounts both showed gains for November. Merrill Lynch showed a return of +2.58% for the month and is at a YTD return of +19.32%. The Key accounts showed a return of +1.80% for the month and have a YTD return of +17.46%. This leaves us with a positive budget variance in this area YTD of \$505,792. Both accounts performed favorably versus market indexes. Expenses YTD through November were \$13,830 over budget.

Pledges for 2020 have begun coming in. We have received 17 pledges to date for a total amount of \$54,952.

The 2020 Budget was discussed and reviewed and approved.

#### **Property** –

New lights have been installed in the church office.

When the radiators in the auditorium were leaking a while ago, it caused some damage to the ceiling in the Pompelly Room. We will soon begin repairs to the plaster ceiling.

#### **Outreach** – Mother Sue

Outreach voted to support the West Buganda AIDS Orphans for 2020 with a funding amount of \$2,680. Which covers (4) full student scholarships.

The Overflow Homeless Shelter opened December 1<sup>st</sup> for the 11<sup>th</sup> year. We are pleased, once again, to provide this ministry in support of the Capital City Rescue Mission, housing up to 20 men nightly. Orientation and training for volunteers was held on November 21, 2019 at 7:00pm and November 23, 2019 at 10:00am – thank you, Jim Chenot, for organizing and running the training events. Women, men and teens (with parent accompaniment) may volunteer for hospitality (8:00pm on) and/or may stay for overnight hours. Please contact Ruth or Mother Sue, in the office, or Jim Chenot to volunteer.

Christmas gifts for the men who stay at our Overflow Shelter are being organized. Tags are available on the Giving Tree in Pumpelly Room. We are requesting wrapped gifts be returned to the church office by Sunday December 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Blessing Bags: Many thanks to Susan Smith, Karen Chapman and Alice Sanigular, of the DOK Julia Chapter, for assembling the Blessing Bags (and thanks to many for the donations!) Together, they assembled 30 male and 45 female blessing bags which will bless the homeless men and women of CCRM this winter. We give special thanks to Donna Ohlmann for knitting dozens of hats (which accompany the Blessing Bags) for the homeless to wear this winter!

#### **Old Business** - None

#### **New Business** –

The budget for 2020 was given to the vestry for review. It was approved on a motion by

F. Hershey and seconded by M. Lundberg. The budget was then unanimously approved by the vestry.

A small committee has been created, The Strategic Growth Committee, which focusses on how to grow, maintain, and improve our parish life at St. Peter's. They will soon be looking for some feedback from our parishioners.

#### **Associate Rector's Report** – Mother Sue

We had one of the largest turnouts ever for the Pre-Thanksgiving Dinner this year. It was a great event and enjoyed by all. Much appreciation, also, for the new stair lift that assisted individuals up to the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor Parish Hall. This will continue to be helpful to many as our congregation ages.

Thanksgiving Altar donations were very plentiful, and we thank the Flower Guild for their arrangements on the altars. We also thank Laura Saffares and the team of individuals who served at Equinox on Thanksgiving morning.

The Women's Book and Bible Study group on *Sensible Shoes, a Story about the Spiritual Journey*, by Sharon Garlough Brown has concluded, with a winter event planned to further discuss developing a Rule of Life. This will incorporate the many spiritual disciplines the group studied this semester, as well as some additional ones. Stay tuned for more details on this.

Alpha continues through December 15<sup>th</sup>. It has had a large group of participants and we have received very favorable feedback.

Many thanks to Mr. Keen, the choir and musicians for an amazing Messiah concert this year. I join many in stating that this is what begins to "bring in Christmas" for me each year and I am thankful for the gift.

#### **Adjournment**

A motion to adjourn was made by F. Hershey and seconded by G. Scala, then was approved unanimously by the vestry.

#### **Compline**

Father Hartt led Compline.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Christie J. Gordon



## *Clergy & Staff*

The Rev. Paul J. Hartt.....Rector  
The Rev. Susan Troiano.....Associate Rector  
Neil K. Keen, F.A.G.O.....Organist & Choirmaster  
Laura Rulison ..... Director of Christian Education  
Ian Mike.....Sexton  
James P. Shortall.....Assistant Sexton  
Ruth Manss..... Office Manager  
Janice Chenot.....Office Volunteer  
E. Constance Powell.....Historian & Archivist

## *Vestry*

James Chenot.....Senior Warden  
Deborah Spath.....Junior Warden  
George Scala ..... Treasurer  
Ashley Closson, Nancy Creagan, Christie Gordon,  
Fred Hershey, Maria Holden, Mark Lundberg,  
Tim Murphy, Jeff Russom

## *How to Contact Us*

### **Office Hours:**

Monday -Friday

9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

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## *Services*

### **Sunday**

Holy Communion 8:30 a.m.

Holy Communion 10:30 a.m.

(1st & 3rd Sundays)

Morning Prayer 10:30 a.m.

(2nd, 4th & 5th Sundays)

Sunday School 10:30 a.m.

### **Wednesday**

Holy Communion 12:05 p.m.

## ST. PETER'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

107 State St.

Albany, New York 12207

