



Cornerstone

November 2020

Newsletter of St. Peter's Protestant Episcopal Church

107 State Street, Albany, New York

From the Rector

Dear Parishioners,

I write with a heavy heart. Bishop Love announced at our Diocesan Convention his intent to step down as our Bishop, effective February 1st. The portion of Bishop Love's final address to the Diocese that speaks to his decision and the circumstances which led to it follows. But I want first to provide some context. Our Bishop explains that he and the Hearing Panel, the Disciplinary Board of the House of Bishops, and the Presiding Bishop have come to an Accord in which his stepping down as our Bishop concludes the disciplinary matter. I am grateful that Bishop Love was permitted to resign and not face deposition, which would have been a scandal. Bishop Love's acts were a matter of conscience, not moral impropriety. His case was strong as a matter of Canon and legislative history. Moreover, the arguments made were sincerely held. No canonical games were being played in his defense. I believe that anyone watching the actual Hearing would conclude the same. The truth is, our Presiding Bishop and most of Bishop Love's fellow Bishops like him. They strongly disagree with his views and think that he went much too far in his November 10th, 2018 Pastoral Directive, but they admire his faith and integrity. With this background, I now share our Bishop's words:

As I reported to the Diocese on October 5th, the Hearing Panel has found me guilty of failing to abide by the Discipline and Worship of the Episcopal Church, and thus violating my ordination vows. They issued a 42-page document outlining their decision, a copy of which has been posted on the Diocesan Website.

The **Summary of Opinion** outlining the Panel's report, states: "This Panel unanimously concludes that TEC has met its burden of showing, by clear and convincing evidence, that Bishop Love has violated Canon IV.4.1(c) in that his November 10, [2018] Pastoral Directive violated the Discipline of the Church, as Resolution B012 was properly constituted and passed as an authorized revision to the BCP as expressly provided for in Constitution Article X, thus requiring that all Bishop Diocesans permit their clergy the option to utilize such rites. TEC has further met its burden of establishing that Bishop Love's Direction also violated the Discipline of the Church in that it violated Canon I.18. The canonical legitimacy of Resolution B012 rendered Canon I.18 mandatory, requiring adherence by Bishops Diocesan in permitting their Clergy the option to perform same-sex marriage rites. TEC has also met its burden of establishing that the Direction violated the Worship of the Church in that Resolution B012 added canonically-authorized same-sex marriage rites to the Worship of the Church pursuant to BCP."

As I shared in my October 5th communique to the Diocese, I am very disappointed and strongly disagree with the Decision of the Hearing Panel, particularly their belief that I violated my ordination vows and their argument that B012 was passed as an authorized revision to the Book of Common Prayer. The Episcopal Church's case against me hinged on their interpretation of the nature of B012. Was it properly constituted and passed as an authorized revision to the Book of Common Prayer (BCP) or not?

It is my belief and that of my legal team that B012 was presented as an alternative resolution to one which would have changed the BCP. It was intended to ensure that same-sex marriages would be allowed in every Diocese, regardless of the Diocesan Bishop's theological views regarding marriage, while at the same time not changing the 1979 Prayer Book.

With that said, while I don't agree with the Hearing Panel's ruling, they have issued their judgement. Unfortunately, given the nature of this case, and the Episcopal Church's demonstrated intent to ensure all dioceses (where civil law permits) allow for same-sex marriages, I have no reason to believe that appealing the Hearing Panel's Decision would result in any different outcome.

A second meeting of the Hearing Panel under the leadership of Bishop Knisely, was scheduled for this coming Monday, October 26th, to determine what disciplinary action should be taken against me. After much thought and prayer, recognizing that whatever disciplinary action would be offered would not be anything I could in good conscience agree to, I have made the very difficult, but necessary decision to resign as Bishop of Albany, effective February 1, 2021 – the 14th Anniversary of my becoming the Bishop Diocesan. Given all that has happened, and that which was still to come, I believe that to stay any longer would be more of a detriment to the Diocese than a help.

The Most Rev. Michael Bruce Curry, Presiding Bishop of The Episcopal Church and I, the Rt. Rev. William H. Love, Bishop of Albany voluntarily entered into an Accord which became effective October 21, 2020, with the unanimous approval of the Disciplinary Board of the House of Bishops. The Accord resolves the matter of my case, thus discharging any further action from the Hearing Panel.

The Accord stipulates the following: I will resign as Bishop Diocesan of the Diocese of Albany, effective February 1, 2021; I will begin a one month terminal sabbatical beginning January 1, 2021; I agree to continue to abide by the January 11, 2019 Restrictions placed upon my ministry by the Presiding Bishop until the effective date of my resignation as Bishop; I will work with the Presiding

Bishop through the Office of Pastoral Development to help foster a healthy transition from my leadership as Bishop Diocesan, as the Diocese begins a new chapter in its history; and lastly, I acknowledge that upon February 1, 2021, the effective date of my resignation as Bishop Diocesan, my November 10, 2018, Pastoral Directive regarding B012 will lose force. Until then, however, it remains in effect.

In signing the Accord, the Presiding Bishop has agreed to allow me to notify the clergy and people of the Diocese of Albany of my pending resignation, before he sends out an announcement to the wider community. I am very appreciative of his willingness to agree to that pastoral request.

I met with Fr. Scott Garno, President of the Standing Committee, on Thursday afternoon, to inform him of my decision to resign and of the Accord between myself and the Presiding Bishop. I pledge my full support to Fr. Garno and the Standing Committee as they enter into their new role. I also pledge not to interfere with their deliberations.

Please note, that in accordance with Article IV of the Constitution of The Episcopal Church, the Standing Committee serves as the Ecclesiastical Authority of the Diocese in the absence of the Bishop. In addition, in accordance with the Diocesan Canons, the Standing Committee oversees the election of the new bishop of the Diocese.

The Diocese of Albany is blessed to have an excellent Standing Committee that will serve you well. I ask God's blessing upon them as they prepare to lead the Diocese of Albany during this period of transition.

During these past 14 years, I have tried as best I could by God's grace and the empowering and leading of the Holy Spirit to be faithful and obedient to the Lord's call on my life as a Bishop in Christ's one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. I have tried to be faithful and obedient to God's Holy Word as best I understand it, as revealed through the Holy Scriptures, recognizing its authority over my life and the ministry entrusted to me.

I have tried by God's grace and the guidance and empowering of the Holy Spirit to faithfully uphold my ordination vows, despite the recent ruling of the Hearing Panel, and to carry out the unique ministry of bishops, as "one with the apostles in proclaiming Christ's resurrection and interpreting the Gospel," testifying to "Christ's sovereignty as Lord of Lords and King of Kings."

I have worked hard to "guard the faith, unity and discipline of the Church...celebrating and providing for the administration of the sacraments of the Church...and sharing with my fellow bishops in the leadership of the Church throughout the world."

It has been a tremendous honor and blessing to work with the bishops and clergy and people of our Sister Dioceses of Down and Dromore in Northern Ireland and the Diocese of Maridi in South Sudan, the Diocese of Northern Malawi, and the Diocese of the Arctic, as well as numerous other friends from around the wider Anglican Communion. Their faithful Christian witness, friendship and support means more than I can ever say.

It has been my goal these past 14 years to help the Diocese of Albany remain Christ centered, focusing on the Great Commandment and the Great Commission, working together as one Church, faithfully proclaiming Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior of the World. To the degree that I have succeeded in these things, I give thanks and praise to God. To the degree that I have failed in these and other things, I ask your forgiveness.

I deeply love and care for the Diocese of Albany and each of you my Brothers and Sisters in Christ. Serving you and our Lord Jesus Christ these past 14 years as Bishop of Albany has been one of the greatest privileges and blessings of my life. I have been blessed to work with one of the greatest Diocesan Staffs any bishop could hope for. I can't imagine what these past 14 years would have been like without them.

My wife Karen and I and our family will be forever grateful for the friendship, love, and support you all have shown us these past many years. Please know that you are and will continue to be in our thoughts and prayers.

I want to close by encouraging you. At every level our Diocese is filled with incredible Spirit-filled people (lay and ordained) who love and faithfully serve our Lord Jesus Christ day in and day out. Over these past 14 years, you have accomplished so much together, through the power and presence of the Holy Spirit. God has used you to help bless countless lives in our communities and beyond. The Lord is powerfully present in the Diocese of Albany and will help lead you through the uncertainties of the coming days – if you fix your eyes on Jesus. In Him, we find hope, truth, unity, strength, and peace.

And now, may the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with you and your loved ones, this day and always as you faithfully go forth in the Name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen

It has been a privilege to serve under Bishop Love. My own emotions here are close to the surface and perhaps should be held back until they are better processed. Allow me to say this much now. I have been a member of the Episcopal Church my entire life. I have been a priest for much of that time. I have seen many bishops through the years. I have seen both liberal and conservative bishops of great integrity, because that integrity has common features. Bishop Love is what a Bishop ought to be -- a person of genuine faith, strong religious conviction, and moral courage. Someone who loves his enemies and prays for them. Someone who lives under the authority of Scripture as best as he can discern it. Someone who earnestly upon his knees prays to God to be corrected if he is wrong. Someone who seeks forgiveness and reconciliation when he offends. Someone who cares for the sheep before himself. Someone who gives his all to his Lord. These things matter most.

The issues of our times are real. They are issues of Christian love, inclusion, dignity, and justice in the face of Scripture and tradition. We should all care to know the truth of God's will as much as our Bishop. We find it together in the Holy Spirit and upon our knees before God. I do not make light of the reasons for Bishop Love's correction by our Church. However, I pray that we continue to follow Bishop Love's example of Christian conscience. No matter if you sorrow or rejoice now to see our diocese begin a new chapter, please know that you are Bishop Love's brother or sister in Christ. In Christ, we are one and only one. Wherever the Lord may lead us in our own Christian journey, I pray that our discipleship prove as faithful as the example we have been given in our Bishop.

Yours in Christ Jesus, Fr. Hartt+

From the Associate Rector

Adapting with Change...

The human story is one of adapting with change. In fact, our very survival has been assured due to the need and response to readjust our basic survival according to constantly changing circumstances. Do we always like change? No – it is just the opposite. In fact, most of us wish for things to remain as we know them, are used to them, and treasure them. In fact, most of us are creatures of habit and continue our long-loved traditions year after year. I know I prefer this option. And yet, when the world around us changes dramatically, we are called to adapting with the change.

This pandemic has certainly brought about the need for many adaptations. In fact, it has brought about changes in nearly every single area of our lives. Faith too has changed. Worship has changed. Perhaps even our spirituality has changed! So, how are we doing with adapting and changing to these “pandemic” times?

Things have not been easy, and this pandemic is lasting far longer than any of us expected it would. We all are experiencing what the experts dub “pandemic fatigue”. We are truly sick of this sickness and may feel we just need our lives to return to normal! Yes – many of us feel this way. Then, we add to our pandemic fatigue the National Church struggles and the upcoming loss of our beloved Bishop. We would love to return to what used to be, and yet we see even more changes on the horizon. As hard as it is, I believe we need to move beyond our feelings and be open to flexibility and adaptation...

If we spend our lives with inflexibility to change and refuse to adapt, we may always be in a state of lament for “what used to be”. But those who can seize the moment, even while mourning what used to be, will be open to re-inventing themselves and creating new norms and customs that bring rich meaning and blessing to their lives.

We have done this with some success at St. Peter’s Church. And yet, I believe there is so much more. There is more richness to be found and more blessing to experience than most of us have been open to. And so, my friends, consider this an invitation to step out in faith towards the unknown so that we can discover the Blessings awaiting us!

Even though our world has changed around us, we know that God has not changed and will not change. He is still our rock and our center. And, as our Diocesan Convention called, if we “fix our eyes on Jesus”, he will lead us to joy and perhaps even unexpected blessings. What we need to do is discern the “essential” and focus ourselves there.

We have so much in our common life, even our worship lives, that are wonderful: our church building, our amazing liturgy and music, the beautiful flowers on the altar and so on. But are these the essential parts of our faith? Or are these the niceties that complement the essential?

What is essential to our Christian lives? Well, our worship of God is the primary thing that comes to mind. In fact, the word worship means to ‘show God his worth’. So, centering our thoughts and actions towards God is our priority. What does God ask of us in worship – in how we show him His worth in our lives? Love, dedication, obedience, sincerity, trust, and relationship come to mind.

So, how are we doing with worship? I know that *how* we worship has changed dramatically. But is the worship still real, still meaningful, still worthy of God? Does our worship relay to God just how much He is worth to us, both individually and corporately? How would God say we are doing? If we are not “hitting the mark” with this essential aspect of our Christian lives, then I think we may need to reckon with adaptation and change. And as we consider various aspects of our common life, we should continually ask ourselves, is it ‘for us’, or is it ‘for God’? Because worship is primary, we should be striving for those things that are ‘for God’ as essential matters of our lives and faith.

No, I do not have all the answers – none of us do. There are far too many unknowns today. But I do know who to seek who does have the answers – the direction – the focus we all desperately need: Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. So, let us “fix our eyes on Jesus” and He will lead and guide us. We may experience things differently, we may even need to adapt or change, but God will keep us on His course and lead us into His joy.

With Thanks for His Love for us,

Mother Sue Troiano

St. Peter's News

Daughters of the King

The November DOK meeting will be held via Zoom on Sunday, November 8th.

Vestry Meeting

The November Vestry meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 10th at 5:15pm. The meeting will be held via Zoom.

Morning and Evening Prayer Videos

Please visit the St. Peter's Facebook page for a daily Morning Prayer video with Mtr. Sue and a daily Evening Prayer video with Fr. Hartt. You can also access these services through the St. Peter's Church website's home page.

Sunday Service Videos

Every Sunday a filmed Sunday Service from inside St. Peter's Church with Fr. Hartt and Mtr. Sue is available for your viewing, which also contains music from the St. Peter's Choir. Every Sunday, St. Peter's parishioners are emailed the YouTube video link for that day's service. Each video is also published on the church website on Sunday morning for that day, as well as on the St. Peter's Church Facebook page. The leaflet and readings for each Sunday are also available on the church website. Click on the "Info Center" tab then click on "Weekly Leaflet" or "Weekly Readings" and then click on the appropriate date for each. Both the leaflet and readings can be printed out so that you may follow along with the service.

Virtual Coffee Hour

Virtual Coffee hour is now available at 11:45am every Sunday Morning. Please let us know if you'd like the link for coffee hour emailed to you.



Harvest Altars: This year, the Flower Guild has decided not to decorate the altars with food for Thanksgiving as they have done in the past. Instead, the altars will be decorated with flowers. The food drive will resume next year.

Scam Alert

Quick reminder about scammers targeting churches-- some folks have been getting emails regarding a need for gift cards and there is a request to respond to the email. DON'T respond and certainly do not send them gift cards.

Remember to protect yourself and your information. If you don't recognize an e-mail address, or if the request sounds strange to you, don't respond to it, don't click on any links, don't call any numbers. Report the email as Spam.

Flower Memorials

During the year, our Flower Guild arranges flowers to bring beauty to our sanctuary and joy to our congregation. Those wishing to make a donation for flowers for a memorial, thanksgiving or celebration should call the Church Office to confirm available dates. During Advent, we use only greens; during Lent, the altars are bare. Other Sundays, we welcome contributions. Cost of flowers: Main Altar is \$50, St. Mark's Altar is \$35, and the Tower Altar is also \$35. All requests are payable in advance.

Equinox Thanksgiving Dinner Donations

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Equinox Thanksgiving dinners will look very different this year. To learn more about who will be preparing the meals, or how to make a monetary donation, or how to fundraise for this much needed form of outreach, please visit:
<https://equinoxinc.networkforgood.com/projects/109496-2020-thanksgiving-community-dinner>

Readers for the YouTube Video's

We are looking for members of St. Peter's, who would like to participate in the Taped Readings for our YouTube Church services. If you are interested please call the parish office at 518-434-3502 for more information.



Sunday School & St. Francis Mission

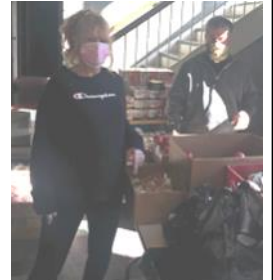
St. Francis Mission Soup Kitchen

Saturday, November 21st ~ 11AM to 1PM

On the 3rd Saturday of every month St. Peter's Church is committed to preparing take out meals and goodies bags to the people at the St. Francis Mission Soup Kitchen, (formerly known as Grace and Holy Innocents) located at 498 Clinton Avenue, Albany, NY 12206. We invite you to join Laura, our Director of Christian Education, in helping with this important 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.

I would like to thank all the people that make St. Francis soup kitchen work like a well oiled machine. Starting with the cooks making nutritious take out meals, the volunteers that come and give their time to serving our community and for all the donations of clothes, book bags and home items that are used again with purpose.

During the month of November, I will be collecting coats for the children and elderly, mostly needed sizes are 4 to 10 youth. I will pick up any donation, socially distant of course, just drop me an email or give me a call.



Children's Videos

Every Sunday we feature a Sunday School Lesson video and a Children's Homily video for you to watch from home. The YouTube Video Links are emailed to you every Sunday along with the Sunday Service video. The videos are also available on the church website home page under the St. Peter's Church Facebook section. Blessings until we can be together again at the Church. If you have any questions, please call Laura @ 518-368-4284.

There will be a special video for Sunday November 22nd. I will be showing you all how to make St. Peter's Sunday School pumpkin bread! Please watch.... carry on the tradition and enjoy a loaf with your Thanksgiving Day meal. Please see the recipe below. That being said, I send my love to all my little angels...miss you all. God bless, Laura Rulison

PUMPKIN BREAD

4 eggs
1 lb. can pumpkin
1/2 c. vegetable oil
2/3 c. water
3 1/2 c. sifted flour
3 c. sugar
2 tsp. baking soda
1 tsp. salt
1 tsp. cinnamon
1 tsp. nutmeg
1 tsp. cloves
1 c. golden raisins
1 c. chopped pecans

In large mixing bowl, beat together eggs, pumpkin, oil and water
Fold in flour, sugar, soda, salt and spices. Stir in raisins and nuts.
Bake in 9x5x3 loaf pans (2) at 325 degrees for 1 hour. Reduce heat to 275 degrees for 1/2 hour.



November 2019



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
<p>1 All Saints' Day with Baptism</p> <p>10:30am - Holy Communion</p> <p>See Website for Video on You Tube</p>	<p>2 Commemoration of All Faithful Departed</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>4</p> <p>12:05pm - Ho</p>
<p>8 Twenty-third Sunday after Pentecost</p> <p>10:30am - Holy Communion D.O.K. Zoom Meeting</p> <p>See Website for Video on You Tube</p>	<p>9</p>	<p>10</p> <p>5:15pm - Vestry Meeting</p>	<p>11 Vetera Office</p> 
<p>15 Twenty-fourth Sunday after Pentecost</p> <p>10:30am - Holy Communion</p> <p>See Website for Video on You Tube</p>	<p>16</p>	<p>17</p>	<p>18</p> <p>12:05pm - Ho</p>
<p>22 Last Sunday after Pentecost Christ the King Sunday</p> <p>10:30am - Holy Communion</p> <p>See Website for Video on You Tube</p>	<p>23</p>	<p>24</p>	<p>25</p> <p>12:05pm - Ho Thanksgiv</p>
<p>29 The First Sunday of Advent</p> <p>10:30am - Holy Communion</p> <p>See Website for Video on You Tube</p>	<p>30 St. Andrew the Apostle</p>		



Count Your Blessings



Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Daily Communion	5 EDOA Priest Retreat	6 EDOA Priest Retreat	7
Veteran's Day Office Closed 	12	13	14
Daily Communion	19	20	21 10:00am-12:00pm - Bible Symposium at Cathedral of All Saints 11:00am - Angels in Training
Daily Communion Thanksgiving Eve Service	26 Thanksgiving Day Office Closed 	27 Office Closed	28
	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Give Thanks to the Lord, for He is good. Psalm 107:1</i></p> 		

Saint of the Month Club

All Faithful Departed, November 2nd

In the New Testament, the word “saints” is used to describe the entire membership of the Christian community, and in the Collect for All Saints’ Day the word “elect” is used in a similar sense. From very early times, however, the word “saint” came to be applied primarily to persons of heroic sanctity, whose deeds were recalled with gratitude by later generations.

Beginning in the tenth century, it became customary to set aside another day—as a sort of extension of All Saints—on which the Church remembered that vast body of the faithful who, though no less members of the company of the redeemed, are unknown in the wider fellowship of the Church. It was also a day for particular remembrance of family members and friends.

Though the observance of the day was abolished at the Reformation because of abuses connected with Masses for the dead, a renewed understanding of its meaning has led to a widespread acceptance of this commemoration among Anglicans, and to its inclusion as an optional observance in the calendar of the Episcopal Church.

Collect:

O God, the Maker and Redeemer of all believers: Grant to the faithful departed the unsearchable benefits of the passion of thy Son; that on the day of his appearing they may be manifested as thy children; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, one God, now and for ever. Amen

.Psalm Lessons 130

Wisdom 3:1–9 or 116:10–17 or Isaiah 25:6–9 1

Thessalonians 4:13–18 or 1 Corinthians 15:50–58

John 5:24–27

Preface of the Commemoration of the Dead

Composer of the Month Club



Leo Sowerby (1895 – 1968), American composer and church musician, was the winner of the Pulitzer Prize for music in 1946, and was often called the “Dean of American church music” in the early to mid 20th century.

He served as organist at Episcopal churches in Chicago, and in 1962 became the founding director of the College of Church Musicians based at the Washington National Cathedral.

His substantial output includes over 500 works in every genre but opera and ballet. His later works, done at St James's, Chicago, and Washington Cathedral, are primarily church music for choir and organ.

His motet, *Eternal Light* and a substantial setting of Psalm 122 are in our choir’s repertoire. We have sung both works on choir trips to England.

Annual Bible Symposium with Rev. Dr. Wesley Hill

The 2020 Bible Symposium will be held in accordance with Covid 19 safety guidelines. You must wear a mask to be admitted to the Cathedral. We will do our best to provide socially-distanced and safe seating. To enable us to do so, we request that you keep your mask on throughout the event.

Tickets are sold on the website on a first-come, first serve basis. No tickets will be sold at the door. Sales end November 20. Please read and fill out the registration form carefully.

Saturday, November 21, 2020

10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Cathedral of All Saints, Albany

For more information please visit: <https://www.cathedralofallsaints.org/events/bible-symposium-2020>

From the Archives



The 1918 Spanish Flu in the Capitol Region

The first wave of Spanish flu hit in the summer of 1918. It was mild and the Capitol Region was lulled into a false sense of security. It was not until the second wave hit in September that the disease hit with the force of a tsunami. It was a swift unseen killer attacking the lungs of young and old alike with patients coughing up blood, with eyes and ears showing a bloody discharge. Fevers as high as 104 degrees were noted.

Although the reporting system for cases was incomplete in those days it was soon realized that Albany was part of a world-wide pandemic. On September 27th the New York State Health Commissioner, Dr. Herman Biggs wrote a letter to state newspapers listing the symptoms and treatment and warning their readership to brace for serious illness.

As Albany became overwhelmed with the sick, students from the Medical College were enlisted to provide care. By October 9th all schools, churches, theaters, movie houses and libraries were closed. Public gatherings were suspended. The City Council made it a misdemeanor to cough or sneeze in public without covering the mouth. Orphanages were closed to visitors or new intakes.

By the third week of October there were nearly 6,000 cases in Albany. Schenectady reported the disease in neighborhoods, factories and institutions. At General Electric more than half the work force was out. School officials in Scotia and Saratoga Springs ordered their buildings closed. Morgues were overwhelmed.

A newly created Smallpox Hospital was reorganized and made available for flu victims. The Guild for Public Health Nursing, the Catholic Women's Service, and the Red Cross all lent their aid. Some hospitals were so short staffed that they had to rely on volunteers from churches and schools.

By November 1st, some 7,091 cases had been reported in Albany. Later research revealed that the virus causing the pandemic was the H1N1 virus of avian origin. It functioned by over-stimulating the body's healthy immune system causing the lungs to fill with fluid.

Just as the pandemic had suddenly appeared, so it declined. By Monday November 11th, children returned to school and Albany's theaters reopened. But the count of the number of casualties was high - between 20 to 50 million deaths worldwide, with 675,000 deaths in the U.S. There were over 450 deaths in Albany and 364 deaths in Schenectady.

These deaths had created many broken families. Local churches and charities now pitched in to place orphans and distribute food. By the beginning of 1919 Albany began to return to normal.

MINUTES FOR THE VESTRY MEETING
ST. PETER'S PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH
September 15, 2020

Present: Fr. Hartt, Mtr. Sue Troiano, J. Chenot, D. Spath, N. Creagan, C. Gordon, F. Hershey, M. Holden, M. Lundberg, T. Murphy, J. Russom, G. Scala

Absent: A. Closson

Opening Prayer Led by Father Hartt

Approval of the Minutes of Vestry Meeting, March 10th, 2020

The March 10th, 2020 minutes were approved on a motion by T. Murphy and seconded by M. Holden. The motion was unanimously approved by the vestry.

Sr. Warden's Report –J. Chenot

Jim started his report thanking both Mother Sue and Father Hartt for all their tireless effort they have put forth each day keeping us connected posting Morning and Evening on Facebook. That being said the Sunday services that they have been put together with Neil Keen have been superb.

When putting this September Zoom meeting together Jim needed to refer back to our last meeting we were together which was March 10th. At that time we were all looking forward to Holy week and Easter Sunday services. Unfortunately we were all separated by Covid and weekly church life as we have known it has sadly been put on hold for now. Sadly we have lost close members from the congregation and choir unable to morn together, weddings and baptisms put on hold. Some have been able to move on to their day to day lives, but there are many that have had their jobs put on hold, some confined to their home alone and loved ones in nursing facilities unable to see their loved one. Please be assured that our clergy and wonderful congregation is praying for everyone during this pandemic and it is gratifying to know many of you are reaching out to each other for support during this time.

We would like to thank many of you who have financially continued to support St. Peter's during this time. Many individuals have had some set back financially and we completely understand those who may not be able to contribute as they normally would. On the other hand there are some who are slightly contributing more to help our minister's discretionary account that is used for those who reach out to our clergy for financial help. Please know your generosity does not go unnoticed. It is important for all of us to remember that though we are not meeting each Sunday that we do have office personnel still working behind the scenes, clergy still working keeping us connected and day to day bills to attend to including payroll. We are very fortunate to have been able to somewhat rely on our endowment which has been doing well to date but we still need to financially support St. Peter's if we are able to do so we don't evade the principle

This is a hard time for many of us in some shape or form and we pray that in the near future we will all be able to worship together as we have done in the past.

Thank all of you for your prayers and support and God bless.

Sunday Attendance – The Average Sunday Attendance is 126.5

Rector's Report - We have been through a lot. We last formally met as a Vestry on March 10th, but there has been much going on behind the scenes.

Your Vestry and Wardens have risen to the demands of this pandemic in countless ways. It is not possible to recount all the various decisions that were reached and plans executed since our last meeting, but I believe that the following are especially important to report here.

The planning of parish life often went week by week. As the gravity of the pandemic became clearer, the guidelines and restrictions from NYS and the Diocese kept evolving. I want to commend the Vestry, parish office, parishioners, and Mtr. Sue for keeping the information stream going and the updates as clear and frequent as possible. Managing communication in a parish of the complexity of St. Peter's is far from easy. We needed to employ letters, newsletters, phone calls, videos, and Facebook. We discovered that there is not a single "go-to" platform that works for all. The various ages and technical abilities of our parishioners certainly became a factor in the degree to which individual members felt informed of the latest news. We did our best. One topic for future Vestry meetings should be the communication infrastructure. I will say that we did an overall admirable job. Of course, there are still things to learn and weaknesses to be remedied.

The support of Dr. Terry Flannery and Jr. Warden-Nurse Deb Spath could not have been stronger. We felt at all times that we had the needed medical knowledge and consults on offer, I want to thank both Debbie and Terry for their great concern for us. Both spoke at church at the onset of the pandemic. Dr. Flannery then added an invaluable video which brought us current on the medical consensus. I know that this video took many, many hours of Dr. Flannery's time. He did it for love and concern. We are grateful indeed.

Perhaps the greatest innovation born of the pandemic was the addition of video Services on Facebook and our website. At the start of Holy Week, my heart was convicted that we could not endure having an unfamiliar liturgy from the Diocese as the foundation of our worship life -- especially in Holy Week. By an act of pure grace, we stepped out in faith. We brought an iPad and iPhone camera into our Sanctuary. The clergy recorded the Service and took interior pictures. Neil Keen did the rest. The quality of his work is stunning. The previously recorded choir music has been spectacular. Neil also took some amazing pictures of the church. Early on, Ray Hull offered some excellent photographs of his past work.

It needs to be said that this is all quite labor intensive. What appears effortless on screen in fact reflects hours and hours of Neil and clergy time. Both the Bishop and congregation want these videos to continue. We will do our best to keep them going at the present quality. If some music repeats on occasion, please understand it is a matter of archival supply. We are trying our best to keep the videos lively and fresh. The Sunday videos are now accompanied by an in-person 10:30AM Service of Holy Communion at the church. Thus far, we have never had more than 14 parishioners in attendance. Usually, the number has been in the single digits. We do not know what autumn and winter will bring, but I think we are seeing the actual level of health concern in our in-person attendance. It is a concern likely combined with the desire for a full music program that is not possible at this time. For many, the videos are simply more like what our parishioners seek. We are offering a Wednesday Holy Communion in the Garden as long as weather permits. We will then move to the Pumpelly Room.

Our Sunday Service online has been supplemented by an almost continuous cycle of Morning and Evening Prayer. At last count, we appear to have posted over 290 Services of Morning and Evening Prayer. Total viewership is 9,915. Many have told me that the pattern of this cycle of daily prayer has sustained them and aided greatly in their sense of connection. Some additional figures: Palm Sunday viewership was 420 and Easter 381. Our ASA since the close has been 130. This would reflect single viewings. Of course, it is likely higher, as often couples or families watch together. Increasing the number by a conservative 25%, we would be at an ASA over 160. This would be the highest ASA we have had at St. Peter's in more than 15 years. The Parish Facebook page has likewise been a lifeline for large numbers of our current and past membership. I would like to encourage our Facebook members to remember that an election season can be a time of easy controversy and offense. We need to be careful with one another and respectful.

Since the start of the pandemic, St. Peter's has held four funerals. We have a 5th funeral still pending. The dearly departed are: Mary Dunn, Barbara Puig, Elaine Keenan, Elizabeth Tebbutt, and Geoffrey Hoderath. It was a mercy that none of the deaths were due to Covid-19. However, there was understandable sorrow in not being able to have our traditional funeral service. We did our best outside at the graveside and in the funeral homes. Each service presented its own set of challenges to do safely. Our hearts and prayers go out to the families. It has been such a hard season of loss. We have had one wedding, which was a joy.

Many of us have watched with sadness the failure of some college students to behave safely. There have been both closures and outbreaks as a result. I mention this unfortunate reality because theory and practice do not always line up. It is one thing to have a policy, it is another to get folks

to follow it. With respect to St. Peter's, I will need to be guided by behavior, not theory. If we have non-compliance, we will need to conform policy to the facts on the ground. We must do so for everyone's sake. Many of us fall within vulnerable groups or have those who do in our immediate family. We are only doing well in NYS because we have acted responsibly. But it is clear that we can lose what we have gained if we don't keep it up. I am confident that we can all continue to follow best practices.

I am delighted that Laura Rulison has added the reading of a Bible story to our videos. We will continue to add Sunday School content in the coming weeks.

We also plan to offer a "virtual coffee hour" via Zoom. I want to thank Tori Waldron for this technical initiative. We could not do it without her able assistance. Tori has secured a Zoom account for the parish. The needed parish iPad arrived today. We will need to set it up for cellular service. The iPad will also be used for recording the church's videos. Transferring large videos from the clergy's own devices to Neil has been difficult via WiFi. The church's iPad will allow us to drop off the iPad itself in Neil's office after recording. Neil can then take it home and thus avoid the sending of large files via WiFi. We are working on a plan to get WiFi up in the church. We will also be looking at fixed cameras that could be used to record and possibly transmit major Services.

I want to thank the Altar and Flower Guilds for their work during this time. Our sexton staff has likewise been hard at work with the needed cleaning regiments. Thank you Pat, Ian, and Wayne. I wish to thank Ruth for her managing of the parish office. Janice Chenot has carried on with her many office responsibilities as a volunteer. Thank you, Janice. Mtr. Sue has made the complexity of these circumstances so much easier. Her counsel and wisdom have been invaluable.

I believe that we have charted the best course for now. Most of all, we need to remain committed and confident in God's grace for the future. "Stay calm and carry on!" Please keep one another in your prayers. God will see us through. In Christ, Fr. Hartt+

Finance – G. Scala - Treasurer's Report

Offerings YTD through August were \$130,442. This compares to a budgeted number of \$155,100 leaving us with a budget deficit of (\$24,658). Under the circumstances of the Covid Pandemic and what it has meant to our in-person worship, this is encouraging in many aspects. However, we do need to remind parishioners that their pledge to St. Peter's is more critical than ever during this time. Checks can be mailed into the office or made online through the church's website.

While there have been some ups and downs, the investment/endowment accounts are performing well and are exceeding budget projections. Merrill Lynch has shown a YTD positive return of +9.97% and the Key accounts showed a return of +8.46% for the Year to date. This leaves us with a positive budget variance in this area of \$189,846. Both accounts did perform favorably versus market indexes, but with Covid and an upcoming Presidential election we must prepare for increased volatility. Expenses for August YTD were \$22,547 under budget.

Pledges for 2020 stand at continue to come in. We have received 48 pledges to date for a total amount of \$137,802.

Property –

The chandelier in the Columbarium was taken down and repaired and is now back in working order.

The plumbing in the bathroom upstairs by the parish hall has been fixed and the shower has been removed.

Pat Shortall has given the property committee a list of some repairs to be done.

Outreach – Mother Sue

Old Business – None

New Business – None

Associate Rector's Report – It goes without saying that this year has been like no other. And so, this Report may differ greatly from the norm because of both the time frame I need to cover since our last meeting in March and also the circumstances caused by the current COVID-19 Pandemic.

In March, at the time of the last Vestry meeting, I enjoyed a one-week vacation traveling to a family member's home in Florida. While there, our world changed dramatically. In fact, the day I returned to NYS was the day that the NYS Governor's mandatory home quarantine began. And so, sheltering in place and ministry from my home became the norm.

Pastoral connection was fostered, and continues to be fostered, mostly through phone calls, emails, texting and letter writing. Initially, calls were brief but important connecting points. However, as time went on, the calls became much deeper and lengthier as individuals shared their concerns and needs. It has been frustrating to have our in-person connections curtailed. It has been especially frustrating not to be able to visit nursing home residents, shut-ins or those who are admitted to hospitals (although that is slowly changing with me having made my first hospital visitation recently). It has been most grievous to me, as a priest, not to be able to administer Holy Communion and anointing to our congregation, or even prayers at the time of death.

However, prayers have and will continue even if from afar. The DOK Julia chapter, of which I am a member and chaplain to, has maintained the daily prayers of the church and congregation. Additionally, I have broadcast Morning Prayer via Facebook since March. This outreach not only maintains our congregation's (and my personal) daily prayers but is also a witness to the wider world. Many other individuals join us in our prayers via Facebook. Additionally, many enjoy the Morning Prayer video services prepared in advance and broadcast via YouTube each Sunday morning. I have participated as reader, preacher and recently Officiant for these taped prayer services. In June, we reopened for in-person worship with Holy Communion and I have led these services bi-weekly since. In short, the work of the church continues.

It has been challenging to learn, embrace and trust the technological helps that allow us to continue our ministry. Often, I lament that I never signed up to be a "TV Evangelist"! However, we know that God can and will continue to work through us even amidst our challenges.

In May, I participated virtually in the annual CROP Walk by walking the distance in my neighborhood and raising funds for both local and national food-assisting organizations. In June, I participated in the Diocesan diaconal Ordination at Christ the King Spiritual Life Center. That same month, I watched Bishop Love's ecclesiastical trial.

We continue to await the verdict and so our deepest prayers continue for our Bishop, Diocese and Church. Also, during the past six months, I have been very busy in my role as Chair of the Commission on Ministry, with coordination of several ordinations as well as continuing the Diocesan discernment and ordination process for over 25 individuals. Over the summer, I supplied twice at other congregations, filling in for emergency situations so that other communities could hold Holy Communion services on Sundays. Lastly, I also was able to enjoy a few days vacation during the 1st week of September. With 2 more weeks to schedule for this year, it is quite uncertain that will be possible with all the work to be done.

Lately, I have had an office presence part-time; on Sundays, Mondays and Wednesdays and work from home the other days. I try to take Friday as a day-off although I still livestream Morning Prayer services via Facebook on Fridays. My cell phone # is on my office voicemail greeting in case individuals have pastoral emergencies and need to reach me right away and so I am always available to the parish.

My final thought is that if there is any encouragement for us to take, it is in our Lord Jesus Christ. Although we have never been through a time like this, which for most of us is the most difficult and stressful period we have ever lived through, our gracious Lord has been through this and so much more; and we can surely trust him now and always. Our church has survived through wars, the birth of our nation, and even a pandemic before (1918-1919). And, our Lord Jesus Christ has suffered death and then rose again to life! God will not leave or forsake us if we continue to be faithful witnesses to our Lord Jesus Christ. Our challenge and mission is to continue to be the church and share the good news of Jesus Christ with the world.k8

Adjournment - A motion to adjourn was made by G. Scala and seconded by M. Lundberg, then was approved unanimously by the vestry.

Compline - Fr. 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

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E-Mail:

Receptionist@stpeterschurchalbany.org

Website:

www.stpeterschurchalbany.org

Services

Sunday

Holy Communion 10:30 a.m.

See Website for Video
on You Tube

Wednesday

Holy Communion 12:05 p.m.

ST. PETER'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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Albany, New York 12207

