



Cornerstone

January 2021

Newsletter of St. Peter's Protestant Episcopal Church

107 State Street, Albany, New York

2020 Annual Reports

ST. PETER'S CHURCH RECTOR'S REPORT

And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. (Matthew 16: 18.)

The other day I was speaking with our Office Manager, Ruth Manss about Christmas this year. As we struggled to find words, I thought of Rod Serling and the beginning of the Twilight Zone. The reference dated us no doubt, but it would be difficult to describe the past year as anything other than shaking at the foundations of church life and our society.

The good news is that the church foundation proved as solid as Jesus promised. We should not be surprised. The Church is not a human creation. Yes, we children muddle through with fits and starts. But the Father's hand is always there guiding us through -- often in ways quite imperceptible to us. We see those ways most clearly in the rearview mirror. An Annual Meeting is a bit of a rearview mirror. It is a time to gather up what we can see and also reflect on what is a much deeper spiritual reality: It is Jesus in our midst. It is His love commandment in action.

The pandemic revealed a great deal about us. It showed that our coming together for Sunday worship and Holy Communion, choir practice and Top-of-the-Hill, Flower, Usher, and Altar Guilds, the annual Parish Picnic and Pre-Thanksgiving Dinner, Sunday School and Children's Chapel -- even Coffee Hour, all of these things opened to their importance as we mourned their interruption this year. This sense of profound loss is as it should be. It is a sign of parish health. Church should be the center of our lives. Church is primary family. It is for us here at St. Peter's.

This year's annual report from your rector will be principally one of thanksgiving. Let me begin with your Vestry. When one agrees to serve on the Vestry, one never really knows what the year will require. To say the obvious, 2020 was a model year of the unexpected. Jim Chenot, Deb Spath, George Scala, Nancy Cregan, Jeffrey Russom, Christie Gordon, Ashley Rose, Maria Holden, Tim Murphy, Fred Hershey, and Mark Lundberg, each brought a vision of how to proceed at this time which was essential to our getting safely through 2020 as a parish. We were able to shape policies and practices that responded to the changing facts on the ground. We were made better at all points for one another's views.

Jim, Deb, and George shouldered an especially heavy load in working with the rector to make our way through. Many decisions ultimately fell to me as rector, but not without the invaluable insights and prayers of the Vestry that you most wisely elected. I do not claim that all of my decisions were perfect about our in-person worship life. My goal has always been the "big picture" and getting everyone safely to the other side. Clearly, that journey continues. Indeed, we are beginning the worst of it now. Please know that the Vestry and Wardens that you elected could not be more committed to this parish and your welfare.

You each have been generous in countless ways to sustain us. Stewardship has been surprisingly strong within the economics of our times. George Scala saw us artfully through the initial hump of the pandemic by the Federal Payroll Protection Plan. Parishioners responded very generously in kind as you were able in the economic downturn. I cannot thank you enough. I was especially moved by the continuous outpouring of outreach money from church members to aid those in need. It reflects who we are and that goodness has held strong.

The ways in which you have taken care of one another in phone calls and errands and countless acts of love can not go unmentioned. I know that many of you took it upon yourself to check on parishioners and help them through the often long days of isolation or worry. Our blessed Laura Rulison has been a living saint in her work at the Children's Cafe and St. Francis outreach. The Thanksgiving baskets and Christmas gifts were especially appreciated. Janice Chenot was an able helper throughout. St. Paul says, "*Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.*" (Galatians 6.2.) I saw that verse in action before my very eyes. I say it often, but know that I am proud of you.

A very special thank you needs to be given to our Choirmaster, Neil Keen. The Sunday videos have been a priceless gift to sustain our faith. The music and church visuals powerfully intertwine with the flow of the liturgy. It has been “the next best thing” to being able to gather at church. Indeed, many have remarked that they have seen in the videos wonderful parts of the church that they had not noticed before. Neil has spent countless hours on making these videos for us. We have been recording since Palm Sunday! The parish website bears witness to the multitude of services and each was Neil’s labor of love. These Sunday videos have been combined with a cycle of Morning and Evening Prayer posted on Facebook by the clergy. It has been a crash course for us in technology. It is rather amazing what an iPhone and iPad can accomplish with God’s grace. To God be the glory.

The Vestry has considered investing in an internet connection in the church and also mounted cameras to record live Services. As we once offered our Sunday services on the radio, perhaps the time has come to consider making a video option for those who remain housebound following the pandemic. This is a tricky discernment. We don’t want to discourage presence and the routine receiving of the Sacraments. However, our truly housebound members deserve resources that could be available in video form with some investment.

The office staff have been hard at work this year in new ways. The cleaning regiments are much more intense. Many more mailings have had to come out of the parish office. Ruth has needed to coordinate readers for the videos and manage deliveries safely. The clergy have been a tad frantic at times and Ruth has been a trooper about it all. Ruth Manss is as steady as a rock. We are blessed by her non-anxious presence and calm ways. Thank you, Ruth.

Janice Chenot has continued to be an essential volunteer to the smooth running of so many aspects of the office. Janice’s offering of her time and talent is beyond generous. Janice has given many, many years to the parish office and our smooth operation. Janice has also partnered with Laura Rulison in many outreach activities. Thank you, Janice.

The Choir has borne an especially hard burden during this pandemic. The gift of singing has been the center of choir members’ parish life. We have been the grateful recipients of the blessing of a rich choral tradition that has been hard for us to forego in this difficult season. But the choir has borne an even greater sense of loss. Choir is a rich community and a devotional offering central to their faith.

Choir members have generously offered to sing in smaller numbers or as soloists to keep music alive in our Services. They have done so beautifully. Both routine Sunday worship and Christmas Eve have been a tribute to their depth of training and commitment. Mostly, I want to acknowledge the sacrifice that they have made in not singing together as a full choir for our health and wellbeing. It has been a profound loss to them and to us.

The death this year of our beloved John Cerniglia and Geoffrey Hoderath added to the profound sorrows of the year. John and Geoffrey’s dedication to the choir over so many years is beyond what can be expressed. We know that they both are singing with the angels and thus finally hearing the perfection for which they always strove. Here I wish also to thank Malcolm Moran for being willing to assume the role of Crucifier in Geoffrey’s honor.

Pat Shortall, Wayne Hill, and Ian Mike have been “frontline workers” in countless ways. I want to thank them especially for their service to the parish and their courage on our behalf. They each have cared for us and one another in ways above and beyond the call of duty. My thanks here also extends to our brave ushers on Christmas Eve.

Mother Sue Troiano has been the best colleague in ministry that I could hope to receive. She knows me well and has a knack for shoring up my deficiencies without complaint or fanfare. Her preaching this year has been a great encouragement to us. We have seen how the Holy Spirit works through her so strongly. I am especially grateful for her work in organizing pastoral care at the start of the pandemic. Thank you, Mother Sue and Jimmy as well for all that he has done for us this year.

To say the obvious, 2020 was a year that we will never forget. But God is merciful and good. He has allowed us to see at every turning point why the church is a Divine and not human construction. The spiritual stones are the members of Christ Body empowered by the Holy Spirit given in our Baptism. If this year has not shown us how dependent we are upon the Faith we have received from those who have gone before, it would be a willful act of blindness. The merely human side of the equation has had its shortcomings to be sure. We are all worn down by the pandemic in ways that no doubt reveal our unique personal frailties and dependence upon Grace. But that is good for us.

One thing is clear. God has carried and is carrying us through. If we say our prayers, we can count on that continuing because Jesus loves us. So, say your prayers and continue in love. Jesus is Lord of all!

Faithfully, Fr. Hartt

ST. PETER'S CHURCH ASSOCIATE RECTOR'S REPORT

I began preparing this Annual Report as I typically do, by reading through my report from last year. But then, I realized, that wouldn't help too much as this past year has been like no other year before! Much has changed for sure. And yet much remains the same. Our Lord remains the same, our faith remains the same and our calling remains the same!

I started the year honeymooning after our glorious wedding celebration! Our thanks to our wonderful church family who supported and celebrated with us! Our return home to "normal life" was short lived when the pandemic closed in on us in March with the NY Pause. Like many of you, my office was closed and I began working from home. As I write this now, I continue to work from home part of the week and go to the church/office part of the week. This will continue for some time it appears. I have set up a fully functioning church office at my house, met all my technological needs and have grown accustomed to virtual access and also Zoom meetings!

Worship services went online in March for Holy Week and beyond. I began offering Morning Prayer daily. This continues today with only a brief hiatus in July for a few days' vacation. During Advent, I made a change by offering Advent Wreath Prayers online instead. It seemed fitting to mark the Season of Advent in a special way. After Christmas, Morning Prayer began again. These online videos, posted to both the Church FaceBook page and website, are watched by members of St. Peter's and many others so they will continue until we can all safely gather in-person again.

In person worship was on hiatus from March until June. Since June, we have had weekly in-person services on Wednesdays at noon and Sundays at 10:30. These are sparsely attended as people continue to have concerns about in-person gatherings. Please know your clergy understand your concerns. For those who are ready, we welcome you back to our in-person gatherings. We appreciate the music that Neil and a small choir offers on Sunday mornings. For others who cannot join us, we will continue to offer our weekly YouTube video service. Neil continues to do an amazing job editing these services and we hear they are a Blessing to many.

Pastoral care has been the greatest challenge for your clergy this year. We have been unable to visit you in home, nursing homes or hospitals. Even care at the time of death has been greatly limited. Our community suffered some tremendous losses this year and our prayers continue for their loved ones. Our pastoral care, for the most part, has been reduced to phone calls, text messages and emails, with the occasional Face Book outreach. Please know that we continue to be eager to know of your joys, and your sorrows and needs, and to support you however we can. Even more importantly, please know that our prayers continue for you. Please reach out and connect to us and to one another however you can. It is so important we continue to foster community during these challenging times.

We continue to have a few visitors and drop-ins at the church office and continue to minister to them while also practicing safe social distancing. It is true that downtown has quieted down much, however, as offices are closed and workers are working from home. If you know of any need, please do make your clergy aware. We know that needs have not stopped during this pandemic. In fact, for some, needs have multiplied. We are still eager to meet the Outreach needs of our neighbors and community.

The church participated, once again, in the annual CROP Walk by collecting sponsors online and each individual walking in their own neighborhoods. We were glad to continue to support our local and national food banks and feeding programs, especially this year when so many individuals are either under or unemployed.

Diocesan Convention was moved to October and to an on-line format. The clergy and your delegates attended and voted on the necessary business needs of our Diocese. At his annual Convention Address, Bishop Love announced his resignation effective 2/1/2021 (following a one-month sabbatical). His resignation resolves and ends the ecclesiastical discipline process the National Church had initiated against him. Needless to say, his resignation is devastating news for us all and we will continue to keep him, his family and our diocesan family in prayers as our Diocese moves towards this transition in leadership.

The Daughters of the King continue their prayer ministry among us. We have held monthly Zoom meetings to both connect with one another and to update our prayer concerns. I thank the Daughters for their constant commitment to prayer.

And speaking of Zoom - coffee hour went virtual in September. We give our thanks to Tori Waldron for setting up our church Zoom account and getting parishioners (and clergy) acclimated to the technology! This has been a wonderful way for both shut-ins and those living far away to continue to connect on Sundays. Please join us sometime if you can.

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 to see God continue to raise up men and women for ministry in the Church. Our work on the Commission has continued despite the pandemic. And, with Bishop Love's announcement of his resignation, our work increased greatly as we completed all canonical requirements for many individuals 'in the process' so that Bishop Love could ordain them before his departure. On December 1st, the Diocese determined that new applications for Holy Orders would be on hold until such time as our Diocese had a new Bishop in place. And so, my work on the Commission will become minimal over the coming months.

Despite the challenges of this year, I am most proud of the amazing staff of St Peter's that continue to "hold it all together"! Fr. Hartt, Neil, Laura, Janice, Ruth, Ian, Connie, Pat, Don and Wayne are the most amazing and dedicated group of individuals and I am blessed to work and serve with. A solution was found for every problem that presented itself during this challenging year, and we all were stretched to think "outside of the box" again and again. Yet this staff persevered and did so joyfully. I am also grateful to the Vestry members for their leadership and also flexibility in switching to Zoom meetings; the Altar and Flower Guilds for their continued care of our sanctuary and for so many of you that continue to minister and serve one another in every way possible. Our family may be "socially distant", yet we are ever close in spirit!

It was a very busy 2020. So busy, in fact, that I never fit in all my vacation time and I hope to take some time over the winter months to catch up in my personal life. We will continue to move forward with great anticipation for what 2021 will bring us. But we continue to move forward with full faith that God is with us and ever leading us onward. For that, I know we are all grateful.

With love,
Mtr. Sue Troiano

ST. PETER'S CHURCH SENIOR WARDEN'S REPORT

I pray this report finds you well. I want to start by wishing everyone a Happy New Year – yes, a Happy New Year we can all look forward to. There is no doubt that each and every one of us has, in some way, been affected by this past year's pandemic; personally, socially, economically and/or spiritually. Many have lost family members and were not able to give them a proper goodbye with a traditional funeral; others may have missed out on important church ceremonies such as a wedding or a baptism. A constant for us all is that we have missed out on so much precious time not being able to see loved ones throughout this period of self-quarantining. For the first time in our lives, many of us have experienced the absence of attending church for almost a complete liturgical year; not finishing the Lenten season, Good Friday, Easter, and Christmas. An entire church calendar year not socially worshipping together. I know that I, along with many others, feel a hole in our hearts, longing to see our church family. I do not consider you "just the congregation" at St. Peter's Church, you are "my family" at St. Peter's Church, and I miss everyone as I can imagine so many others do as well.

Early in the beginning stages of shutdowns due to COVID-19, it was apparent that we were not going to be able to complete the Lenten season or celebrate Easter in person at St. Peter's. Our Clergy, Father Hartt and Mother Sue Troiano, did not hesitate to immediately reach out to us through social media by posting daily Morning and Evening prayer and they immediately prepared a pre-recorded Easter Sunday service in a short period of time. Our talented Choir Director, Neil Keen, has been editing these digital services every week; beginning with Holy Week and continuing through our wonderful Christmas Eve Service. The Clergy and Neil have gone above and beyond to keep our congregation spiritually connected through these trying times. Their love for St. Peter's is apparent through these videos which takes much time and effort to produce. Many thanks to all three of you, the services have helped many of us feel spiritually connected while we cannot be physically connected in attending church.

In the summer, we began receiving some guidelines from State and local levels as well as our diocese on how to open churches safely. Since then, we have been open each Sunday for a 10:30am Holy Communion Service with certain restrictions to keep everyone as safe as we can. I would like to thank Ian Mike and Pat Shortall for following the guidelines that are in place for sanitizing the church regularly for our clergy and congregation. I want to also thank Wayne Hill who has stepped up during this time to help clean and sanitize as well. Neil Keen has been able to introduce some choir music into the service by first starting with soloists then working up to putting together quartets that are able to sing socially distanced. The Sunday service has had some regular parishioners attend each week on a small scale, and we hope that other parishioners will attend when they feel comfortable enough to do so. In the meantime, our clergy and Neil will continue producing the wonderful online Sunday Services where many still look to worship safely from home.

Ruth Manss, office manager, has been able to keep the church office running well during these strange times with keeping up with the monthly newsletter, incoming mail, phone calls and periodic mailings. Janice Chenot, office volunteer, has continued her important task of reconciling and tracking contributions, updating the church website, as well as putting together the online and in-person leaflets each week. Thank you both for your diligent service and love of St. Peter's.

With these uncertain times for many, we are fortunate to report that the church has financially been able to weather this pandemic storm. In these tough times the congregation has continued to support St. Peter's financially through mail-in contributions as well as online giving through our website. Many of you have gone over and above being generous by sending in additional contributions to our Clergy's discretionary fund for Community Outreach so that we can continue to serve others who reach out for assistance during these trying times. Again, I want to thank our clergy for their support, helping those in need financially and those who are going through difficult times and are looking for some spiritual comfort. This is only possible with the continued financial support from all of you. Our church continues to receive utility and maintenance bills as well as covering the payroll expenses. The weekly contributions and the return from our endowment has served us well and we need to praise God for that. Our treasurer, George Scala, and I are continually looking at our investment portfolio and budget policies, making sure our financial funds are properly allocated with the help of our financial advisors. Thank you, George, for your continued support and all the work you do for the finance committee. The Vestry has been able to resume monthly meetings through Zoom. I want to thank our Junior Warden, Deb Spath, and the Vestry for all their input and advice throughout this time of uncertainty.

In the Fall, when it was evident that we were not going to be able to completely re-open for church services and special social events we are accustomed to, the first concern was how we would take care of outreach programs we normally participate in. With your financial support and help from Laura Rulison and Janice Chenot, we were able to help two local outreach programs in the inner city of Albany during Thanksgiving and Christmas. The generosity from all of you has helped so many families in need during this past holiday season.

I would like to finish by thanking those who are frontline, medical, or essential workers that have had to work tirelessly day in and day out through this pandemic without any break. We have many in our parish who are in these positions and it has taken a toll on many with high tensions and fatigue setting in – our prayers are with you.

Though some of us have been separated physically from our church family for some time now, it is apparent that the love for St. Peter's is still in everyone's heart and soul. Thank you for your support and prayers to St. Peter's as well as your support in reaching out to each other during these difficult times.

Jim Chenot

ST. PETER'S CHURCH PROPERTY AND RESTORATION REPORT

It was a bit tranquil in 2020 as far as property was concerned. Beginning in early January last year we were able to begin phase 2 of the Interior Restoration project with the intention to have completed for Easter Services. The project was completed by Easter but unfortunately services were put on hold due to the covid pandemic. Phase 2 consisted of all the stone pillars and archways being cleaned. In preparation looking forward to Easter we also had the mosaic floors redone restoring them to their beautiful luster. We can only pray that this coming year many will be able to see the work done that normally see the interior of the church on a regular basis. Phase 3, the final phase will be restoring and cleaning the sanctuary walls, ceiling and altar. This phase will be addressed again in the near future and will let the congregation know where we stand financially to complete this last phase. It would be nice to see this project completed by Christmas 2021 if the funding is there and Egan Restoration can work us in their schedule. We are very fortunate that some are continuing to contribute to this project and contributions are being earmarked for this next phase.

There is still interest to update the Pumpelly room, fixing the plaster wall, painting and purchasing new furniture which is sorely needed. Again this project will need to be addressed and see when it is feasible to do after we look at our financial situation after the pandemic winds down.

Thank you to those who have financially contributed and supported these important projects in the past, and continue to do so. The church has not looked as beautiful as it does now and we are looking forward to following up on these projects as soon as it is feasible.

Jim Chenot

ST. PETER'S CHURCH USHERS GUILD

I would like to say a hearty “Thank You” to all the Ushers who served this past year. Please join me in acknowledging the contributions of the following ushers:

Clark Daggett; Fred Lincoln; Bernie Burnell; John Davis; John Sterrett; Catherine Schunk; Julie Hotmer Drao; Sharon DeBonis; William Collins; Kevin Creagan; Jack Ratzel; Jeff Russom; Sherry Bishko; Frank Spath; Chris Grill; Mark Lundberg; Michelle Lundberg; Kevin Creagan; Moses Kamyra

There is no question that this year’s Sunday services have been different. It is my sincere wish that for each of you, the new year brings you and your families a sense of gratitude and peace while awaiting to resume our normal Sunday worship.

Respectfully submitted: Moses M. Kamyra, Head Usher

ST. PETER'S CHURCH ALTAR GUILD

The Altar Guild, in 2020, was responsible for setting and clearing the altar until March arrived and with it our COVID shutdown.

With the church closed our members had no services to set for or to clear. Unfortunately, even with the church’s subsequent limited re-opening, there remains no prudent reason for us to resume our duties yet.

My thanks to our clergy who are handling the limited altar guild duties at this time. My thanks as well to Pat Shortall and Ian Mike for their help with frontal changes. Thank you to Diana Martin and Sharon DeBonis for their continued services with laundering of the linens.

New members are always welcome, either to set the altar or launder and iron our linens, or both: please email me (cathschunk@aol.com) or call the church office anytime.

Respectfully submitted,
Catherine Schunk, Director

Active members for 2020: Barbara Adams, Sharon DeBonis, Pam Gerfin, Laura Grill, Catherine Gabriels, Donna Hershey, Barbara Kelly, Michele Lindberg, Diana Martin, and Donna Ohlman.

ST. PETER'S CHURCH FLOWER GUILD

Regular Flower Guild Activities for 2020 saw the same radical changes that were experienced by all of the parish committees. Gone but not forgotten. Not by any means.

Our normal expectation for many years has been to provide beautiful and appropriate flowers for the Church throughout the year. We are dependent upon the generosity of parishioners who request (and fund) special memorial or thanksgiving offerings. And we work hard to stay within our “budget,” as we decorate the church each week.

During March (when the altars are traditionally bare anyway) everything changed. Our committee of 9 hardworking, loyal members had to adapt to individual needs and changes in the Church services. Instead of doing altar flowers on Friday mornings for the Sunday service, we needed fresh arrangements for earlier taping of the following Sunday’s service. Our traditional source of flowers became difficult to access. Our committee members had individual challenges – health, transportation, family issues, reorganization of their “normal” lives. The responsibility could not be shared equally and we all were grateful to those who could shoulder the greater burden. As with with other church activities, the Flower Guild managed to accomplish its mission. Anyone watching the artfully produced videos surely delighted in the gorgeous close-ups of beautiful altar flowers every week.

Help for our efforts is, as always, greatly appreciated. We are thankful for those who make gifts as memorials or other special appreciation or dedication. We ask: for the Main Altar - \$50; for St. Mark’s or Tower Altars - \$35. For Easter Lilies and Christmas Poinsettias – dependent on individual generosity. The Thanksgiving Altar project of non-perishable food items for the Food Pantry is a tradition which could not be observed in this Pandemic Year but is expected to be resumed as soon as our lives return to enough normalcy.

As always, we welcome new hands and fresh ideas for our mission. We hope for new members – love of flowers and eagerness to learn is more important than experience.

Respectfully submitted, The Flower Guild 2020

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

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

The Julia Chapter of the DOK at St. Peters Church continues to stay active with all prayer requests from St. Peter's Church. Despite the lockdown from COVID in March 2020, the DOK began meeting monthly via Zoom starting at the end of the summer. Our goals are to honor all prayer requests, as well as improve the spirituality within the Julia Chapter.

We look forward to 2021!

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. Unfortunately this year was particularly challenging due to COVID & many of our parishioners have not felt safe leaving their homes. Many prayers for a better year in 2021.

Thank you.

FHS,

Julia Hotmer Drao

ST. PETER'S CHURCH ARCHIVES

Despite the pandemic causing many of us to attend a virtual church service online, I have come into the Archives Collection twice a week to sort and classify materials into the collection. I have answered archival questions and written articles for our newsletter. The most significant article concerned the Spanish Flu of 1918. It gave our parishioners a taste of how the world and especially Albany handled and eventually conquered the infectious H1N1 virus.

To summarize - in the Archives this year, with the sorting and classifying of articles, the collection has continued to grow and improve. Questions have been answered in person, by telephone or online. I would like to emphasize that visitors are welcome from 9:30am to noon on Tuesday and Thursday or by appointment, call 518-479-1318.

Connie Powell - Church Archivist

ST. PETER'S CHURCH SUNDAY SCHOOL

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! Praying for a safe and healthy new year. First I must thank the congregation of St Peter's for all the love and support given to me to continue my outreach to our community. We were able to send 20 full Thanksgiving dinners to the families of the Southend Kids Cafe. A big shout out to my secret shopper Janice Chenot, you were an amazing help for Christmas, your generosity allowed me to shop for three in need children of the cafe, which I delivered. St Francis soup kitchen also benefited from your generosity. I had gift cards to hand out to families, 100 adult goodie bags which included a warm pair of gloves and holiday treats, and 25 bags for the children which also contained gloves.

At a time when our community is in desperate need, St Peter's steps in to answer their prayers. I need to thank Jim Chenot, the vestry, Fr Hartt, Mother Sue, Ruth, Pat and Ian for all their help and hard work during this crazy year, you have all stepped up your game to accommodate the many rules and guild lines placed upon us. I look forward to serving our church and our community this year. Please keep in mind the third Saturday every month for St Francis, I will be collecting clothes during the year, just give me a call and I will safely pick up the donations. I will continue to post videos on Sundays for the children. I miss them so much. Please know I think of you all often. I am praying we can all be together soon.

Blessings, Laura Rulison

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
January 2021		<i>Happy New Year!</i>	
<p>3 Second Sunday after Christmas Day</p> <p>See Website for Video on You Tube every Sunday</p>	4	5	6 The Epiphany Our Lord
<p>10 First Sunday after The Epiphany: The Baptism of Our Lord Jesus Christ</p> <p>11:45am - DOK Meeting Via Zoom</p> <p>See Website for Video on You Tube every Sunday</p>	11	12 5:15pm - Vestry Meeting	13
<p>17 Second Sunday after the Epiphany</p> <p>See Website for Video on You Tube every Sunday</p>	18 The Confession of St. Peter the Apostle Martin Luther King Day Office Closed	19	20
<p>24 Third Sunday after the Epiphany</p> <p style="text-align: right;">31 Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany</p> <p>See Website for Video on You Tube every Sunday</p>	25 The Conversion of St. Paul the Apostle	26	27

	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 The Holy Name of Our Lord Jesus Christ	2
ny of d Jesus Christ	7	8	9
	14	15	16 11:00am - Angels in Training
	21	22	23
	28	29	30

ST. PETER'S CHURCH MUSIC PROGRAM

2020 started with the musical program in its usual routine of weekly rehearsals and Sunday services. As Lent arrived, we began our Friday Evensong series.

Then the Pandemic shutdown put an end to choral activities altogether. So many of our traditions for the remainder of the year were suspended. Beginning in Holy Week, we began producing video services, using a combination of recorded liturgies and sermons, together with archival recorded music of our choir and organ. With the leadership and support of the Clergy, approximately 40 such video services were created through 2020. More recently, we have added video Children's Homilies and Sunday School lessons. These services involve the efforts of many, including readers, photographers, and flower arrangers.

Our good fortune is practically miraculous, in that there turned out to be a large supply of recordings of choral pieces, along with somewhat fewer congregational hymns, made at St. Peter's services over the years. There are also many archival photographs of the church, which, along with newly taken images and submissions from members of the parish, have made the video series possible. Special appreciation to those whose photos and video of past Christmas Eve services made this year's Christmas Eve video come alive.

While the choir has not been able to meet all together, we have relied on small ensembles of four or fewer to provide music for the in-person Sunday services which began in the fall. We continue to look for creative ways to provide what music we can and keep the choir community in touch, all while observing safe practices to protect both singers and worshippers.

In addition to the hardships imposed by the pandemic, the choir mourns the death of two long-serving and dedicated members, Geoffrey Hoderath and John Cerniglia. These two gentlemen had each served for 40 years and were pillars of our community, both musically and as caring members of the choir family. Special thanks to those who made contributions to the Choir Fund in memory of these choristers. When we are back singing together, we will arrange a fitting musical tribute to their memories.

As we move forward, I am confident that the dedication of our singers, along with the support of the Clergy and Congregation, will enable us to continue to provide music to support our parish life and worship, and, when the time comes, to restart our full program without significant loss of momentum.

Respectfully submitted,
Neil Keen
Organist and Choirmaster

ST. PETER'S CHURCH OUTREACH PROGRAM

Our wonderful clergy continued to provide support and assistance to individuals during this very difficult year. Although street traffic was reduced, many people in downtown Albany continue to be in need. Your clergy assist many people with prayer, presence and discretionary funds.

The Overflow Homeless Shelter operated for its 11th year, welcoming men from the Capital City Rescue Mission from January through March of 2020. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19, the overflow shelter did not open for the winter months at the end of 2020. CCRM did report that their population was lower than usual and also that they have been able to meet the demands for emergency shelter and with no virus outbreaks.

St. Peter's participated once again in the annual CROP walk the first weekend in May to raise funds for both local and national food programs. This year, we had a team of 3 individuals, Mother Sue and Jimmy Troiano and Cary Carcuro, who walked in their own home neighborhoods and raised funds for their food programs. Thank you to those who walked and donated to our team!

The meal ministry at St. Francis Mission (formerly Grace and Holy Innocents) continued throughout the year. Our thanks go to Laura Rulison for her coordination of volunteers to go once a month on Saturdays. When COVID restricted in-person meals, hundreds of meals were prepared "to-go"! Thank you Laura and team!

Laura Rulison also collected gift cards for families to purchase school supplies, and at Christmastime, asked for donations of gift cards for Target or Walmart which were given to families from the St. Francis Mission. Laura also coordinated the South End Children's Café Thanksgiving Baskets containing food for a traditional Thanksgiving dinner. We thank Laura for her generous heart and dedication to ministering to and serving these families.

Like everywhere, our Outreach ministries at St. Peter's adjusted due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Hopefully, we will be able to get back to more of our regular outreach activities in 2021.

Judy Burns

ST. PETER'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH - 2021 BUDGET

	2020 Budget	2020 Actual	2021 Budget
INCOME			
Offering Income/Pledged/Envelopes	\$ 205,000	\$ 181,170	\$ 205,000
Offering Income/Loose	\$ 4,500	\$ 1,052	\$ 4,500
Offering Income/Special Funds	\$ 23,150	\$ 19,481	\$ 23,150
TOTAL Offering Income:	\$ 232,650	\$ 201,703	\$ 232,650
Other Income (Columbarium, Interest, Misc.):	\$ 1,500	\$ 2,112	\$ 1,500
Investment Income			
Key Trust Return (Net of fees)	\$ 58,065	\$ 221,371	\$ 58,065
Merrill Lynch Return (Net of fees)	\$ 77,313	\$ 351,846	\$ 77,313
TOTAL Investment Income:	\$ 135,378	\$ 573,217	\$ 135,378
TOTAL INCOME:	\$ 369,528	\$ 777,032	\$ 369,528
=====			
EXPENSES			
Outreach - Total Outreach	\$ 15,000	\$ 18,687	\$ 15,000
Fellowship - Parish Events & Hospitality	\$ 3,500	\$ 550	\$ 3,500
Music/Choir	\$ 16,000	\$ 7,459	\$ 16,000
Pastoral Support			
Diocesan Conferences	\$ 3,000	\$ 85	\$ 3,000
Travel	\$ 4,150	\$ 1,161	\$ 4,150
Discretionary - Rector/Assistant	\$ 8,400	\$ 8,400	\$ 8,400
Visiting Clergy Stipends	\$ 1,000	\$ -	\$ 1,000
Total Pastoral Support	\$ 16,550	\$ 9,646	\$ 16,550
Christian Education			
Sunday School Supplies	\$ 1,700	\$ 152	\$ 1,700
Adult Education	\$ 1,200	\$ 28	\$ 1,200
Total Christian Education	\$ 2,900	\$ 180	\$ 2,900
Worship			
Altar Supplies	\$ 5,750	\$ 999	\$ 5,750
Altar Flowers	\$ 2,750	\$ 1,702	\$ 2,750
Total Worship	\$ 8,500	\$ 2,701	\$ 8,500
Administration/Salaries			
Salary: Lay, Clergy, Other	\$ 247,308	\$ 257,206	\$ 247,308
Diocesan Assessment	\$ 66,000	\$ 71,169	\$ 66,000
Total Administration	\$ 313,308	\$ 328,375	\$ 313,308
Operations			
Supplies, Equip Maint, Insurance, Office Exp.:	\$ 71,800	\$ 81,839	\$ 71,800
Total Operations	\$ 71,800	\$ 81,839	\$ 71,800
Payroll Related Expense/Benefits			
Payroll Taxes, benefits, etc.:	\$ 159,600	\$ 187,361	\$ 159,600
Total Payroll Related/Benefits	\$ 159,600	\$ 187,361	\$ 159,600
Plant Operations			
Utilities, Repairs, Property Maintenance:	\$ 83,500	\$ 40,888	\$ 83,500
Total Plant Operations	\$ 83,500	\$ 40,888	\$ 83,500
TOTAL EXPENSES:	\$ 690,658	\$ 677,686	\$ 690,658
GAIN/(LOSS):	\$ (321,130)	\$ 99,346	\$ (321,130)

Treasurer's Narrative for annual report

Needless to say, 2020 was a challenging year for all and navigating through the church's finances was no exception. First, I wish to gratefully thank our entire parish for continuing to meet pledges to the church. As you will see from the budget summary, in a year like 2020, to be down only 5% from the previous year is remarkable and a true testament to the St. Peter's family and how much St. Peter's means to all of us. With the uncertainties still upon us as we head into 2021, the Vestry has made the decision to implement the entire 2020 budget as the 2021 budget until such time that there is more clarity in the world when we will re-evaluate for any modifications. Our performance in 2020 exceeded budgetary projections. Endowment/investment income outperformed budget projections, expenses were under budget and as mentioned previously, offering income was very strong in a pandemic year. If anyone has any questions, I can be reached at gscala@nycap.rr.com.

Suspension of In-Person Worship for January

Dear Parishioners,

I pray that you are well and staying safe. I write to share my intention to close in-person worship for the remainder of January. We will reassess thereafter. The infection rate in the Capital Region has now exceeded 10%. The highly infectious UK variant of Covid-19 has also been found in Saratoga. The Albany County Executive has urged us to stay home and our Governor has called the UK variant in our area a “game changer” in terms of concern. Our hospitals are struggling to meet the increases in admissions. We must do our part to promote public health and keep our people safe. My decision has been a difficult one. At this time, St. John’s, Troy, St. Andrew’s, Albany, and St. Stephen’s, Delmar, have suspended in-person worship for January. No doubt other parishes will soon follow in our area. As I know that you do, please continue to keep our parish and community in your prayers. Please know that you are very much in the prayers of your clergy and Vestry.

We will get through this with good care and God’s grace.

Blessed Epiphany, Fr. Hartt

St. Francis Mission Soup Kitchen & Community Outreach

St. Francis Mission Soup Kitchen Saturday, January 16th ~ 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.

Thank you all for your generosity and your giving Spirit for all the donations to the St. Francis soup kitchen and the Southend Kids Café this Christmas Season. I had gift cards to hand out to families, we put together 100 adult goodie bags, which included a warm pair of gloves and holiday treats, and 25 goodie bags for the children. I was also able to shop for three families in need at the Southend Kids Café.



FYI: Every third Saturday every month for St Francis, I will be collecting clothes during the year, just give me a call and I will safely pick up the donations. Laura

2020 VESTRY MEMBERS

SR. WARDEN: James Chenot

JR. WARDEN: Deborah Spath

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

Baptisms 1

Confirmation/Reception 0

Weddings 1

Funerals/Committals 10

ASA 2020 123

Instructions for Voting:

Due to the pandemic, we will be allowing voting on the Vestry Elections by mail. In order to be sure to provide the right number of ballots for households, we ask that you request a ballot by phoning the Parish Office (518) 434-3502. You will then be mailed your ballot(s) along with a pre-addressed envelope that will allow for anonymous voting. The envelope will be addressed to the church and have the return address of the church. You may also drop off your ballots at the Parish Office. All mailed ballots must be received by Monday, February 8th. Write-ins are permitted. Please make sure that any write-in candidate is placed next to the vestry seat that you would like your candidate to assume. Qualifications for voting will be on your ballot. We believe that this system will work best in this extraordinary year.

Annual Meeting

Dear Parishioners,

After much prayer and reflection, the Vestry has nominated the following parish members to serve on Vestry:

- ◆ Deb Spath will be running for her 1st two-year term as Jr. Warden.
- ◆ Maria Holden who has finished Stephanie Lencewicz term, will be up for election for her 1st three-year term.
- ◆ Ashley Closson has finished her 1st term and will be up for re-election for an additional three-year term.
- ◆ Tim Murphy has termed out leaving his seat open.
- ◆ Malcolm Moran has been nominated to fill Tim Murphy's seat.

In the case of a vacancy, the vestry is empowered to fill that seat until the next Annual Meeting, at which time the vestry appointed seat will be opened for the parish election.

From time to time, we are asked about how one qualifies as a parish member and thus able to vote. The qualification of voters is by Canon and law determined by the rector, if there be one. The relevant language is as follows: *"Persons of full age belonging to the parish, who have been baptized and are regular attendants at its worship and contributors to its support for at least twelve months prior to such election or special meeting or since the establishment of such parish, shall be qualified voters at any such election or special meeting. ..."* RCL Section 43, 6. Thank you for your faithfulness to St. Peter's and may God Bless you in 2020.

God Bless,
Father Hartt
James Chenot

O God, from whom all good proceeds: Grant that by your inspiration we may think those things that are right, and by your merciful guiding may do them; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen. (BCP, 229.)

MINUTES FOR THE VESTRY MEETING
ST. PETER'S PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH
November 10, 2020

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

Absent: None

Opening Prayer Led by Father Paul Hartt

Approval of the Minutes of Vestry Meeting, October 13, 2020

The October 13, 2020 minutes were approved on a motion by T. Murphy and seconded by J. Russom. The motion was unanimously approved by the vestry.

Warden Report – J. Chenot

It is hard to imagine that we would normally at this time be preparing for our annual pre-Thanksgiving dinner as well as the choir rehearsing for the Messiah performance for the beginning of December. Fortunately our clergy and choir director has worked diligently to help us still feel connected with the church producing wonderful online services, putting together the past months during the covid pandemic we are all dealing with. Many thanks to Father Hartt, Mother Sue and Neil for all their efforts now and as we move forward into the Advent season producing these services.

Following my report we will discuss our finances with our treasurer George Scala. We need to keep in mind contributions and pledge obligations have fallen off a bit during this year during the pandemic. Everyone in some way has been affected with the pandemic and we need to realize that this is slightly affecting the church's finances. The finance committee is again working with a law firm looking into helping us maximize our return from our Key Trust accounts. Our goal is to increase our return at Key, so we do not need to continually rely on our Merrill Lynch account for supplemental income which performs slightly higher annually than Key. We want to thank Janice Chenot for her work in the office balancing all the incoming donations which come in weekly. There are online contributions, incoming contributions, processing the payroll as well as all the bills which still need to be taken care of and reconciled. In these uncertain times she is under certain stress making sure our accounts are properly funded to make sure we cover the cost of the day to day operations of the church and we appreciate all her work behind the scenes.

Some parishioners have asked about what sort of outreach they can participate in this year since we will not be taking food donations to decorate the altar for Thanksgiving, which would then ultimately go to the local food pantry. Fortunately, Laura Rulison has ties with the South End Children's Café on Warren Street in Albany. They have an after school program for intercity kids, K-4 and serve dinners each night for those in need. This year they are taking donations for Thanksgiving "baskets" which consist of a turkey and all the traditional fixings that a family would need to prepare a Thanksgiving dinner for a family of four. In place of the giving tree that we normally would have at church for Christmas gifts for those less fortunate, we have decided on \$10.00 gift cards for individuals in need at Grace and Holy Innocents in Albany. Again, Laura Rulison dedicates her time feeding hundreds each week at their soup kitchen. Contributions for both these outreach programs can be sent to the church office. Laura Rulison and Janice Chenot will do all the shopping needed for the Thanksgiving baskets as well as the gift cards. Contributions to both of these outreach efforts can be sent into the church office.

As we look forward towards Advent in these uncertain times, we will keep the congregation informed on how we move forward with upcoming services and restrictions. Please pray for those who are going through many unfortunate circumstances personally and financially during this pandemic.

Sunday Attendance – The Average Sunday Attendance is 122.2

Rector's Report - Father Hartt

Father Hartt joined the Vestry meeting via Zoom. He thanked Mtr. Troiano for her work in sustaining the parish while he is in Florida. Before leaving, Fr. Hartt recorded videos for the month of November. He thanked Neil and all involved for their continued support of the video Services, and also the Daily Offices. A proposal for Christmas Eve Services was circulated in October. However, the facts on the ground have changed and are changing. December's Vestry meeting will be a better forum for working through the details. Fr. Hartt reported on the latest numbers from the County Executive. Fr. Hartt knows that many are weary from the Covid-19 restrictions and concerns. It has been difficult to secure the right balance in response to the threat and views will continue to diverge in the Vestry and broader parish. We must pray and listen for the right path.

The combined attendance figures of online and in-person worship remain positive given the duration of time. We have added a children's homily to Laura Rulison's fine offering. Zoom Coffee Hours continue Fr. Hartt is grateful for the purchase of a parish iPad. It has made the production and work on the videos much easier. Fr. Hartt spoke about earlier discussions of wiring the church with video cameras. It would be costly. It makes most sense if video content is intended beyond the pandemic.

Fr. Hartt is very appreciative of all the Guilds, Lector's, and singers who have made our Services come together well under the present constraints. Fr. Hartt is considering ways to expand within safe boundaries. Fr. Hartt thanks George Scala and Jim Chenot for their ongoing and excellent work to manage our investments and control expenses. Fr. Hartt thanks the parish for their ongoing financial support. It has been a great encouragement. Likewise, Laura Rulison and many others have gone to great lengths to keep outreach to our community the heartbeat of the parish. We can be proud of the dedication to the community's most vulnerable that Laura, her family, and countless other parishioners have continued to extend in these difficult times. Fr. Hartt prayed for us all a safe Thanksgiving.

Finance – G. Scala - Treasurer's Report

Offerings YTD through October were \$158,677. This compares to a budgeted number of \$193,875 leaving us with a budget deficit of (\$35,198).

Under the circumstances of the Covid Pandemic and what it has meant to our in-person worship, this continues to be 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. Year-to-date for the same period in 2019 we were at \$171,651 in offerings.

The investment/endowment accounts, while continuing to perform well versus indexes, had a down month with Merrill Lynch being down -1.33% for October and has a return of +6.43% YTD. The Key accounts were down -1.48% for the month and shows a YTD return of 4.29%. This leaves us with a positive budget variance in this area of \$49,440. Expenses for October YTD were \$23,404 under budget.

We continue to work with our attorney on the Key Distribution issue. The attorney continues to wait for our file from the previous firm the attorney was at, and we hope that to be received soon. George will continue to follow-up with the attorney.

Stewardship was discussed and it was agreed for Jim to send out a letter he had drafted and George and Father Hartt had reviewed.

No changes in pledges and we expect to be starting to see 2021 pledges soon.

Property – After the big storm last month that took down the power at the rectory, we have had some trees removed from the property.

Outreach – None

Old Business- None

New Business –

A plan for Christmas Eve Services has started to be discussed in order to adhere to COVID guidelines. More information will be available to the congregation when a plan is in place. Holiday outreach opportunities were discussed. Due to the pandemic, we are planning different Thanks- giving and Christmas outreach projects this year. For Thanksgiving, instead of non-perishable food donations for the Altar, we will be donating bags full of items for a Thanksgiving dinner to be given out at the South End Children's Café. We will send out an announcement to the congregation for monetary donations. Laura Rulison and Janice Chenot will do the shopping and dropping off the bags. For Christmas, instead of the annual Giving Tree, we have decided to purchase \$10 Gift Cards to Walmart to be handed out at the St. Francis Soup Kitchen. Again, we will send out an announcement to the congregation.

We discussed sending out more frequent Constant Contact emails for regular communication of announcements such as these outreach announcements. There are weekly leaflets that can be found on the website, but not everyone who views the YouTube Sunday Service see this leaflet with the announcements in it. Communication is extremely important during this time, so we are trying to figure out the best way to keep everyone connected.

Associate Rector's Report – Mother Sue

Since our last meeting, I have continued with daily Morning Prayer via Facebook as well as Wednesday and Sunday Holy Communion in-person services weekly. The church continues with video taped Morning Prayer service weekly as well, for distribution on Sunday via YouTube. On Saturday 10/24 your clergy and delegates attended the 152nd Convention of the Diocese of Albany. During his Convention Address, Bishop Love announced his resignation as Diocesan Bishop effective 2/1/2021. This will be preceded by a one month terminal sabbatical. With his resignation, the Disciplinary Committee determined that no further action would be taken in regards to the Ecclesiastical trial's guilty verdict and that matter is now closed. The convention was held virtually via Zoom this year and, thus, remained focused primarily on the business of the Diocese. Elections occurred and the annual budget was passed. Thank you to Jack Ratzel and Mark and Michelle Lundberg for agreeing to be lay delegates this year - your dedication to your church is greatly appreciated. We missed the in person gathering, worship and workshops that normally turn Convention into a Retreat/Conference weekend & hope they return next year.

I attended two conferences this month for clergy; one of which was our Diocesan Clergy Retreat. That was a very important time for clergy to spend with Bishop Love before his retirement. Most of us are still reeling from this news and we all await to see the next steps for our Diocese. The Standing Committee is working closely with Bishop Love and will assure the smoothest transition for us as possible. They will also become the ecclesiastical authority for the Diocese on 2/1/2020 and will update us on a future Bishop search process.

We had an outstanding All Saints Day service, with baptism, on 11/1. It felt wonderful to have more people in church while practicing all safety protocols. The quartet choir group was outstanding and everyone enjoyed their music. This shows us that we are fully capable of full worship services each Sunday and I hope to encourage wider participation week to week. I call on the members of our Vestry to lead the congregation back to worship by not only attending if they are able but also reaching out and encouraging others to do the same.

My work with the Commission on Ministry has been full this month as we assess all business that needs to be completed before Bishop Love's resignation. I ask your prayers and support as we continue to assist the Diocese with raising up godly men and women for ordained ministry.

Thanksgiving will be upon us in 2 weeks and we will hold our Thanksgiving Eve HC service on November 25th at noon. The following Sunday, November 29th is the First Sunday of Advent. Laura Rulison will provide Advent wreaths and candles and the Advent Daily Devotions will be available for all as well. There will also be other devotional material available in the back of the church. Advent is a great time to rededicate oneself to attending church services weekly - please come if you are able! Fr. Hartt has been away since November 1st, returning December 1st for vacation. Thank you to Ruth, Janice, Ian, Pat, Wayne, Laura and Vestry members for helping hold down the fort. We are blessed with an excellent staff and ministry team here at St. Peter's!

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by M. Lundberg and seconded by M. Holden, then was approved unanimously by the vestry.

Compline

Mother Sue 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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Monday -Friday

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Fax: 518-462-4419

E-Mail:

Receptionist@stpeterschurhalbany.org

Website:

www.stpeterschurhalbany.org

Services

Sunday

Holy Communion 10:30 a.m.

See Website for Video
on You Tube

ST. PETER'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

107 State St.

Albany, New York 12207

