

# nerstone January 2024

Newsletter of St. Peter's Protestant Episcopal Church 107 State Street, Albany, New York

Beloved of God,

Get ready. 2024 is going to be the Year of the Lion.

No, I'm not talking about an animal that didn't make the cut on the 12-year Chinese calendar (although there is a "Year of the Tiger" on that one.) I'm talking about a storyteller that roars like a lion when he shares divine wonders.

In other words, it's the year of St. Mark the Evangelist. Every three years in our church, we get to hear a different gospel writer telling the story of Jesus on Sunday mornings.

In 2023, we heard the story of Jesus in the voice of Matthew – one of the 12 apostles who presented Jesus as the ultimate Rabbi, still instructing us as students through large blocks of teaching like "The Sermon on the Mount." Matthew's writing demonstrated a deep understanding of Jewish tradition and culture and a passion for his readers to see Jesus as the promised Messiah.

Next year, in 2025, we'll hear the story of Jesus told in the voice of Luke – a trained physician who himself may have been a Gentile. Perhaps that's why Luke told many stories that showed Jesus as a healer and that showed Jesus' interactions with Gentiles depicted in a favorable light. Luke's gospel also includes some of the most well-known parables in Scripture, including "The Prodigal Son" and "The Good Samaritan," as well as the canticles "The Song of Mary," "The Song of Zechariah," and "The Song of Simeon."

The Gospel of John – which is stands apart from the other three gospels in tone and some content – is read in parts throughout the three-year Sunday lectionary cycle (and so we'll be hearing John's voice here and there this year).

All that brings us to 2024 – The Gospel of Mark.

I often describe Mark as the "action movie" gospel writer. If you're reading his gospel in the original Greek, it has the quality of someone running, wild-eyed, into a room and saying, "You'll never believe what I just saw! This happened....And then immediately this happened...."

Mark's gospel is the shortest of the four gospels, and one could think of it as a documentary about Jesus. It includes many vivid scenes depicting Jesus' teaching, healing, exorcisms – and the crowd's reactions to him. Even though this is the shortest of the four gospels overall, Mark's description of Jesus' suffering and execution is the longest of the four gospel accounts. For Mark, Jesus' call to cross-shaped discipleship is everything.

One final detail that's important for us at St. Peter's: This gospel is as close to a "Gospel according to St. Peter" as we are going to get. According to the early church historian Eusebius, a guy named Papias (who was the bishop of Hierapolis around 120) stated that he knew St. John the apostle, and John told him that Mark wrote his gospel based on the eyewitness accounts of St. Peter. St. John also identified Mark as being the same guy as "John Mark" in the book of Acts and other New Testament letters – a one time traveling companion of St. Paul and later a companion of Peter (he's mentioned in the final chapter of 1 Peter if you want to look it up).

If church tradition is correct that we're hearing Peter's version of the events of Jesus' life and death, it makes sense that Mark's gospel has such detailed accounts of Peter's shortcomings. Everything we know about Peter indicates that his denial of Jesus and subsequent restoration to leadership make him a humbler and wiser (but still imperfect!) man.

It delighted me when I first came to St. Peter's Church and realized that our side chapel is dedicated to St. Mark the Evangelist. Even within our walls, these two Christ-followers are side by side. This year, I'm excited to walk with them both and to hear – through their words – what our Lord has to say to us.

Grace and peace in Christ Jesus,

Mtr. Christina+

## Annual Parish Meeting ~ SAVE the DATE

The annual meeting of St. Peter's Church will be held on Sunday, January 28. All communicants in good standing are eligible to vote in this year's Vestry elections. A slate of candidates will be announced in the coming weeks during worship services, in our leaflets, and via our Constant Contact newsletter, The Apostle Weekly.

This year, we'll also be adding some music, food, and stories to the meeting to make it more fun (and less long).



## Pledge Cards

Pledge cards for 2024 have been mailed out to all parishioners. If you did not receive a pledge card please call the church office. It would be greatly appreciated if you could please take a minute to complete your card and return it to the church office or place it in the offering plate during the service. Pledges can also be made on the St. Peter's website at <a href="https://www.stpeterschurchalbany.org">www.stpeterschurchalbany.org</a> by clicking on the "Get your pledge card" button. You may also call the church office and we would be more than happy to complete a card for you. Thank you to those that have promptly completed and returned their pledge card or pledged online.



The Epiphany

## St. Peter's Happenings

## The Epiphany

On Saturday, January 6th, We will be celebrating "The Epiphany of our Lord Jesus Christ" at 9:00am with Holy Communion.

## **Vestry Meeting**

The next Vestry meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 9th at 5:15pm.

## Wednesday Noon Worship

On the first Wednesday of each month St. Peter's offers a said Holy Communion service at 12:05pm in St. Mark's Chapel. On the other Wednesdays of each month at 12:05pm, a short service of Noonday Prayer will be said in St. Mark's Chapel. All are welcome!

## Wednesday Lectionary Lunches

Bring a bag lunch and join Mtr. Christina in the Pumpelly Room after Noonday Prayer at 12:30pm. During this informal gathering, we'll chat about any questions or observations you have regarding the day's Bible readings (but no Biblical/spiritual topic is off limits!) Need the readings? Visit:

https://prayer.forwardmovement.org and click "Daily Readings." Drinks will be provided.

## Learn to Pray - St. Peter's Prayer School

This adult education course, meeting monthly on the second Wednesday of the month at 12:30pm in the Pumpelly Room, offers practical instruction on trying a different form of prayer each month. You can join any class that interests you. This month's class is: "Prayer through Art".

### Lay Eucharistic Ministers

Are you looking to increase your religious experience? We are looking for members of St. Peter's who might be interested in becoming a Lay Eucharistic Minister. Experience the joy of serving God by assisting at both the Morning Prayer and Holy Eucharistic Sunday Services. If interested please call the parish office at 518 434-3502.

### Choir

Choir rehearsals are on the following schedule:

Thursdays: 5:30pm - 7:00pm Full Choir

Sundays: 9:30am rehearsal for the 10:30am service

We are eager to welcome boys and girls age 8 to grade 8 to join the Treble section of the choir.

## Carly's Cards

As we begin a new holiday season, perhaps you may be interested in volunteering for Carly's Cards in 2024. If anyone is interested in assisting please contact Susan Smith at (518) 505-6051 or email: <a href="mailto:Gpleasant49@gmail.com">Gpleasant49@gmail.com</a>. A sincere thank you to all who volunteered in 2023!

### Coffee Hour -

A great place to extend our time together!

We are still looking for volunteers to host coffee hour events after the 10:30 service. It's a great opportunity for casual conversations, information sharing and just plain enjoyment of others in the St. Peter's family. It's fun and fairly easy. Don't feel like baking or buying goodies? The kitchen freezer is always well stocked! Think you might need a bit of help? There are detailed instructions in the kitchen and helpers are always there too.

An updated schedule has been posted in the kitchen – take a look and give it a try this winter. It's a rewarding stewardship that makes participants happy! Please contact Michele Vennard at <a href="mailto:mlvennard@gmail.com">mlvennard@gmail.com</a> or 518-858-0525 (cell) or 518-274-4989. Glad to talk it over and hope you can join us to serve or bake or both!

## 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.

## St Francis Mission & South End Children's Café

## St. Francis Mission Saturday, January 13th and January 20th ~ 11am to 1pm

On every second and third Saturday of every month, Laura, Director of Christian Education and outreach, along with other volunteers, all get together to help serve the families of our community in the Southend of Albany. You are welcome to come and witness this amazing outreach program anytime you can, we are there from 11am-1pm. For information or to let Laura know you are coming please call her at (518) 368-4284.







Blessings to All!

A huge thank you to the D.O.K., Sharon Evans and The East Greenbush Animal Hospital for the personal hygiene bags for the people of St. Francis Mission.

## **Winter Clothing Collection:**

Once again St. Peter's is collecting gently used or new coats for children and adults in need at the St. Francis Mission. Please drop off your donations in the green barrels located in the Pumpelly Room or at the back of the church and upstairs in the Sunday School Room. You may also call the church office to schedule a time for drop off. Sizes needed are: Children: 2t - 5, Women: Medium - 2XX, Men: Large - 2XX. We are also collecting hats and gloves/mittens for children and adults. As always, thank you for your support.



## Outreach

### CHRISTMAS DINNER AT THE DAMIEN CENTER

The cooks of St. Peter's outdid themselves this year. We served our friends at the Albany Damien Center a full turkey dinner, with turkey and gravy by Deb Spath and Sharon DeBonis, stuffing and mashed potatoes by Cathy Schunk, sweet potato casserole by Mollie Flannery and Tanya Douglas, green bean casserole by Maria Holden, Brussels sprouts by Sharon DeBonis, macaroni and cheese by Tanya Douglas and Mollie Flannery, desserts by Maria Holden and Laura Grill, with a special guest appearance by Chef Claire's daughter, and cranberry sauce by Diana Martin. Every dish received multiple compliments and many of our guests asked for everything to be piled onto their plates. Last year we served about twenty-five people and this year it was over forty. Several people requested to-go plates for later and some also asked for to-go plates for friends and loved ones. (One guest asked for a plate for his "imaginary friend", who "likes all the same things I do.") Dinner was set up and served by Laura Saffares and Sharon DeBonis, with much assistance from the chef and assistant chef of the Center, who both volunteered to work Christmas, and their new helper. The desserts, as always, were especially popular, and very attractively presented. Maria Holden has taken on most of the organizational duties, along with the shopping, and kept everyone informed as we worked our way toward the big day. Thanks to all who labored to serve our friends who don't have a lot of resources and are living with HIV and AIDS. They are so, so







## South End Children's Café



Thank you to all that donated a gift to the Southend Children's Café

Thank you all for donating food for the free food cabinets at the South End Children's Café.

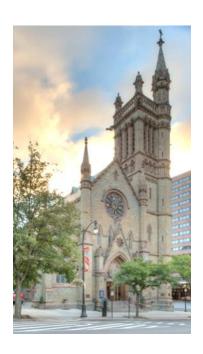




# January 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	W
	<ul><li>1 The Holy Name</li><li>New Year's Day</li><li>Office closed</li></ul>	2	3 12:05pm - Ho
7 First Sunday after the Epiphany The Baptism of Our Lord Jesus Christ  8:30am - Holy Communion 10:30am - Holy Communion	8	9 5:15pm - Vestry Meeting	10 12:05pm - No 12:30pm - St
14 Second Sunday after the Epiphany  8:30am - Holy Communion 10:30am - Morning Prayer 12:00pm - St. Peter's Prayer School "Prayer through Art"  4:00pm - Winter Family Disciple (Learn)	15 Martin Luther King Day Office Closed	16	17 12:05pm - No 12:30pm - Le
21 Confession of St. Peter the Apostle (transferred) 8:30am - Holy Communion 10:30am - Holy Communion	22	23	24 12:05pm - No 12:30pm - Le
28 Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany  8:30am - Holy Communion 10:30am - Morning Prayer 12:00pm - Annual Meeting	29	30	31 12:05pm - No 12:30pm - Le

<sup>7</sup> ednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	4	5	6 The Epiphany
oly Communion	5:30pm - Full Choir Rehearsal		12:00pm - Holy Communion
	11	12	13
oonday Prayer . Peter's Prayer School er through Art"	5:30pm - Full Choir Rehearsal		11:00am - Angels in Training
	18	19	20
oonday Prayer ctionary Lunch	5:30pm - Full Choir Rehearsal		11:00am - Angels in Training
oonday Prayer ctionary Lunch	<ul><li>25 Conversion of St. Paul the Apostle</li><li>5:30pm - Full Choir Rehearsal</li></ul>	26	27
oonday Prayer ctionary Lunch			Wish you and your family a joyful, bright, healthy, prosperous and happiest new year ahead. !!  Happy New Year!



## Capital City Rescue Mission and St. Peter's Episcopal Church Overnight Men's Shelter

Partnering together for Winter Emergency Shelter since 2009

Volunteers will assist Mission and Church Staff with hospitality, ministry, and oversight of all guest needs. Specific duties include explaining shelter guidelines, serving snacks and drinks, and settling in guests for the night. Additional time may be spent exchanging stories and enjoying Christian movies. Volunteers may choose to volunteer a few hours a night, or volunteer for a full night, Overnight Volunteers have the option to sleep in reclining chairs provided by the Church.

Thank you for considering! The rewards of serving the homeless far outweigh the sacrifices!

## For more information, please contact us today!

To volunteer through the Mission, please contact the Volunteer Coordinator!

Hope Smith Office # 518-462-0459 ext. 237 vcoordinator@albanymission.com

To volunteer through St. Peter's, please call or email one of the following:

Ruth Manss, Office # 518-434-3502 x 5 or email receptionist@stpeterschurchalbany.org

Mtr. Christina Hunter, Office # 518-434-3502 x4 or email priest@stpeterschurchalbany.org

Or Jim Chenot, cell phone 518-669-3096

For St. Peter's Shelter and Mission Operations, please contact the Mission's Intake Coordinator Lance Rowland, 518-462-0459 ext. 246 (office) or (cell) 518-320-5758 or email <a href="mailto:Lrowland@albanymission.com">Lrowland@albanymission.com</a>

Thank you for considering joining us this winter!

May Jesus Christ our Lord richly bless you as you work with us as His hands and feet to the needy people of Albany!



We wish you a Happy and Healthy New Year

2024

From All of us at St. Peter's Church

## MINUTES FOR THE VESTRY MEETING ST. PETER'S PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH

November 14th, 2022

Present: Mtr. Christina, J. Chenot, D. Spath, P. Benson, A. Closson, S. Debonis, C. Gordon, S. Hartt, M. Holden, M. Lundberg, J. Russom, G. Scala

Absent: F. Hershey

Opening Prayer Led by Mtr. Christina.

### Approval of the Vestry Meeting Minutes, October 10th, 2023

The vestry minutes from the October 10th, 2023 meeting were approved on a motion by D. Spath, seconded by J. Russom, then unanimously approved by the vestry.

### Priest in Charge Report - Mtr. Christina

#### Rector stuff:

Baptized Camille and Renee Chenot and Noah Gordon on All Saints' Sunday.

Did godparent preparation instruction for all three babies' parents and godparents.

Admitted six children to Holy Communion on All Saints' Sunday: Henry Crisafulli, Nathan Gordon, Bailey and Teagan LaPlante, Chelsea Pautler, and Matthew Saffares

Prepared the children for First Communion during two special classes in October.

Participated in Fall Family Disciple (Serve) session on Oct. 14 – a group of us volunteered at Loaves and Fishes feeding ministry on that Saturday.

Participated in Fall Family Disciple (Play) session on Nov. 4 – a group of us enjoyed fellowship during a fall-themed party at the rectory.

Led St. Peter's Prayer School (Intercession and Imagination) on Wednesday, Nov. 8.

Led Children's Chapel on Sunday, Oct. 29 while Dr. John Davis preached and officiated at Morning Prayer.

Working with a few St. Peter's parishioners who are interested in discerning their spiritual gifts.

Noonday Prayer and Lectionary Lunch are ongoing on Wednesdays. We've had a couple of visitors to both, and the All Saints' Wednesday Eucharist was well attended.

Beginning preparation for Winter Family Disciple, which will be held Jan-Feb-March, 2024.

Did one hospital visit.

Worked with our staff on some details in re-opening our winter Men's Overflow Homeless Shelter on November 1.

Attended part of the yearly Priest Retreat at Christ the King Center on November 9-10.

Will offer Morning Prayer on Zoom at 6:45 am weekday mornings in Advent.

Planning on making a round of Advent phone calls again through the directory.

### Interim stuff:

Big Picture Update:

Led the "Vision 2112 and Taste of History Potluck" on Oct. 22. We had roughly 25 people attend to share stories, food, and do group reflection on ideas to try in the future.

Shared our draft Mission Statement and Core Values with the parish in the November Cornerstone article.

Taking a break from most Big Picture work until January to focus on Advent/Christmas.

Administrative Update: Will address this in the task forces part of our meeting.

Finding out from the Diocese what would be involved if St. Peter's wants to extend a rector's call to me after January

### SAVE THE DATE:

Handel's Messiah – Dec. 3 Christmas pageant – Dec. 10 Lessons & Carols and Hanging of the Greens – Dec. 17 Christmas Eve – Dec. 24 at 4:30 and 10 pm. Submitted by The Rev. Christina Hunter

### Sr. Warden's Report -J. Chenot

This past month of October appears to be the month of preparation for many upcoming events in November eventually leading us to the Advent season. First Communion and Bible study classes were held during October. All this preparation led us to All Saints Sunday, November 5th, celebrating three baptisms and six individuals ready to receive their First Holy Communion. Congratulations to all the families and friends that participated in this joyous Sunday celebration, it was wonderful to see so many in the church celebrating with all of us.

Also, in October we worked on our Stewardship campaign. Mother Christiana put her appeal for stewardship in the November newsletter and Jim Chenot sent out a letter with a pledge card included. Again, we pray that everyone reflects on the importance of St. Peter's in their lives, when pledging. We are very fortunate to have an endowment that supplements our budget shortfall, making your support so important to the finance committee by helping us to forecast next year's budget. Many thanks to those who have pledged in the past and continue to pledge. For those unable to give monetarily, though tireless, donate their time and talents to St. Peter's, please know your work does not go unnoticed and we are very thankful for your service.

Last month, our new choir director Daniel Romero officially took on the role as organist and Choir director. The choir and Daniel have been working very well with all that is coming up musically during this busy season. It has been great working with Daniel, and we are looking forward to working with him moving forward, together making beautiful music for our congregation and the local community during worship services, as well as special choral events.

This past Saturday, November 11th, we hosted our annual Pre-Thanksgiving Dinner in the Parish Hall. This event has taken on a life of its own and seems to run more successfully each year. We had an incredible turnout with an abundance of great Thanksgiving food to enjoy. Thank you to all those who were able to bring a dish to pass, cook a turkey or help set up and cleaning up. Many thanks to Janice Chenot for heading up this great evening of food and hospitality. In addition, many thanks to Pat Shortall and Wayne for the extra help setting up and breaking down the tables and chairs.

Our doors opened on November 1st starting again the overflow homeless shelter at St. Peter's, in conjunction with the Albany City Rescue Mission. This is an important outreach to the less fortunate serving our local community. This year we will be looking for volunteers to help host each evening from 8:00 till around 10:00 by helping the City Mission staff set up refreshments, as well as monetary donations for food supplies. I would like to thank everyone involved with the outreach committee who have dedicated time and effort into making this program a success.

Last Sunday during the 10:30 service, pumpkin bread was baked by our Sunday School Children and will be blessed by Mother Christina this upcoming Sunday, and the loaves will be available to the congregation in celebration of Thanksgiving. Laura Saffares has been incredible year after year working with our children in Sunday School and we need to thank her for all her faithful service and love for our children. Laura, for some time now has also been very involved with our out-reach committee helping the immediate community, The Damian Center, St. Francis Outreach, as well as the Childrens Café in the South end. All of these ministries are so vital to many in need, and we are very proud and fortunate to have Laura represent St. Peter's in our local community.

We start off our Advent season with a performance of the Messiah on December 3<sup>rd</sup> at 3:00, performed by our choir and chamber orchestra. Many thanks to Danial, our choir director, for jumping right into one of the treasured annual musical performances we perform each year. The choir has been rehearsing diligently and is sounding great – thank you all.

There are many pieces to navigate, day to day clergy stuff we don't normally see behind the scenes. Mother Christina has been so instrumental in helping us this past year with tasks given to the vestry to tidy up loose ends. Their work has helped in so many ways, but most importantly, with their hard work and efforts, we look forward continuing to make St. Peter's a wonderful, vibrant, hospitable parish family we can all be proud of.

Thank you all – praying you have a blessed Advent.

Jim

Sunday Attendance - The Average Sunday Attendance is 80.5 (as of December 7, 2023)

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

Treasurer's Report Highlights/Summary - October 2023

	October	YEAR-TO-DATE
OFFERINGS	\$17,720	\$177,762
EXPENSES	(\$54,223)	(\$518,289)
GAIN/(LOSS)	(\$36,503)	(\$340,527)
WITHDRAWLS FROM ENDOWMENT TO FUND SHORTFALL	\$37,672	\$329,892

Endowment Return (Merrill Lynch)

Oct: -2.53%

Index Calculated Return: -3.30%

Updated 2023 Pledges:

32 for a total of \$116,880

YTD Offerings through Oct '23 are \$34,951 higher than '22

### Property -

The Rectory - The company has come to empty the septic tank, just for routine maintenance purposes.

The Church -

All loose pieces of the slate roof have been repaired. This does not include the new roofing needed for the Bell Tower, but just the repairs needed to fix leaking in a few areas.

The flooring for the Choir stalls is scheduled to be completed within the upcoming weeks as well as the addition of racks to the stalls to hold the choir's music. Two heat circulatory in the church will be replaced.

### Outreach -- S. Debonis

Support for St. Peter's Outreach at the St. Francis Mission (Loaves and Fished) continues to grow. In October Laura Saffares, Laura Grill, Tanya Douglas and her children, Mtr Christina Hunter and her children and Maria Holden, as well as others from our parish, served meals and helped with finding clothes, diapers and housewares for the guests. More and more of the guests do not speak English; many, but not all, speak Spanish, so any volunteers who speak a second language are encouraged to come and help out, even if you're not able to fetch and carry. All volunteers report that it is an incredibly rewarding experience.

In November and December there will be green collection vessels for outerwear in various sizes in the Pumpelly Room and in the back of the church. There will be a giving tree for the children at the South End Children's café in the Pumpelly Room as well, starting the Sunday after Thanksgiving. Thanks to Janice Chenot and Ruth Manss for all their help with these ministries. Laura Saffares and Janice Chenot will also be shopping for Thanksgiving dinner bags again this year. Thanks also to Wayne Hill, who introduced us to a new sister church in Albany. The Flower Guild will be organizing the delivery of the food on the Thanksgiving altar this year, in consultation with Outreach.

Old Business – The Vestry is working hard to develop a safety plan to be implemented as soon as possible.

### New Business -

The vestry has decided to try advertising through Facebook. We think this will have a larger reach than our previous postcard advertising. We will start with posting for The Messiah Performance.

Due to his new position as Assistant Organist, Malcom Moran has stepped down from his position on the vestry. The Vestry will discuss appointing someone to replace him.

### Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by C. Gordon and seconded by P. Benson, then was approved unanimously by the vestry. Compline was led by Mtr. Christina.

Respectfully Submitted, Christie J. Gordon

## Clergy & Staff

The Rev. Christina Hunter	Priest-in-Charge			
Daniel Romero	Organist & Choirmaster			
Malcolm Moran	Assistant Music Director			
Laura Saffares	Director of Christian Education			
Ruth Manss	Office Manager			
James P. Shortall	Sexton			
Wayne Hill	Sexton			
Janice Chenot	Office Volunteer			
E. Constance Powell	Historian & Archivist			
Vestry				
James Chenot	Senior Warden			
Deborah Spath	Junior Warden			
George Scala	Treasurer			
Christie Gordon	Clerk			

Pete Benson, Ashley Closson, Sharon DeBonis, Samuel Hartt, Fred Hershey, Maria Holden, Mark Lundberg, Jeff Russom

ST. PETER'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
107 State St.
Albary New York 12207



## How to Contact Us

### Office Hours:

Monday - Friday 9:00 am to 4:00 pm Telephone: 518-434-3502

Fax: 518-462-4419

E-Mail:

Receptionist@stpeterschurchalbany.org

Website:

www.stpeterschurchalbany.org

## **Services**

Sunday

Holy Communion 8:30 am Holy Communion 10:30 am (1st & 3rd Sundays) Morning Prayer 10:30 am (2nd, 4th & 5th Sundays) Sunday School 10:30 am

## Wednesday

Holy Communion - 12:05pm (1st Wednesday of the month) Noonday Prayer - 12:05pm (All other Wednesdays)