



Cornerstone

Summer 2015

Newsletter of St. Peter's Protestant Episcopal Church

107 State Street, Albany, New York

A New Presiding Bishop

The General Convention of The Episcopal Church has elected our new Presiding Bishop, the Bishop of North Carolina, The Rt. Rev. Michael Curry.

The Presiding Bishop has various responsibilities and authorities outlined in the Church's Canons. He or she "presides" over the meetings of the House of Bishops. The Presiding Bishop is also the face of The Episcopal Church to the broader Anglican Communion and the usual host to dignitaries visiting from abroad. He or she connects and represents us to our ecumenical partners. Finally, the Presiding Bishop serves as "chief consecrator" for our newly elected Bishops. The Prayer Book states:

When a bishop is to be ordained, the Presiding Bishop of this Church, or a bishop appointed by the Presiding Bishop, presides and serves as chief consecrator. At least two other bishops are co-consecrators. Representatives of the presbyterate, diaconate, and laity of the diocese for which the new bishop is to be consecrated, are assigned appropriate duties in the service. (BCP 511.)

The role of a Presiding Bishop is significant, but differs from that of an Archbishop. There is a strong sense in The Episcopal Church of the Presiding Bishop as "a first among equals," "chief pastor," but not a "chief executive" with expansive authority. Indeed, we alone in the Anglican Communion have a "Presiding Bishop" as opposed to Archbishops.

However, as the controversies within our Church have escalated, we have seen movements to concentrate more power in the Office of Presiding Bishop. This movement has not been without controversy. Historically, the Polity of the Episcopal Church has always been more "democratic" and respectful of Diocesan authority than our partners in the Anglican Communion. Our polity reflects our history as a nation, one distrustful of concentrated power in any single office. Our bishops choose quite carefully who will "preside" over their House and respect their prerogatives. Bishop Michael Curry clearly meets this test of respect and confidence. He was overwhelmingly elected on the first ballot. Bishop Love sent our Diocese the following message on the election.

Right Reverend Michael Curry Elected 27th Presiding Bishop

The House of Bishops elected and the House of Deputies confirmed the Right Reverend Michael B. Curry, Bishop of North Carolina, as the 27th Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church on June 27th. Presiding Bishop-Elect Curry was elected on the first ballot and confirmed overwhelmingly.

Presiding Bishop-Elect Curry was the Rector of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Winston Salem, North Carolina from 1978 - 1982, the Rector of St. Simon of Cyrene Episcopal Church in Lincoln Heights, Ohio and the Chaplain at Bethany School from 1982 - 1988, and the Rector of St. James' Episcopal Church in Baltimore, Maryland from 1988 - 2000, when he was elected Bishop of North Carolina.

He holds a Bachelors of Arts, with High Honors from Hobart and William Smith College; a Masters of Divinity from Berkeley Divinity School at Yale; Continuing Studies at The College of Preachers, Princeton Theological Seminary, Wake Forest University, The Ecumenical Institute of St. Mary's Seminary and Institute of Jewish Christian Studies; and D.D., honoris causa, from Sewanee The University of the South, Berkeley Divinity School at Yale, Virginia Theological Seminary, and The Episcopal Divinity School.

Presiding Bishop-Elect Curry is a prolific author, most recently having published Songs My Grandmother Sang (Morehouse Publishing, 2015) and Crazy Christians: a Call to Follow Jesus (Morehouse Publishing, 2013).

He is married to Sharon and they are the parents of two adult children.

Congratulations Presiding Bishop-Elect Curry!

The Episcopal Church often makes statements through our election of a Presiding Bishop. Presiding Bishop Curry reflects a Church deeply committed to evangelism in a new world. Presiding Bishop Curry is a man of profound faith and compelling presence. He is an especially good preacher and winsome communicator of the Good News to a new generation. Presiding Bishop Curry radiates the devotion of a life-long Episcopalian, one truly nurtured and formed by our Church. I commend Presiding Bishop Curry to your daily prayers. He will take office in November.

The following link will connect you to the press conference following Presiding Bishop Curry's election. It provides considerable insight into the man and his hopes for our Church. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3dWIkFdWDiM>

May the Lord richly bless Presiding Bishop Curry's ministry and witness these coming next nine years.

Peace of Christ,
Fr. Hartt+

Claiming the Power of Christian Community

As many of you know, I write this article as I recover at home from a June 16th surgery. Recover may not be the best word to use for this time as it implies I'm returning to a prior place. In fact, I have already exceeded far beyond that place in terms of health, energy level and, most of all, outlook. The surgery was an elective Roux-en-Y gastric bypass. My 15+ year old diabetes diagnosis, with blood sugar becoming less than manageable over the past year, led me to this radical place. Although it made logical sense in every way as a step towards improved health, decreased medical complications and, God willing, a longer and higher quality of life, the few weeks before the procedure became a time of serious struggle. This is the story of how God led me through that time.

First I wish to acknowledge the parts that make us who we are: body, mind (both intellect and emotions) and spirit. Most times these are working together in harmony. Sometimes they are at odds. What are we to do when this occurs? Which "part" of us do we give precedence? I believe in a holistic approach, with one exception, because I believe we are most whole when all parts do indeed work in tandem. There is one part of us that can be quite tricky, however, and that is our emotions.

Our emotions can cause us to experience great happiness or despair. Note that both of these, as all emotions, are fleeting. They change based on circumstance. Even the depth at which we experience various emotions is quite dynamic. Emotions can encourage us. Emotions can also impede us. I have found that when my emotions alone are at odds with my other parts, it is time to lay them aside.

The emotions I struggled with the few weeks before surgery were mostly fear based. I had experienced a bad reaction to anesthesia seven years prior, so this, naturally, was a concern. However I found that I was using that as a crutch for not dealing with the fear, worry and doubt I was experiencing. These became so great that I was certain I would cancel the procedure. However, every other "part" of me knew I should proceed. I wanted to lay these negative emotions aside but found I just couldn't. So I teamed myself with an army of people praying for me.

I spoke plainly to Fr. Hartt and the Vestry about what I faced and was blessed as they anointed and prayed for me. I asked the Daughters of our church and other churches to pray for me. I asked to be placed on the St. Peter's prayer list. I contacted friends and family, each time ending the conversation with "please pray for me." Diocesan Convention, just 10 days before the surgery, provided the opportunity for me to ask literally hundreds of people to pray for me. I visited the Prayer Table and attended the Healing Service and was anointed and prayed for by the Bishop of Malawi. I received the Sacrament of Reconciliation. As I greeted people I asked for prayers. Bishop Love and many others on Diocesan staff prayed for me. I think you get the picture. I now had an army of intercessors holding me steadfast in the Lord.

One of the most treasured gifts of Christianity is Community. It begins at baptism which our church recognizes as a corporate event as we are brought into the Body of Christ. This Community is meant to be lifelong and family like. Paul wrote "For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body...If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it." (1 Cor 12:12-13a, 26-27)

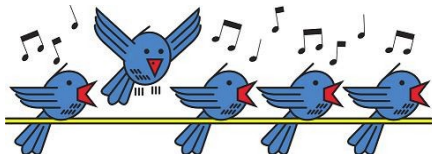
I admit that asking for prayers is a very vulnerable place to put oneself. One feels exposed, fragile, perhaps even weak. However, there is no Power in heaven or on earth greater than the Power of God and that power through which Christ's Body, through its many members, holds intercession. Prayer is real and the Power of God claimed through it is real. That Power is greater than emotions like fear, worry and doubt and even greater than vulnerability which is, in the end, ego based.

I am certain it was the Prayers of the faithful and the Power of God that led me through these past few weeks. I am thankful and blessed beyond measure. Everything leading towards the surgery occurred seamlessly. The surgery was performed perfectly. My diabetes was completely resolved before hospital discharge. I am experiencing energy levels that rival my 25 year old self not to mention weight loss which can only lead to improved health and well being. I no longer live in terrible fear of sickly senior years and I pray to serve God and his church for many, many more decades!

Your community at St. Peter's Church is a force to be reckoned with, in every good way, and I can only encourage you to claim that Power if and when you need it. James, the brother of our Lord, knew this well. He writes, "Are any among you suffering? They should pray. Are any cheerful? They should sing songs of praise. Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up; and anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of the righteous is **powerful and effective.**" (James 5:13-16)

Claim the Power of your Christian Community and have a very Blessed summer!

Yours in Christ,
Mother Sue+



Summer Choir

During the summer months, we welcome parish members to sing with regular choir members for the 10:30 service. Beginning on June 21st, the summer choir will meet on Sunday mornings at 9:45 to prepare music for the 10:30 service. There is no audition, although the ability to follow musical notation is helpful. Come and join the music making!

- Choir Awards -

The Choir's season concluded with Choir Awards last Sunday, June 14th. We thank all the members of the choir and congratulate the recipients of named awards:

Women of St. Peter's Award (to a girl treble for meritorious service): Alexis Jefferson Brown

The Clarence Newman Medal (for outstanding treble/soloist): Jennifer Powell

The Rector's Medal (to an adult chorister for distinguished service): Christie Chenot

Patrice Malatestinic received recognition for 30 years of service

Ann Collins received recognition for 20 years of service

Diana Martin received recognition for her continued

NEW WEBSITE!

It's here! Our new website for St. Peter's Church will be up and running in the beginning of July. The new website will feature easy navigation, information on upcoming events, lots of photos and much more!

Please visit us at:
Stpeterschurchalbany.org

Choir Tour 2017

Our choir has been invited to sing a week's residency at Chichester Cathedral in England in the summer of 2017. We are excited to be able to offer this experience once again, particularly to our younger singers. As the planning of this trip gets started, look for more information on the details of the trip.



Ordinations to the Diaconate

Vocational Diaconate

Karen Malcom

(St. Michael's, Colonie)

Sandra McGowan

(St. David's, East Greenbush)

Denise Moore

(Grace, Waterford)

Transitional Diaconate

David Radzik

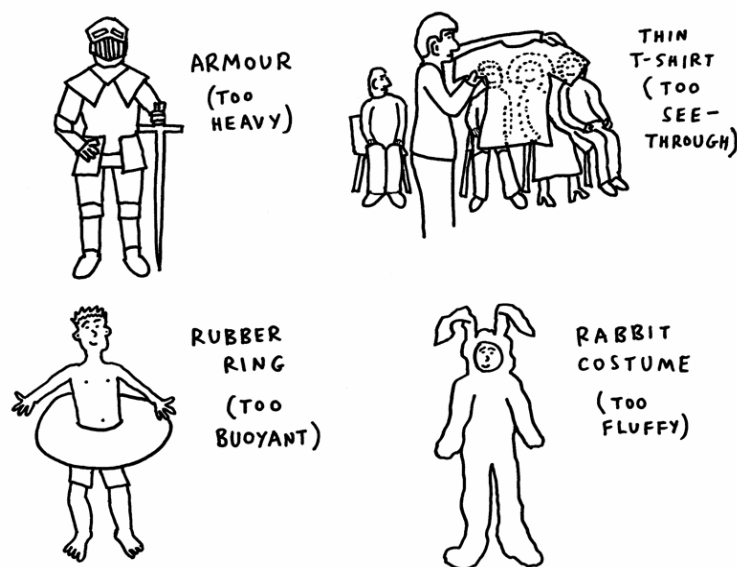


Convention Holy Eucharist with
 (from left):

Bishop Darren McCartney, Diocese of the Arctic, Bishop Grant LeMarquand, Bishop of Egypt, Bishop Harold Miller, Diocese of Down and Dromore Ireland, Bishop Love, Diocese of Albany, Archbishop Lord George Carey, 103rd Archbishop of Canterbury, Bishop Daniel Herzog, retired Bishop of Albany, Bishop Fanuel Magangani, Bishop of Northern Malawi, Bishop Todd McGregor, Bishop of Madagascar

Church Chuckles!

WHAT NOT TO WEAR FOR YOUR BAPTISM



Albany Episcopal Cursillo

This is a lay ministry of the Episcopal Church to help renew and deepen Christian commitment, serving under the leadership of Bishop Love.

The three-day weekend brings together a diverse group of Episcopalians to share the richness of many modes of worship and broaden each one's appreciation for our church. Lay people conduct the weekend with two or three members of the clergy functioning as spiritual advisors. Cursillo presumes that those who attend are already well grounded in the faith. It is not intended to be a conversion experience but an enriching and deepening of what is already there. It often provides new insights into our faith as well as fostering ministry among lay people.

Women's Weekend : October 15-18, 2015

Men's Weekend : March 10-13, 2016

Couple's Weekend : March 31 - April 6, 2016

If you are interested in this program please talk to Father Hartt, Mother Sue, or Jack Ratzel for more information.

Outreach

There will be no outreach meetings for the months of July or August. Please join us at our next meeting in September to learn about Outreach ministries and hospitality events beings planned!

Daughters of the King

The DOK meeting this month will be Sunday July 12 and August 9, 2015 at 9:35am in the second floor classroom.

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 434-3502.



2015 ST. PETER'S ANGELS SOFTBALL SCHEDULE

April 26 th	Sunday	12:00PM	@ Mullens	Lost 11-3
May 3 rd	Sunday	1:30PM	@ Mullens	
May 15-5				
May 17 th	Sunday	12:00PM	@ Mullens	Lost 18-3
May 17 th	Sunday	1:30PM	@ Mullens	
May 18-7				
June 7 th	Sunday	1:30PM	@ Mullens	
June 9-5				
June 14 th	Sunday	1:30PM	@ Mullens	
June 12-6				
July 12 th	Sunday	3:00PM	@ Mullens	
(John C's Team)				
July 12 th	Sunday	4:30PM	@ Mullens	
(Straight Ballin')				
July 19 th	Sunday	4:30PM	@ Mullens	(Feelin')

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 re-

Youth Formation & Sunday School



Beaver Cross Camp Dates!

2015 Overnight Camp Dates

Beaver Bound	Wed, July 1 – Fri, July 3	k-2
Grade		
Discoverers	July 5 – July 10	3-5 Grade
Adventurers 1	July 12 – July 18	6-8 Grade
Adventurers 2	July 19 – July 25	6-8 Grade
Pioneers 1	July 26 – Aug 1	9-12
Grade		
Pioneers 2	Aug 2 – Aug 8	9-12
Grade		

*Dropoff is Sunday, 2-4PM and Camper Pickup is Saturday at 10:00 followed by a closing ceremony and cookout for campers and their families.

2015 Day Camp Dates

Daycamp 2	July 6 – July 10
Daycamp 3	July 13 – July 17
Daycamp 4	July 20 – July 24
Daycamp 5	July 27 – July 31
Daycamp 6	Aug 3 – 7
Daycamp 7	Aug 10 – 14
Daycamp 8	Aug 17 – 21

*A Day Camp Week runs Monday-Friday from 8:00-5:00 every day. An early 7:30 drop-off with breakfast is available for an extra

2015 Youth Bible Studies

Herkimer

Christ Episcopal Church, 300 N. Main Street
1st & 3rd Monday, 6-8 PM

Amsterdam

St. Ann's Church, 37 Division St.
2nd & 4th Monday, 6-8 PM

Ballston Spa

Christ Church, 15 West High St.
1st & 3rd Tuesday, 6-8 PM

Delmar

St. Stephen's Church, 16 Elsmere Avenue
2nd & 4th Tuesday, 6-8 PM

Glens Falls

Church of the Messiah, 296 Glen St.
2nd & 4th Thursday, 6-8 PM

Schenectady

Christ Church, 970 State Street
2nd & 4th Sunday, 5-7 PM

Oneonta

St. James Episcopal, 305 Main St.
4th Thursday, 6-8 PM

Potsdam

Trinity Church, 8 Maple St.

Summer Arts Program

St. John's Church, 146 First Street, Troy, NY 12180 is offering a summer arts program this summer. *Concoction*, St. John's Arts and MORE Camp, is an opportunity for youth ages 5-18 to create with the Creator. This year's theme, *All Creatures, Great and Small* will be explored through sign language, sculpting and drawing animals, music, games, and drama. The program will be held at St. John's from 9 a.m. until 12 noon, Monday through Friday, **June 29 through July 3**. A Bible lesson and snack will be provided. *Suggested* donation for the camp is either \$10.00 per child *or* something for the food pantry. However, no child will be turned away. To register, you may call Katie Brillat, Youth Minister at (518) 274-5884

Trinity Watervliet

Vacation Bible School will be offered at Trinity Church, 1336 First Avenue, Watervliet, NY 12189 **July 6th to 10th from 9:30 a.m. until 12:30 p.m.** Lunch will be provided. This program will serve children from 5 to 12 years old, and is open to all children who wish to attend. A parent or guardian will need to accompany each child for registration. For more information call 518-852-8484.

St. Francis Mission Soup Kitchen

The 3rd Saturday of each month (June 20, 2015) (Angels in Training), invites you to join Laura Saffares and others from St. Peter's to prepare and serve lunch at this Episcopal church on Clinton Avenue, Albany. Generally, over 100 adults and children come for lunch so many hands mean light work! Please call Laura for information or to let her know you are coming at 368-4284.

July 2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 8:45am - Top of the Hill 12:05pm - Holy Communion	2	3 Office Closed	4 Independence Day
5 Proper 9 8:30am - Holy Communion 10:30am - Holy Communion	6	7	8 8:45 am - Top of the Hill 12:05 pm - Holy Communion	9	10	11
12 Proper 10 8:30am - Holy Communion 9:35am - DOK Meeting 10:30am - Morning Prayer	13	14 No Vestry or Outreach	15 8:45 am - Top of the Hill 12:05pm - Holy Communion	16	17	18 11am - Angels in Training
19 Proper 11 8:30am - Holy Communion 10:30am - Holy Communion	20	21	22 St. Mary Magdalene 8:45 am - Top of the Hill 12:05 pm - Holy Communion	23	24	25 St. James the Apostle
26 Proper 12 8:30am - Holy Communion 10:30am - Morning Prayer	27	28	29	30	31	

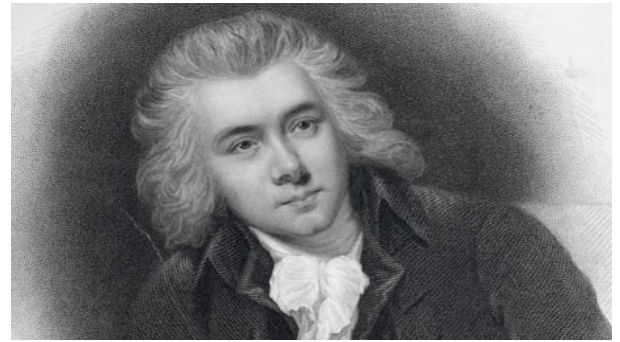
August

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2 Proper 13 8:30am - Holy Communion 10:30am - Holy Communion	3	4	5 8:45 am - Top of the Hill 12:05 pm - Holy Communion	6 The Transfiguration of our Lord Jesus Christ	7	8
9 Proper 14 8:30am - Holy Communion 9:35am - DOK Meeting 10:30am - Morning Prayer	10	11 No Vestry or Outreach	12 8:45 am - Top of the Hill 12:05pm - Holy Communion	13	14	15 St. Mary the Virgin 11am - Angels in Training
16 Proper 15 8:30am - Holy Communion 10:30am - Holy Communion	17	18	19 8:45 am - Top of the Hill 12:05 pm - Holy Communion	20	21	22
23 Proper 16 8:30am - Holy Communion 10:30am - Morning Prayer	24 St. Bartholomew	25	26	27	28	29
30 Proper 17 8:30am - Holy Communion 10:30am - Morning Prayer	31					

Saint of the Month Club

William Wilberforce

1833



PRAYER: Let thy continual mercy, O Lord, kindle in your Church the never-failing gift of love, that, following the example of thy servant William Wilberforce, we may have grace to defend the poor, and maintain the cause of those who have no helper; for the sake of him who gave his life for us, thy Son our Savior Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth with

The life of William Wilberforce refutes the popular notion that a politician cannot be a saintly Christian, dedicated to the service of humanity.

Wilberforce was born into an affluent family in Hull, Yorkshire, on August 24, 1759, and was educated at St. John's College, Cambridge. In 1780, he was elected to the House of Commons, and he served in it until 1825. He died in London, July 29, 1833, and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

His conversion to an evangelical Christian life occurred in 1784, several years after he entered parliament. Fortunately, he was induced by his friends not to abandon his political activities after this inward change in his life, but thereafter he steadfastly refused to accept high office or a peerage.

He gave himself unstintingly to the promotions of overseas missions, popular education, and the reformation of public manners and morals. He also supported parliamentary reform and Catholic emancipation. Above all, his fame rests upon his persistent, uncompromising, and single-minded crusade for the abolition of slavery and the slave-trade. That sordid traffic was abolished in 1807. He died just one month before Parliament put an end to slavery in the British dominions. One of the last letters written by John Wesley was addressed to Wilberforce. In it Wesley gave him his blessing for his noble enterprise.

Wilberforce's eloquence as a speaker, his charm in personal address, and his profound religious spirit, made him a formidable power for good; and his countrymen came to recognize in him a man of heroic greatness.

Minutes of the Vestry
St. Peters Protestant Episcopal Church
May 12, 2015

1. Approval of minutes for May 12, 2015 the minutes were approved on a motion by P. Gerfin and seconded by J. Ratzel.

2. Sr. Warden Report-J. Chenot

Last month was somewhat a quiet month following Easter Sunday that was at the beginning of April. Fortunately we had a wonderful and well attended English tea fundraiser following the Sunday service on April 19th to benefit the Homeless Action Committee. We would like to thank Judy Burns and Christy Fish for hosting this outreach event as well as those who prepared sandwiches for the event.

Attendance on Sunday's drops a bit after Easter just as it does after Christmas. That said, this Thursday, May 14th is Ascension Day and we will have a service of Choral Evensong at 7:30 PM. The following Sunday is the Seventh Sunday in Easter followed by Pentecost Sunday, and then Trinity Sunday. The purpose of bringing these important feast days and Sundays up is since Easter has come and gone, church life continues and it is important to remember that we are grooming a younger congregation as well as new visitors that are coming on a regular basis on Sundays. We who consider ourselves as pillars and/or members at St. Peter's are needed to attend more often to worship and support these new members, as well as support our clergy who tirelessly work hard each week preparing for services.

We started this month participating in the Albany Crop Walk supporting the Capital District Food Pantries. We want to thank all those who participated by walking that day, those who donated monetarily, as well as thanking Maria Holden who was St. Peter's coordinator this year for this event.

This past Sunday we said goodbye to our intern Denise Moore. On May 30, 2015 she will be ordained to the Sacred Order of Deacons at the Cathedral of All Saints. On behalf of Vestry and congregation we want to thank her for her pastoral and outreach work she has done for St. Peter's and wish her future successes on her spiritual journey ahead. Following the 10:30 service we had a small reception acknowledging her accomplishments here at St. Peter's. We hope she will come back to visit and always know that she is always welcomed here and can consider St. Peter's her second home. Also, the Sunday school planted flowers in pots for Mother's Day to take home. Thank you to Laura Saffares and staff for all their extra effort they spend with our young children in the Sunday school.

Looking ahead, we have the Albany Diocesan Convention coming up June 6-8th in Speculator. Thank you to those who will be delegates representing St. Peter's during that weekend. Also, Sunday June 14th, we will be honoring the Choir and Sunday school with awards, both groups marking their successes and milestones. Following the service there will be an ice cream social at coffee hour hosted by the Sunday school.

3. Finance- G. Scala

George S. reviewed the Treasurer's Report for the month of April. Total offerings for the month were \$22,414 plus an additional \$609,078 which the church graciously received from the Estate of William Daley. Year to date total offerings are \$1,686,225 (\$77,147 excluding bequests). The investment/endowment accounts showed small gains for the month. Merrill Lynch was up .40% and Key was up +.50%. Year

George also reported on the stewardship for 2015. The givings for 2015 to-date remain at 95 units for an annual giving amount of \$198,382.

4. Property-T. Murphy

J. Chenot reported on the need for repairs at the Rectory and that the up lighting on the outside of the church has been repaired

5. Outreach-Mtr .Sue

6. Old Business - none reported

7. New Business- Altar Hangings and supplies-John Davis

8. Associated Rectors Report-Mtr. Sue

Outreach:

In the absence of Judy Burns, the Outreach Committee met to recap the following ministries:

- CROP Walk: Many thanks to Maria Holden for coordinating our team and to all the walkers and donors. As of the day of the walk, the St. Peter's team had raised \$1,000. A final total will be reported when available.
- April Tea Fundraiser: Thank you Judy Burns, Christy Fish and the others for organizing and preparing food for the tea. It was enjoyed by all and also raised \$381. The Outreach Committee added to this, and we forwarded \$400.00 to Homeless Action Committee for their use in Outreach ministry in the City of Albany.

I want to begin by giving my thanks and appreciation to Denise Moore and all that she has done among us this year. She gave us much in service particularly during our worship services. Beyond that, Denise was a huge help to the parish in administration of the Overflow Homeless Shelter, pastoral visitations, preaching and teaching and was particularly vital to our Confirmants and to me personally, helping me at every possible opportunity. In short, I know that we, and the Church as a whole, are greatly blessed by her ministry which God will certainly increase upon her Ordination. Please consider coming and celebrating this gift on Saturday May 30th at 11:00am at the Cathedral of All Saints.

Daughters of the King: We continue to have a strong prayer ministry for our parish. In fact, most weeks the Daughters receive at least one Confidential Prayer Card request. We continue to encourage women of the parish to consider joining us and welcome them at any of our meetings which return to the 9:35 am time slot on the 2nd Sunday of the month. Although we don't meet in the summer, our prayers continue with an updated prayer list weekly (thank you Susan!)

Cathedral of All Saints Great Chapter: I am completing my sixth (and final) year as a Great Chapter member and thank the Cathedral for the opportunity to serve in this way.

Upcoming Dates:

EDOA Convention June 5-7th – it's not too late to register. Please let Mother Sue know if you'd like to carpool from Albany, leaving Friday morning.

Bishop Ball Golf Classic: June 14th with golfing and a dinner. This not only honors the ministry of Bishop Ball but also provides funding for Outreach ministries in Albany. Please consider golfing and/or attending the dinner.

9. Sunday Attendance –Fr.Hartt

Average attendance is 135.7

10. Rectors Report

Father Hartt presented a report both summarizing and quoting from a recent Episcopal Church survey:

“New Facts on Episcopal Church Growth and Decline: A look at the dynamics of growth and decline in Episcopal Congregations, in conjunction with the Faith Communities Today (FACT) ecumenical/interfaith survey project.”

Reports of data and trends are routine from The Episcopal Church's headquarters. However, this report is considerably more comprehensive. Father Hartt believes that the vestry should understand these trends as we prayerfully prepare approaches for growth and mission. Father Hartt believes that “data is not destiny,” but rather areas to ponder as St. Peter's sets its own priorities.

Each congregation is unique, and “correlation is not always causation.” Nonetheless, convergence with several problem areas should give us pause as we consider our own parish's life. The report can be found online with the graphs and charts referenced. Father Hartt has mostly selected direct quotes and also summarized some portions in the text below. The principal point is to notice trends of percentage growth or decline. The presence of many children is perhaps our strongest area..

Simply because an area of St. Peter's life would be considered weak in terms of the report, does not mean that we would desire or be willing to change that area. However, we must face such decisions honestly and armed with knowledge of the trends. Again, each parish is unique and the report speaks to general trends.

The Rector's emphasis is supplied in bold.

KEY QUOTES & SUMMATIONS

“New Facts – Growth and Decline – TEC”

Not all regions are equally fertile for the growth of Episcopal congregations. Figure 1 shows that churches in western states are most likely to experience growth, followed by churches in the South. The Northeast and the Midwest are where growth is least likely and decline is most widespread. Growth in the South and West is undoubtedly related to population growth through “Sunbelt” migration, but historically, the South has also been better for growth because the population is more likely to be active in churches than other

Northeast churches: 17% growing.

Not too many years ago, growth was least likely among churches in downtown areas of larger cities. This is no longer the case, and many downtown areas have experienced a revival. The churches that remain downtown are somewhat more likely to be growing than churches in locations other than newer suburbs.

Growth is most likely among congregations organized since 1995. New organizations of all types tend to be more focused on establishing themselves as viable institutions and are able to incorporate new people more easily than older organizations. Clearly, however, the early growth that comes easily does not last forever, or even much past 15 years in most cases. Churches formed prior to 1900 are least likely to grow.... **Churches founded between 1600-1900, only 17% are growing.**

Among the three contextual factors addressed thus far, the most pervasive, independent effect on growth and decline is provided by region.

The vast majority of Episcopal congregations are predominantly white (nonHispanic/Latino) or “Anglo” (86%). And as is also the case in all mainline denominations, **predominantly white churches are less likely to grow and more likely to decline. 43% of congregations growing where predominate ethnic makeup is Asian, Hispanic, Native American or Multi-Racial.**

Episcopal Church members are older on average than the American public. The differences are greatest among the oldest and youngest age categories. Proportionately, we have many more persons age 65 or older and many fewer children, youth and young adults than the general population. This is due, in part, to the cumulative effects of a low birth rate following the baby boom era among a highly educated, predominantly white constituency. **But the Episcopal Church has also failed to retain many of the children of its members over the years.** These trends are not exclusive to the Episcopal Church, or to mainline Protestant denominations, but they are more extreme among mainline, predominantly white, highly educated denominations and most Jewish groups. **When 51-75% of a church's makeup is over 50, 43% of such parishes are declining.**

The “tipping point” in terms of likelihood of decline seems to be where over half of members are 50 years old or older. Decline or plateau is the norm among churches with predominantly older (age 50+) members. ... such congregations often lack a clear sense of mission and purpose, vibrant worship and involvement in recruitment and evangelism. **When 36% of members are 34 or younger, 37% of those churches are growing.**

Much more important to the growth profile of a congregation are the religious character of the congregation and its sense of mission and purpose. Churches that are clear about why they exist and what they should be doing are most likely to be growing congregations. They do not grow because they have been at their location for a century or two nor because they have an attractive building where they worship. They grow because they understand their reason for being and make sure they do the things well that are essential to their lives as communities of faith. ... Without a clear purpose, congregations often resemble inward-looking clubs or clans where fellowship among friends is the primary reason for being. The strong correlation between growth and having a clear mission and purpose.... **35% of churches that say they have such purpose are growing.**

Essential to all churches as worshiping religious communities is a sense of spiritual life, rather than simply human relationships and organizational/ritual activity. **36% of congregations that described themselves strongly "Our Congregation is Spiritually Vital and Alive" are growing.**

Some, a little or no emphasis on living out one's faith in daily life were in decline. Having such a basic emphasis did not guarantee growth, but lacking it nearly guaranteed decline or plateau.

Congregations that are willing to change to meet new challenges also tend to be growing congregations. Most congregations believe that they are willing to change, which is somewhat surprising given the obvious resistance to change in churches across America. But among the minority of Episcopal congregations that doubt their ability to change, growth is very unlikely. **Only 7% of congregations that are unwilling to change and 11% of congregations that were unsure experienced growth in worship attendance.**

Congregations are living communities and are constantly in flux. Any sense of constancy is an illusion or the result of a desire to keep things from changing. But change is inevitable as towns and neighborhoods change and as people join, become more active, give birth, become less active, drop out, move away or die. Vital organizations are those that adapt and adaptation requires purposeful change rather than drift. But among the minority of Episcopal congregations that doubt their ability to change, growth is very unlikely.

Congregations that have experienced serious conflict are more likely to have declined in worship attendance over the past four years. **59% of congregations with 3 or more areas of serious conflict in the past 4 years have declined.**

In general, the more worship services a congregation has, the more likely it is to have grown. Only 15% of churches with one Sunday service grew between 2009 and 2013, as compared to 38% of congregations with four or more services. Since very few churches have four or more services and the vast majority of Episcopal congregations have one or two services, the key finding here is that churches with only one service are very unlikely to grow, but churches with two or more services are more likely to experience growth. **A stronger relationship between services and attendance growth deals with the type of services a congregation has, in addition to simply its number of services. As shown in Figure 15, churches that have Morning Prayer on Sunday, a combination of Morning Prayer and Rite I or Rite II, or only Rite I, are very unlikely to have experienced any growth (only 6%) and most are declining in worship attendance. Growth is a bit more likely (but still infrequent) among churches that have a combination of Rite I and Rite II services.** This includes churches with only one service which alternates its rites weekly and churches that have more than one Sunday service. The proportion of churches growing increases among Episcopal congregations that have only Rite II services. Again, these can be churches with any number of services. **69% of churches offering Morning Prayer or only Rite I are declining.**

30% of churches which added a “non-typical service” are growing. In some cases these nontypical services were traditional services such as compline, evensong, Taizé, candlelight services with chant and meditation, or “family oriented” services followed by a meal. In other cases, the services were more “contemporary” or were “imaginative” in some way....

Only 17% of churches that described their principal service as “reverent” were growing.

The key seems to be doing something different from very traditional worship with a particularly solemn tone. For Episcopal churches, characterizing worship as “reverent” is related to decline, as is always or nearly always using kneelers. It is not that

worship lack any sense of reverence. But if being reverent and all the word implies is what characterizes worship rather than vibrancy and joy, the result is not likely to be growth. Most Episcopal churches are not growing and most of the churches that are not growing feature a basic Rite II service or alternate between a basic Rite I and Rite II service.

How often do children or youth read or engage in other worship leadership activities during your congregation's worship services? 28% of churches that answered "often" were growing.

Churches with a lot of children tend to involve them in worship as a matter of course. But among churches with a smaller number of children, their level of involvement in worship is strongly associated with growth

Coffee Hour So, although "chaotic" sounds bad and somewhat non-Episcopalian, 24% of Episcopal congregations described their coffee hours as "chaotic" and these congregations were more likely to be growing and less likely to be declining than any other type of congregation.

Attracting and incorporating new members requires desire and intentionality, but it also requires action and the involvement of existing members. Recruitment success results not just from official programs and events, but from the behavior of members who promote the congregation and invite others to attend worship and other events. As many studies have shown, the primary way people first connect with a congregation is through a pre-existing relationship with someone who is already involved.

33% of growing congregations describe having a "warm greeting and multiple efforts to contact."

Websites: In 2015, simply having a website is not rare or cutting-edge. The vast majority of congregations have web sites and for this reason the relationship between simply having a site and growth is not very strong. **Now, the issue is whether the web site is regularly updated and whether more active means of electronic communication are used. The effect of technology for communication is cumulative. The more things are done by a church, the more it is likely to grow. Figure 24 shows that churches that use many kinds of platforms (6 or more) are most likely to grow.**

Special events: How many special events or fellowship activities were held in the past year? 40% of growing congregations have such events weekly. 30% of growing congregations have such events more than once monthly.

Sunday School Growing churches emphasize Sunday school. In Episcopal churches, Sunday school typically involves the children and not all Episcopal churches have a lot of children. So is the relationship between an emphasis on Sunday school and growth simply a result of the proportion of children and youth in a church? The answer is "no." **There is a strong correlation between an emphasis on Sunday school and growth even in churches with relatively few younger members.** The strongest correlation between an emphasis on Sunday school and growth is found for churches with a moderate proportion of children and youth. 37% of growing congregations see their Sunday School a "specialty" of their parish.

Clergy:

Not surprisingly, churches with multiple priests were most likely to have grown and least likely to have declined between 2009 and 2013. In terms of the percentage growing, it did not matter if all priests were all full-time, a combination of full and part-time or even the rare situation where all priests were part-time.

The median Episcopal rector, vicar, dean or priest-in-charge (not counting interims, supply priests, curates or associates) is 59 years of age. The age of a congregation's priest is strongly related to growth and decline. Churches with priests age 49 and younger are most likely to grow, followed by churches with priests age 50-59. The likelihood of growth decreases greatly among older age cohorts of priests leading congregations. Only 17% of churches with priests age 60-65 are growing and the proportion growing is even lower among congregations led by priests in their late 60s or in their 70s. 40% of churches that called their priest between 2000-2004 are declining.

Figure 30 shows that decline is also widespread among churches with interim priests and among churches where the new priest has been there one year or less. The likelihood of growth increases with tenure through four years. After four years of tenure, fewer congregations are growing and more are declining. In churches where the priest has led the congregation for 11 years or more, 39% of congregations are declining and only 9% are growing. As compared to churches with an interim or a new priest, the percentage of churches in decline is lower among congregations with long-tenured clergy, but the percentage growing is also quite low. That is because so many churches with long-tenured priests are on stable plateaus— neither growing nor declining very much.

How well does "generate enthusiasm" describe your priest? 65% of parishes where the clergy person is described as "slightly or not at all" are declining. Indeed, the four items with the lowest correlation with growth were among the characteristics that nearly all priests said fit them "very well" or "quite well." But the characteristics that are most strongly correlated with growth are different. Not all priests are able to generate enthusiasm, get people to work together or have a clear vision for the congregation. Even fewer describe themselves as "charismatic leaders." These are leadership skills and many church leaders lack them or fail to use them. The ratings that were widespread among priests and that also significantly related to growth were being an "effective preacher," and "is friendly and engaging." Only 5% of Episcopal parish priests say that they are just "somewhat" friendly and engaging and 6% say that being "an effective preacher" describes them "somewhat" or "slightly."

Lay Leadership: Where there is some rotation, but among a limited number of people, decline is less dominant and growth is more likely. Where there is a lot of rotation among lay leaders, growth is much more likely. Lack of rotation in the vestry, wardens and other leadership positions tends to overwork the leaders to the point where the church is mostly about committee work, and it also leads to an insular, closed community that is difficult for newcomers to really join.

The report offers us much to consider. The key is that we understand our commitments and own our non-negotiables. St. Peter's is indeed an unique parish in many ways. The rector emphasizes that our future growth is as much a matter of commitment to regular attendance by our existing members as the manner in which we reach out and incorporate new worshipers. In all things, prayer and faithfulness come first.

11. Adjournment The Vestry meeting was adjourned on a motion by P. Gerfin

12. Compline was led by Fr Hartt

Respectfully submitted,

Clergy & Staff

The Rev. Paul J. Hartt..... Rector
The Rev. Susan Waldron.....Associate Rector
Neil K. Keen, F.A.G.O.....Organist & Choirmaster
Laura Saffares..... Director of Christian Education
James P. Shortall.....Sexton
Robert Clancy.....Assisting Sexton
Meghan Cooney.....Administrative Assistant
Janice Chenot..... Office Volunteer
E. Constance Powell.....Historian & Archivist

Vestry

James Chenot.....Senior Warden
Deborah Spath.....Junior Warden
Judy Burns Clerk
George ScalaTreasurer
Pam Gerfin, Tim Murphy, Maria Holden, Moses Kamy, Mark
Lundberg, Earl Stafford, Jack Ratzel, Stephanie Lencewicz

How to Contact Us

Office Hours:

Monday -Friday

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

Telephone: 518-434-3502

Fax: 518-462-4419

E-Mail:

Receptionist@stpeterschurchalbany.org

Website:

www.stpeterschurchalbany.org

Services

Sunday

Holy Communion 8:30 a.m.

Holy Communion 10:30 a.m.

(1st & 3rd Sundays)

Morning Prayer 10:30 a.m.

(2nd, 4th & 5th Sundays)

Sunday School 10:30 a.m.

Wednesday

Holy Communion 12:05 p.m.

ST. PETER'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

107 State St.

Albany, New York 12207

