



Cornerstone

May 2016

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

From the Rector

Spiritual, Not Religious

There is an old joke told in seminary and it goes like this: "Jesus came to proclaim the Kingdom of God and ended up with the Church." The joke is funny, cautionary, attractive, and mostly wrong. I would like to consider all four. That is, the reason the joke is funny, cautionary, attractive, and mostly wrong.

It is funny because we know from experience that the life of any church is fraught with diversions from the Kingdom. "You are sitting in MY pew" comes to mind. Likewise, "But we've always done it this way" as a near riot breaks out because the rector changes some minor thing or another. Then there are those little parish dramas that hardly show us at our Christian best. We can almost picture Jesus exhaling a weary sigh.

The joke is cautionary for precisely the reasons just mentioned. Church can be full of diversions and detours, where parish suppers have better attendance than Good Friday and "the least of these my brethren" are indeed too often treated as least! Jesus' "Father forgive them for they know not what they do" seems applicable many times over in parish life. Is it any wonder folks opt out of church life, becoming "spiritual, not religious" instead?

This brings up the reason that the joke is attractive. The Church is a glass house and throwing stones can be fun. You're pretty sure to hit a target when you throw one. Of course, there is also the culture itself that signs off on the church-rejecting attitude. One is hardly going to get in trouble or make anyone uncomfortable at a cocktail party by being "spiritual, not religious." In fact, approving nods will be seen. Being "religious" often makes others uncomfortable these days. Even we religious types have seen enough bad examples of social religiosity to understand the reactions.

So how might this joke-deserving truth about the Church nonetheless be mostly wrong? Put another way, did Jesus come to proclaim the Kingdom of God and wind up instead with the Church in a way he neither desired nor anticipated?

A few things are worth considering here. Before the Church were the disciples. They were with Jesus full time and there wasn't a bit of stained glass anywhere. Yet how would we describe their grasp of the "Kingdom of God?" The Gospels certainly don't portray them as "getting it" most of the time. If anything, their grasp of things seems to improve considerably as the Church develops. It is within the larger community, in the conditions of mutual correction and deliberation, that they understand the Lord more deeply and set their course under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is together that they honestly confront their personal limitations and advance the Kingdom on the basis of humility and interdependence.

The problem inherent to "spiritual, not religious" is the aloneness, the charting of one's own course. The very structure of "the Kingdom of God" is found in the many sheep following the one Good Shepherd. Jesus prays that "there be one flock, one Shepherd." (John 10:16.) The lone sheep is the lost sheep. In the parable, Jesus returns it to the flock. Like the gifts of the Holy Spirit, the Kingdom of God is lived out and realized as brothers and sisters, family of one Father. Looked at from the perspective of the family to which we are called, "spiritual, not religious" is inherently prodigal. It is to be missing from the family Table.

The Church is also part of the Kingdom of God because it is connection on God's terms. We are tested at church on the limits of our love and willingness to extend ourselves in real time and space and with real people whom we look in the eye. This connection may occur at coffee hour, the exchanging of the peace, or where we sit at a parish supper. It will be there where we will truly see need and yearning in the eyes of our brother or sister and face "passing by" like the priest and Levite of the parable or actually being the "Good Samaritan." The list could go on, but we know that church is more demanding than private spirituality precisely because it compels us to practice in a living family what we profess in our faith. The Anglican spiritual writer Evelyn Underhill called the Church "The School of Charity." It is where we best learn and practice the love to which we are called everywhere.

So back to the joke. Did Jesus intend the Church? The answer is yes. It is precisely what the Apostles formed to realize Christ's vision of family. It is the inevitable outcome of the vision of "one flock, one Shepherd." Our identity as Christians is inherently communal, not individualistic. We are rather counter-cultural in that sense. It is hard work to be sure, but the Church then was not less problematic than the Church now. One only needs to read Paul's Epistles to see that truth. In fact, another seminary joke is not to wish we were like the early Church because we already are!

Several years back, I was approached about doing a wedding at St. Peter's. I began to speak to the couple about the purpose of Christian marriage and the role of the church community in their new life together. The couple promptly informed me that they were "spiritual, not religious." I gently mentioned that it did not seem that they wanted to get married in a "spiritual" building but in a beautiful brick and mortar building secured for them by three hundred years of faithful religious observance. It was clear that they had never considered that the very place in which they wished to marry was the fruit of the dread "organized religion." Would they now do their part to make sure the parish was there for the next bride and groom as others had done for them?

Any pastor could tell the same story about weddings, funerals, baptisms, and groups that seek the fruit of faithful religious “institutional” life. I can assure anyone that the homeless men that sleep in our gym aren't looking for a “spiritual” bed but a physical one in an actual heated building. This offering comes from the faithful life of religious community showing up through thick and thin and not on our own terms.

Many of us presently attending Saint Peter's share the worry of countless Episcopal churches these days. It is a worry that the disciplined work of Christian community is falling on fewer and fewer members. In many cases, it threatens the very existence of churches to marry, baptize, confirm, bury, worship, and even sleep in. We need only look at our Children's Chapel to see the essential need of gathered community to pass forward the Faith. The Church's vision is multi-generational. We care deeply about those to come and those who have gone before.

Consider, right now countless young people are looking forward to college. They eagerly seek to join the institutional life of schools formed through generations. Likewise, if we have a heart attack, we want an “institutional” hospital, a place where medical knowledge is practiced, developed, and shared. Our kids participate in sports teams that can only function by the disciplined presence of other teammates and the institutional life of middle schools and high schools. In other words, we regularly seek and see the value of institutional life elsewhere. Indeed, we depend on it.

Jesus certainly was critical of the religion of his day. We also ought to be critical of our own time. But Jesus did so as religion's Lord, not religion's rejector. We ought to apply our Lord's critiques to the religion of our time, not by throwing stones, but accepting that the Church is only as good as we are personally prepared to sacrifice to make it. The wholesome role of private spirituality is that taking of personal responsibility and the self-examination it requires.

As we come to Pentecost, let us rejoice and celebrate the gift of the Church. Let us be counter-cultural for the sake of our own and future generations. The forebears of this historic church will surely rejoice in heaven as we unite ourselves to the love and faithfulness that spiritually infuse the very stones of St. Peter's. In the words of the Apostle Paul, *“Glory to God whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine: Glory to him from generation to generation in the Church, and in Christ Jesus for ever and ever.”* (Ephesians 3: 20-21.)

Blessed Pentecost, Fr. Hartt+

From the Associate Rector

We are all creatures of habit. Like others in the animal kingdom, most of us thrive on routine. Yes, the unexpected surprise is welcomed from time-to-time. Yet for the most part, we create and enjoy lives of routine and order. I was reminded of this recently when adopting a 3 month old puppy. It was recommended that I begin training immediately and I was told that providing him with a consistent routine was paramount to his success.

Our church life fits nicely into this model of routine and consistency. We move through the liturgical year modeling God's salvific work accomplished through Jesus Christ. We move seasonally through Christ's life, death, resurrection and ascension. Then in the season of Pentecost, we celebrate the birth of the Christian Church whose members continue Christ's work in the world today. We do this year after year, adding to the 2,000 years of similarly routine celebrations before us.

Yet our celebrations are not to be routine nor feel mundane nor habitually ordinary. This is because our celebrations, although often remembrances, are not simply memorial in nature but participatory in the here and now. For instance, when we celebrate Holy Communion, we join Jesus Christ and his disciples at his holy table. Likewise, when we celebrate a Holy Baptism among us, we experience the descent of the Holy Spirit among us – in our very midst. When we celebrate a marriage, we witness a new creation made by God as the two become one flesh. Finally, even at a funeral we experience God's movement among us as we claim, on behalf of the departed, God's promise of eternal life for those who Believe and commend our loved one to his gracious keeping.

None of these acts of God are routine or ordinary to be certain. In fact, God has given his people, through the church, tangible ways to connect with him. That is why the Sacraments are so very important in our tradition. We believe them to be certain ways through which God delivers his Grace to his people. God's grace – his love and favor – are Kingdom treasures we receive here on earth. We are to experience them zealously and with great excitement.

As we begin to approach the summer months and the long season of Pentecost in the church, many of us will make plans to break up our school-year routine with vacations and trips elsewhere. Wherever these summer months find you, whether away or enjoying a “staycation” nearby, I pray that you experience the Lord and His celebrations afresh and anew with great joy and excitement.

Pentecost is the longest season of the church and is different than all the others. From Advent through the Easter season, we celebrate the various stages of the life of Jesus Christ and God's saving work during each part of it. But during Pentecost we celebrate the birth and life of His church – that's you and I – here on earth continuing God's work in our world. It is not a low season in the church or a time to be away from God. Just the opposite – it is the time to plant firmly in our mission as Christians to bring God's love and hope to others around us.

This Pentecost season, may the Gospel come alive in your life and renew your Spirit with the hope brought to us through our Savior, Jesus Christ so that you may bear witness of Him out in the world!

Many Blessings,

Mtr. Sue+

Crop Walk

The 2016 Albany CROP Hunger Walk is on Sunday, May 1st at 1:30PM with registration beginning at 12:30PM. CROP Hunger Walks help to support the overall ministry of Church World Service, especially grassroots, hunger-fighting development efforts around the world. CROP Hunger Walks also help to provide food and water, as well as resources that empower people to meet their own needs. Please think about joining and/or sponsoring the St. Peter's Team! It's a lot of fun and an amazing cause. If you would like a walker packet or would like to sponsor a St. Peter's walker, please see Maria Holden, our St. Peter's Recruiter. You can also register for the walk and/or donate to the St. Peter's Team on our team page at: <https://www.crophungerwalk.org/albanyny/Team/View/20068/St-Peters-Episcopal-Church>.

Garden Fair

On Saturday, May 21st, from 9:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m., Trinity Church, 585 4th Ave., Troy, NY 12182, will sponsor their 11th Annual Garden Fair. Many perennial and annual plants will be available for sale along with herbs, roses and tomato plants. Crafts, baked goods and a basket raffle will be offered. Lunch and make your own sundaes will be available for purchase. There will be tours of the historic graveyard throughout the day.

Daughters of the King

The May DOK meeting will be held on Sunday, May 8th. They will meet after the 10:30am service in the Vestry room.

Outreach

The May Outreach meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 10th at 4:30 pm. Please join us to learn about Outreach ministries and hospitality events being planned!

Vestry Meeting

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

Mark your Calendar!

June 5, 2016 is the 17th Annual **Bishop Ball Golf Tournament** at Western Turnpike Golf Course, Guilderland NY. Registration for Golf teams as well as those attending Dinner will be available soon! Additional information available at: <http://www.thecathedraloffallsaints.org/>

Ascension Day Evensong

Please join us as we celebrate the fullness of the Easter Season with Ascension Day Choral Evensong on Thursday, May 5th at 7:30PM.



National Day of Prayer

The Annual National Day of Prayer will be held on Thursday, May 5th. The Albany event takes place at The Cathedral of All Saints beginning with a Concert of Prayer at 11AM followed by a Government Prayer Service at 12PM. Please join us in prayer for our nation and its leaders. For more information please visit: praycapitalregion.org.

Diocesan Mission Conference

The Diocesan Mission Conference will be hosted by St. Mary's Church, 220 Lake Ave, Lake Luzerne, NY 12846 on Saturday, May 7th, from 10:00 a.m. until 2:30 p.m. Come hear stories about local and global mission trips and/or activities in Northern Ireland, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Madagascar and more. The purpose of the conference is to learn how to pray for others and encourage others to live out the Great Commandment and Great Commission. This event is open to all ages. Please bring a bag lunch. Drinks and an ice cream social and desserts are provided. No registration is required and best of all, it's free!

EDOA 2016 Diocesan Convention

Pre-convention meeting: For Delegates, and all interested parishioners, there will be a pre-convention meeting on Tuesday, May 10th at the Cathedral of All Saints starting at 7:00pm. The new EDOA budget along with other Business Meeting agenda items will be provided. Our elected delegates are particularly encouraged to attend.

148th Convention of the Diocese of Albany

June 10th - 12th at Camp of the Woods, Speculator NY. Please call the church office for a full schedule and registration information.



Thank You to all the Men
and Women who have
served our country

Those who have entered into REST:

In sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ, we commend to Almighty God:

Julia Sturges O' Connor

11/18/25 - 04/12/16

Thomas J. Cleveland

06/26/45 - 04/17/16

Pentecost is Sunday, May 15th

We will have wonderful services including baptisms (at our 10:30AM service). As is customary within our tradition, we are encouraging you to wear red to church on Pentecost (red symbolizes the fire of the Holy Spirit).

Mohawk Hudson Regional Art Show

The Women of St. Peter's Church are invited to attend the 2016 Mohawk Hudson Regional Invitational Open Art Show at the Albany Center Gallery, 39 Columbia Street, Albany, on Friday, May 6th, it is free and open to the public. Here is the link to see more about the art show; <https://www.facebook.com/events/137582173305594>

St. Peter's Angels Softball Team

The Angels 10th season will begin on Sunday, May 1st. Games will still be played only on Sunday afternoons, and again this year they're part of the Empire State Sunday Softball League. Anyone interested in playing should contact Pete Benson at 269-1293.



2016 ST. PETER'S ANGELS SOFTBALL SCHEDULE

May 1st	Sunday	1:30PM	@ Ridgefield SB	(Scissors III & Co)
May 1st	Sunday	3:00PM	@ Ridgefield SB	(Mohawk Honda)
May 15th	Sunday	4:30PM	@ Mullens	(Keller Williams)
May 22nd	Sunday	1:00PM	@ Ridgefield SB	(Table 41 Brewing Co)
May 22nd	Sunday	2:30PM	@ Ridgefield SB	(Il Faro)
June 5th	Sunday	1:30PM	@ Mullens	(Tops in Bottoms)
June 12th	Sunday	1:30PM	@ Mullens	(Café Hollywood)
June 26th	Sunday	1:30PM	@ Mullens	(Vipers)
July 10th	Sunday	4:30PM	@ Mullens	(Keller Williams)
July 17th	Sunday	1:30PM	@ Ridgefield SB	(Il Faro)

Games will be played at either Mullens Park located at 35 North First Street, Albany, NY 12204 or Ridgefield Park located at 316 Partridge Street, Albany, NY 12208. Directions are available on the website. Please type in your browser <http://www.softball-24-7.com/ESS-SundaySoftball/index.html> do not Google search it as it will not appear. On the website, we are listed as St. Peter's Angels. To check on rainouts call 269-1293.

Local produce delivered to
St. Peter's Episcopal Church on Thursdays

How Does It Work?
 Field Goods is a local produce subscription delivery service. Brilliant, right? Each week, you'll receive 5-8 different types of fruits and vegetables. Invaluable to a healthy lifestyle!

Field Goods chooses the items delivered and purchases them directly from over 60 different Hudson Valley farms. A subscription costs \$20, \$25, or \$30 a week depending on which bag you choose. All of the produce is non-GMO, much is organic, and all is grown by small farms.

In the Bag, our newsletter, gives you information about what you're eating and how to eat it: facts, recipes, and photos! We deliver 150+ varieties of fruits and vegetables, and more than a dozen types of local cheese and artisan bread, all grown by local small farms or local producers.

Field Goods offers great value and variety, convenient delivery, fresh and delicious produce, and supports local farmers.
 What's not to love?

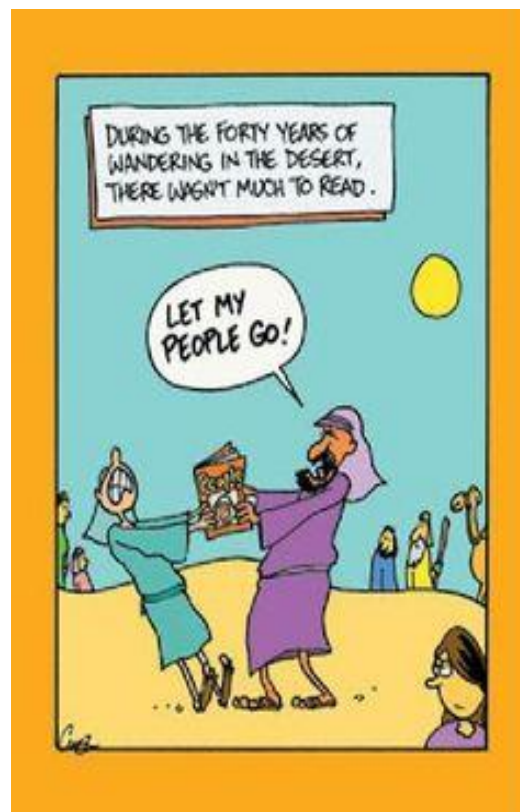
To sign up & learn more, go to **Field-goods.com**
 Email info@field-goods.com
 Field Goods is located in Athens, NY

What our customers are saying

"I LOVE vegetable day."
 "I am having so much fun experimenting with new foods and recipes."
 "Excellent quality, value, variety."
 "My kids like Baby Turnips and Kale...who knew?"
 "Great newsletter. Makes me want to cook."
 "THANK YOU for changing the way my family eats!"

Free \$5.00 Gift Certificates are available at the church office for new customers only. If you have been thinking of trying this service - please call Kristin for a complimentary gift certificate towards your first order.

Church Chuckles!



Youth Formation & Sunday School

ATTENTION 2016 GRADUATES

We would like to acknowledge all graduates for the 2015-2016 school year. If you, your child, or even your grandchild will be graduating from high school or college or has already graduated anytime during this past school year, please complete the form that was included in your May Newsletter and return it to the church office. If you did not receive a form or need another one please call the church office. The deadline is Monday, May 23rd if you would like it to be included in the June Newsletter.

St. Francis Mission Soup Kitchen **(a.k.a. Angels in Training)**

On the 3rd Saturday of each month (May 21st) we invite 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 therefore many hands mean light work! Please call Laura for information or to let her know you are coming at 368-4284.

Beaver Cross Camp Is Hiring

Beaver Cross Camp is accepting applications for the 2016 summer season. The staff and volunteers of Beaver Cross Camp are devoted to our Lord and the work He has entrusted to them to serve and minister to all who come to Summer Camp and make His name known to them. For an application go to: <http://www.beavercrossministries.org/employment.html>



Of all the special joys in life,
The big ones and the small,
A mother's love and tenderness
Is the greatest of them all.
Happy Mother's Day to all the Moms
You all are a true blessing from God.

Beaver Cross Camp Registration Open

Registration for Beaver Cross Camp is now open! Experience the adventure of summer camp by being part of Beaver Cross Camp communities devoted to faith, friendship and fun. At Overnight Camp and Day Camp, campers explore and deepen their faith together through dynamic teaching and activities. New friendships are created and old ones rekindled as campers laugh and learn together in the environment they themselves help create to be safe, encouraging and fun. To register online for camp, <https://registration.campbrain.com>



Beaver Cross Camp Dates!

2016 Overnight Camp Dates

Beaver Bound	July 6 - July 8	K-2 Grade
Discoverers	July 3 - July 8	3-5 Grade
Adventurers 1	July 10 - July 16	6-8 Grade
Adventurers 2	July 17 - July 23	6-8 Grade
Pioneers 1	July 24 - July 30	9-12Grade
Pioneers 2	July 31- Aug 6	9-12Grade

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

2016 Day Camp Dates

Day camp 1	July 4 - July 8
Day camp 2	July 11 - July 15
Day camp 3	July 18 - July 22
Day camp 4	July 25 - July 29
Day camp 5	Aug 1 - Aug 5
Day camp 6	Aug 8 - Aug 12
Day camp 7	Aug 15 - Aug 19
Day camp 8	Aug 22 - Aug 26

*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 charge. Every Day Camp week is open to kids grades K-6.

For registration forms pick one up at the church office, or visit beavercrosscamp.com.

May 2016

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
<p>1 Sixth Sunday of Easter</p> <p>8:30 am - Holy Communion 10:30 am - Holy Communion 12:30 pm - CROP Walk Reg. 1:30 pm - CROP Walk</p>	<p>2</p> <p>5:00 pm - Treble Rehearsal</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>4</p>
<p>8 Seventh Sunday of Easter Mother's Day</p> <p>8:30 am - Holy Communion 10:30 am - Morning Prayer 11:45 am - DOK Meeting</p>	<p>9</p> <p>5:00 pm - Treble Rehearsal</p>	<p>10</p> <p>4:30 pm - Outreach Meeting 5:15 pm - Vestry Meeting</p>	<p>11</p> <p>8:45 am - Top of the 12:05 pm - Holy Communion</p>
<p>15 Pentecost Celebrate by wearing Red!!!</p> <p>8:30 am - Holy Communion 10:30 am - Holy Communion w/Baptisms</p>	<p>16</p> <p>5:00 pm - Treble Rehearsal</p>	<p>17</p>	<p>18</p> <p>8:45 am - Top of the 12:05 pm - Holy Communion</p>
<p>22 Trinity Sunday Youth Sunday</p> <p>8:30 am - Holy Communion 10:30 am - Morning Prayer w/ Children's Chapel</p>	<p>23</p> <p>5:00 pm - Treble Rehearsal</p>	<p>24</p>	<p>25</p> <p>8:45 am - Top of the 12:05 pm - Holy Communion</p>
<p>29 Second Sunday after Pentecost</p> <p>8:30am - Holy Communion 10:30am - Morning Prayer</p>	<p>30 Memorial Day</p> <p>Office Closed</p>	<p>31</p>	

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	<p>5 Ascension Day National Day of Prayer</p> <p>5:30 pm - Full Choir 7:30 pm - Evensong</p>	<p>6</p> <p>12:30 pm - Organ Concert</p>	<p>7</p>
<p>St. Hill Communion</p>	<p>12</p> <p>5:00 pm - Treble Rehearsal 5:30 pm - Full Choir</p>	<p>13</p> <p>12:30 pm - Organ Concert</p>	<p>14</p>
<p>St. Hill Communion</p>	<p>19</p> <p>5:00 pm - Treble Rehearsal 5:30 pm - Full Choir</p>	<p>20</p> <p>12:30 pm - Organ Concert</p>	<p>21</p> <p>11:00 am - Angels in Training</p>
<p>St. Hill Communion</p>	<p>26</p> <p>5:00 pm - Treble Rehearsal 5:30 pm - Full Choir</p>	<p>27</p> <p>12:30 pm - Organ Concert 6:00 pm - Hollis/Panzironi Wedding Rehearsal</p>	<p>28</p> <p>4:00 pm - Hollis/Panzironi Wedding</p>



FRIDAY NOONTIME ORGAN CONCERTS

Free half-hour recitals each Friday at 12:30pm

Evensong - Ascension Day, Thursday May 5th at 7:30PM. The choir will sing Choral Evensong with canticle settings by Herbert Murrill and a motet by Charles Villiers Stanford. All are welcome for this festive musical service.

Composer of the month – Thomas Tallis (c.1505-1585)

Thomas Tallis is sometimes referred to as the Father of Anglican Church Music. Not much is known about his early career, but in his 30s he served as a singer at Canterbury Cathedral and went on to the Chapel Royal, where he sang, played the organ, helped run the choir, and composed. Tallis successfully navigated the Protestant vs. Catholic controversies of the day and successfully served both branches. He, along with William Byrd, was granted by Queen Elizabeth a monopoly to print music in England.

His choral music ranges from simple motets and service music settings, several of which we sing at St. Peter's, to his famously monumental 40-voice motet, Spem in alium. Tallis was a teacher of William Byrd, and his music had great influence to those who followed him. At his death, Byrd wrote a musical lament, Ye sacred muses, which closes with the words, "Tallis is dead and music dies."



CHOIR

Choir rehearsals are on the following schedule:

Mondays: 5:00pm - 6:15pm Trebles
Thursdays: 5:00pm - 6:30pm Trebles
5:30pm - 7:00pm Adult choristers
Sundays: 9:30am rehearsal for the 10:30am service

Please contact Neil Keen for more information at stpmus@gmail.com or 339-0137.

We have added a new feature on the St. Peter's website: regular postings of music selections from our Sunday services.

Saint of the Month Club

The Martyrs Of the Sudan

"The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church," the third-century North African teacher, Tertullian, once wrote. And in no place is that observation more apt than in Sudan, Africa's largest country, and a land long torn by violence. British policy in the late nineteenth century was to arbitrarily divide the vast country between a Muslim North and a multiethnic South, limiting Christian missionary activity largely to the latter, an artificial division that has created enduring problems. Since independence, on January 1, 1956, three civilian governments and three military dictatorships have ruled a country that has experienced forty-one years of civil war. During the 1980s Sudan's internal armed conflict assumed an increasingly religious character, fueled by a northern-dominated Islamic government imposing authoritarian political control, Islam as the state religion, a penal code based on Sharia law, and restrictions on free speech and free assembly.

On May 16, 1983, a small number of Episcopal and Roman Catholic clerical and lay leaders declared they "would not abandon God as they knew him." Possibly over two million persons, most of them Christians, were then killed in a two-decade civil war, until a Comprehensive Peace Treaty was signed in January 2005. During those years, four million southern Christians may have been internally displaced, and another million forced into exile in Africa and elsewhere. Yet despite the total destruction of churches, schools, and other institutions, Sudanese Christianity, which includes four million members of the Episcopal Church of the Sudan, has both solidified as a faith community, and gradually expanded at home and among refugees, providing steadfast hope in often-desperate setting. This hymn, written by Sudanese children in exile in Ethiopia, reflects both the tragedy and depth of faith of Sudan's Christians:

Look upon us, O Creator who has made us.
God of all peoples, we are yearning for our land.
Hear the prayer of our souls in the wilderness.
Hear the prayer of our bones in the wilderness.
Hear our prayer as we call out to you.



From the Archives

Architecture and Symbolism in St. Peter's Church

Chi Rho Symbol

The architecture of St. Peter's Church can be divided into six parts:

The Vestibule - The entrance to the church from the street.

The Narthex - The space between the Vestibule and the Nave. On the right side of the Narthex is a room housing our War Chapel and our Columbarium.

The Nave – The main part of the church where the congregation gathers. It contains the pews and aisles.

The Chancel – The place where the Choir sits. It is usually three steps up from the Nave.

The Sanctuary – The front part of the church containing the altar from which the Holy Communion Service is conducted. It is usually three steps from the Sanctuary floor to the altar.

The Sacristy – The place of storage of the robes of the Rector and those who assist. Also the place for the storage of the Communion vessels and linens.

In the Sanctuary there are many beautiful symbols. For example the mosaic floor contains representations of the gospels of the first four evangelists of the New Testament: Saint Matthew, Saint Mark, Saint Luke, and Saint John. These gospels are represented as winged figures.

Gospel of Saint Matthew:

Going from left to right, facing the Sanctuary, the first figure represents the gospel of Saint Matthew as a winged man. This figure emphasizes emphasizing Jesus' human nature. This gospel begins with Jesus' genealogy and ends with the fulfillment of prophesy that he is the son of God.

Gospel of Saint Mark:

The second figure going from left to right represents the gospel of Saint Mark. This gospel is depicted as a winged lion. It represents the voice of John the Baptist crying in the wilderness, making way for the Lord. The lion also symbolizes both royal dignity, and Christ's resurrection. Christ's resurrection (rebirth) is shown as the newborn lion who at first appears dead but is awakened by the breath, the tongue and the roaring of its sire.

Gospel of Saint Luke:

Going from left to right the third mosaic figure represents the gospel of Saint Luke as an ox, the beast of sacrifice for the atonement of sin by God's blood.

Gospel of Saint John:

The last figure represents the gospel of Saint John as a winged eagle. The eagle in this context depicts God's Word coming down from Heaven. This Word is made flesh in Jesus. As Saint John's gospel soars in spirit upward to the heaven of heavens, it brings back revelations of its sublime and awful mysteries.

These same four winged figures shown in the mosaic floor of the Sanctuary, are also depicted in the stained glass windows of our Sacristy.

Other Mosaic Decoration

Between the depictions of the second and third evangelists' gospels in the Sanctuary, there is a mosaic monogram containing the Latinized version of three Greek letters *IHS*. These are the first three letters of the name of Jesus. This symbol is generally interpreted as *The Holy Name of Jesus*. This same emblem is also found in the center of our Altar Cross.

Greek Symbolism below the Altar

Within the Sanctuary are many other important symbols. The Sanctuary contains the Prun Altar and Reredos with its beautiful angels reverencing the cross. The altar is supported by four pillars between which are following engraved symbols:

Going from left to right, the first symbol is is *Chi Rho* which is formed by superimposing the two Greek capital letters *Chi* and *Rho* (*XP*) as the Greek word for Kristus or Christ, invoking the authority of Jesus as well as symbolizing his status as the Christ. The symbol looks like the letter P placed above a series of spokes. I used the *Chi Rho* symbol as an illustration of Greek symbolism at the beginning of this article.

On the second symbol below the altar is a representation of the cross of Christ with the *IHS*, depiction of the *Holy Name of Jesus*, in the center of the cross.

The third and final symbol between the altar pillars superimposes the first Greek letter *alpha* (as a large A) superimposed on the last Greek letter *omega* (as a large O). The O is incomplete at the base. The *alpha omega* (*AO*) symbol is interpreted as meaning that Christ, in all things, is the beginning and the end. This concept is found in the Book of Revelations. *Other Symbols*

There are also symbols on the carpet and on the chairs in the Sanctuary. The edges of the carpet have the same vine and branches motif as the mosaic decoration at the front of the Nave.

The symbols on the carpet leading up to the altar include an *Anchor*, a symbol of safety, meaning Christ is a symbol of unfailing hope for all who believe in him. Other symbols on the carpet are *hearts* representing Jesus' sacred heart in his divine love for humanity, and *crosses* representing Jesus' death on the cross as the atonement for our sin. There is a symbol of an *Upside Down Dove* representing the descent of the Holy Spirit on Jesus after his baptism.

There are various *Chi Rho* symbols on chairs in the Sanctuary. The symbol on the back of the chair of the Bishop is the *Corporate Arms of St. Peter's Church*, which includes a Crossed Key and Bishop's Staff superimposed on the upside down Cross of Saint Peter. A Bishop's Mitre also is superimposed on the cross. Decorative branches grace the area below the symbol.

Thus Saint Peter's has many symbols in the Sanctuary that give special meaning to the worship service of the church.

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

March 8, 2016

Present: Fr. Hartt, Mtr. Sue Waldron, J. Chenot, G. Scala, D. Spath, T Murphy, M. Holden, M. Lundberg, E.Stafford, N.Creagan, M Kamy, K.Cheowski

Opening Prayer Fr. Hartt

1. Approval of Minutes of Vestry Meeting , March 8 2016

The March 8, 2016 minutes were approved on a motion made by M. Lundberg and seconded by K. Cheowski. The motion was unanimously approved by the vestry.

2. Senior Warden Report - J. Chenot

J. Chenot thanked all who had a hand in making our annual Shrove Tuesday Pancake dinner which again was a huge success and a great way to start off our Lenten season. Thanks to Jack Ratzel, Jeff Russom, Janice Chenot and Pam Gerfin, and so many others who with volunteered to serve and clean at the dinner. It was a great evening of fellowship and great food for all.

Ash Wednesday services were well attended and Jim also wanted to remind all that we are still having Evensong services each Friday evening at 5:45 during lent. He thanked the choir and Neil Keen for their participation at all these Friday services.

As mentioned in the past, we always see a drop in Sunday attendance after each Advent season as well as Eastertide. It is so important for us to keep in mind that new members are visiting our church and we need to be there each Sunday to support them showing them we are thriving and growing church, if not, they may not return. J. Chenot wanted to thank everyone involved with the homeless overflow shelter which has ended for this past winter season. This year our shelter, as in the past has been so important to these men especially during the winter months. Many thanks to Judy Burns and Mother Sue for coordinating this important outreach. This completes our 7th year that helps the Albany City Mission as well as serves our local community. Jim also wanted to thank the congregation for all their support with food and monetary donations during this past season.

Jim thanked Father Hartt and Mother Sue in advance for all their preparation during lent and leading up to Palm Sunday, Holy week and Easter Sunday Service. Also a thank you in advance to the altar guild, ushers and Pat and Bobby for all their work behind the scene, your work does not go unnoticed. As indicated in the most recent letter sent out to the parishioners, Mother Sue has taken a secular job with the State of New York during the weekdays, but will continue to be our assistant minister on Sundays as well as continuing to hold study groups as she has in the past. We wish her well in her new life changing endeavor and thank her for her continued work that she does for all of us at St Peter's. Also we want to welcome our new front office secretary, Kristin Robinson who has taken Meghan's position. With all this transition within the church office, much of the extra load of work has fallen on Janice Chenot. She has been working tirelessly in the office and taking on new tasks on that Meghan had implemented. Thank you so very much for your dedication and support to the church and to all of us.

We would also like to thank Neil Keen and the choir for all their work preparing for Good Friday service. This year the choir will be performing "The St. Matthew Passion" on Good Friday with orchestra. Also I want to thank the choir for all their time and dedication at rehearsals preparing the music for Easter Sunday services. Lastly, we look forward to the Easter egg hunt the Saturday before Easter at the rectory. As always, Jim is looking forward to Easter Sunday and is hoping for a great turn out as we did at Christmas time.

3. Finance - G. Scala

George S. reviewed the Treasurer's Report for the month of February. Total offerings for the month were \$15,859 and YTD we are at \$37,991. This is (\$14,751) below budget projections.

The investment/endowment accounts continued to struggle consistent with the markets. Merrill Lynch was down -.96% for the month and Key was down -.61% for the month. YTD Merrill Lynch is down (-5.81%) and Key is down (-4.35%). This keeps us off with a significant budget variance for the year of (\$236,113). We continue to hope the market will rebound and stabilize in the future. While the returns were disappointing, both accounts performed favorably versus market indexes. Expenses year to date are \$7,965 under budget.

George also reported on the updated stewardship numbers. To date 2016 pledges are 65 units at \$160,502. The average pledge amount is up from 2015 but the total number of pledging units and pledge dollars remains down. Discussion occurred about stewardship. George will present an analysis statistically of pledging units between 2015 and 2016 at the April meeting.

George reviewed the Treasurers report for the month of February, 2016. Our Investments are doing well. Even though we are below in offerings it was still a good year. Expenses were under budget.

Motion to approve the budget was made by M. Holden and seconded by D. Spath. The motion was unanimously approved by the vestry.

**4. Property -
No report**

5. Outreach - Mother Sue

Soup Sampler on March 5th was a great success. Parishioners donated \$197.00 through soup purchase, with the Outreach Committee adding an additional \$103.; a total of \$300 was raised for the Food Pantries of the Capital District, Inc. who support 53 food pantries through Albany, Rensselaer and Saratoga counties. Thank you to the cooks for all of the delicious soup and to Judy Burns and Janice Chenot for coordinating this event.

The Outreach Committee provided (4) scholarships to the West Buganda Aids Orphan Girls for \$2,000.

The Homeless shelter ran for its 7th year, concluding on 2/29/16. CCRM chose to close earlier this year than in years past due to the mild weather we have been experiencing. We thank all people who donated funds and supplies to the shelter and also the volunteers who provided hospitality to the men. Carly Crewell presented ideas to increase membership and church attendance to promote the need of each person's contribution of time, talent and treasure. Thank you Carly!

This year's CROP Walk will be May 1, 2016. They are seeking a Recruiter from St. Peter's to attend the Recruiter's Rally on 3/13. Maria Holden has volunteered for this role – thank you Maria!

We began planning the Annual Spring Tea with intent to benefit the new troop of the American Heritage Girls at St. Peter's. A tentative date of April 17th has been set. Thank you Judy Burns for coordinating this event.

A new whiteboard will be ordered for Coffee Hour hosts, to be designed by Carly Crewell who will seek volunteers to sign up. We also discussed presentations of various committees to help increase interest.

6. Old Business

Delegates to Convention (June 10-12) were discussed with several individuals proposed. Jim Chenot will reach out to these individuals to secure their availability.

7. New Business

Annual convention coming soon, a motion to approve ? and ? as delegates to convention was made by M. Lundberg and N. Creagan. The motion was unanimously approved by the vestry. Mtr Sue Waldron compensation package was proposed to and approved unanimously by the vestry. The vestry also noted that her salary is designated as housing allowance.

8. Associate Rector's Report- Mother Sue

Lent: We had a strong presence at the Pancake Supper as well as Ash Wednesday services. I'd like to thank the Altar Guild for their extra devotion this time of year to our altar preparations.

Lenten Women's Bible Study: The women continue to meet to read and reflect on, "Your Beautiful Purpose" by Susie Larson each Wednesday at 1:00. Our study will conclude on Wednesday March 16th.

Lenten Quiet Day: A Quiet Day has been planned for Sunday March 13th from noon-5:00pm with lunch (provided by the Daughters of the King), followed by three readings with quiet reflection time for each, and ending with discussion of The Call to the Observance of a Holy Lent. Celebration of Holy Communion at 4:00pm will complete the Quiet Day.

Daughters of the King: We hosted a women's luncheon on February 14th (in lieu of our regular meeting) at Wellington's with 11 women present. This month, the Daughters are providing lunch for the Lenten Quiet Day. Thank you Daughters! The Daughters continue to be honored to hold the daily prayers and intercessions we are given.

Upcoming Events: **Chrism Mass:** is Monday 3/21 at 6:00 at the Cathedral of All Saints. The clergy will recommit their Ordination Vows with Bishop Love who will also bless the holy oil we use throughout the year.

I'd like to thank Fr. Hartt, Jim, Deb and the Vestry and parish for your support with my upcoming transition to bi-vocational ministry. I am blessed to continue to serve among you.

9. Sunday Attendance

Attach Father Hartt's report

The average Sunday attendance is currently 117.9

10. Rector's Report- Fr.Hartt

Fr. Hartt spoke of the recent letter to the parish announcing Mtr. Waldron's moving to part-time ministry at St. Peter's. In relevant part, the letter states:

"Prior to entering seminary, Mother Waldron worked in the Information & Technology field. In fact, Mother Sue had a wonderful position with New York State. Over the past year, Mother Sue has been discerning whether it is time for her to become bi-vocational. The Diocese has for some time been encouraging more recently ordained clergy to consider this option. Frankly, it is a reflection on the health of our denomination that this line of thought has developed. Nonetheless, there are benefits for parish finances and retirement security for newer clergy.

Mother Waldron already has many years in the NYS pension system and has been offered a technology position with the Education Department. After prayer and consultation, she has decided to accept the offer and work for St. Peter's on a part-time basis. The good news is that Mother Sue will be present with us each Sunday and offer her excellent educational offerings as in the past. The principal impact on the parish will be Mother Sue's availability for routine office presence and on-call pastoral care. We will need to respect these new limits on her time. This will be an adjustment for us during the week, but our Sundays will feel as they do now."

Father Hartt spoke of Mtr. Sue's many gifts and the blessing of her ministry at St. Peter's. He is delighted that Mtr. Sue will still be serving at St. Peter's under this new arrangement.

Father Hartt spoke next of the new receptionist. Again as stated in his letter to the parish:

"As you know, we have been searching for a new receptionist. I am pleased to announce that we have found a new person to take over from Meghan Cooney. Please welcome Kristin Robinson when you call or stop by the office over the next couple of weeks. There is a lot to learn for Kristin about our unique ways at St. Peter's. Fortunately, Kristin is a devout Christian and full of energy. We look forward to her presence with us."

Father Hartt spoke of the upcoming Diocesan convention in June. Delegates were discussed and paperwork signed.

Average Sunday attendance is better than this time last year. At 123 as opposed to 111. However, we must not lose sight of the fact that last year's ASA of 120.6 was considerably less than 2014's 136.8. Father Hartt believes that this decrease includes existing parishioners who simply come fewer Sundays per month, which reflects national trends. Strategies for evangelism and increased attendance were reviewed. Fr. Hartt again stressed the centrality of keeping the Sabbath. We do not have a membership problem, but an attendance problem. This can be seen clearly on Easter and Christmas.

The poetry reading by Professor Slade on March 6th following services went quite well. The poems Dr. Slade shared were deep in Christian faith and reflected the black experience in America. One parishioner specifically spoke of how important such ventures in the Christians arts are to our identity as Episcopalians.

Father Hartt shared the upcoming schedule for Holy Week. He prayed for us a most Blessed Easter.

11. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by E. Stafford and seconded M. Lundberg. It was passed unanimously by the vestry.

12. Compline

Fr. Hartt led Compline.

Respectfully Submitted,
Deborah Spath

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
Kristin Robinson.....Administrative Assistant
Janice Chenot.....Office Volunteer
E. Constance Powell.....Historian & Archivist

Vestry

James Chenot Senior Warden
Deborah Spath.....Junior Warden
George Scala..... Treasurer
Kevin Cehowski, Nancy Creagan, Maria Holden, Moses Kamy,
Stephanie Lencewicz, Mark Lundberg, Tim Murphy, Earl Stafford

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

