



Cornerstone

November 2019

Newsletter of St. Peter's Protestant Episcopal Church

107 State Street, Albany, New York

From the Rector

Advent and the Pharisee & Tax Collector

Our minds are naturally moving towards Thanksgiving. With the kids safely back to school or college, we can finally focus our attention on sorting out travel plans or how Thanksgiving will happen at our place this year. There are many details and expectations are high. It is a joyful but also anxious time of year. We want to get it right. Then Christmas appears on the horizon. Black Friday shopping and the preparations for Christmas lay claim before we can even catch our breath.

Into this odd combination of joy and frenzy comes Advent. I know that it is likely the last thing on anyone's mind right now, but Advent is coming. December 1st is the First Sunday of Advent. Your clergy will soon be encouraging you "to keep a holy Advent." Faithful souls quite rightly wonder, "What does that really mean anyway? How on earth with all the demands and details can we get to that elusive holy state?" Believe me, I struggle as well.

One Advent admonition that we typically hear at church is to slow down and truly prepare our hearts to receive the Christ Child. It is good counsel, but can also feel a little unrealistic. We are distracted. We are being pushed and pulled in a thousand directions. Yet Jesus appears then and now to a distracted world. In fact, many of Jesus' parables concern that very thing. The Kingdom of God has come, but will the invited guests show up? There is treasure buried in a field, but will we sell everything to get that field? Countless parables concern claiming the Kingdom moment. Like Martha and Mary, we are called to choose the better part.

I recall that a seminary friend would talk of John the Baptist crashing all our Christmas parties. "The voice of one crying out in the wilderness" is in fact about our wilderness. The wilderness of distraction and lesser things. The wilderness that we must walk through to get to Bethlehem "and see this thing that has taken place," as the shepherds say (Luke 2:15). It is precisely "this thing" that is to claim our attention!

I acknowledge that there is not an easy answer or quick fix to our wilderness. It is about seeing things differently. It is about not allowing the "holiday season" to take charge of our souls. Home devotions around the Advent wreath help a great deal. It is a joy and profoundly meaningful to light those candles, say the prayers, and read the brief passage of Scripture appointed with the family. The Advent daily devotionals by C.S. Lewis or Henri Nouwen in the back of the church help many. Lessons and Carols and Handel's Messiah can be counted on to lift us towards heaven. Being at the Advent Services is the most urgent. In a word, we keep a holy Advent by being around the holy. The holy time of church. The holy of a believing family around the Advent Wreath. We will soon find ourselves in holy wonder at "this thing that has taken place." We saturate ourselves with the things of God.

And this also means to have mercy on ourselves. We were given a great pre-Advent gift this year in the form of Jesus' Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector. It is a parable in which Jesus tells us of two men in the Temple. The Pharisee is giving thanks to God that he is not like other men. He is good and righteous. He goes on to list his many virtues to the Lord. Far behind him stands the tax collector. He is despised by the people and considered a traitor to the Romans. It is a shady business. The tax collector knows it. He knows that he has no virtues to recount to the Lord. He stands far off beating his breast. "God, be merciful to me, a sinner!" Jesus says that it is the tax collector, not the Pharisee who stood right with God. No point in doing the Advent devotions with the heart of a Pharisee. We get to Bethlehem the tax collector way.

When we think about the shepherds on bended knee before the manger, we sense a combination of holy wonder and humility. There is no presumption of any kind. The Child is pure gift. Even to be in His presence is to be healed. We can't even imagine being the Pharisee before Him, going on and on about our supposed virtues. We are humbled and right-sized. We feel "let all mortal flesh keep silence."

Might it be that keeping a holy Advent is the intersection of the tax collector and the shepherds? It would be the truth of our unworthiness and the holy wonder that God is about to give us a whole new standing. Could that tax collector even imagine God's verdict of acquittal or the Pharisee that all his supposed virtues are a dirty rag? Well, a holy Advent seems to be about the wonder of the free gift of salvation with the acknowledgment that we sure understand we need it!

The wondrous vision before the manger gathers it all together.

Come Lord Jesus! Fr. Hartt+

From the Associate Rector

Spiritual Planning versus Experiencing...

I'm thinking a lot about planning this time of the year. Yes, at church, we are already busy planning Advent and Christmas celebrations! As one who works for the church, as well as one who worships in the church, I always have one foot in the present and the other in the future. In fact, one of the most challenging things to learn, after ordination, was how to be fully present in two spiritual places at once! How does one write a Christmas sermon during penitential Advent, or finish an Easter sermon during Holy Week?

I believe that many of you can relate as well as there are probably many areas of your lives that you experience similar things. And I know that most all of you will also be planning for the Christmas season, be it through shopping, decorating, baking or other endless tasks and activities, all while trying to fully experience Advent spiritual thoughts in Church.

And so, I think it's prudent for us to reflect on spiritual planning versus spiritual experiencing. Recently, I spent time meeting with a young lady who is preparing to receive Holy Communion for the first time. During preparation, we naturally spent time speaking about the Lord's Prayer. One thing I asked of her and her family, was to pray the Lord's Prayer once daily, so that memorization of it would come more easily for her. I was amazed that just after one week she had 90% of it committed to memory already! This is spiritual planning for certain...

Spiritual experiencing is another thing but one that often intersects with spiritual planning. I share the following story with many of our confirmands to teach this very thing: Often I visit individuals in the nursing home during the end season of their lives. Sometimes, their memory has started to fail them. Sometimes, the deterioration is so great that it is hard or near impossible for them to connect with the present at all. These pastoral visits are challenging as I try to make a pastoral connection with the individual. What I have found works the best is connecting with them on a "planned" aspect of their spiritual life. I often use the Lord's Prayer. During our confused conversation, I often tell them I'm going to start praying and welcome them to join me as they are able. Then, I begin praying The Lord's Prayer slowly and deliberately. Every time, without fail, the confusion has stopped and the individual joins me in praying that holy prayer together. Every time this happens without fail! What a profound spiritual experience this is for both of us.

I believe this demonstrates how good spiritual planning can support a good spiritual experience. Time spent as a youth memorizing The Lord's Prayer means that even in old age, when one's reason may not connect with the present, one's soul can through joining in Holy Prayer with another person.

And so good spiritual planning often leads us to good spiritual experiences when we are at our weakest. In similar fashion, it is during a crisis when all else fails us, that we need a strong spiritual foundation to lean on. For example, I've been at the bedside of a dying person and witnessed how reciting Psalm 23 brought the greatest comfort to them and their loved ones.

And so, this is why we nurture our youth, and ourselves, with worship week after week; memorizing the order of service from the Book of Common Prayer; learning and repeating The Lord's Prayer over and over again; praying and claiming the promises found in Psalm 23; softly singing Amazing Grace; quietly basking in our practice of Confession and Absolution. Spiritual planning leads to a strong spiritual experience throughout one's lifetime.

Please remember this as so many other areas of your life beckon to you. I know many of us are torn with fractured schedules and over-committed lives. But many things that call to us are earthly things... things that are passing away; while spiritual and everlasting things wait in the background. Invest in those everlasting blessings by nurturing them and prioritizing them. Spiritual planning leads to strong spiritual experiences. It's often one's choice and commitment that makes the difference.

Blessings to you for a Blessed season of Advent – our great planning and preparation for the coming of Jesus Christ into the world!

With Love, Mtr. Sue+



**Just a Reminder,
Daylight Savings is November 3rd
Fall back!!**

Daughters of the King

The November DOK meeting will be held on Sunday, November 10th, after the 10:30am service. The meeting will be held in the 2nd floor, front classroom.

Outreach

The November Outreach meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 12th at 4:30pm. Please join us to learn about Outreach ministries and hospitality events being planned!

Vestry Meeting

The November Vestry meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 12th at 5:15pm.

Thanksgiving Altar Donations

Again this year, for Thanksgiving, we will decorate the Altars with a bounteous display of food – cans, boxes, jars or packages destined for distribution to the food pantry. (No fresh foods that can spoil, please.) We are asking for contributions from the whole parish family so that our altars may truly reflect our dedication to community outreach. Donations may be left at the Church **before** Saturday morning, **November 23rd** when the Flower Guild will be decorating the altars with food, instead of the usual flowers. These Thanksgiving altars are given in memory of Jan D’Agostino, beloved leader of St. Peter’s Flower Guild, whose idea for this decoration has become a fine tradition.

Equinox Donations

Again this year, Equinox has again asked us to donate single serve applesauce in packs of 4 count or 6 count. Boxes will be located in the Pumpelly Room and in the Sunday School rooms. We will be collecting applesauce through Sunday, **November 24th**. Thank you in advance for your support.

Thanksgiving Eve Service of Holy Communion will be on Wednesday, November 27th at 7:30pm.

Equinox Volunteers Needed!

On Thanksgiving day we will be joining hundreds of volunteers in assembling Thanksgiving dinners for delivery for Equinox at the Empire State Plaza. Please join us for our time slot on Thanksgiving morning, **November 28th from 7:30am to 9:30am**. Please call Laura at (518)368-4284 to sign-up, as we are limited to just 10 adult volunteers.



Pre-Thanksgiving Dinner at St. Peter’s

Saturday, November 16th, 2019

Beginning at 5:00pm

Dinner Served at 5:30pm

Please join us for our 9th Annual Pre-Thanksgiving Dinner as we celebrate the holiday together. St. Peter’s will again supply the turkeys and we are looking for volunteers who are interested in helping out by cooking a turkey and bringing it already sliced to the dinner. For those who cannot help with the turkeys we ask you to please sign-up to bring one of the other many Thanksgiving side dishes or desserts. There are two sign-up sheets located in the Pumpelly Room: one sheet is to let us know what you are bringing and the other sheet is to let us know how many of you are coming. Or you may call the church office at (518)434-3502 to let us know.

We also ask you to please bring a donated food item (canned goods, rice, cereal, etc.) to be included in our traditional Thanksgiving Altar display. These items will then be donated to our local food pantry for distribution. For more information or to help with the dinner (set-up, cooking or clean-up) please contact Janice Chenot at (518)786-1070 or jechenot@hotmail.com.



Blessing Bag Donations

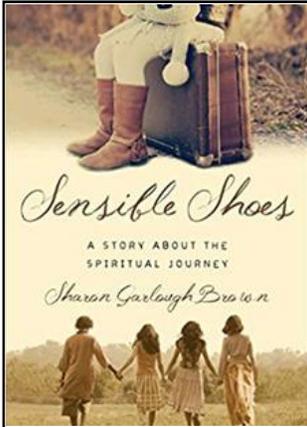
To assist and offer comfort for individuals who stay in the homeless shelters, the Daughters of the King will be assembling Blessing Bags on Sunday, December 8th. These are small (quart size) bags of good will and hospitality that are given to people who may need some cheer and comfort. Please consider bringing an offering of care products such as: tooth paste, tooth brush, a comb, scented lotion, hair bands, mints, candies, wipes, granola bars, travel deodorant, lip balms, band aids, cotton swabs, small cracker packets, Slim Jim snacks, feminine pads/wipes, small tissue packets, small note pads and pens can also be useful. Products that contain alcohol such as mouth wash and hand sanitizer should not be included (hand sanitizer wipes are ok). Gently used purses/handbags are also welcomed to assist women in need. Please bring in your donations by Sunday, December 8th. If you’d like to join the Daughters in assembling the bags, please join us in the Vestry Room immediately following the 10:30am service.

Adult Education



ALPHA SERIES: Alpha is a series of talks exploring the Christian faith, run over eleven weeks. Each talk is presented in DVD form. The program comes out of the Church of England. The DVD talks are followed by open conversation in small groups. The Alpha program is now run around the globe. Everyone is welcome, but the program aims at those with fundamental questions about the Christian faith. Alpha is especially suitable for seekers.

The Alpha course is held in the Vestry Room on Sunday afternoons from 12:15pm - 1:30pm. The course will continue through the month of November, and will end Mid December.



Women's Book and Bible Study:

Please join the women of the church as we read and reflect on *Sensible Shoes, A Story About the Spiritual Journey* by Sharon Garlough Brown. We read one chapter weekly and then discuss the material and spiritual guidance/practices. We gather on Tuesday evenings at 5:00pm, in the Vestry Room.

November 5th	Chapter 8:	<i>Intimacy and Encounter</i>
November 19th	Chapter 9:	<i>Found at the Crossroads</i>
November 19th	Chapter 10:	<i>Deeper into the Wilderness</i>
November 26th	Chapter 11:	<i>Lightening the Load</i>
December 3rd	Chapter 12:	<i>Walking Together in the Love of God</i> *Final Class

A REMINDER!!

December 1st is the deadline for the Restoration Committee to submit a report to the Bender Family Foundation on the results of our fundraising campaign to meet the \$10,000.00 Challenge Grant which will enable us to complete Phase 2 of our interior restoration project.

We still have a ways to go in order to meet our goal.

Your gift is needed to make this effort a success.

Overflow Homeless Shelter

Could you consider giving up one evening this winter to offer the gift of hospitality and show another the love and mercy of God?

The St. Peter's Overflow Homeless Shelter will open for its 11th season on December 1st to augment the ministry of the Capital City Rescue Mission to Albany's homeless. This year, we will be housing up to 18 men each evening through March 2020. Overflow Shelter Training, for both men and women volunteers will be provided on Thursday, November 21st at 7:00pm and Saturday, November 23rd at 10:00am, whether you are new to this ministry, or would like a refresher.

We are currently receiving donations of food items and financial support. Food items needed include: coffee, tea, sugar, popcorn and snacks, cereal (hot and cold), peanut butter, bread, fresh fruit, milk and juice along with fresh baked items. These can be dropped off at the church office any weekday, or brought to church on Sundays and given to Ian or Pat. Thank you in advance for your continued prayers and support.

Youth Formation & Sunday School

Many new and exciting things happening at St. Peter's.....

We are celebrating Youth Sunday, the last Sunday of every month. Father Hartt and Mother Sue have captivated the children with their own Eucharistic service. The children are able to participate with all aspects of the service. Please come and join us.

The Sunday School will be baking pumpkin bread on **Sunday, November 17th**. Please allow the children to wear old clothes so they may enjoy the wonders of baking. There will be a blessing of the bread on **Sunday, November 24th** and each member of the church will be able to take a loaf home to share for Thanksgiving Day dinner.

Also, we will be collecting single serve applesauce in 4 count or 6 count packs for Equinox through Sunday, November 24th. Taking it one step further, we are volunteering at the Empire State Plaza on **Thanksgiving morning, November 28th** from 7:30am to 9:30am. While there, we will be assembling Thanksgiving dinners for delivery. Please wear a baseball cap.

During the month of **November**, we will be collecting gently used coats for people of need at the soup kitchen. Please drop off your donations in the front office or upstairs in the Sunday School. We will be collecting coats for kids and gloves and hats for the elderly.

Mark your calendars: The Christmas Pageant will be held on **Sunday, December 15th**.

We need angels and shepherds, etc. Please join us on Sunday, December 8th to get parts and costumes.

Any questions or comments, please give me a call at (518)368-4284.

Blessings, Laura Rulison



CONGRATULATIONS

Phoebe Clark
on receiving your first
Holy Communion on
All Saints' Sunday



November 3rd, 2019

St. Francis Mission Soup Kitchen

Saturday, November 16th ~ 11AM to 1PM



On the 3rd Saturday of every month St. Peter's Church is committed to preparing and serving lunch to 100+ people at the St. Francis Mission Soup Kitchen (formerly known as Grace and Holy Innocents) located at 498 Clinton Avenue in Albany. We invite you, and the youth of our church (the Angels in Training) along with their friends, to join Laura Rulison (our Director of Christian Education) in helping with this outreach program that is in such desperate need of volunteers. For information or to let her know you are coming please call Laura at (518)368-4284.

Coming in December

CATHEDRAL LOCK IN



WHEN: December 13th-14th

WHO: 7-12th Graders

PRICE: \$30

DROP OFF: Fri. 6 PM

PICK UP: Sat. 10 AM

LOCATION: Cathedral of All Saints,
62 South Swan Street, Albany, NY 12210

For more information call: 518.692.9550 ext. 114/ fax: 518.692.8777

Dinner is provided on arrival

November 2019



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
		<p><i>Give Thanks to the Lord, for He is good. Psalm 107:1</i></p> 	
<p>3 Twenty-first Sunday after Pentecost All Saints' Sunday Healing Prayers</p> <p>8:30am - Holy Communion 10:30am - Holy Communion 12:15pm - Alpha Course</p>	4	<p>5</p> <p>5:00pm - Women's Book & Bible Study</p>	<p>6</p> <p>8:45am - Top 12:05pm - Ho</p> <p>Albany Dioces Conference</p>
<p>10 Twenty-second Sunday after Pentecost</p> <p>8:30am - Holy Communion 10:30am - Morning Prayer 11:45am - DOK Meeting 12:15pm - Alpha Course</p>	<p>11 Veteran's Day</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Office Closed</p>	<p>12</p> <p>4:30pm - Outreach Meeting 5:15pm - Vestry Meeting</p> <p style="text-align: center;">No Book & Bible Study</p>	<p>13</p> <p>8:45am - Top 12:05pm - Ho</p>
<p>17 Twenty-third Sunday after Pentecost</p> <p>8:30am - Holy Communion 10:30am - Holy Communion 12:15pm - Alpha Course</p> <p>Sunday School Baking Pumpkin Bread</p>	18	<p>19</p> <p>5:00pm - Women's Book & Bible Study</p>	<p>20</p> <p>8:45am - Top 12:05pm - Ho</p>
<p>24 Last Sunday after Pentecost Christ the King Sunday</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Youth Sunday</p> <p>8:30am - Holy Communion 10:30am - Morning Prayer w/Children's Chapel 12:15pm - Alpha Course</p>	25	<p>26</p> <p>5:00pm - Women's Book & Bible Study</p>	<p>27</p> <p>8:45am - Top 12:05pm - Ho 5:30pm to 7:0 7:30pm - Tha</p>



Count Your Blessings



Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		<p>1 All Saints' Day</p> <p>12:30pm - Organ Concert</p>	<p>2 Commemoration of All Faithful Departed</p>
<p>o of the Hill ly Communion</p> <p>se Preaching</p>	<p>7</p> <p>5:00pm - Treble Rehearsal 5:30pm - Full Choir</p> <p>Albany Diocese Preaching Conference</p>	<p>8</p> <p>12:30pm - Organ Concert</p> <p>Albany Diocese Preaching Conference</p>	<p>9</p>
<p>o of the Hill ly Communion</p>	<p>14</p> <p>5:00pm - Treble Rehearsal 5:30pm - Full Choir</p>	<p>15</p> <p>12:30pm - Organ Concert</p>	<p>16</p> <p>11:00am - Angels in Training 5:00pm - Pre-Thanksgiving Dinner</p>
<p>o of the Hill ly Communion</p>	<p>21</p> <p>5:00pm - Treble Rehearsal 5:30pm - Full Choir 7:00pm - Overflow Shelter Training</p>	<p>22</p> <p>12:30pm - Organ Concert</p>	<p>23</p> <p>9:30am - Harvest Altar Decorating 10:00am - Overflow Shelter Training</p>
<p>o of the Hill ly Communion</p> <p>00pm - Full Choir Rehearsal</p> <p>anksgiving Eve Service</p>	<p>28 Thanksgiving Day</p> <p>Office Closed</p> <p>7:30am to 9:30am - Equinox Volunteers to pack dinners for delivery</p>	<p>29</p> <p>Office Closed</p>	<p>30 St. Andrew the Apostle</p>

St. Peters Music

CHOIR

Choir rehearsals are on the following schedule:

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

We are eager to welcome boys and girls age 8 to grade 8 to join the Treble section of the choir. Please contact Neil Keen at (518)339-0137 for further information. There are also openings for singers of high school age and above.

FRIDAY NOONTIME ORGAN CONCERTS

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



~ HANDEL'S MESSIAH ~

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 8th

at 3:00 PM

Presented by St. Peter's Choir,
accompanied by a small orchestra.

No charge for admission. Donations will be received.

Composer of the Month Club

Although known by many merely as “the wife of Robert Schumann,” Clara Schumann, nee Wieck, had an extensive and successful musical career of her own.

CLARA SCHUMANN (1819-1896)



- She was one of the most famous Romantic composers and concert pianists.
- Born to musical family in Leipzig, Germany; taught by her father.
- First performance at age 8. Began writing music at age 12.
- Married Robert Schumann, a piano student of her father, against her father's wishes. Had to sue her father to get permission to marry.
- First to play concerts from memory.
- Revolutionized the piano concert, showcasing contemporary composers.
- Suffered great tragedies. Pre-deceased by four of her children.
- Her husband attempted suicide, after only 14 years of marriage, and was committed to a mental institution for the last years of his life.
- Supported the family and her eight children through teaching and an international concert career of 61 years.
- Composed works for piano, voice, orchestra, string quartet, and a few organ works.

In her own words: *“Why hurry over beautiful things. Why not linger and enjoy them.”*

Saint of the Month Club

ALL SOULS/ALL THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED, NOVEMBER 2nd

In the New Testament, the word “saints” is used to describe the entire membership of the Christian community, and in the Collect for All Saints’ Day the word “elect” is used in a similar sense. From very early times, however, the word “saint” came to be applied primarily to persons of heroic sanctity, whose deeds were recalled with gratitude by later generations. Beginning in the tenth century, it became customary to set aside another day on which the church remembered that vast body of the faithful who, though no less members of the company of the redeemed, are unknown in the wider fellowship of the church. It was also a day for particular remembrance of family members and friends. Though the observance of the day was abolished at the Reformation because of abuses connected with masses for the dead, a renewed understanding of its meaning has led to a widespread acceptance of this commemoration among Anglicans, and to its inclusion as an optional observance in the calendar of the Episcopal Church.

Collect:

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

Other Happenings in November & December

Daughters of the King

Fall Assembly

What's in your Cup?

Plans are underway for The Daughters of the King Fall Assembly, on Saturday, November 2, 2019 at Christ the King Spiritual Life Center from 9:00am – 3:30pm (registration at 8:30am). We will be meeting in the Great Hall and the cost (including lunch) is \$25. Mother Jean DeVaty will be our Speaker and Celebrant and our theme is “What’s in Your Cup?”.

DOK Assembly information and registration at:

<https://files.constantcontact.com/2f974ad1701/64bc06da-0d79-481d-8e59-96806da08366.pdf>

Men's Conference

Information and registration at:

https://www.ctkcenter.org/2019_mens_retreat_2745

Honest to God

Finding truth in a world of lies

A retreat for men...with keynote speaker Stan Key

November 15-16, 2019

When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth.

— John 16:13



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Welcome Home Initiative

a program for combat veterans

Monday - Wednesday, November 11th - 13th

The Welcome Home Initiative© is a healing program for military combat veterans and spouses. These veterans may be suffering in varying degrees from Post-Traumatic Stress or Moral Injury and are in need of Soul Repair. The format of the program helps veterans and spouses understand the hidden impact of combat and provides a safe place for their emotional healing. This essential spiritual and emotional healing is a complement to healing received from medical, psychiatric, and social services. There is NO CHARGE for veterans or their spouses thanks to the generosity of individuals, churches and businesses.

To learn more, apply to attend, or to support this initiative contact

Christ the King Spiritual Life Center

<http://www.ctkcenter.org> | healing@ctkcenter.org | (518)692-9550, ext. 201



Advent Retreat

Emmanuel: God With Us

An Advent Retreat; Friday, December 6 - Saturday, December 7, 2019

Give God the gift of you. Give you the gift of God – Emmanuel

Using the image of a cup...taken from Joyce Rupp's book *The Cup of Our Life: A Guide For Spiritual Growth* we will invite our Advent cup to whisper truths of our indwelling God. In fellowship with others, come away and take time to empty yourself of all that separates you from God.

Invite Emmanuel God with us... to take up residence in your heart, soul and spirit. Invite Him to bless this Advent time of waiting as you prepare to celebrate Jesus' birth at Christmas.

A restful Advent retreat facilitated by Dcn. Lynne Crimi and Dcn. Lynne Curtis

Info at: https://ctkcenter.org/images/HealingCenter/DOCUMENTS/AdvntRtrt_2019_RgstrnForm.pdf



**MINUTES FOR THE VESTRY MEETING
ST. PETER'S PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH
September 10, 2019**

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

Absent: T. Murphy

Opening Prayer Led by Father Paul Hartt

Approval of the Minutes of Vestry Meeting, June 11, 2019

The June 11, 2019 minutes were approved on a motion by A. Spath and seconded by M. Lundberg. The motion was unanimously approved by the vestry.

Warden Report –D. Spath

The wardens welcomed the vestry back from their short summer break. This past Sunday, September 8th, the choir returned beginning their new musical season as well as us welcoming back the Sunday school. First on the agenda for the Sunday school was registration information and baking prayer pretzels for the congregation to enjoy after the 10:30 service. Thanks to Laura Rulison and the Sunday school leaders for their continued support leading our Sunday school programs as well as those who take care of the younger children in the nursery in the months ahead.

Sunday, September 22nd, we will be hosting our annual church picnic at the church rectory. Each year we look forward celebrating this important day that brings the congregation together, sharing great food and enjoying everyone's fellowship.

We also would like to thank Mother Sue for covering Father Hartt's duties while he was away on vacation in July. We are fortunate to have an incredible clergy dedicated to St. Peter's with the ability to cover all our spiritual needs at any given time – thank you both for all you do for us at St. Peter's.

Fall programs and classes will begin shortly, Alpha, First Communion, Confirmation Classes, Bible studies, just to name a few. Father Hartt and Mother Sue will follow up in their reports as to when all the classes will begin.

Our financial portfolios at Merrill Lynch and Key again have held up very well during the summer months as the stock market continues to move in a positive direction. Thank you, George Scala for all your time and work with the investments and reports you generate each month for the vestry and congregation. The information compiled is so important to all of us as well as useful as we look ahead at stewardship and begin planning for next year's budget.

The interior restoration project was a large success based on the amount we were able to raise for the first phase. The positive feedback from many in the parish and others visiting since the restoration has been incredible. Now that the first phase has been completed we are hopefully moving ahead with the second phase early after the Christmas season, so we may have that phase completed by Easter. A letter to the parishioner's will be going out in the next week or so with our intentions to where we are financially to be able move forward with this phase. Again, we would like to thank all those who have already contributed to the restoration project; the positive complements on the work already completed has been endless.

Each year we continue to look for those interested in volunteering on committees such as the Flower, Altar, and Usher guilds. We look forward in seeing new members as well as those who may think they might be interested to inquire about these important ministries that are vital to our church life. St. Peter's is very fortunate to have many dedicated members who volunteer a considerable amount of time to these committees and we would like to thank them for their continued support and commitment to all these important missions within the church life. The choir has also been reaching out to recruit new members young and old. If anyone knows someone or knows a child that is at least eight years old that may have an interest joining our choir, please have them contact Neil Keen for additional information.

Finally, we would like to congratulate Mother Sue and Jimmy Troiano's on their recent announcement of their wedding engagement. We are all extremely happy for both of them and wish them the best as they enter a new chapter in their lives.

We hope to see everyone at the parish picnic.

Sunday Attendance – The Average Sunday Attendance is 111.1

Rector's Report - Father Hartt

Fr. Hartt began by thanking the Wardens, Treasurers, Fred Hersey, and Maria Holden, for meeting last week to plan Phase Two of the Interior Restoration Project. Fred's hard work was rewarded with a Bender Grant and the Restoration Committee has written a fine letter to the parish for our review this evening. The \$10,000 Bender Grant is a matching funds grant. The bulk of Phase Two involves stonework and a little additional painting in the archways. We continue to get approving remarks from visitors. There has been a pronounced uptick in these comments since the painting.

Father Hartt rejoiced to hear news of the mountain of backpacks which were donated with school supplies for our parish outreach. The blessing of the backpacks has become not only an important outreach, but a wonderful start of the Sunday School year. Our children come wearing their own backpacks and to have them blessed as they begin their school year. Mrs. Donna Ohlman received an award from the Sunday School for her gift of a hand-made Altar linen for Children's Chapel. Sunday was festive indeed.

As previously reported, Fr. Hartt has been appointed as Chair of the Diocesan Deacon School. It is a three-year course of study. There is a good bit to do with the start of the Deacon's School each year. Fr. Hartt was away this past Sunday for an ordination retreat. He was asked to give a talk on ministry to those now in the ordination process. On Saturday of this week, Fr. Hartt has been asked to be the guest preacher at the Bi-centennial celebration of the founding of St. John's, Delhi. Four past rectors and the Bishop will be in attendance.

November 16th will be our Pre-Thanksgiving Dinner. December 8th will be the Messiah and choir party at the Rectory.

With their new floor laid, the Cathedralites have returned to the Cathedral. Our last Sunday together was over Labor Day Weekend. Father Hartt wished to commend the parish for its faithful hospitality. There was a heavier load carried over the summer for our Guilds, but they were of good cheer about it all. A special thanks to the Altar Guild and Cathy Schunk for extra duty. The entire experience of having the Cathedral with us was profoundly life-giving. This summer could not have done more to make us see that we are one. We truly blessed one another spiritually by our separate traditions and ways. Dean Harding and Fr. Hartt plan to work on a shared Evensong in the coming year. Fr. Hartt also reminded us that we are invited to the Cathedral's celebratory "return" picnic this Sunday.

It has been a busy summer in many ways, especially pastorally. Mtr. Sue had an especially busy July while Fr. Hartt was on vacation in Florida. Fr. Hartt encouraged the Vestry to keep the clergy informed of pastoral needs as they come to know of such concerns in the parish.

St. Peter's will be having its Parish Picnic on September 22nd. Fr. Hartt thanked Jim Chenot for putting a team together. The following Sunday, we will begin our fall Alpha. Last year, there were several requests for Alpha to be held Sunday morning following church. This will provide a convenient opportunity to experience the Alpha program. Fr. Hartt hopes that participants will consider inviting others outside of the parish.

Fr. Hartt had a wedding last Saturday. Laura Hickey and Michael Barton were married. Two more weddings are planned this year. Ashley Spath and Dan Closson, Jimmy Troiano and Mtr. Sue Waldron. We look forward to the festivities and rejoice for these wonderful couples.

Finance – G. Scala - Treasurer's Report

George reviewed the Treasurer's Report for June, July and August. Offerings YTD through August were \$138,049. This compares to a budgeted number of \$151,767. YTD Offerings through the same period in 2018 were \$131,441.

The investment/endowment accounts both showed gains over the summer. Merrill Lynch shows a YTD return of 15.13%. The Key accounts show a YTD positive YTD return of 13.77%. This leaves us with a positive variance in this area YTD of \$378,313. Both accounts performed favorably versus market indexes. Expenses YTD through August were \$3,172 over budget.

Pledges for 2019 remain at 49 pledging units for a total amount of \$126,154.

There was much discussion concerning stewardship and budget which will be discussed at the October meeting. Electronic on-line pledging is in place as well as giving and we are going to strive to be able to better communicate electronically with the congregation by soliciting email addresses, cell phone numbers for texting as well as communication preferences.

Property –

The leak in the rectory roof was fixed. We will be looking to now repair the interior spots where the leak was. The vestry room has received a facelift which includes painting, repair of the windows, and the addition of some window dressings. Thank you to Ruth, Deb Spath and Ian for your help in making the room look great. Another project we will begin is cleaning up and doing some repairs in the garden.

Outreach – Mother Sue

Alexandra Whitcraft is sponsoring The S.H.E. Fund Harvest Moon Benefit on Saturday September 14, 2019 from 6:00-10:00pm. This assists the Maasai girls in Narok, Kenya to flee illegal underaged marriage and FGM, and additionally provides funding for their college education. Mtr. Sue will attend and support the benefit. Additional information can be located at www.shecollegefund.org

Three upcoming October fundraising events are:

Harvest Evening Celebration to benefit the Capital District Food Pantries on October 3, 2019 from 6:30-8:30 at the Franklin Plaza in Troy.

Capital City Rescue Mission auction and banquet on October 8, 2019 from 5:30-9:00pm at The Marriott on Wolf Road Albany, NY.

Healing a Women's Soul fundraiser on October 16, 2019 from 6:00-8:30pm at St. Paul's Church in Albany.

Presence and donation will be made by the Clergy and Outreach Committee and all parishioners are invited to attend. See the church office for additional information.

Old Business- None

New Business –

We would like to update contact information for parishioners. We will be sending around forms to fill out with updated email addresses as well as cell phone numbers. This will give us the option of possibly starting to send newsletters electronically if requested and event reminders to be sent out. Cell phones will give us the opportunity to send out emergency updates effectively to parishioners such as in the case of inclement weather updates.

Associate Rector's Report – Mother Sue

June was a busy month with attendance at Diocesan Convention in Speculator NY. Additionally, I supplied at St. Eustace Lake Placid and St. Thomas Tupper Lake over the summer months. The summer remained busy with much pastoral support. There were many hospitalizations in July, and thanks be to God, many healings that followed! We also held the committal for Camille Avakian, a long-time parishioner of St. Peter's. Summer worship was grand with the addition of Cathedralites. I enjoyed working with the Cathedral staff and meeting many of the members. I also enjoyed my vacation time and thanked Fr. Hartt and the Vestry immensely for providing the time off and for covering the parish needs for three weeks in August while I was away. The greatest joy occurred on August 31, 2019 when I became engaged to James Troiano. We bid your prayers as we prepare for Holy Matrimony.

September 3rd marked the start of the Fall Women's Book and Bible Study group. We are reading *Sensible Shoes, a Story about the Spiritual Journey*, by Sharon Garlough Brown with weekly gatherings and reflection. Women of the church are welcomed to join these informal spiritual gatherings or, if they are unable to meet with us, may read the book on their own.

I attended and assisted at the annual Postulant's and Candidate's Retreat September 6-7 at Christ the King Spiritual Life Center. My role as Chair of the Commission on Ministry (managing the Ordination Process for the Diocese of Albany) continues this coming year.

The start of the year with Prayer Pretzels, a mountain of backpacks donated, and the upcoming Parish Picnic have encouraged us in our witness of the Gospel message this year. I'm looking forward to our offering Alpha at the end of the month, to be held on Sundays after worship services. This is a great opportunity to introduce and/or grow in one's Christian faith. I pray parishioners might consider inviting a friend or family member to join us at Alpha. Instruction for First Holy Communion also begins soon. Please speak to the clergy if you have a child that seeks this preparation.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by C. Gordon and seconded by D. Spath, then was approved unanimously by the vestry.

Compline

Father Hartt led Compline.

Respectfully Submitted,
Christie J. Gordon

Clergy & Staff

The Rev. Paul J. Hartt.....Rector
The Rev. Susan Waldron.....Associate Rector
Neil K. Keen, F.A.G.O.....Organist & Choirmaster
Laura Rulison..... Director of Christian Education
Ian Mike.....Sexton
James P. Shortall.....Assistant Sexton
Ruth Manss..... Office Manager
Janice Chenot.....Office Volunteer
E. Constance Powell.....Historian & Archivist

Vestry

Deborah SpathSenior Warden
James Chenot.....Junior Warden
George Scala..... Treasurer
Nancy Creagan, Christie Gordon, Fred Hershey,
Maria Holden, Mark Lundberg,
Tim Murphy, Jeff Russom, Ashley Spath

How to Contact Us

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Telephone: 518-434-3502

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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